PERCEIVED BODY WEIGHT, BODY CATHEXIS, AND CLOTHING INTEREST/IMPORTANCE OF OVERWEIGHT AND NORMAL-WEIGHT WOMEN

A Thesis

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by

Freda Passmore Freeman, B.S.E.

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Approved by

[Signature]
School of Home Economics
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Human beings have similar species characteristics, but differences in body appearance do exist among individuals. People of all ages have been aware of these differences in body types. Sheldon (1940) was one of the first researchers to classify the various types of body build into three extreme types. These types were described as soft roundness at one end of the continuum to linearity and fragility at the other end of the continuum. An individual's attitude toward his/her body is an important influence on one's behavior, which was recognized by Secord and Jourard (1953). They coined the term body cathexis and defined it as feelings of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with parts and processes of the body.

A component of body cathexis is body weight. Since a person may perceive his/her body weight in relation to the social and cultural environment, the reactions of others may affect one's perception of his/her body, and consequently, the way one feels about his/her body (Douty, et al., 1974). The cultural ideal for American women today does not seem to have changed since the 1955 study of Secord and Jourard in which females were more satisfied with their bodies when they were smaller than normal (but when their
busts were larger than average). Evidence of this ideal can be observed in the advertising of various products in newspapers, television, and magazines in which the slender figure is the one usually depicted. Since body weight is an important component of body cathexis, it seems feasible that how one perceives his/her body weight might be significantly related to how one feels toward other body parts and processes.

According to Horn (1968), clothing is the second skin and can be considered an extension of the human body. An important consideration in clothing selection is an individual's concern for clothing. Curiosity about clothing has a direct influence on an individual's practices in regard to clothing and is referred to as clothing interest/importance (Sharpe, 1963). Since clothing may be seen as a covering for the body, and body cathexis is a measure of the individual's feelings about his/her body, it seems feasible that the feelings one has about his/her body might be exhibited in the interest or importance assigned to clothing.

Researchers have investigated body cathexis and various clothing variables, but only two studies were found in which the researchers (Compton, 1967; Matthews, 1969) were concerned with clothing variables and the extent of body weight. Matthews reported that differences did exist between overweight and normal-weight women on body cathexis,
in that overweight women were less satisfied with their bodies than normal-weight women. She further reported that differences existed between overweight and normal-weight women on clothing fabric and design preferences, which was similar to the findings of Compton (1967). No study was found in which the concern involved a comparison between overweight and normal-weight women's perceptions of clothing interest/importance. It is not known if perceived body weight and body cathexis are related to clothing interest/importance. Therefore, additional empirical evidence is needed in regard to the relationships between (1) perceived body weight and body cathexis and (2) perceived body weight and clothing interest/importance.

PURPOSE IN THE STUDY

It was the purpose in the study to investigate the relationship between perceived body weight and the following variables:

1. Body cathexis
2. Clothing interest/importance

The major goal in the study was to obtain empirical evidence about differences which might exist between overweight and normal-weight women in relation to their feelings toward the body and feelings toward clothing. Differences have been reported to exist between overweight and normal-weight women on body cathexis and clothing fabric and design.
preferences; however, no research was found in which the level of clothing interest/importance was compared for overweight and normal-weight women.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated as a basis for conducting the study:

1. What is the relationship between perceived body weight and body cathexis?

2. Do differences exist between normal-weight and overweight women on body cathexis?

3. What is the relationship between perceived body weight and clothing interest/importance?

4. What is the relationship between body cathexis and clothing interest/importance?

5. Do differences exist between normal-weight and overweight women on clothing interest/importance?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terminology is used throughout the report of the study:

1. **Body cathexis:** An individual's feeling of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with parts or processes of the body (Secord and Jourard, 1953).

2. **Clothing interest/importance:** Attitudes and beliefs about clothing, the knowledge of and attention
paid to clothing, and the concern and curiosity a person has about his/her clothing and that of others. Interest/importance may be manifested by an individual's practices in regard to clothing—the amount of time, energy, and money one is willing to spend on clothing; the degree to which one uses clothing in an experimental manner; and his or her awareness of fashion and what is new (Smith, 1976).

3. **Perceived body weight**: How an individual classifies one's weight—normal versus overweight. On a scale of 1 to 7, normal-weight falls in the 1 to 4 category, while overweight, in the 5 to 7 category.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A search for literature related to the objectives of the study was conducted by the researcher. The studies which were most pertinent are presented in the following sections: body cathexis; body cathexis and body weight; body cathexis, body weight, and clothing; and clothing interest/importance.

BODY CATHEXIS

Body cathexis has been defined as the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction reported by a person toward aspects of his/her own body (Secord and Jourard, 1953). It has been reported that one's feelings toward the body is a significant personality variable related to one's security and self concept (Secord and Jourard, 1953).

Secord and Jourard are considered pioneers in the field of body cathexis. In a 1953 study, they investigated the relationship between body cathexis and self cathexis, anxiety, and security among college men and women. Reported in the study was a method for the measurement of body cathexis in which subjects rated themselves on a scale of 1 (highly dissatisfied) to 5 (highly satisfied) on 46 parts of the body. A similar scale was developed to evaluate the
subject's feelings toward the self on items representing conceptual aspects of the self. In addition, two other measures were used in the study: the homonym test of body cathexis (Secord, 1953) consisting of homonyms which had meanings related and not related to the body, and Maslow's Test of Psychological Security-Insecurity (Maslow, 1945).

Secord and Jourard found that for both men and women the mean body cathexis ratings were related to the self cathexis scores, that is individuals tended to cathect their body to the same degree and in the same direction that they cathected their self. No significant relationship existed between body cathexis and the homonym test for the men, but a significant relationship did exist between the two variables for the women. Low body cathexis was associated with anxiety in the form of undue concern with pain, disease, or bodily injury, and was also associated with insecurity as demonstrated by the relationship between body cathexis and the Maslow test.

In 1954, Secord and Jourard investigated the relationship between the actual measured size of body parts and body cathexis. A male university population was used in the study. Measurements were made of height, weight, shoulders, chest (relaxed and expanded), and muscular strength (biceps relaxed and contracted) and analyzed in relation to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction expressed with the corresponding body cathexis measurements.
The researchers reported that body weight was not related to body cathexis, but cathexis for body parts pertaining to "masculinity" was related to the size of relevant body parts. Large size was associated with strong, positive feelings toward the respective body part, and small size with weak, negative feelings. The inference was made that large size was a desirable quality for males.

An extension of the 1954 study was made by Secord and Jourard (1955) with females as the sample. The subjects were asked to rate their feelings toward the following 12 body components on a scale of 1 (highly satisfied) to 7 (highly dissatisfied): height, weight, bust, waist, hips, thighs, calves, ankles, feet, nose length, shoulder width, and neck length. In addition, the subjects were required to estimate the size of each of the body parts listed above and to indicate the ideal body dimensions for each of the body parts. Secord and Jourard reported that the measured and estimated sizes for height, weight, bust, waist, and hips were significantly correlated with cathexis for those body parts. The mean self-rated ideal sizes for weight, waist and hips were smaller than average, while the ideal bust measurement was larger than normal. Secord and Jourard (1955) concluded that a shared ideal existed for certain dimensions of the female figure. For women in the American society, the appearance of the body is an important determinant of both self-esteem and acceptability to others,
whereas among men the appearance of the body is less important for these values (Jourard and Remy, 1957).

Jourard and Remy (1957) used a modification of the Secord and Jourard scales for body cathexis and for self cathexis to investigate the differences between college men's and women's ratings of the two variables. The two sexes did not differ in the degree of differentiation of self concept; however, women tended to have a more highly differentiated body image than men. The researchers further reported that men tended to differentiate their self concepts to a greater degree than their body image.

Hunt and Feldman (1960) conducted a study of body cathexis using college men and women as subjects. A modification of Secord and Jourard's body cathexis scale was used to rate the various body parts according to satisfaction/dissatisfaction in terms of present day feelings and in terms of past feelings (early adolescence). The researchers reported that the current body cathexis ratings were consistently more favorable than the adolescent ratings; however, greater variation existed in the women's scores than in the men's scores.

In summary, body cathexis is a term used to describe the feelings of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with parts or processes of the body. In the studies cited, body cathexis was reported to be significantly related to self concept, ideal body image, insecurity, and anxiety. Both men and
women were similar in self concept—they cathected their body to the same degree and in the same direction that they cathected their self. The two sexes reported that their present feelings toward the body were more favorable than their early adolescent feelings; however, the sexes differed on ideal body image. Men were more satisfied with their bodies when they were larger than normal; women were more satisfied when they were smaller than average. In addition, low body cathexis scores for women were associated with anxiety and insecurity.

BODY CATHEXIS AND BODY WEIGHT

Body weight has been considered by the researchers in the preceding section as a component of body cathexis. However, in the preceding section, the researchers did not report whether the subjects were overweight, normal-weight, or underweight. Sheldon (1940) classified the various body types as endomorph, mesomorph, and ectomorph. Most people probably use a different classification of body extremes—"fat" people and "thin" people. Whyte (1957) stated that the cultural ideal for body shape among American women was the very thin figure. However, he found that this type of person actually appeared more frequently in the middle and upper classes than in the lower classes. Moore, Stunkard, and Strole (1962) found a similar relationship between socioeconomic status and obesity. In the lowest
socioeconomic class, 30% of the women were obese, while in the highest socioeconomic class, 4% were obese.

Various researchers have investigated the body image of obese persons. A disturbed body image has often been used as a dependent variable in relation to three independent variables: emotional disturbances, age of onset of obesity, and the parental evaluation of the child's obesity (Stunkard and Mendelson, 1961). This section includes a review of studies involving a disturbed body image primarily in relation to three independent variables cited above.

**Emotional Disturbances**

Stunkard and Mendelson (1961) reported that obese men and women saw their world in terms of their body weight. A disturbance in body image did occur, but only in some emotionally disturbed obese persons. This disturbance was exemplified by a feeling that the body was grotesque and was viewed by other persons with hostility. Often obese persons with a disturbed body image showed other significant emotional disturbances. Stunkard and Mendelson found that the obese individuals reacted to stress or psychological trauma by gaining weight, while the majority in the control groups lost weight. Certain traits in the personality were reported to be common to all the obese individuals: immaturity, impulsiveness, and a poorly organized emotional life.
Additional personality traits have been reported by researchers as common to the obese. Tension, depression, and moodiness were symptoms common to the obese according to Shorvon and Richardson (1949) and Rennie (1940). Bruch (1941) concluded that obese children were oversensitive, maladjusted, and fundamentally unhappy. Harrington (1930) found that many obese individuals exhibited emotional unstable personalities, and they often obtained relief during periods of nervous stress by constant nibbling on food. Later, Hockman (1938) hypothesized that for the obese eating represented a relief from the fear of starving to death. It was his belief that this fear of starving was preceded by a mental or emotional shock, such as the death of a parent or a financial misfortune.

Chirico and Stunkard (1960) were interested in the physical activity of the obese in comparison with the non-obese. They reported that obese women expressed attitudes during periods of despondency that were significantly different from the nonobese woman. The obese women responded to depression by passive acceptance. An example of a typical statement of the obese woman was, "When I'm blue, I sit," while the nonobese women responded, "When I'm blue, I go out." For men no significant differences were found between the obese and nonobese subjects' feelings of despondency.
Researchers have reported that the effectiveness of interaction in social situations was reduced by the body appearance of the very obese (Fisher, 1973). Chirico and Stunkard (1960) found obese women to be more socially inhibited than nonobese women. Obese women expressed a desire for friendly or "easy" relations with others, but had little capacity to achieve such relations. Obese men expressed little desire for social relations, but possessed the same capacity for social interaction as nonobese men.

**Age of Onset of Obesity**

Age of onset of obesity has often been studied in relation to a disturbed body image. Stunkard and Mendelson (1961) reported that the onset of obesity occurred mainly during childhood or adolescence. Fisher (1973) reported that in the American society the worship of size is prominent; something big is worth more than something small. However, worship of size does not apply to the obese body. Therefore, a defect in body perception occurs when the principle of size is applied by the obese children to their bodies.

Bruch (1941) reported that obese children's first encounter with the outside world was often when they entered school. They were usually unprepared for the social adjustment, and food was relied on for comfort and satisfaction. According to Bruch (p. 468),
Obesity in childhood may thus be understood as a disturbance in the maturation of the total personality and as a somatic compensation for thwarted creative drives, whereby the total size of the body becomes the 'expressive organ' of the conflict.

**Parental Evaluation of the Child's Obesity**

Several studies have been conducted on the parental responses to the child's obesity. Many of the obese children were brought up in strict fashion and had stern, aggressive fathers and "kindly cold" mothers, according to Shorvon and Richardson (1949). In contrast, Bruch and Touraine (1940) reported that many of the fathers of the obese children were weak, submissive, and unable to give manly guidance, while the mothers displayed protectiveness to the child, covering an underlying attitude of aggressiveness and hostility. Feiner (1954) found obese children in his study were highly dependent on parents in general, especially the mother who was significantly more aggressive than the father.

In assessing family life, Stunkard and Mendelson (1961) reported that when the obese children were the focus of parental hostility and contempt, they often grew up with similar feelings toward themselves. Bullen, Monello, Cohen, and Mayar (1963) reported that the responses of the nonobese children implied a family life of sociability and unity, while the responses of the obese children implied a less unified family which the obese children were afraid to leave.
Bruch and Touraine (1949) studied the development of obesity as one form of the parent’s responses to the child's environment. They reported that the sex of the obese child was often a keen disappointment to many of the parents. Furthermore, mothers were often concerned with the child's physical safety, which led to numerous overprotective measures. Bruch and Touraine further reported that obesity in childhood rarely aroused the interest of the family. In most families the parents of the obese child did not recognize the excessive size until their attention was directed to it by outside sources. The home environment did not offer sufficient emotional security to the child; therefore, food gained importance in emotional value to the child. Many mothers believed food was the only way of expressing their affection for the child.

Another area of interest has been the relationship between the obesity of children and obesity of parents. Bullen, Reed, and Mayer (1964) found that the frequency of obesity among the parents of obese adolescent girls was significantly greater than among parents of the nonobese girls.

In summary, emotional disturbances, age of onset of obesity, parental evaluation of the child's obesity, physical activity, and social interaction have been studied in relation to a disturbed body image of obese persons. Personality traits of tension, immaturity, and moodiness were
reported as being common to the obese individuals. In the
studies cited, obese and nonobese persons were often com-
pared on feelings of depression, family life situations,
and social relations. Obese women responded to depression
by passive acceptance, while nonobese women responded to
depression by active acceptance. Responses of obese chil-
dren implied that their families were less unified than the
nonobese families. The obese individuals believed that
their body appearance was responsible for reducing accept-
ance in social situations, and often obese women were more
socially inhibited than nonobese women.

BODY CATHEXIS, BODY WEIGHT, AND CLOTHING

Body cathexis and body weight have been studied in
relation to only a few clothing variables. Klassen (1967)
was interested in the relationship between body concern
and clothing attitudes of adolescent boys and girls. For
girls no significant relationship was found between body
concern and clothing attitudes. However, for boys a signif-
icant relationship did exist.

Richards and Hawthorne (1971) studied values and
clothing attitudes of male university students in relation
to body cathexis. No significant relationship was found
between body cathexis and clothing attitudes. Apparently,
men were
more concerned with body functions than with body surfaces.

Tigard (1975) examined the effect of the body build of adolescent females on the development of feelings about the bodily self and the impact that body cathexis might have on the development of individual fabric preferences for clothing. She reported that the subjects were generally more dissatisfied than satisfied with their physical bodies. No significant relationship was found between body cathexis and clothing fabric preferences. Tigard concluded that body configuration and body cathexis were not exclusive variables operating in the development of individual fabric preferences for clothing among a group of adolescent girls.

Compton (1964) investigated the relationship between the body-image concept and the clothing fabric and design preferences of a group of hospitalized psychotic women. Along with the Compton Fabric Preferences Test, the Barrier and Penetration Scores (Fisher and Cleveland, 1958) were also used in the study. The Barrier Score was defined as an index of the degree to which an individual regarded his/her body exterior as a defensive barrier. The Penetration of Boundary Score was defined as an index of the degree to which an individual regarded his/her boundaries as readily penetrated.

Compton found that women with weak body boundaries tended to define body limits by their selection of bright
saturated colors. Women with high height-weight ratios scored higher on the Barrier measure than women with low height-weight ratios. Compton suggested that women with large height-weight ratios were more secure than were women with small ratios. In regard to the penetration component, a significant positive relationship existed between penetration scores and preferences for warm colors and large fabric designs.

In a later study, Compton (1967) reported that adolescent delinquent girls with larger height-weight ratios chose weak figure-ground contrasts in clothing fabrics more often than did delinquent girls with lower height-weight ratios. The findings were similar to those reported by Matthews (1969): obese college women preferred weak figure-ground contrasts and small designs more often than did non-obese women. However, the findings in Matthews and Compton's studies differed on color preferences. Compton found the larger girls preferred warm colors more often than did the smaller girls, in contrast to Matthews who reported that no significant difference existed between the color preferences of the obese and nonobese women. Matthews further reported that a difference in body cathexis was found between obese and nonobese women. Obese women were significantly less satisfied with their bodies than the nonobese women.
In summary, only a few studies were found involving the relationship between body cathexis, body weight, and clothing-related variables. Two studies were reviewed in which the extent of body weight (overweight and normal-weight) were investigated in relation to clothing fabric and design preferences. In one investigation, the researcher reported that body cathexis and clothing attitudes were not significantly related, but a female sample was not used in the study. In another investigation, body cathexis and clothing attitudes were significantly related for boys, but not for girls. No studies were found involving differences which might exist between overweight and normal-weight women in regard to clothing interest/importance.

CLOTHING INTEREST/IMPORTANCE

Four terms have commonly been utilized by researchers in relation to the feelings toward clothing: awareness, attitudes, interest, and importance. The four terms are defined in *Webster's New World Dictionary* (1976) as given below:

**Awareness**: Having knowledge of something through alertness in observing or interpreting what one sees, hears, feels (p. 103)

**Attitude**: A manner of acting, feeling or thinking that shows one's disposition, opinion (p. 95)
Interest: A feeling of intentness, concern, curiosity about something; importance (p. 762)

Importance: Meaning a great deal; having much significance, consequence, or value (p. 730)

According to the researcher of this study, an individual first becomes aware of clothing, then develops an interest in clothing, and finally decides how much importance or emphasis should be placed on clothing. Since awareness is a prerequisite for clothing interest, and clothing interest is a clothing attitude, the term clothing interest/importance was used in the study.

Clothing interest/importance may be related to the manner in which a person behaves in everyday roles and actions. Thus, clothing may have an effect on an individual's feelings of self-esteem, approval, or disapproval of his/her behavior. One of the early researchers to study clothing interest in relation to behavior was Flugel (1929). He found that some people reported little or no pleasure from clothing, and others rebelled against all clothing forms. Wass (1962) also investigated the relationship between clothing interest and behavior. She found clothing was extremely important to ninth grade girls who reported that it often affected their behavior.

Researchers have investigated the relationship between both clothing attitudes and clothing interest to selected personality characteristics. Matthews (1963)
studied selected personality traits in relation to clothing importance of college men and women. She found that individuals with certain personality characteristics were more interested in clothing than persons with other personality characteristics. She reported that a highly significant difference existed between the clothing attitudes of female students who were extremely dominant in personality and those who were extremely submissive in personality. In general, women placed more importance on clothing than did men.

Potts (1974) investigated the clothing-related behavior of 64 middle-aged women to determine if their interest in clothing was related to two variables—feelings of social security— insecurity and an open or closed belief system. According to Potts, she used a very independent, self-assertive sample in which the majority of subjects were both secure and open-minded and the level of interest in clothing varied without being significantly related to either variable.

Knapper (1968) reported that clothing interest and clothing satisfaction were related. High scorers on a clothing interest measure were satisfied with their clothing and saw themselves as being good, neat, and coordinating dressers. A high clothing satisfaction score was indicative that the subject was outgoing and coped well with social situations.
Clothing awareness has been reported by various researchers to be related to social status. Wildes (1968) defined clothing awareness as the degree to which subjects considered clothing in their assessment of social situations. Rosencranz (1962) found that social class was related to clothing awareness in that upper-class women had significantly higher scores than lower-class women. Upper-class males also had higher clothing awareness scores than their lower-class counterparts, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Demographic variables, other than social status, have been studied in relation to clothing interest. In a study of young women, Rosencranz (1948) found that occupation, income, and area (urban or rural background) were highly related to clothing interest. Education, marital status, number of children in the family, and membership in organizations were also significantly related to clothing interest, but to a lesser degree.

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) found that a relationship existed between clothing interest and age; younger persons were more interested in clothing than were older persons. Bonaker (1970) also found that age was the most important demographic predictor of interest in fashion, followed by marital status and sex. Only moderately related in her study were the number of children at home, extent of education, occupation, income level, and social class status.
Persons who were concerned with status and personal appearance were relatively more interested in fashion than those who were concerned with cost, utility, and personal satisfaction.

Clothing interest has been studied in relation to fashion interest, knowledge of current fashion trends, wearing of clothing styles, and fashion innovativeness. Hoffman (1956) found a relationship existed between clothing interest and fashion interest. Frost (1968) reported that fashion interest was related to the amount of attention, time, thought, and importance given to the latest fashions. Lundeen (1958) reported that the clothing interest of men was related to a knowledge of current fashion trends. Reed (1973) found that wearers of different clothing styles (high-fashion, low-fashion, non-fashion, and counter-fashion) could be differentiated by their attitudes toward clothing. Sharpe developed a clothing interest/importance scale (1963) which was used by Shrank (1970). She reported that a high clothing interest score was related to fashion innovativeness.

Smith (1976) investigated the effect of attractive and unattractive clothing on person perception in a task-oriented situation. The perceiver's clothing interest was measured by a modification of Sharpe's (1963) clothing interest/importance scale. Smith found that clothing
interest was significantly related to the attractive person perception ratings.

In summary, four terms have commonly been utilized by researchers in relation to feelings toward clothing: awareness, attitudes, interest, and importance. These variables were reported to be related to behavior, personality, fashion interest, clothing satisfaction, and demographic variables, such as age, marital status, and occupation. However, no research was found in which clothing interest was studied in relation to body cathexis or how individuals perceive their body weight.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The procedure for the study is presented in the following sections: selection of the sample, selection and adaptation of instruments, pretesting and revision of instruments, data collection, and analysis of data.

SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

Sixty five subjects comprised the sample in the study. All were women, 54 of whom were between the ages of 18 and 25; 10 were between the ages of 26 and 39; and one was in the 40 or over age category. Forty seven of the subjects were in the normal-weight group, and the remaining 18 subjects were in the overweight group by self-designation.

The subjects in the study were selected from three available groups. One of the groups included women from two diet and exercise classes at The Ohio State University. Permission was obtained from the instructor to administer the questionnaires to the women. The instructor had asked the women for their cooperation in the project, and the women agreed to participate in the study. A total of 24 questionnaires were obtained; 14 of the women were self-designated as normal-weight and 10, as overweight.

Sixteen responses were obtained from other students, faculty members, and staff employees at The Ohio State
University. The women agreed to answer the questionnaires during their spare time while on campus. Thirteen of these women were normal-weight and three were overweight.

Members of an accounting class at Columbus Business University were in the third group. The instructor of the class had agreed to administer the questionnaires to the students. Completed questionnaires were obtained from 25 subjects. Twenty were normal-weight and five were self-perceived as overweight.

SELECTION AND ADAPTATION OF INSTRUMENTS

Body cathexis and clothing interest/importance scales were the two primary instruments used to measure the variables in the study. In addition to these instruments, information was desired about certain demographic characteristics of the subjects for descriptive purposes, and the subject's perceived body weight and bone structure.

Body Cathexis

In 1953, Secord and Jourard developed a body cathexis scale in which men and women were asked to indicate their feelings toward 46 parts and processes of the body on a scale of 1 through 5. A body cathexis score was obtained by summing the ratings of each person and then dividing by 46. To test the reliability of the body cathexis scale, Secord and Jourard computed split-half reliability coefficients. The scale was deemed moderately high in reliability.
The reliability coefficient for women subjects in the study was .83 (n=43), for men, .78 (n=45).

Secord and Jourard later modified the body cathectic scale to study the body cathectic of men and women separately. In a 1954 study, Secord and Jourard included 40 body parts and processes which were evaluated on a 5-point scale for men. In 1955, 12 items were included in the body cathectic scale which was administered to women; the items were height, weight, bust, waist, hips, thighs, calves, ankles, feet, nose length, shoulder width, and neck length. With the exception of thighs, calves, nose length, and neck length, the remaining items had previously been investigated in the 1953 study by Secord and Jourard. The women were asked to rate their feelings about each of the 12 body parts on a scale of 1 to 7 rather than on the 5-point scale previously used.

A modification of Secord and Jourard's body cathectic scales used in 1953 and 1955 was deemed most appropriate for the present study. Three graduate students in the Textiles and Clothing Department at The Ohio State University were requested to select items from the 1953 body cathectic scale which they believed to be the most important body aspects to women. The items were height, weight, posture, nose, shoulder width, bust or chest, waist, hips, legs, feet, thighs, neck length, face shape, hair color, and eyes. Of these 15 items selected, nine were the same items used by
Secord and Jourard in the 1955 study of women, while the remaining six items were used by Secord and Jourard in the 1953 study of men and women. The 15 items selected for this study were also used by Klassen (1967) in a study related to concern with the body.

The subjects in the present study were asked to signify their feelings about each body part in accordance with the 7-point scale used by Secord and Jourard in 1955: (a) strong positive feeling; (b) positive feeling; (c) slight positive feeling; (d) have no feeling one way or the other; (e) slight negative feeling; (f) negative feeling; and (g) strong negative feeling. The ratings for each subject in the sample were summed and divided by 15. A low score (1 to 3) indicated that a woman was satisfied with her body; a high score (5 to 7) was indicative that a woman was dissatisfied with her body.

**Clothing Interest/Importance**

Barnes (1955), Ebeling (1960), Wass (1962), Sharpe (1963), Kirby (1966), and Wellen (1966) developed scales to measure the clothing interest and/or importance of subjects. The majority of the scales were developed for a specific group of individuals—women over 60 years of age, adolescents, or men. Sharpe's clothing interest/importance scale was designed for adult women in all age groups; therefore, it was selected for use in the study. According to Creekmore (n.d., p. 24), Sharpe's clothing interest/
importance scale "has been carefully tested to produce one of the most refined measures of clothing variables available."

Sharpe selected from clothing indices, clothing interest/importance items that previous researchers had developed. Three pretests were administered before the final scale was completed. Subjects in the pretests were college-age women, while the final scale was administered to women of other ages for scale validation. The following 5-point Likert scale was used to rate the response items:

- DT --- Definitely True
- PT --- Partly True
- U --- Undecided
- PF --- Partly False
- DF --- Definitely False

The preliminary questionnaire consisted of 80 statements in which 74 were attitudinal, one pertained to the knowledge of fashion designers, and five pertained to the number of clothing items in the subject's wardrobe. The statements evaluated by a clothing specialist, a sociologist, and 18 members of a sociology class for clarity and relevance, resulted in some reworded or deleted items; 72 statements were used in Pretest I.

Following Pretest I a scale value difference method of item analysis was used to eliminate the statements for which the results were inconsistent with the total score. Eighteen items met the established critical ratio of 3.00 and a scale value of .45. A split-half corrected
reliability coefficient of .77 was established for the 18 items.

The 72 items were revised and administered in Pre-test II. Factor analysis was used to isolate statements which did not measure clothing interest and importance. As a result 36 statements were administered in Pretest III. They were evaluated by the scale difference method of item analysis. Fourteen items met the critical ratio of 3.00. Ten of the 14 items measured interest, two items measured prestige, and two items were concerned with ego satisfaction. A split-half corrected reliability coefficient of .89 was established for the 14 items.

Functional validity of the final scale was determined by administering the statements to 24 women whose clothing-related behavior was known by Sharpe. Sharpe predicted 12 would score high on the clothing interest/importance scale and 12 would score low on the scale. By applying a t test to the mean scores, a value of 10.34 was obtained which was significant at the .001 level.

Smith (1976) further analyzed Sharpe's scale for clarity, reliability, and functional validity. Smith used the 36 statements from Sharpe's Pretest III, rather than Sharpe's final 14 item scale. As a result of pretesting, none of the 36 statements were deleted on the basis of face validity or ambiguity. One statement was reworded and the alternative responses were modified to read as follows as a
result of comments made by the participants:

T — True
PT — Possibly True
U — Undecided
PF — Possibly False
F — False

Smith also used women with known high and low clothing interest/importance to test for functional validity. The difference between the high and low clothing interest groups was found to be significant ($t=7.90$, $p<.001$). Following a check for internal consistency, 22 of the 36 statements were selected for Smith's study. Further reliability analysis resulted in a coefficient of .92 when the Kuder-Richardson Reliability Formula-20 was used.

Smith's adaptation of Sharpe's clothing interest/importance scale was used in the present study. In assigning numerical weights to the five alternative response positions, the answer "True" was given the weight 1 on positive-worded items and 5 on negative-worded items. This was directly opposite to Sharpe's assignment of numerical weights. However, this method was deemed desirable to avoid confusion by keeping the direction (low scores indicating high clothing interest/importance) the same as in the body cathexis scale (low scores indicating high body cathexis).

**Demographic Information and Perceived Body Weight**

Demographic information about the subjects in the study was desired for descriptive purposes. Questions pertaining to age, marital status, and college rank or
occupation if the subject was not enrolled in college. Information regarding an individual's weight was also deemed necessary in order to make comparisons of overweight and normal-weight women in regard to body cathexis and clothing interest/importance.

The researcher used a self-designation method in which the subjects rated their body weight on a scale of 1 (thin) to 7 (heavy). A rating of 1 to 4 was considered normal-weight, while a rating of 5 to 7 was considered overweight. In addition, the subjects were asked to rate their bone structure on a scale of 1 to 7, 1 being small-boned, 7 being large-boned. To double check the two scales, subjects were asked to include their height and weight.

PRETESTING AND REVISION OF INSTRUMENTS

The instruments in the study were pretested on a total of 14 graduate students, faculty members, and other employees at The Ohio State University. Seven of the respondents were pre-determined by the researcher as being overweight, while the remaining seven were considered normal-weight. All of the subjects designated their body weight and bone structure in the direction anticipated by the researcher. Therefore, the perceived weight and bone structure scales were considered to be appropriate instruments for categorizing women into two weight groups for the study. (See Appendix A for perceived body weight and bone structure scales used in final study.)
Only one revision was made in the body cathaxis scale as a result of pretesting. The strong, positive response was reworded from "Think that others would like to be just like me" to "Consider myself extremely fortunate." A respondent questioned the selection of the original wording because it might tend to show conceit. (See Appendix B for body cathaxis scale used in final study.)

Revisions were also made in the clothing interest/importance scale. The meaning of one statement was questioned. Therefore, it was changed to read, "I enjoy clothes like some people enjoy such things as books, records, and going to the theater" rather than, "I enjoy clothes like some people do such things as books, records, and going to the theater."

The 5-point Likert response scale was also revised as follows:

From:  
T -- True  
PT -- Possibly True  
U -- Undecided  
PF -- Possibly False  
F -- False

To:  
SA -- Strongly Agree  
A -- Agree  
U -- Undecided  
D -- Disagree  
SD -- Strongly Disagree

This revision was believed necessary because some of the respondents were confused as to the difference between "Possibly True" and "Possibly False" used in Smith's scale. (See Appendix C for clothing interest/importance scale used in final study.)
DATA COLLECTION

Two weeks were required to collect data from the 65 subjects. The questionnaires required approximately 10 minutes to complete. All data were collected during the spring quarter session of 1977 of both universities.

The questionnaires were distributed to the participants in the study at four separate times. Fourteen questionnaires were administered to women enrolled in an afternoon diet and exercise class at The Ohio State University, while 10 questionnaires were administered to women enrolled in an evening diet and exercise class at the same university. Sixteen women students in a morning accounting class at Columbus Business University responded to the questionnaires; 25 questionnaires were administered to women students, faculty members, and other employees at The Ohio State University during their spare time while on campus.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

A variety of statistical procedures was used in the analysis of the data. Included were mean value, median, standard deviation, range, Pearson Product Moment correlation, and t test. An item analysis was also performed on the clothing interest/importance measure.

Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to determine relationships between (1) perceived body weight and body cathexis, (2) perceived body weight and clothing
interest/importance, and (3) body cathexis and clothing interest/importance (research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4). The t test was applied to determine significant differences between normal-weight and overweight women's body cathexis and clothing interest/importance (research questions 2 and 5). The .05 level was used to determine if relationships and differences in the study were significant.
Chapter 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The data for the study consisted of the responses to questionnaires obtained from 65 women in Columbus, Ohio. Only 18 of the women were in the overweight category since difficulty was encountered in obtaining this segment of the sample. The results of the study are presented in the following sections of this chapter: demographic characteristics of the sample, presentation and analysis of the research questions, and discussion of the results.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

The largest segment of the total sample was comprised of women who were between the ages of 16 and 25, single, and enrolled in college. The normal-weight sample included a larger percentage of subjects in the younger age range than the older age ranges, a larger percentage of single than married participants, and a larger percentage of participants who were enrolled in college than the overweight group of women (Table 1).

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Findings related to the clothing interest/importance of normal-weight and overweight women are discussed in
Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample:
Age Group, Marital Status, College Rank or Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Group</th>
<th>Normal-Weight</th>
<th>Overweight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 or over</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Rank Or Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Occupation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
relation to perceived body weight and body cathexis. Five major research questions served as guidelines for the collection of the data. The results of the analysis of data in relation to the research questions follow.

**Research Question 1**—What is the relationship between perceived body weight and body cathexis?

Mean scores and standard deviations were computed for the two groups of women, normal-weight and overweight, as well as for the total sample for perceived body weight (Table 2). The actual range of scores for the total sample (normal-weight and overweight combined) was 1 to 7. Scores for the normal-weight sample ranged from 1 to 4, and for the overweight sample the range was 5 to 7.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total group</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal-weight</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the median for the perceived body weight for the total sample was computed, the median was the same as that for the normal-weight women (4.00), and practically
identical to the mean value for the total sample (4.01).
The median and mean value were found to be higher for over-
weight women than for the normal-weight women. The median
for the overweight women was 5.00, while for the normal-
weight women it was 4.00.

For body cathexis a possible range of scores was 15
to 105 (90 points). The total sample in the study had a
range of 32 to 74 (42 points). The range of scores for the
normal-weight sample was the same as that of the total
group, while the range of scores for the overweight sample
was 46 to 70 (24 points). Mean scores and standard devi-
ations for the groups of women for body cathexis are
recorded in Table 3.

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total group (n=65)</td>
<td>54.69</td>
<td>8.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal-weight (n=47)</td>
<td>52.87</td>
<td>8.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight (n=18)</td>
<td>59.72</td>
<td>6.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the total sample of women a median of 53.00
and a mean value of 54.69 were found for body cathexis.
(A lower mean or median score represented more satisfaction
with the body than a higher mean or median score.) The mean score for body cathexis was lower for normal-weight women (52.87) than for overweight women (59.72), representing more satisfaction with the body for normal-weight women than for overweight women. The median for the total sample and for the normal-weight sample was 53.00, while the median for the overweight sample was 57.00, which was again somewhat higher than the normal-weight sample.

A Pearson Product Moment correlation was computed between the scores for perceived body weight and the total scores for body cathexis. Significant relationships existed between the two variables for the total sample ($r=.45$, $p=.001$) and for the normal-weight women ($r=.55$, $p=.017$) as shown in Table 4. For overweight women a significant relationship did not exist ($r=.16$, $p=.274$).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total group</td>
<td>(n=65)</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal-weight</td>
<td>(n=47)</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>(n=18)</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to perceived body weight, the participants were requested to check their perceived bone structure. The perceived bone structure was significantly related to perceived body weight for the total group of women ($r = .51$, $p \leq .001$). For normal-weight women a correlation coefficient of $.47$ ($p \leq .001$) was found. However, for overweight women no significant relationship existed between perceived body weight and perceived bone structure ($r = .31$, $p = .108$).

Research Question 2—Do differences exist between normal-weight and overweight women on body cathexis?

Differences between normal-weight and overweight women on body cathexis were evaluated by the $t$ test and by Pearson Product Moment correlation for the 15 items which constituted the body cathexis scale. The differences obtained when the $t$ test was applied to the mean scores of normal-weight and overweight women on body cathexis can be seen in Table 5. Significant differences between the two groups existed for height, weight, waist, hips, legs, thighs, and neck length.

The relationship between perceived body weight and each of the individual items in the body cathexis scale was calculated for the total sample. Significant relationships existed between perceived body weight and height, weight, hips, legs, thighs, face shape, and eyes (Table 6). For
Table 5
Scores of Normal-Weight and Overweight Women on Body Cathexis Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Cathexis Item</th>
<th>Normal-Weight (n=47)</th>
<th>Overweight (n=18)</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X Score</td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>X Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posture</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder width</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waist</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hips</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legs</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feet</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thighs</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>5.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck length</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face shape</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair color</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores range from 1 (highly satisfied) to 7 (highly dissatisfied)  
*p<.05 \( (t\geq 2.00) \)
**p<.01 \( (t\geq 2.66) \)
***p<.001 \( (t\geq 3.75) \)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Cathexis Item</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posture</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder width</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waist</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hips</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legs</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feet</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thighs</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck length</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face shape</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair color</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
normal-weight women significant relationships existed between perceived body weight and feelings toward weight ($r = .37, p \leq .005$), face shape ($r = .29, p = .022$), and eyes ($r = .46, p \leq .001$). The same items were also significantly related to perceived body weight for the total sample. Perceived body weight was significantly correlated with bust ($r = .44, p = .034$) for overweight women only.

Perceived bone structure was significantly related to hips ($r = .38, p \leq .001$) for the total group of women. Normal-weight women’s perceived bone structure was significantly related to posture ($r = .27, p = .030$) and thighs ($r = .24, p = .046$). No significant relationship existed between perceived bone structure and any of the individual body cathexis items for overweight women.

Research Question 3—What is the relationship between perceived body weight and clothing interest/importance?

Mean values and standard deviations for clothing interest/importance are reported in Table 7. Very little difference in scores was found for the sample as a whole, for normal-weight, or for overweight. The possible range of scores was 22 to 110 (88 points). The range of scores for the total sample and for the normal-weight group was 30 to 97 (67 points); for the overweight group the range was 34 to 88 (54 points).

Pearson Product Moment correlation was computed between the mean scores for perceived body weight and
clothing interest/importance. No significant relationships were found for perceived body weight and the total clothing interest/importance scale for the total sample, or the two sub-groups, normal-weight and overweight.

Table 7
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Clothing Interest/Importance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total group</td>
<td>58.63</td>
<td>15.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal-weight</td>
<td>59.98</td>
<td>15.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>57.22</td>
<td>16.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 4 — What is the relationship between body cathexis and clothing interest/importance?

The relationship between the mean scores for body cathexis and clothing interest/importance was evaluated by computing a Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient. The mean score for body cathexis for the total group was 54.69; for the normal-weight group, 52.87; and for the overweight group, 59.72. The mean score for clothing interest/importance for the total group was 58.63; for normal-weight women, 59.98; and for the overweight group, 57.22. Relationships were not significant when the Pearson Product Moment correlation was computed.
Research Question 5—Do differences exist between normal-weight and overweight women on clothing interest/importance?

Mean scores of normal-weight and overweight groups of women for the clothing interest/importance measure were evaluated by the t test. The mean score for normal-weight women was 59.98, with a standard deviation of 15.98, while the overweight women had a mean score of 57.22, with a standard deviation of 16.10. No significant differences were found between the scores for the two groups of women on clothing interest/importance.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose in the study was to investigate the relationship between perceived body weight and (1) body cathexis, and (2) clothing interest/importance.

Significant differences were found between the body cathexis scores of normal-weight and overweight women. In general, overweight women were less satisfied with their physical bodies than normal-weight women, which was the same finding as Matthews (1969) reported. Significant differences existed between the two groups of women on the following items included in the body cathexis measure: height, weight, waist, hips, legs, thighs, and neck length. No significant differences occurred between normal-weight and overweight women as far as the bust was concerned. Even though the slender figure is the ideal figure type, Secord
and Jourard (1953) reported that women were generally more satisfied with their physical bodies when their busts were larger than average.

Perceived body weight was found to be significantly related to body cathexis for the total sample, and for normal-weight women. Perceived body weight was also significantly related to the individual body cathexis item of weight for the total sample and the sub-sample of normal-weight. This finding was similar to the finding of Secord and Jourard (1955), who reported that women's estimated body weight was related to their feelings toward weight.

A clothing interest/importance measure was used in the study which had been developed by Sharpe (1963) and revised by Smith (1976). Kuder-Richardson Formula-8 was used to calculate the overall reliability of the clothing interest/importance scale. A reliability coefficient of .92 occurred in Smith's study. In this study a reliability coefficient of .82 was found; however, the standard deviation for the total group (15.91) was very high.

It was believed by the researcher that one's perception and feelings toward the body might be related to one's feelings toward clothing, which serves as the second skin (Horn, 1968). However, this theory was not supported by empirical evidence from this study. When perceived body weight and body cathexis were analyzed in relation to clothing interest/importance, no significant correlations
existed for the total sample, or the two sub-samples. These findings were similar to those of Richards and Hawthorne (1971), who reported that no significant relationship existed between body cathexis and attitudes toward clothing; however, their sample was composed of men. Klassen (1967) found a significant relationship between body cathexis for adolescent boys, but for adolescent girls no significant relationship existed.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The appearance of the human body may or may not be enhanced by the clothing one wears. Individuals are concerned with clothing, and researchers have investigated the interest or importance that individuals place on clothing. No research was found in which clothing interest/importance was investigated in relation to how one perceives his/her body or feelings toward the body. Therefore, a study of perceived body weight and body cathexis of normal-weight and overweight women was undertaken to gain some insight into their basic attitudes toward clothing.

SUMMARY

It was the purpose in the study to investigate the relationship between perceived body weight and the following variables:

(1) Body cathexis
(2) Clothing interest/importance

The major goal in the study was to obtain empirical evidence to determine if any differences existed between overweight and normal-weight women in relation to their feelings toward the body and feelings toward clothing.
The following research questions were formulated to serve as guidelines in the study:

1. What is the relationship between perceived body weight and body cathexis?

2. Do differences exist between normal-weight and overweight women on body cathexis?

3. What is the relationship between perceived body weight and clothing interest/importance?

4. What is the relationship between body cathexis and clothing interest/importance?

5. Do differences exist between normal-weight and overweight women on clothing interest/importance?

The data for the study were collected during a two week period in the spring of 1977. Questionnaires were utilized which were modifications of Secord and Jourard's (1953 and 1955) body cathexis scale and Smith's (1976) adaptation of Sharpe's (1963) clothing interest/importance scale. In addition, the respondents' perception of their body weight and bone structure was obtained. A total of 65 women from Columbus, Ohio comprised the sample. The majority of the women in the sample were between the ages of 18 and 25, single, and enrolled in college.

When the data were analyzed, perceived body weight and body cathexis were significantly related for the total sample and for normal-weight women. No relationships were found between clothing interest/importance and perceived
body weight or body cathexis for the total group, or for the sub-groups.

The t test was applied to see if significant differences existed between the mean scores of normal-weight and overweight women for two variables—body cathexis and clothing interest/importance. Significant differences existed between the two groups of women on the following body cathexis items: height, weight, waist, hips, legs, thighs, and neck length. However, no significant differences existed between the two groups of women on clothing interest/importance.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher has formed the following conclusions for the women who comprised the sample:

1. How normal-weight women perceive their body weight is significantly related to their feelings toward body parts and processes.

2. Overweight women are generally less satisfied with their physical bodies than normal-weight women.

3. How women (normal-weight and overweight) perceive their body weight and feel toward their body parts are not significantly related to their feelings toward clothing.
4. Normal-weight and overweight women do not differ significantly on the degree of interest or importance they place on clothing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As a result of the study, the following suggestions for further study are presented:

1. Research needs to be conducted to see if clothing preferences differ for the two groups of women, and the extent to which overweight (and underweight) women use clothing to increase body satisfaction.

2. If the self-designated perceived weight scale is used in further studies, the scale should be expanded from 1 to 7 to 1 to 9 to increase the respondent's choice of possible answers.

3. The perceived weight scale should be used with perceived underweight, as well as overweight and normal-weight.

4. Certain social status groups were reviewed in Chapter 2 as containing more overweight women than other status groups. Social status has also been related by other researchers to clothing. Research should be conducted to investigate the relationships between social status, perceived body weight, and clothing interest/importance.
5. No research was found related to clothing and underweight women. Therefore, this should be researched in the future.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Creekmore, Anna M. Methods of Measuring Clothing Variables. Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station Project No. 783, n.d.


BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is your age?  Check one.

18 - 25
26 - 39
40 - over

Marital status. Check one.

single
married

College rank (if enrolled at The Ohio State University)

freshman
sophomore
junior
senior
graduate

If you are not enrolled at The Ohio State University, what is your occupation?

Please indicate how you would classify your body for the following two items.

THIN

HEAVY

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

SMALL-BONED

LARGE-BONED

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

What is your weight?  ____ pounds

What is your height?  ____ ft.  ____ in.
BODY CATHEXIS SCALE

Please place the number which best corresponds to your feelings (as indicated in the scale) in front of each characteristic listed below.

(1) Consider myself extremely fortunate
(2) Consider myself fortunate
(3) Am satisfied
(4) Have no particular feelings one way or the other
(5) Don't like, but can put up with
(6) Have strong feelings about, and would change if I could (or am changing)
(7) Find it unbearable, and would do almost anything to change

EXAMPLE: _____ Height

_____ Height
_____ Weight
/ Posture
_____ Nose
_____ Shoulder Width
_____ Bust or Chest
_____ Waist

_____ Hips
_____ Legs
_____ Feet
_____ Thighs
_____ Neck Length
_____ Face Shape
_____ Hair Color
_____ Eyes
APPENDIX C
CLOTHING SCALE

Indicate your reaction to each statement as follows:

SA - Strongly Agree  
A - Agree  
U - Undecided  
D - Disagree  
SD - Strongly Disagree

Circle the abbreviation which most nearly expresses your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I try to keep my wardrobe in line with the latest fashions.</td>
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<td>I would rather spend money on clothes than on other items such as records, books, plays, or movies.</td>
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<td>I avoid wearing certain clothes because they do not make me feel distinctive.</td>
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<td>I frequently buy clothing to boost my morale.</td>
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<td>It is easy to recognize important people by the clothes they wear.</td>
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<td>I try to wear a new outfit to special functions.</td>
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<td>I like to be considered one of the best dressed in a group.</td>
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<td>I am not too concerned with fashion.</td>
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<td>People talk too much about clothes.</td>
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<td>Newspaper, radio, and television accounts of what women in the limelight are wearing are boring.</td>
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<td>A woman should be well dressed when doing routine neighborhood errands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>I enjoy reading about the current fashion trends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I enjoy clothes like some people enjoy such things as books, records,</td>
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<td>and going to the theater.</td>
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<td>I attend fashion shows when I have the opportunity.</td>
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<td>If I saw a garment or accessory I liked, I would skimp on something else</td>
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<td>I like to study fashion magazines and pattern books.</td>
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<td>I readily accept new fashion trends.</td>
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<td>I have no interest in keeping up with the latest fashion trends.</td>
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<td>Clothing is so attractive to me that I would like to spend more on it</td>
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<td>than I should.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I skip the fashion ads in newspapers or magazines.</td>
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<td>I enjoy talking about clothes.</td>
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<td>I enjoy discussing fashion changes with friends.</td>
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</table>