

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: World War II Wedding Dress as Presented in United States High Fashion Magazines:1939-1945

Abstract approved: _____
Kathy K. Mullet

The purpose of this study was to explore wedding dress styles represented in United States high fashion magazines during the World War II period. The objectives of the study were to: discover what wedding dress styles were proposed by high fashion magazines during the period 1935-45, determine if wedding dress designers of this period abstained from using details prohibited by the L-85 regulations for regular day dresses and to determine if wedding dress styles proposed in American high fashion magazines during the period 1939 to 1945 were similar to styles adopted by society women featured in these same magazines.

Images of bridal dress were gathered from the 1939 to 1945 monthly issues of the high fashion magazines *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. Each image was categorized as either a proposed style or an adopted style, depending on how it was presented in the magazine. The images, as well as any associated descriptive text, were then evaluated using the content analysis method. A pilot test was conducted to test the reliability of the researcher's judgment, as well as the research instrument. Intercoder

reliability was established with a score of 87 percent for the primary instrument and 93 percent for the secondary instrument.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency counts and percentages. These counts were used to establish what styles were utilized and how often, the most common type being expressed as the mode. In addition to establishing commonly used styles, it was discovered there was only occasional use of L-85 styles details prohibited for regular day dress.

It was hypothesized that wedding dress styles proposed in United States' high fashion magazines during the period 1939 to 1945 would be similar to styles adopted by society women featured in these same magazines. Chi-square contingency tables as well as visual analyses were used to test this hypothesis. No significant difference was found between the frequency distribution of proposed and adopted styles, thus the hypothesis was accepted.

Sociological theories of fashion explain that fashion is a process of conformity and collective selection. Within the context of these high fashion magazines, fashion was presented to potential innovators and leaders as well as followers. Fashion information was disseminated at both the impersonal and interpersonal level and proposed fashions became adopted fashions.

The effects of World War II on society, the economy and prevailing attitudes and ideals was reflected in wedding dress style during this period. The desire to preserve resources was reflected somewhat in the limited use of L-85 prohibited items, as well as the occasional informal or "use-more-than-once" dress. The nation's economic prosperity, in addition to exemption from L-85 restrictions and prevailing

societal attitudes all were likely factors in the persistence of the traditional wedding dress.

World War II Wedding Dress as Presented in United States High Fashion Magazines:
1939-1945

by
Tamara Clayton

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Science

Presented March 19, 2007
Commencement June 2007

Master of Science thesis of Tamara Clayton presented on March 19, 2007.

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Tamara Clayton, Author

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WORLD WAR II WEDDING DRESS AS PRESENTED IN UNITED STATES HIGH FASHION MAGAZINES: 1939-1945

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As a designer, it is important to recognize sources of design inspiration. History often offers a rich source of inspiration. Of particular interest to me as a designer, was the World War II period in America. It was a wish to design wedding dresses with the look and feel of this period that led me to this research.

Clothing can be seen as a reflection of the time and place in which it was created and worn. Bridal dress, while typically more traditional in style, is also a reflection of its time and place. Many of the World War II bridal dress images and descriptions available in historical references took on a more practical tone, leading to an interest to discover what was occurring by way of wedding dress style at the high fashion level during this period. Also of interest was the possible effect of the socio-political environment on dress design and adoption at this level of fashion.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore wedding dress styles represented in U.S. high fashion magazines during the period 1939 to 1945. Proposed wedding dress styles will be compared to adopted wedding dress styles to determine the extent to which society women of the period adopted proposed wedding fashion.

Research Questions

1. What wedding dress styles were proposed by high fashion magazines during the period 1935-45?
2. Did wedding dress designers of this period abstain from using the details prohibited by the L-85 regulations for regular day dresses?

Hypothesis

Wedding dress styles proposed in American high fashion magazines during the period 1939 to 1945 will be similar to styles adopted by society women featured in these same magazines.

Assumptions

The wedding dresses shown in high fashion magazines represent what was available to brides during 1935-45.

Definition of Terms

Wedding Dress- The complete ensemble worn by the bride on her wedding day, either during the wedding ceremony or for the bridal party or reception. For this study the term “wedding dress” will be limited to the dress, skirt and jacket, or dress and jacket

combination only and will exclude such things as shoes, headpiece, and undergarments.

Design- “A unique combination of silhouette, construction, fabric, and details that distinguishes a single fashion object from all other objects of the same category or class” (Sproles & Burns, 1994, p. 6).

Style-“A characteristic mode of presentation that typifies several similar objects of the same category or class” (Sproles & Burns, 1994, p.7).

Proposed Style- A style that is suggested as the “latest fashion” to the clothing consumer by either a clothing retailer or the fashion media.

Adopted Style- A style that is accepted and worn by the clothing consumer.

The Zeitgeist- The view that all that is fashionable can be seen as a reflection of the times in which it is created and exists (Brannon, 2005).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many theories and models of fashion change and adoption exist. The following review will include a discussion of several of those theories. The role of the media as it pertains to the fashion change process will also be examined. Further, the discussion will include an overview of high fashion magazines, the socio-political environment, and wedding dress styles of the United States during the World War II period.

Fashion

Fashion is a term which carries a variety of meanings. A fashion can be an item or an idea. Fashion is a collective behavior that changes with the changing times. For something to be fashionable, it must be socially acceptable. Sproles and Burns (1994) relate many of the proposed definitions of fashion and generalize them into a broader definition of fashion, specific to the context of clothing:

A clothing fashion is a style of dress that is temporarily adopted by a discernible proportion of members of a social group because that chosen style is perceived to be socially appropriate for the time and situation (p. 5).

Many theories related to fashion and its processes have been developed over the past century in an effort to explain how and why fashions change. Among these are several sociological theories, explaining the fashion process as it relates to social systems.

Sociological Theories

The sociologist George Simmel presented the imitation-differentiation perspective in 1904. He believed that fashions began with the upper class. These fashions were then emulated by the lower classes of society. As fashions were adopted and emulated by lower classes, the wealthy upper class would adopt new styles in order to set themselves apart. This model of fashion change is often referred to as the “Trickle-down” theory of fashion change.

King (1963) wrote in response to Simmel’s trickle-down theory. King argued that the vertical flow process outlined by Simmel was outdated and not applicable in his modern environment. In King’s “simultaneous adoption” theory, he proposed that fashion adoption occurs simultaneously at all societal levels. He attributes this to a leveling of class structure making fashion available to a broader range of people, mass communication spreading fashion information quickly and effectively, and to industry practices that he feels actually impede the vertical flow process.

Herbert Blumer (1969) also theorized in response to Simmel’s Trickle-down theory. He believed that fashion is not a response to class imitation and differentiation but rather stems from conformity and a “wish to be in fashion” (p. 280). Blumer’s ideas are known as theories of collective selection. The elite, he argued, do not dictate fashion and do not adopt fashion for the sake of differentiation but strive to follow the fashions already in place. He believed fashion is a collective process in which there are innovators, leaders, followers, and participants. He suggested that fashion leaders can emerge from the elite class but also appear elsewhere. Fashion leaders lead not

because of their high social standing but because of their “prestige,” or ability to “carry weight” as a fashion leader (p. 287).

According to Blumer (1969), being ‘in fashion’ is driven by several factors. Among these are historical continuity, the striving toward modernity, and a response to collective tastes formed in the context of social interaction. He further believes that psychological motives exist within the process, but are not the driving force.

Blumer (1969) offered a very comprehensive argument for the basis of fashion change. He presented it within a broader social context and explained the effects of the changing world on fashion while explaining its boundaries for change (continuity). His process includes all participants, no matter social standing, who respond to change in collective tastes.

In 1970, George A. Field proposed yet another theory of fashion change, termed the “Status Float” phenomenon or “Trickle-up” theory. Field argued that fashions demonstrated an upward flow of adoption from lower to higher status levels, rather than the downward flow process outlined by Simmel. He gave many examples of this upward flow including the adoption of youth culture by the older population, blue-collar fashions adopted by white-collar groups and the assimilation of Negro subculture into the dominant white culture.

McCracken (1985) also commented on Simmel’s trickle-down theory. McCracken believed that Simmel’s theory had some problems but argued that the theory possessed several strengths, especially its predictive nature that other theories lack. He believed this theory would be useful with revision.

McCracken's revisions to Simmel's theory included defining groups in terms of other demographic dimensions, rather than in terms of social position. He also put the theory within a cultural context so as to understand the "motives and ends that inspire fashion change" (p. 45). To accomplish this he included a model of the symbolic nature of clothing, as he believed that understanding motives for change would help in predicting the timing and direction of change.

Dorothy Behling (1985) theorized that fashion flows in both an upward and downward process. She agreed with Field's theory but felt that "bottom up" influences stem primarily from the youth. Behling proposed a model that included the median age of the population and health of the economy, citing that these factors influence the flow of fashion influence. Median age, she argued, determines role models which in turn determines whether fashion flows up from the youth or down from an older, wealthier group. According to Behling, only a bad economy or governmental decree can alter the flow. She cited examples from every decade since the 1920s to support her theory.

The Zeitgeist. All that is fashionable can be seen as a reflection of the times in which it is created and exists. This response to modernity or the spirit of the times is known as the Zeitgeist (Brannon, 2005). The framework for the Zeitgeist has been built upon sociological theories of conformity and collective selection. For example, Blumer (1969) cited the influence of modernity and social interaction on fashion. He stated specifically that consumers will choose "from among competing styles...which match developing tastes, those which 'click'" (p. 282).

Paul Nystrom (1928) laid the early framework for the Zeitgeist. He outlined three factors that guide and influence the character and direction of fashion movements. These factors include: (1) outstanding or dominating events; (2) dominating ideals which mold the thought and action of large numbers of people; and (3) dominating social groups that rule or lead and influence the rest of society (p. 83). Dominating events included wars and world fairs. Examples of dominating ideals include the Greek ideal of beauty as well as religion and patriotism. Dominating social groups are those who have power or leadership.

Brannon (2005), in her discussion of Nystrom's framework for observing the Zeitgeist added two more factors that guide the character and direction of fashion. These are dominating attitude and dominating technology. Attitude she defined as the desire during a particular time to either conform to others or to differentiate oneself, citing that during times when the desire is conformity, the pace of fashion slows down (p. 18). The influence of technology, according to Brannon, has included the space age and modes of communication.

Fashion Leadership

In the theories related so far, the role of fashion leaders at all levels of the process emerge as key to fashion diffusion and adoption. The elements in the diffusion of new ideas as outlined by Rogers (2003) include an innovation, communication of that innovation, time and the setting of a social system. According to Rogers, interpersonal communications are the most effective form of communication to lead to the adoption of a new idea. Within a social system, opinion leaders emerge to

influence other individual's attitudes and behavior relative to a new innovation. These opinion leaders, according to Rogers, are characteristically more exposed to external communication, more "cosmopolite," have a somewhat higher social status, are more innovative, and are at the center of interpersonal communication networks. Fashion opinion leaders, therefore, have the unique role of taking in fashion information at the impersonal level that will influence others' fashion decisions at an interpersonal level.

Role of the High Fashion Magazine

The role of impersonal communications in the fashion process has been examined by many researchers over the past few decades. Several of these researchers, including Grundereng (1967), Summers (1970, 1972) and Reynolds and Darden (1972), have found exposure to high fashion magazines to be higher among innovators and opinion leaders. Although there is not much research to validate the role of impersonal communications in controlling consumers' fashion choices, the aforementioned findings suggest that impersonal communications in the form of fashion magazines reach fashion opinion leaders, where it is disseminated at an interpersonal level. Because of this "two-step flow" of communication (Katz, 1957), impersonal communications, especially in the form of high fashion magazines, become an important part of the fashion process.

The World War II Period: 1939-1945

By 1939 the Nazi Government in Germany was creating alliances and arming their country. When Poland was invaded on September 1, 1939, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany. In the United States, a position of neutrality was maintained. On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japanese bombers. This action resulted in a US declaration of war on Japan and, a few days later, on Germany and Italy. The war continued until the surrender of Germany on May 7, 1945 and ended with the surrender of Japan on August 14, 1945 (Morris, 1961).

Socio-political Environment

Although the US was not directly involved in the war abroad until December 1941, Europe's involvement caused a feeling of fear in the United States. Thoughts of war swept the nation (Wright, 1996). As early as 1939, with Europe's entrance into the war, effects of the war were present in the nation's economy, society, and politics. As a result, "wartime America" encompassed the entire period from 1939 to 1945 (Jeffries, 1996).

Wartime America was shaped by prosperity, in contrast to the depression and period of high unemployment that preceded it (Wright, 1996). There was a feeling of hope as unemployment declined and incomes rose (Abrahamson, 1983). Abrahamson states:

While the civilian population experienced some shortages and inconveniences, such measures of the general welfare as total consumer spending, per-capita calories in the daily diet, per-capita annual

consumption of meat, clothing, and shoes, and residential use of energy all rose during the war years. (p. 139)

World War II also had important societal implications. During the war years, all males 18-38 became subject to selective military service. Women joined the workforce and were enlisted for noncombatant duties as men went off to war (Morris, 1961). Between 1939 and its peak in 1942, marriage rates rose by more than 25 percent. Marriage was often entered into hastily, according to Jeffries (1996, p. 87).

The war's effect on society was also present in the ideals of the day. There was a feeling of unity that prevailed as Americans worked toward common goals. According to Polenberg (1972) this feeling of unity resulted from civilian activities that demanded a high level of community cooperation, such as victory gardens. Further, the Office of Civilian Defense promoted a unified America, asking that Americans conserve resources, buy war bonds, refuse to spread rumors, and in general, promote the common good (Polenberg, 1972, p. 133).

Politically, the War Production Board (WPD) was given authority to do what was needed to preserve resources for the war. Rationing of tires began in 1941. In 1942, the use of a coupon book was instated for sugar, coffee and gasoline. Soon this method of rationing became the norm and extended to meats, fats, oils, cheese and shoes (Morris, 1961).

In the field of textiles, the WPD cited that "civilian demand and military demand involve the same fibers, facilities, manpower" (WPD, 1943, p. 2). It is for this reason that in April of 1942 The WPD placed regulations on the garment industry in the form of General Limitation Order L-85. General Limitation Order L-85 dictated

that non-essential details were not to be used. Narrow skirts were mandated. Jackets could not be longer than 25 inches, hems could not exceed two inches in depth, cutting on the bias and use of certain sleeve styles which required the use of excessive amounts of fabric were banned (WPD, 1943).

Fashion was shaped by these regulations and restrictions. An editorial in *Vogue* magazine (Chase, 1944) entitled “The Fashion that L-85 Built,” displays narrow skirts and tunics, boxy jackets, cap sleeves and short coats. According to Robinson (1976), these wartime restrictions made fundamental changes to the fashionable style impossible, and led to fashionable changes being manifest in the details of the garment.

Bridal Fashions

While general fashion had to adhere to the L-85 regulations, exceptions were made for service uniforms, religious clothing and theatrical costumes. Wedding dress was among those exemptions (WPD, 1943). According to the literature, bridal fashions were not wholly unaffected by the war effort.

Zimmerman (1985) summarized wedding dress of this period as being inspired and generated by U.S. designers, as the war prevented the import of designs from Paris and other European cities. She cites man-made fibers as being the favorite choice. She states that although wedding dress was exempt from the L-85 rules, brides were practical. They scaled down styles, used remnants, and made dresses that could be worn again.

Zimmerman's take on dress of this period was that it was both "pretty and practical" (p. 230). Trains were often eliminated. Oftentimes, as Zimmerman notes, brides wore suits "always with a hat" (p. 230) or face veil, rather than the traditional dress. She also notes the abundant use of the sweetheart neckline and the use of a handkerchief instead of a veil.

Probert (1984) also discusses the effect of rushed weddings and increasing frugality on bridal wear. While American brides did not have restrictions until late into the war, and therefore were able to don lavish gowns and veils, frugality nonetheless influenced styles of the era. She cites the influence of nineteenth century styles (fitted bodices and full skirts) on wedding dress design continuing from the late thirties. This style, however, differed from the previous few years in that the skirts were less bulky.

The use of gathered or draped jersey, organdy, crepe, brocade, satin, batiste, lawn, and lace, in "ivory, palest blue, pink, beige, green, mauve and white" (p. 40) are cited specifically by Probert (1984). Further, she notes that high, simple necklines typified the first few years of this period, becoming wider and off-the-shoulder later in the period. Veils were short and full, topped with a "diadem, crown or floral arrangement" (p. 40). According to Probert, the distinguishing characteristics of this period were "fussy details" (p. 40).

High Fashion Magazines

During World War II, the periodicals *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* were each devoted to high fashion and equal in their ability to bring news of the latest Couture fashion to their readers at a speed that rivaled their European counterparts (Wood,

1971; Peterson, 1964). While periodicals of this era were generally targeted to a broad segment of the American population, both *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* were marketed towards an exclusive, elite segment of the female American population (Zuckerman, 1998).

Both *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* presented their fashion information to the reader in much the same way and with a similar tone. *Vogue* was characterized by presenting up-and-coming designs in “alluring photographs and sketches in a setting which bespoke opulence and cosmopolitanism” (Peterson, 1964, p. 267). *Vogue* is further characterized by its focus on the latest in fashion and beauty as well as the lifestyles of the rich and famous (Zuckerman, 1998). Similarly, Peterson (1964) classified *Harper's Bazaar* as a “thick, glossy, chic, lavishly illustrated monthly devoted to fashions, beauty, fiction, and belles-lettres” (p. 220).

During the World War II period, these magazines continued in their regular circulation and changed little by way of content. One of the two most discernible changes was a shift to U.S. inspired designs and collections. As the fashion trade in Paris was stifled by German occupation, focus shifted from Parisian to American designers. “For the first time, the fashion centre of the world is here...in America,” states an editorial in the April 1, 1940 issue of *Vogue*, “...American talent has risen to the occasion with all its native resourcefulness and skilled dress-making technique” (Chase, p. 95).

The second discernible change was the presence of information relevant to the war. Fashion editors were encouraged by the War Production Board to help their readers understand the importance of supporting the war effort. They suggested that

editors do such things as emphasize the functionality rather than glamour of clothing, demonstrate the many possibilities of a single outfit and suggest that it would be “unpatriotic” for clothes to be discarded unless actually worn out (WPD, 1943, p. 49). Women’s magazines as a whole began to offer information as to how women could support the war effort, including editorials and advice on such things as rationing and joining the workforce (Zuckerman, 1998).

Summary

Fashionable clothing has generally been accepted as the dress adopted by members of a social group for a period of time. Researchers in the field of fashion have theorized about the reasons for fashion development and change. There has not, however, been any general agreement as to why or how fashions change. No one overarching theory has been developed.

Sociological theorists have added a great deal to the study of fashion. Sociological theorists, including Simmel (1904), King (1963), Behling (1985), and Blumer (1969), theorized about the effects of societal change on fashion development. They argued that fashion is a collective process driven by social, cultural and economic factors. These factors together help create the spirit of the times or the *Zeitgeist*. The framework for the *Zeitgeist* was established by Nystrom (1928) and further supported by Brannon (2005). This framework established a way of looking at fashion development as a reflection of the spirit of the times.

Within these theories, the importance of the fashion leader emerges. The fashion leader has power to influence others’ fashion decisions. Theorists such as

Grindereng (1967), Summers (1970, 1972), and Reynolds and Darden (1972) have found that these fashion opinion leaders are more likely to be the readers of high fashion magazines. By examining images from the high fashion magazines *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* during the period 1939-1945, the researcher will determine the extent to which the bridal dress proposed in these magazines was adopted by the women featured in these same magazines.

During the years 1939 to 1945 much of the world was involved in World War II. The United States' entering the war at the end of 1941 brought with it many societal implications with effects extending to the world of apparel fashions. Women's fashionable apparel fell under new restrictions in the form of the L-85s. Wedding dress, although exempt from the L-85s, was not exempt from the effects of the war. Designs became increasingly "American." Further, they emphasized frugality and practicality. It is the researcher's intent to determine wedding dress styles as proposed in the 1939-1945 issues of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* and to determine if they used any elements that were prohibited in day dress by the L-85 regulations

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to explore proposed and adopted wedding dress styles during the period 1939-1945 as represented in high fashion magazines. It was the researcher's intent to determine what styles were represented during this period, to determine the extent to which proposed styles were adopted, and to discover if any elements restricted by the L-85 regulations were utilized in wedding dress of this period. The content analysis method was employed to achieve this purpose.

Research Design

Content analysis is a technique developed to produce quantitative data from verbal or nonverbal communication. It is distinguished from more qualitative or interpretive analysis in its reliance on the scientific method. This method is also distinguished in that it must be objective, systematic, and quantitative (Kassarjian, 1977; Nuendorf, 2002).

For a study to be appropriate to the tools of content analysis it must contain each of the aforementioned characteristics. To be objective, the study must be replicable. Categorization and analysis must follow strict rules that can be followed again and again and generate the same results. Systemization also relies on establishing rules. For a study to be systematic, bias is eliminated by adhering to rules for content and category selection. Lastly, content analysis must involve

quantification. The data generated must be suited to statistical methods for interpretation (Kassarjian, 1977).

Content analysis is an ideal method for quantifying and analyzing data where sources are numerous and the meaning of communicative messages is the object to be studied. It is systematic and an objective way to look at data that might not otherwise lend itself to an unbiased interpretation. There are, however, two possibly problematic issues to consider when conducting a content analysis study: validity and reliability. Validity refers to measuring what the instrument was designed to measure (what the researcher professes to be measuring). Reliability, as defined by Budd, Thorp, and Donohew (1967), means that “investigators using the same techniques on the same material will get substantially the same results” (p. 66). Reliability is important in that it provides the assurance of independent data (Kassarjian, 1977).

Both validity and reliability must be addressed at all stages of the content analysis process. Demonstrating validity may be difficult. Evidence of a study’s validity may only emerge over time with repetition of similar studies (Budd et al., 1967). Paoletti (1982) cites the collection of validating evidence from other sources as an alternative to establishing a measure of validity. Reliability, unlike validity, is easy to establish. Instrument reliability can be easily established by pretesting, and then adjusting categories (Paoletti, 1982). Intercoder reliability can also be easily established. This is accomplished by having several people analyze the same sample using the provided research instrument. The percentage of consistency among the coders is then calculated. The ratio of coding agreements to the number of coding

decisions becomes the coefficient of reliability. A coefficient of above 85 percent is believed by Kassirjian (1977) to be satisfactory to establish intercoder reliability.

Content analysis has been a useful tool to researchers in varying fields. Paoletti (1982) discussed its use and application in the study of costume. She specifically cited its suitability to sources such as advertisements, fashion illustrations, and descriptions of costumes in popular magazines. Further, she provides a method for researchers to follow.

Paoletti's (1982) method includes five steps in the design of a content analysis study (p. 15):

1. choose a source
2. determine unit of analysis
3. determine if content is manifest or covert & adapt research design accordingly
4. define the instrument categories
5. choose the appropriate level of quantification

First, sources must be chosen. These sources should be appropriate to the research objective and should provide enough material to generate a sample suited to statistical analysis. Secondly, the unit of analysis (the selected portion of source material) must be determined. This may include verbal content in the form of a word or paragraph, or nonverbal content in the form of an illustration or photograph. Each unit chosen should be similar and comparable. The third step is to identify the content as manifest (obvious or explicit information) or covert (hidden, implicit messages). Once this is determined, the research design should be adapted so it is appropriate to

the type of content being studied. Since the research instrument used will largely be based on the content being manifest or covert, it is important to identify the content type before moving forward with the study (Paoletti, 1982).

The fourth step is to define the instrument categories. An exploratory study using a separate sample may be necessary to determine the nature of content available so that appropriate categories may be developed. A tested instrument already in use may be adapted to suit the needs of the researcher. The final step is to choose the appropriate level of quantification. This level is dependent upon the nature of the research problem (Paoletti, 1982).

Sources

The magazines *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* were chosen because of their similar focus, format, and target market. These sources were determined to be appropriate to the research objective because they display images of high fashion wedding dress styles both proposed and adopted during the period being studied. Further, these high fashion publications, according to Peterson (1964) and Zuckerman (1998) were the two most predominant during the 1939-45 period and would therefore have been the most likely to be read by the fashion leaders of the day. Through an exploratory study of the 1935 and 1950 issues of these magazines it was determined that there would be enough material available to generate a sample appropriate to statistical analysis.

All monthly issues of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* beginning January 1939 and ending December 1945 were examined for this study. Units of Analysis were gathered

by looking through each of these issues page by page. While each issue was examined, units of analysis were present in only 21 of the 84 monthly issues of *Vogue* and in 16 of the 84 monthly issues of *Harper's Bazaar* (see appendix C).

Unit of Analysis

For this study, images and text from both *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* dated 1939 to 1945 were gathered and examined. Content dealing with the bride is of specific interest, therefore, images of bridesmaids and others in the bridal party were omitted. Each visual image collected was used as a unit of analysis. Verbal content was only utilized when it accompanied and described an illustrated garment.

For purposes of comparability not all images were analyzed. In order for an image to be analyzed properly it needs to be large enough and clear enough to be discernible. It also needs to show enough of the content being analyzed (the dress) to be useful. Therefore, a set of criteria for image use was developed:

1. The image must be at least 2.5 inches tall.
2. The image must extend to mid thigh or further.
3. The image will not be used if it is too blurry to see detail.
4. The image will not be used if more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the dress is obscured by other people or objects.

These criteria ensured that each of the images provided similar content as well as enough information to accurately categorize the style as a whole.

Once images were gathered, they were grouped as either a proposed style or an adopted style. Images from a yearly bridal section from each publication, as well as all

other bridal features were gathered and examined to discover proposed fashions for the up-and-coming season. Advertisement images were only utilized when they advertised the wedding dress specifically. Wedding announcements were examined to discover what fashions were adopted that season by women of high society. Because only styles adopted by U.S. brides were pertinent to this study, announcements for weddings that did not take place in the United States were omitted. All images were located by going through each magazine issue page by page.

Identifying Content

The content used in this study is manifest. Dress styling and detailing presented in the images and text is straightforward and obvious to the viewer. The research design is appropriate to this content because it is dress style that is being compared and analyzed. Implicit messages are not relevant to this study.

Instrument Development and Category Definition

An instrument was developed to measure the wedding dress design shown in each unit of analysis, or each image (see appendix B). To help ensure instrument validity, categories were developed keeping in mind the conceptual definition of design, which includes the silhouette, construction, fabric, and details. The categories developed for this study include: primary fabric, silhouette, bodice fit, skirt length, neckline placement, neckline treatment, armhole placement, sleeve style, sleeve

length, sleeve edge, waistline placement, waistline treatment, skirt treatment, train, and ornamentation.

Sub-categories were developed so that data could be properly coded. For example, within the category of neckline placement, data could be categorized as high, natural, or low. Categories were developed that would be mutually exclusive (one code per unit). They were also developed to be exhaustive by incorporating an “other” category. If a style detail occurred more than once in the “other” category, it was included in the data analysis as a category of its own. For example, the bound sleeve edge was added to the instrument after two occurrences were recorded.

To further help ensure instrument validity and reliability, several exploratory studies were conducted. This was accomplished by looking through fashion magazines other than those used in this study. This initial exploration made it possible to determine if the developed categories would be appropriate and if any others were needed. Changes were made as necessary in the development of the final instrument.

A second instrument was developed to determine if any L-85 prohibited design elements were used in the wedding dresses shown in the images gathered for this study (see appendix B, part R). This instrument consisted of a yes or no checklist featuring prohibited design elements listed from the WPD’s 1943 L-85 rule reference book.

The research instruments were accompanied by a codebook and a coding form which related detailed coding instructions (see appendix A). Category definitions were given so that categorization would be clear and accurate and to help ensure reliability in the instrument. A separate coding form was completed for each unit of analysis.

Pilot Study. A pilot study was conducted to test instrument reliability and to establish intercoder reliability. Two testers coded a sample from the 1949 issues of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. This year was chosen because it was determined to be near enough to the years being studied to have a similar format but far enough removed by way of dress styles to avoid creating bias in the researcher.

The sample included a total of 175 coding decisions. The primary instrument included 119 of these coding decisions, of these, there was agreement on 103. The ratio of agreements to total coding decisions resulted in a simple coefficient of reliability of 87 percent. The secondary instrument included a total of 56 coding decisions with only 4 disagreements. This resulted in a coefficient of 93 percent. Both the primary and secondary instruments were determined to be reliable based on Kassarian's (1977) assertion that a coefficient above 85 percent is satisfactory to establish intercoder reliability.

Data Analysis

Data gathered in this study was measured on a nominal scale and was therefore suited to nonparametric statistical methods (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). Each categorical measure was assigned a number for purposes of identification. Group characteristics were described by frequency counts. The mode was the descriptor of central tendency (Budd, et al., 1967). In this manner, it was possible to discern what characteristics of dress design were commonly used during this period. It was also possible to measure the use of L-85 prohibited items.

The hypothesis was tested using the chi-square test for independence and a visual analysis. Only categories that were most relevant to understanding the overall style of the period were subject to this test. For example, the categories of “Sleeve Edge” and “Armscye Placement” were not analyzed because they may be inferred by looking at other categories such as “Sleeve Type.”

The chi-square test for independence should not be used when any expected frequency is less than five; therefore some categories were collapsed into a category representing the mode (or modes, if bi-modal) of the data and an “other” category (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007, p. 604). Each style category that still did not meet requirements for the chi-square test for independence was visually analyzed for a relationship using side-by-side bar graphs. For consistency, categories for the visual analysis were collapsed in the same manner as those subject to chi-square analysis. The hypothesis was accepted if the majority (at least 80 percent for purposes of this study) of style categories showed significantly similar categorical frequency distributions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore wedding dress styles represented in U.S. high fashion magazines during the period 1939 to 1945. Commonly used style details were determined by analyzing photographs and illustrations in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. The extent to which society women of the period adopted proposed wedding fashion was determined by comparing proposed wedding dress images to adopted wedding dress images.

The sample for this study was gathered from a total of 40 magazine issues, 24 of *Vogue* magazine and 16 of *Harper's Bazaar*. The entire sample consisted of 98 dresses. Of those, 70 were images of proposed styles, 28 were images of adopted styles.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1

What wedding dress styles were proposed by high fashion magazines during the period 1939-45?

Wedding dress style details were tabulated and then counted to establish the frequency of occurrence for each. The mode of the frequency count is the common type for each particular style detail.

Primary fabric. The most common color was the white wedding dress with a total of 44 occurrences. Ivory and Pastels had seven occurrences each. There were

five printed dresses and three other colors (see figure 1). Thirty-two of the images were not discernible because the images were black and white and no color information was present in the accompanying text.

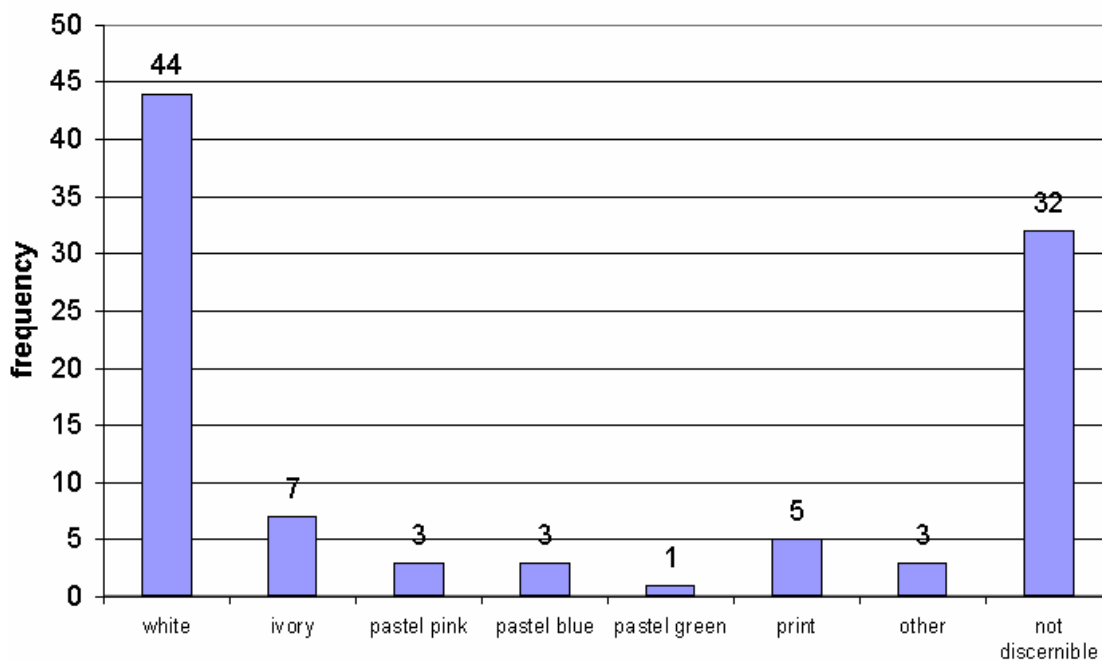


Figure 1. Frequencies of wedding dress colors found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Rayon was the most common fiber (N=14), followed by silk (N=12). There were three occurrences of silk/rayon blends. Cotton was used almost as frequently as silk and rayon (N=12). There was only one use of wool. In 56 of the images, fiber type could not be discerned (see figure 2).

There were a number of fabric structures used, crepe was the most common with 12 occurrences. Organdie was the next most commonly used (N=9), followed by satin (N=8) and jersey (N=7). Other fibers included chiffon (N=5), taffeta (N=5), faille (N=4), and moiré (N=3). Thirty-seven of the images were not discernible (see figure 3).

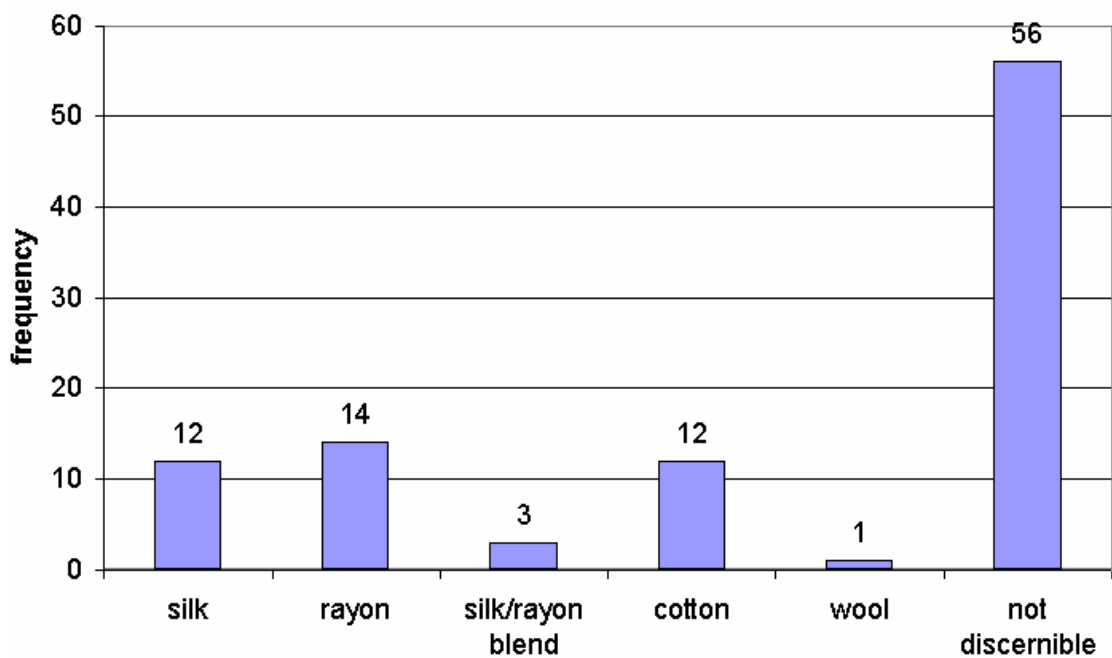


Figure 2. Frequencies of fiber usage in wedding dresses found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

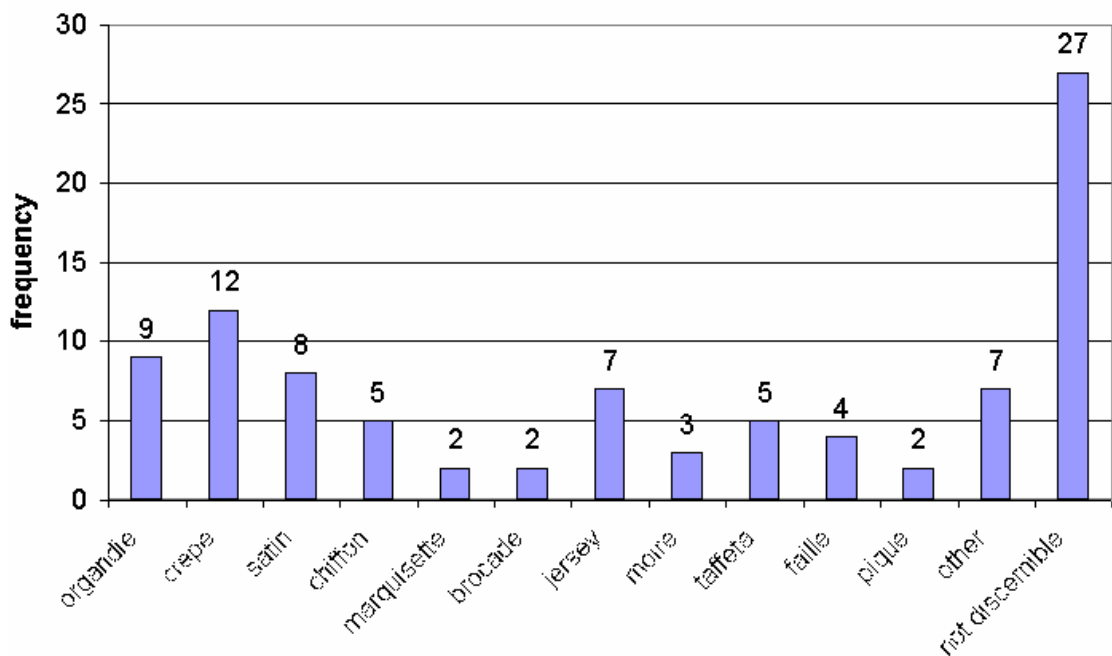


Figure 3. Frequencies of fabric structures used in wedding dresses found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Silhouette. Two types of silhouette were found. The most commonly used was the ball gown/bouffant silhouette (N=73). The sheath/tubular silhouette was also used, but not nearly as often (N=15) (see figure 4).

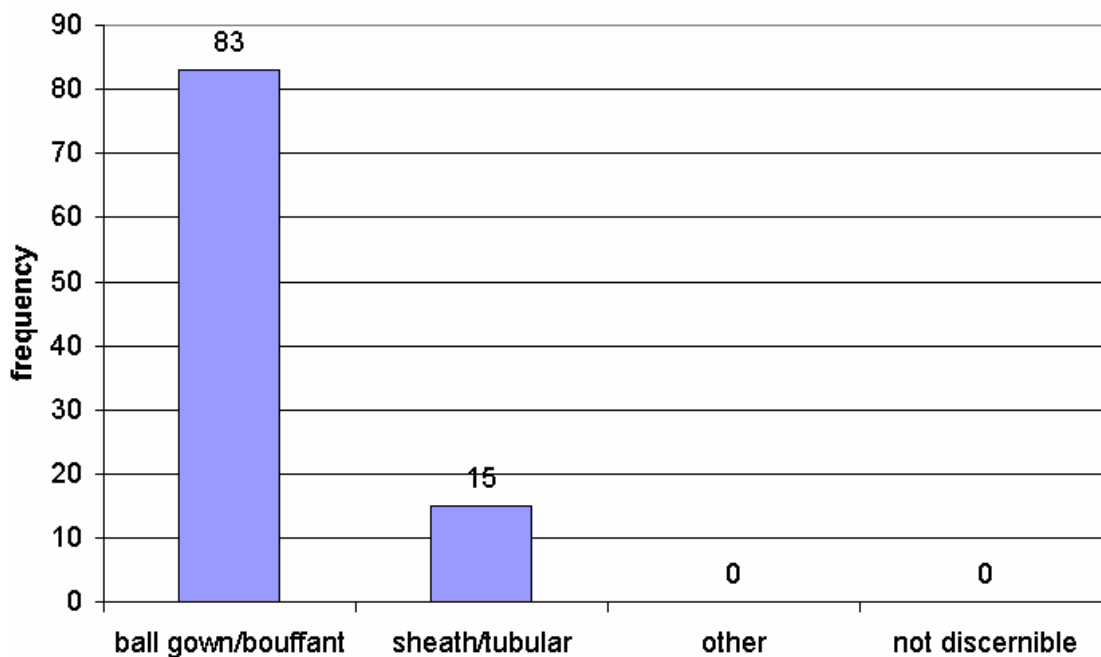


Figure 4. Frequencies of wedding dress silhouettes found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Bodice fit. The fitted/semi-fitted bodice was the most common with 84 occurrences. There were 13 occurrences of the bloused/shirtwaist bodice. There was only one occurrence in the “other” category, this being a draped, toga-like bodice (see figure 5).

Skirt length. The most common wedding dress length was floor length (N=71). There were eight occurrences of mid-calf length dresses and only one ankle length dress. Eighteen images were not discernible (see figure 6).

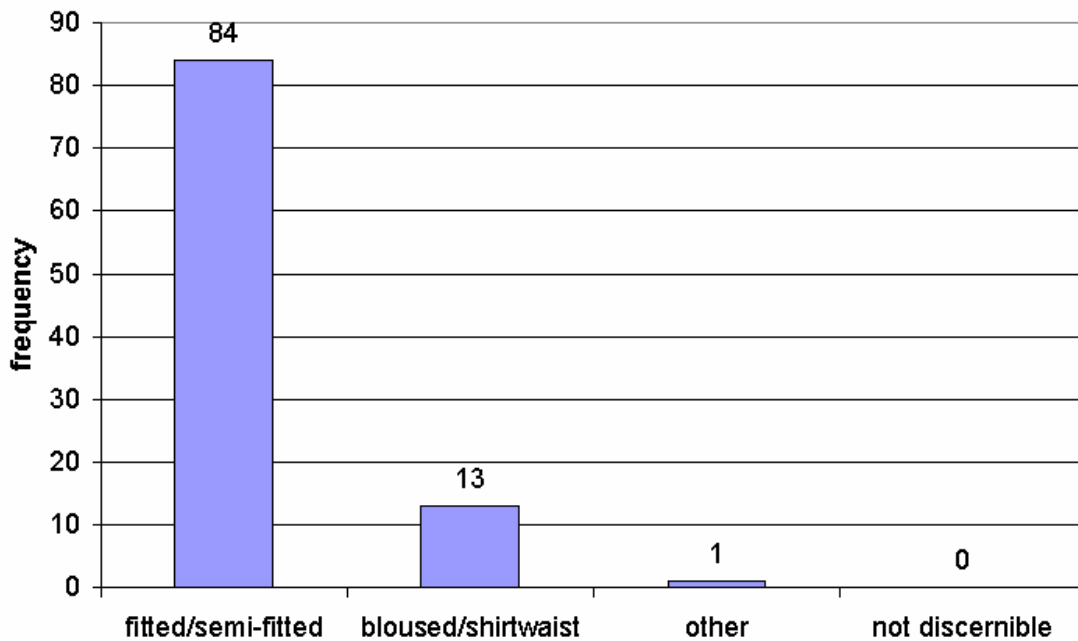


Figure 5. Frequencies of wedding dress bodice fit found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

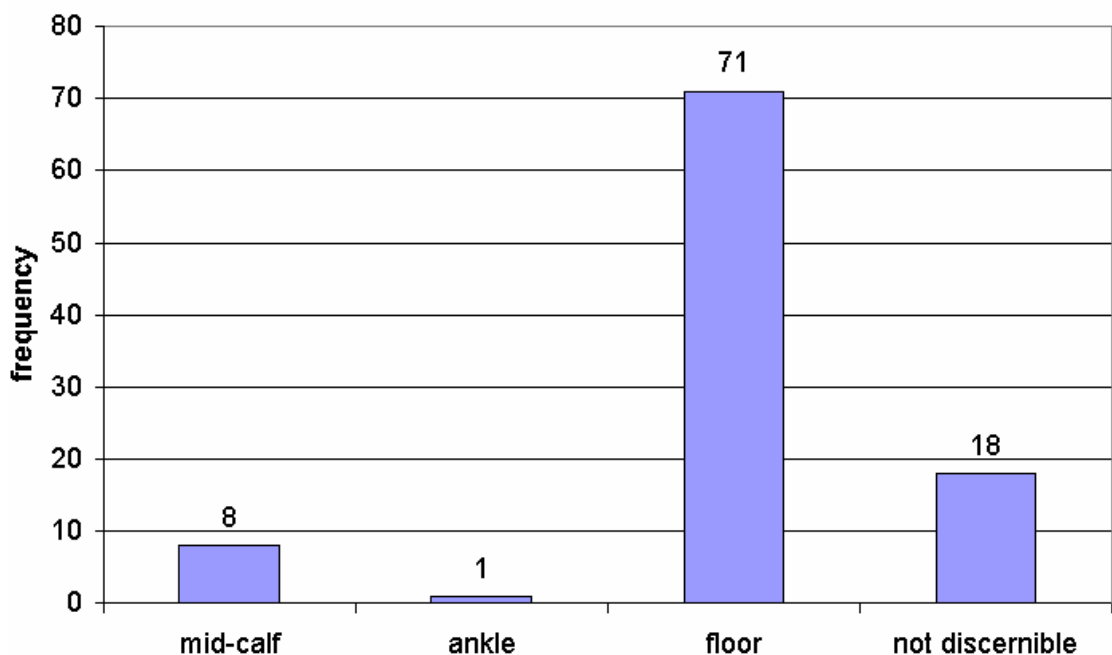


Figure 6. Frequencies of wedding dress length found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Neckline placement. The low neckline was the most common (N=38). This was closely followed by the high neckline (N=32). The natural neckline was the least common (N=18). There were ten non-discernible images (see figure 7).

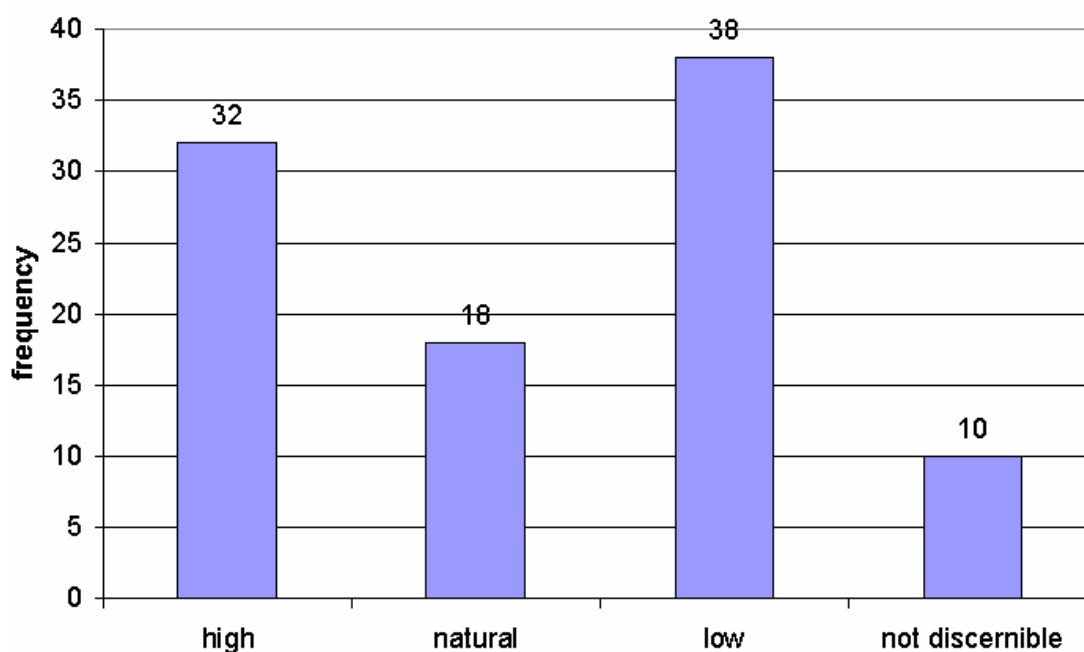


Figure 7. Frequencies of neckline placement on wedding dresses found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Neckline treatment. There were many neckline variations among the images. The most common was the collared neckline (N=17) and the jewel neckline (N=15). The V-shaped (N=11) and sweetheart neckline (N=11) were also fairly common. Other neckline treatments included square (N=8), off-the-shoulder (N=7), décolletage (N=5), gathered (N=4), and scoop (N=3). Necklines on 14 of the images were not discernible (see figure 8).

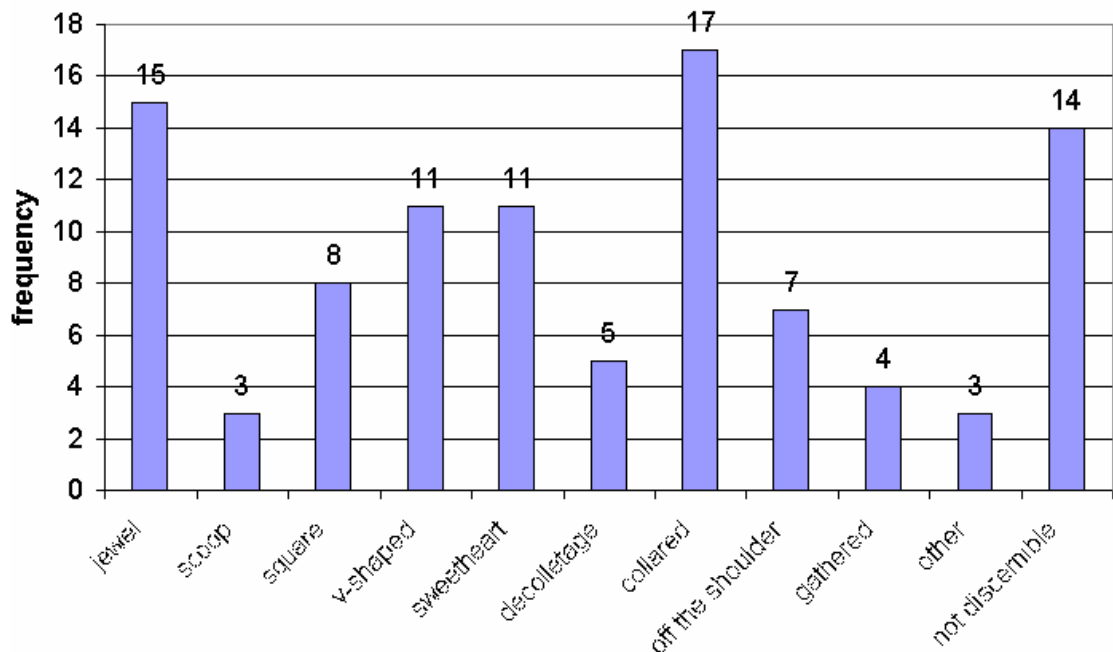


Figure 8. Frequencies of neckline treatments on wedding dresses found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Armscye placement. Sleeves set at the natural shoulder line were the most common type (N=71). There were also ten sleeve-bodice combinations and seven sleeves set below the shoulder line. Armscye placement was not discernible in five of the images (see figure 9).

Sleeve style. The fitted sleeve was the most common (N=44). The straight sleeve followed with 15 occurrences. There were a number of sleeve styles that were used with less frequency such as the puffed sleeve (N=7), leg-o-mutton (N=5), bishop (N=5), and cap (N=4) (see figure 10).

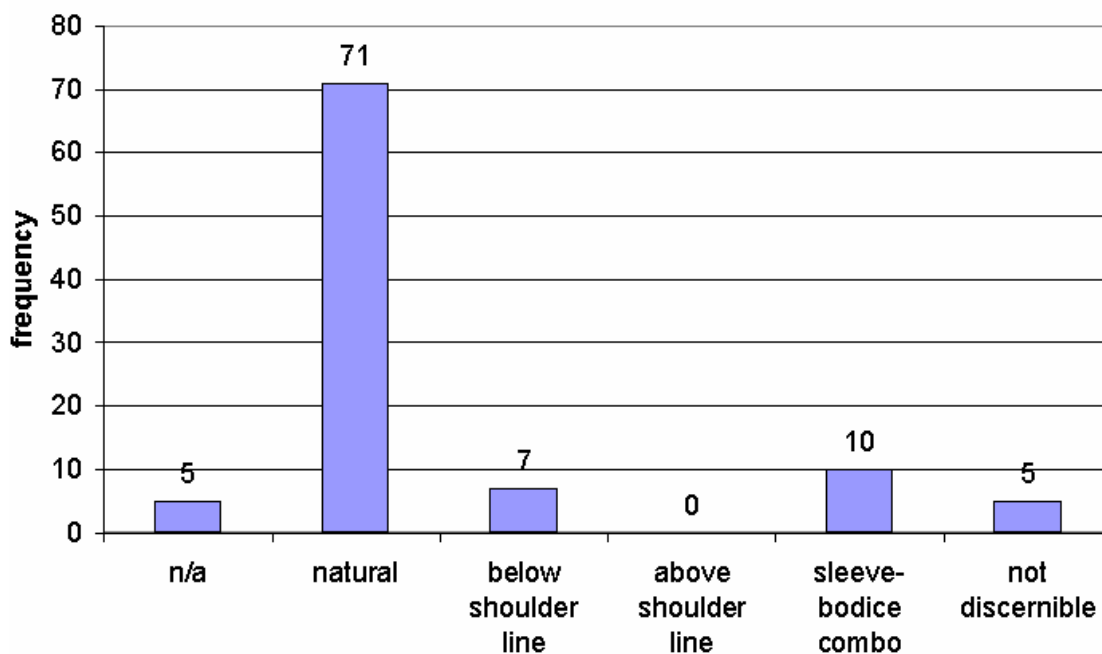


Figure 9. Frequencies of armscye placement on wedding dresses found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

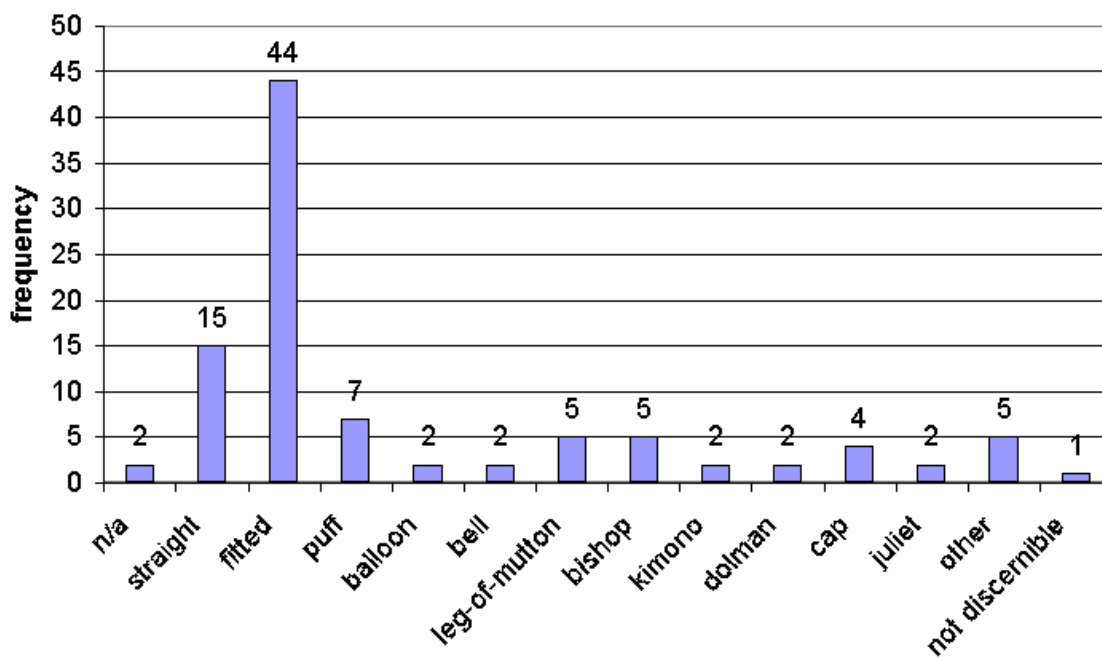


Figure 10. Frequencies of wedding dress sleeve styles found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Sleeve length. Long sleeves were the most common (N=59). There were 25 occurrences of shorter sleeves (including elbow length, short, and cap length sleeves). Three-quarter length sleeves were sometimes used (N=11) (see figure 11).

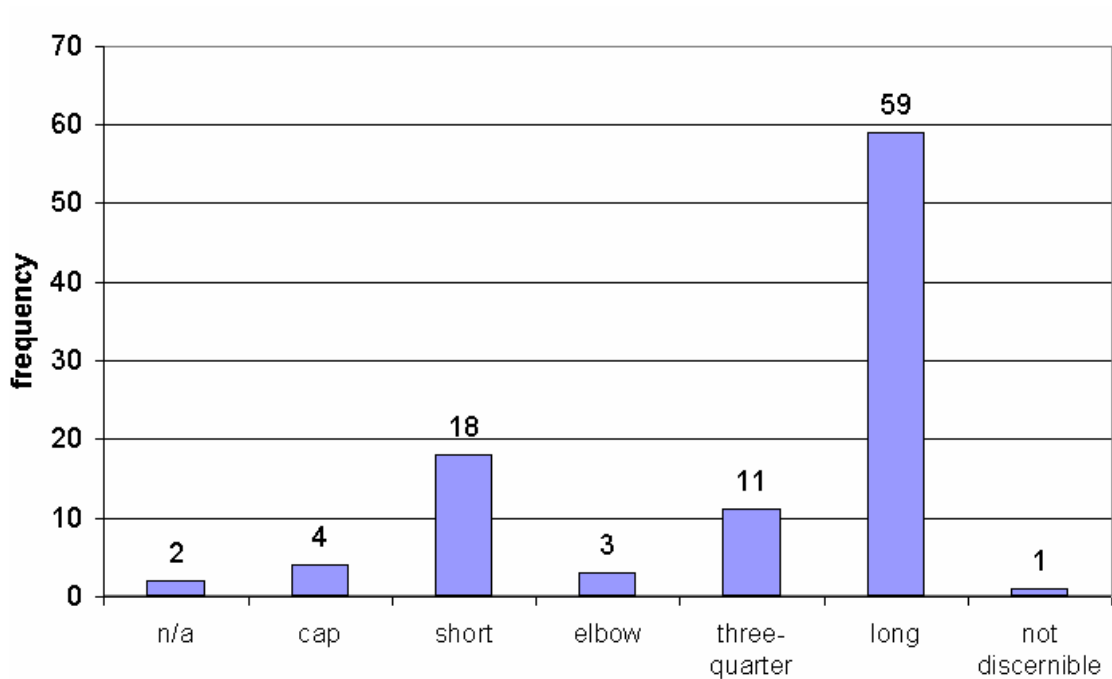


Figure 11. Frequencies of wedding dress sleeve length found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Sleeve edge. Plain sleeve edges were most commonly used (N=62). Other sleeve edge types include ruffled (N=6), sleeve band (N=5), and a bound edge (N=2). seventeen images were not discernible (see figure 12).

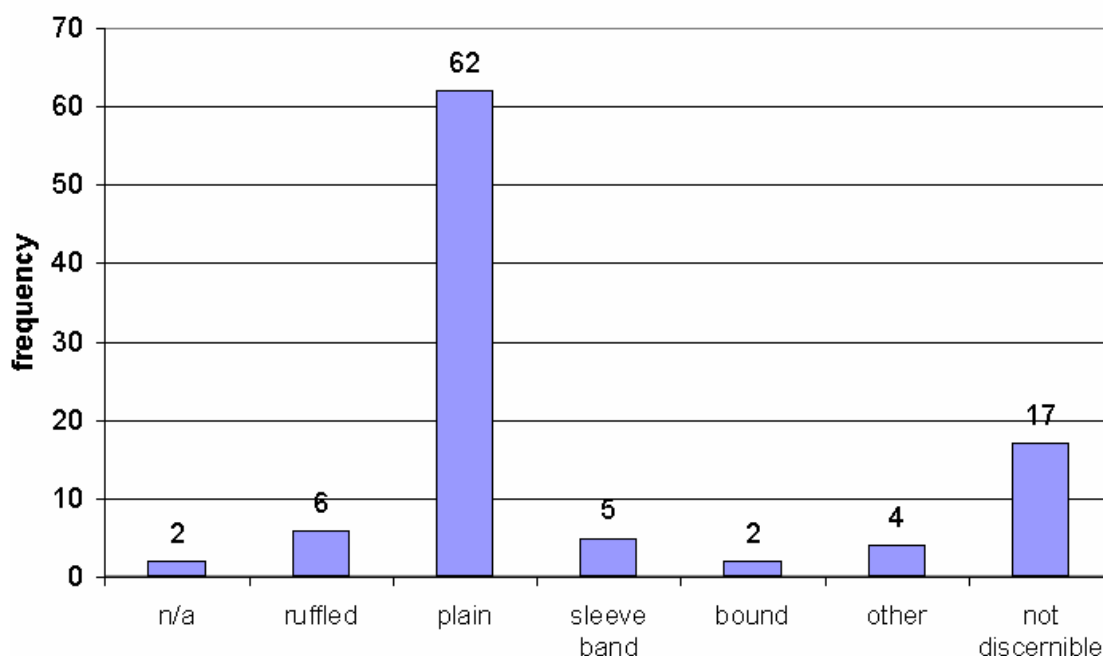


Figure 12. Frequencies of sleeve edge styles found on wedding dresses in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Waistline placement. The most common waistline placement was at the natural waist (N=70). There were nine dresses with dropped waistlines, six with waistlines that sloped down to the hips, and nine Basque waist dresses. There was only one occurrence of an empire waist dress (see figure 13).

Waistline treatment. Waistline treatments varied. Most commonly there was no waistline treatment (N=48). When there was a treatment present, the sash was the most common (N=10). Other treatments included peplums (N=6), yokes (N=7), and belts (N=6). Fourteen images were non-discernible (see figure 14).

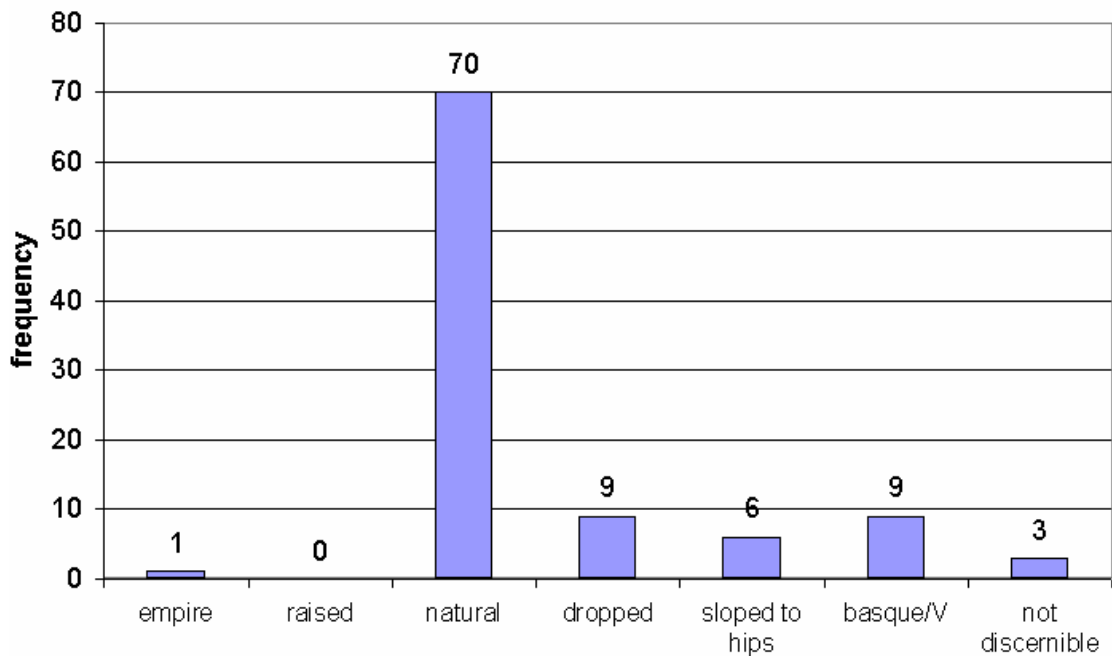


Figure 13. Frequencies of wedding dress waistline placement found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

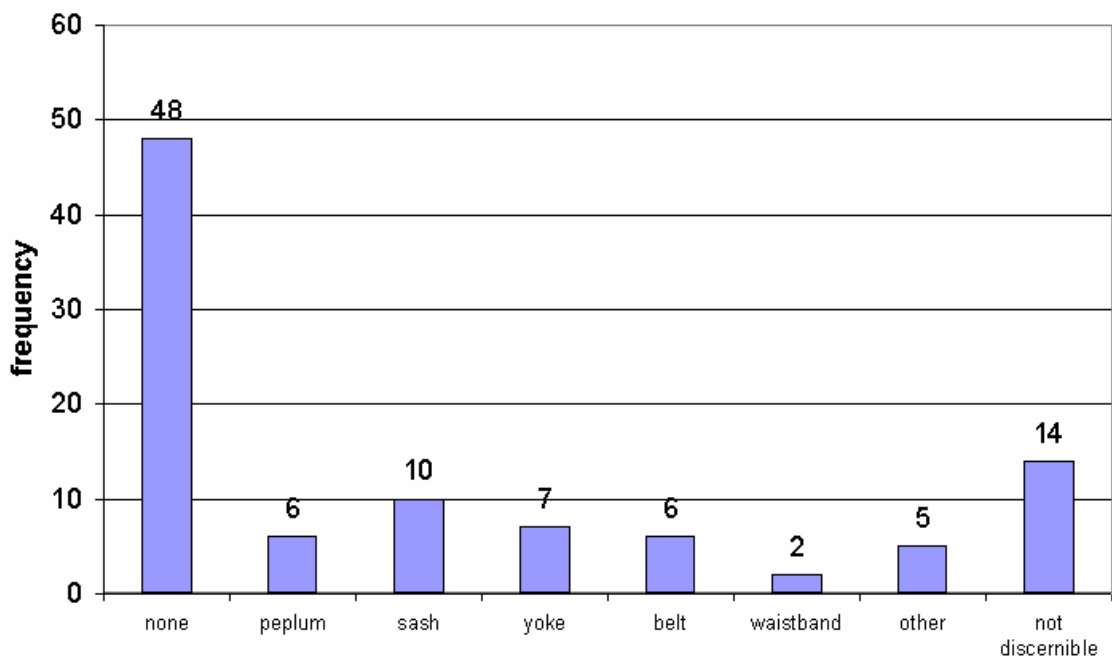


Figure 14. Frequencies of waistline treatments on wedding dresses found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Skirt treatment. The gathered skirt was the most common type (N=58).

Bell/flared skirts were used in 24 of the images and straight skirt treatments in ten.

There were four occurrences of tiered skirts (see figure 15).

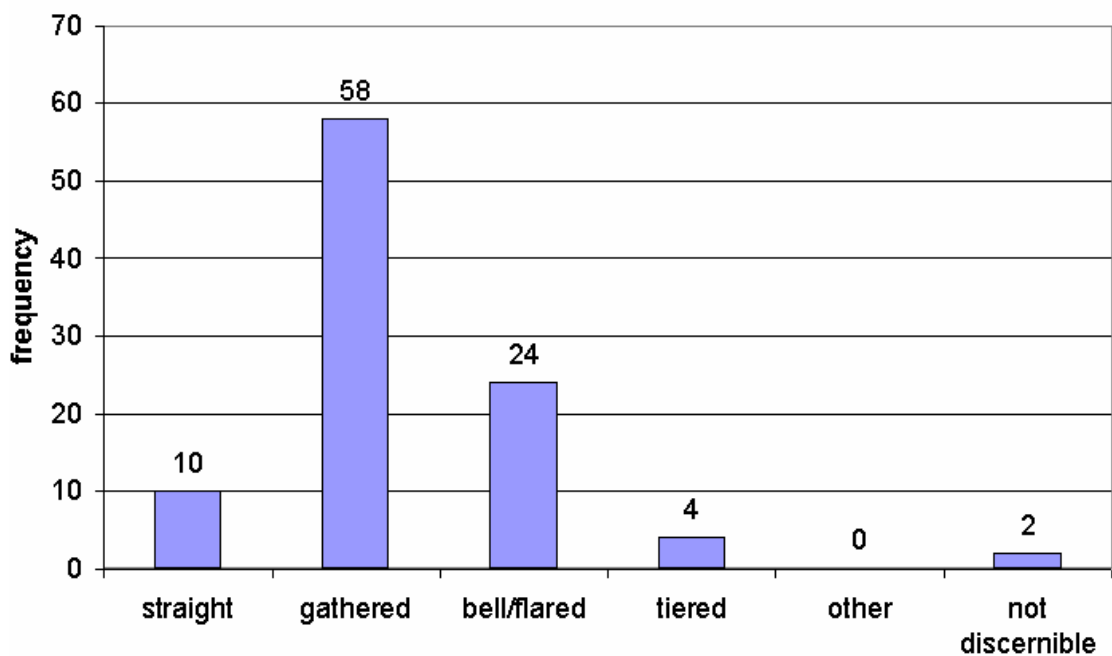


Figure 15. Frequencies of wedding dress skirt treatments found in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Train. Thirty-three of the images examined had no train, followed by 26 with a medium/cathedral length train. Only four had short/sweeping trains. In a large number of the images (N=35) the train or train length was not visible for categorization (see figure 16).

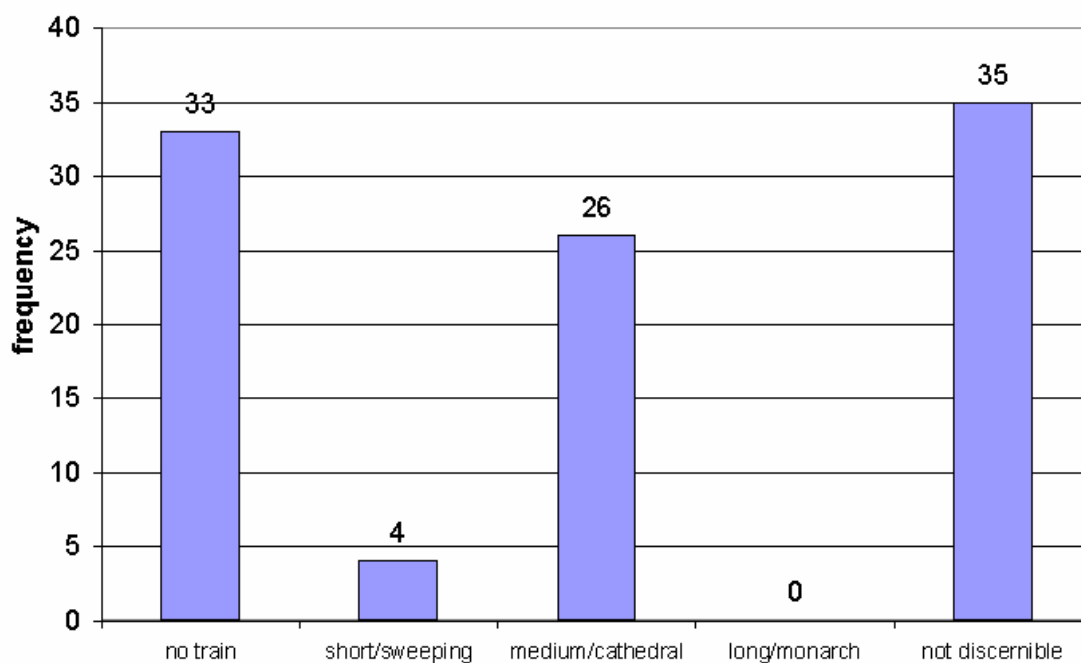


Figure 16. Frequencies of train styles found on wedding dresses in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* between 1939 and 1945.

Ornamentation. Many forms of ornamentation were utilized. Commonly used ornamentation included pearl beading (N=8), gathers (N=22), buttons (N=20), ruffles (N=18), ruching and shirring (N=12), bows (N=7), ties (N=8), lace (N=7), and jewels (N=5). Often, more than one form of ornamentation was used simultaneously.

Summary. The white wedding dress was the most commonly used color. Rayon, silk and cotton were the most commonly used fibers. Fiber structure varied, but popular structures included crepe, organdie, satin and jersey. The most typical dress of this period would have likely been floor length. It would probably have a fitted bodice, ball-gown silhouette, and a naturally set waistline. Naturally set long

fitted sleeves were popular as was a collared or jewel neckline. The gathered skirt was popular. Dresses usually did not have trains.

Research Question 2

Did wedding dress of this period abstain from using the details prohibited by the L-85 regulations for regular day dresses?

Percentage of occurrence was established by dividing the total number of prohibited uses in each category by the total number of images (n=98) (see figure 17). The frequency distribution illustrates that there were occurrences of some design details prohibited for day dress. However, these occurrences were few: seven Belts or sashes over two inches wide (7.1%); nine Balloon, Dolman or Leg-o-mutton sleeves (9.2%); no French cuffs; no cuffs with more than two buttons; two dresses with more than one sleeve ruffle (2%); four sleeve ruffles over three inches wide (4.1%); no collar on top of another; and eight collars or ruffles over five inches wide (8.2%).

Though L-85 regulations were required for day dress, they were not required for wedding dress. There was however, limited use of the prohibited items listed above. The most common violation was seen in the use of prohibited sleeve styles (9.2%), wide sashes (9.2%) and the use of ruffles (10.2%). This would be expected due to the fact that these were the L-85 prohibited details more commonly associated with use in wedding dresses.

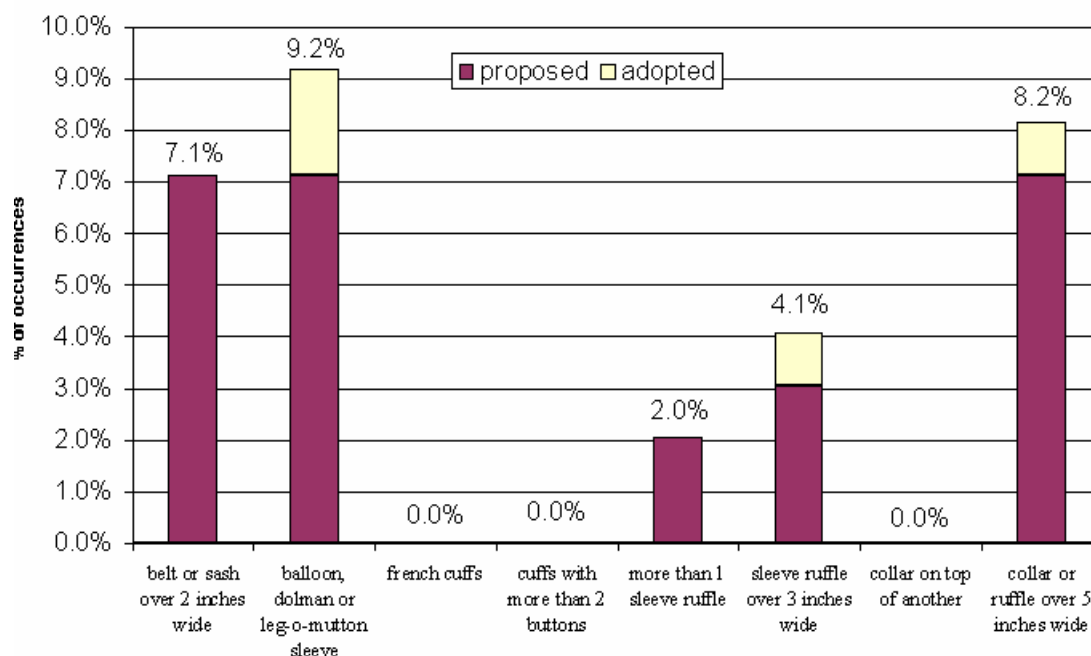


Figure 17. Percentage of L-85 prohibited items for regular day dress.

Hypothesis 1

Wedding dress styles proposed in American high fashion magazines during the period 1939 to 1945 will be similar to styles adopted by society women featured in these same magazines.

No significant difference was found using the chi-square test for independence between the distributions of proposed and adopted styles for the categories sleeve style ($p=.65$) (see table 1), sleeve length (.4831) (see table 2), skirt treatment ($p=.9221$) (see table 3), waistline placement ($p=.9667$) (see table 4), train (.2513) (see table 5). A significant difference was found between proposed and adopted styles in the neckline placement category ($p=.0007$) (see table 6) and neckline treatment category ($p=.0031$) (see table 7).

Table 1

Difference in Frequency of Occurrence of Sleeve Styles Between Proposed and Adopted Wedding Dress Images.

Image Type	Fitted	Other
Proposed	30	38
Adopted	14	13
$\chi^2=.2059$ $df=1$ $p=.65$		

Table 2

Difference in Frequency of Occurrence of Sleeve Length Between Proposed and Adopted Wedding Dress Images.

Image Type	Elbow and Above	Below Elbow
Proposed	20	49
Adopted	5	21
$\chi^2=.4919$ $df=1$ $p=.4831$		

Table 3

Difference in Frequency of Occurrence of Skirt Treatments Between Proposed and Adopted Wedding Dress Images.

Image Type	Gathered	Other
Proposed	43	27
Adopted	15	11
$\chi^2=.0096$	df=1	p=.9221

Table 4

Difference in Frequency of Occurrence of Waistline Placement Between Proposed and Adopted Wedding Dress Images.

Image Type	Natural	Other
Proposed	51	19
Adopted	19	6
$\chi^2=.0017$	df=1	p=.9667

Table 5

Difference in Frequency of Occurrence of Trains Between Proposed and Adopted Wedding Dress Images.

Image Type	No Train	Sweeping-Medium Train
Proposed	29	22
Adopted	4	8
$\chi^2=1.316$ $df=1$ $p=.2513$		

Table 6

Difference in Frequency of Occurrence of Neckline Placement Between Proposed and Adopted Wedding Dress Images.

Image Type	High	Natural	Low
Proposed	30	11	20
Adopted	2	7	18
$\chi^2=14.5262$ $df=2$ $p=.0007$			

Table 7

Difference in Frequency of Occurrence of Neckline Treatments Between Proposed and Adopted Wedding Dress Images.

Image Type	jewel & collared	other
Proposed	29	30
Adopted	3	22
$\chi^2=8.7626$	df=1	p=.0031

The categories color, fiber, fabric structure, silhouette, bodice fit, and skirt length were visually analyzed using side-by-side bar graphs. No significant difference was found between the distribution of proposed and adopted styles was apparent in any of the aforementioned categories (see figures 18-23).

The hypothesis was supported in that 11 of the 13 categories (84.6%) subject to either a chi-square or visual analysis showed significantly similar categorical distributions. The two categories that did not have similar distributions were neckline placement and neckline treatment. The high neckline placement occurred much more in proposed images (42.9%), while low necklines occurred with greater frequency in adopted images (64.3%). Naturally placed necklines occurred in 15.7 percent of the proposed images and in 25 percent of the adopted images. The dissimilar frequency distribution for proposed and adopted neckline treatments was likely due to the large number of neckline treatments available for use.

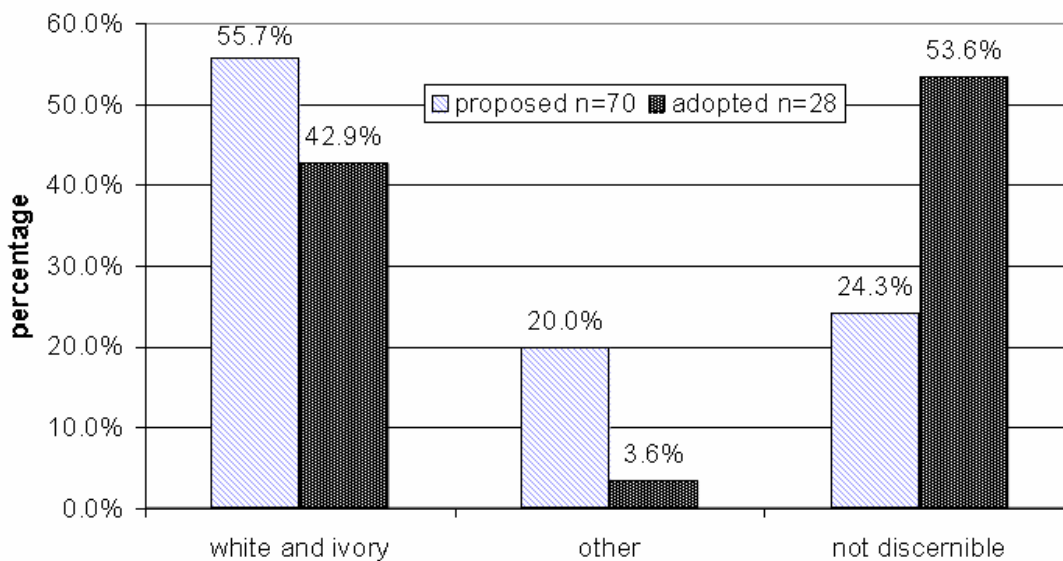


Figure 18. Percentage of occurrence for adopted versus proposed wedding dress colors.

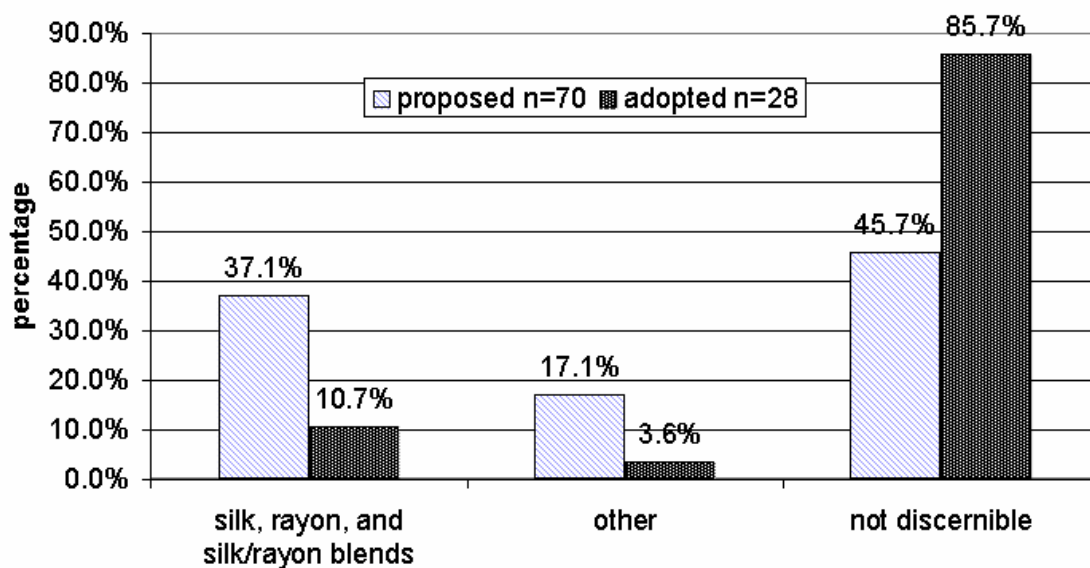


Figure 19. Percentage of occurrence for adopted versus proposed wedding dress fiber types.

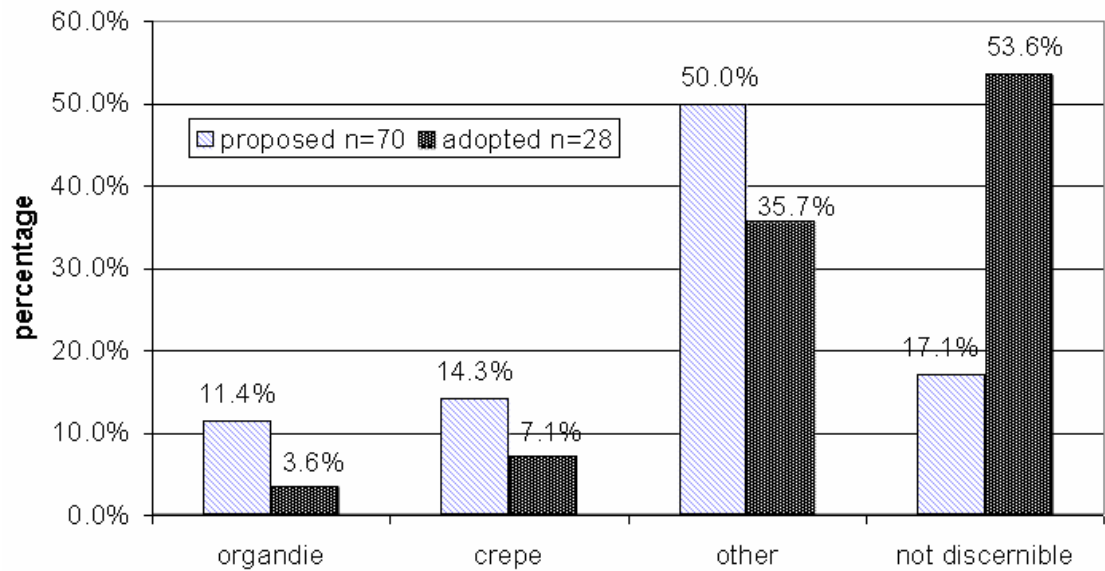


Figure 20. Percentage of occurrence for adopted versus proposed wedding dress fabric structure.

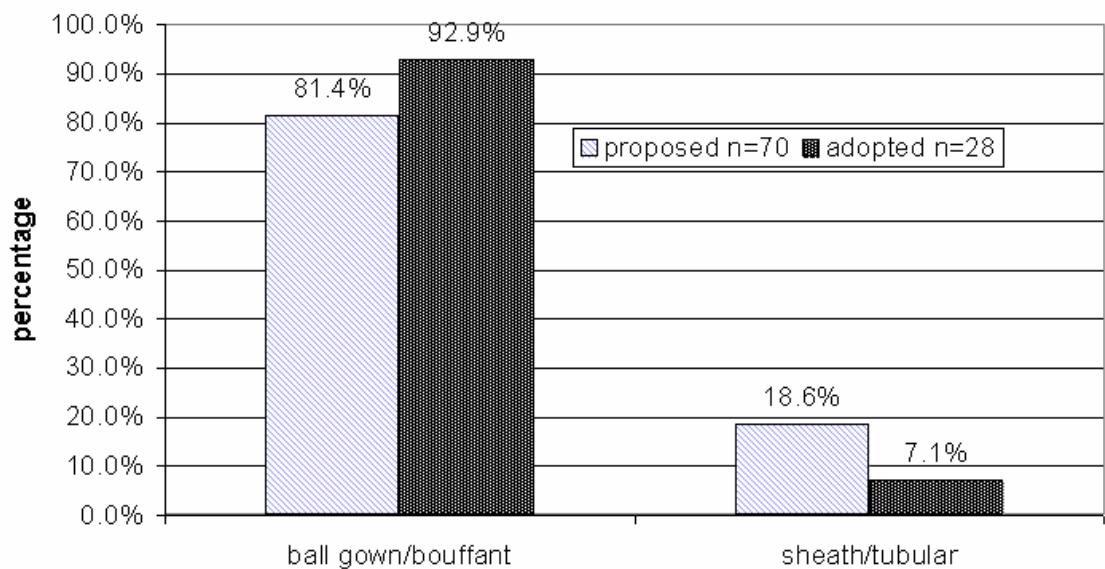


Figure 21. Percentage of occurrence for adopted versus proposed wedding dress silhouettes.

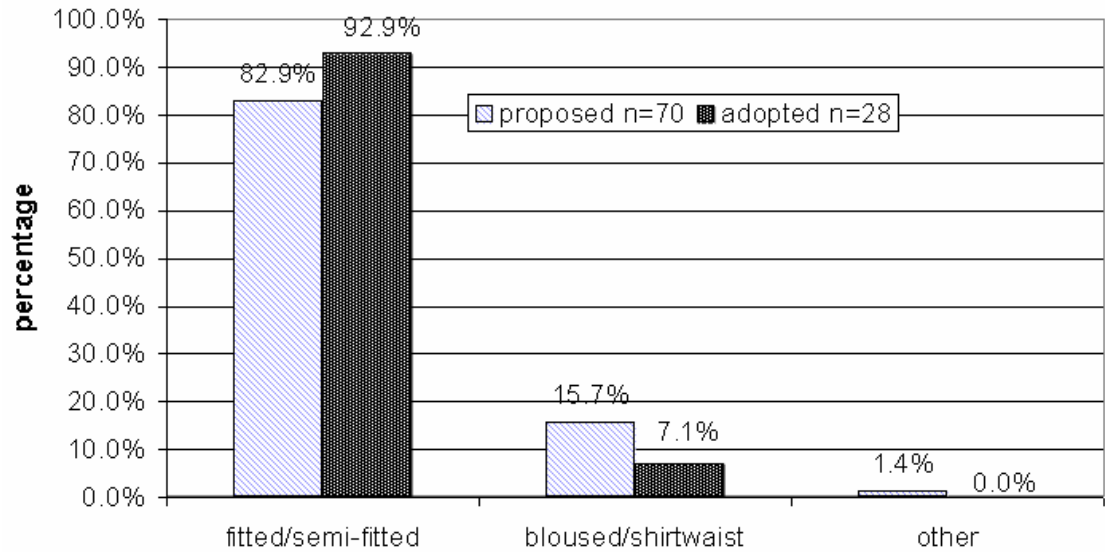


Figure 22. Percentage of occurrence for adopted versus proposed wedding dress bodice fit.

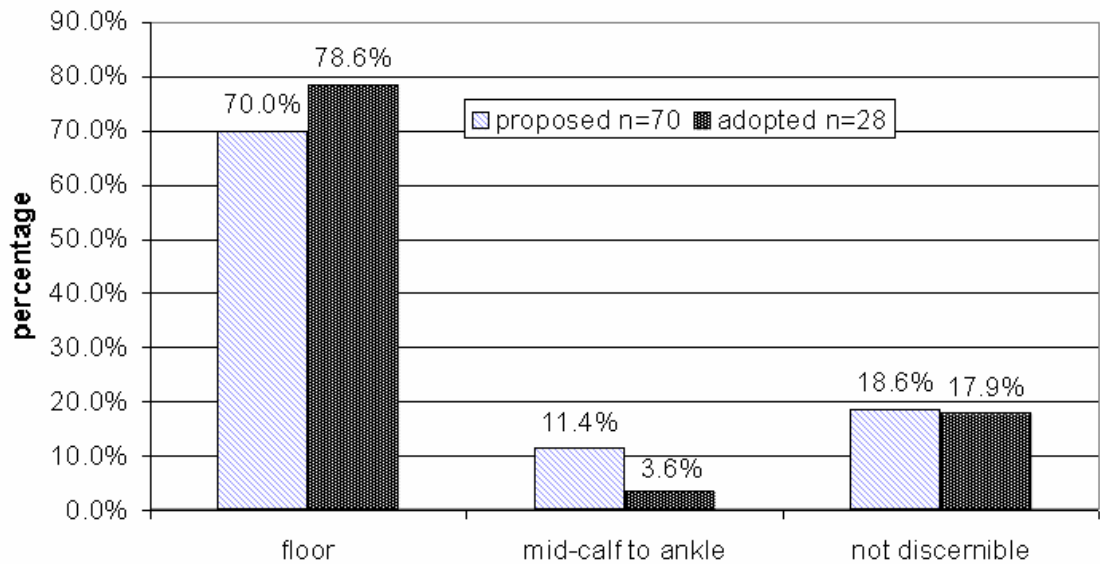


Figure 23. Percentage of occurrence for adopted versus proposed wedding dress length.

Summary

The present study explored wedding dress styles represented in high fashion magazines of the United States during the period 1939 to 1945. Style details commonly used were determined by generating frequency counts from photographs and illustrations in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. Frequency counts were also used to determine the extent to which wedding dresses of this period used details that were prohibited by the L-85 restrictions for day dress. While there were occurrences of some design details prohibited for day dress, these occurrences were few.

The distribution of the frequencies for both proposed and adopted styles were compared using the chi-square test and visual analysis to test the hypothesis. The results of these tests showed that styles occurred with the same frequency in both proposed and adopted images, with the exception of neckline treatments and neckline placement.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore wedding dress styles represented in U.S. high fashion magazines during the period 1939 to 1945. Style details commonly used were determined by observing photographs and illustrations in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. The extent to which society women of the period adopted proposed wedding fashion styles was determined by comparing proposed wedding dress images to adopted wedding dress images. The content analysis method was utilized to achieve this purpose.

Proposed and adopted wedding dress style details were categorized and frequency counts were generated. In this manner, it was possible to find commonly used styles, the most common type expressed as the mode of the data. Frequency counts were also used to determine the extent to which wedding dresses of this period used details that were prohibited by the L-85 restrictions for day dress. While there were occurrences of some design details prohibited for day dress, these occurrences were few. The prohibited items that were utilized most commonly, such as balloon and leg-o-mutton sleeves, wide sashes and ruffles, probably experienced more use because they were the details more commonly associated with wedding dresses.

Having established frequency counts it was then possible to establish if adopted styles reflected proposed styles. It was determined that wedding dress styles

proposed in these magazines were similar to styles adopted by society women featured in these same magazines.

Limitations

The present research might have generated broader results had it not been for some categorical limitations. It may have been useful to have categorized wedding dresses as informal and formal, as this often influenced the specific style details used in the gown. Further, there was not a provision for the categorization of bodice variations such as jacket bodices, yoked bodices and illusion bodices. These elements, if included, may have possibly enriched the data set.

The research was also somewhat limited by the sample size. Only *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* were utilized in this study. If other high fashion magazines in circulation during this period could be the number of images could be increased. A larger sample size would have made it possible to apply the chi-square analysis to the entire data set when testing the hypothesis and would have negated the need for visual analysis.

A further limitation to this study was the fact that many style details in adopted images were non-discernible due to the nature of adopted wedding dress images. Images of proposed styles were generally large, clear and easy to make out. Images of adopted styles were often smaller or showed the bride surrounded by friends and family. These factors made it harder to discern what style details were present in adopted wedding dresses.

Conclusions and Implications

Several elements typified wedding dress fashion present in high fashion magazines of the World War II period in the United States. The white wedding dress was the most commonly used color. Rayon, silk and cotton were the most commonly used fibers. Fiber structure varied, but popular structures included crepe, organdie, satin and jersey. Naturally set long fitted sleeves were popular as was a collared or jewel neckline. The gathered skirt was popular. Dresses usually did not have trains.

While it is not possible to draw conclusions from this data about a most popular interrelation of components it is possible to look at a few features that stand out to typify the dress from this period. The dress would have likely been floor length. It would probably have a fitted bodice, ball-gown silhouette, and a naturally set waistline. Figure 24 illustrates a dress that includes the most commonly used style details from this study.

The illustration in Figure 24 has a low, collared neckline. Although this combination was sometimes used during this era, the collared neckline treatment was more typically found on the high or naturally placed neckline. This serves as an example as to why generalizations about the interrelation of style details cannot be generated from this data, as the most commonly used elements were not necessarily used together.

This picture of common wedding dress fashion cannot be generalized to the entire population because it was drawn exclusively from what was found in the high fashion magazines *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. It therefore does not represent the totality of what was available to and worn by U.S. brides during this period.

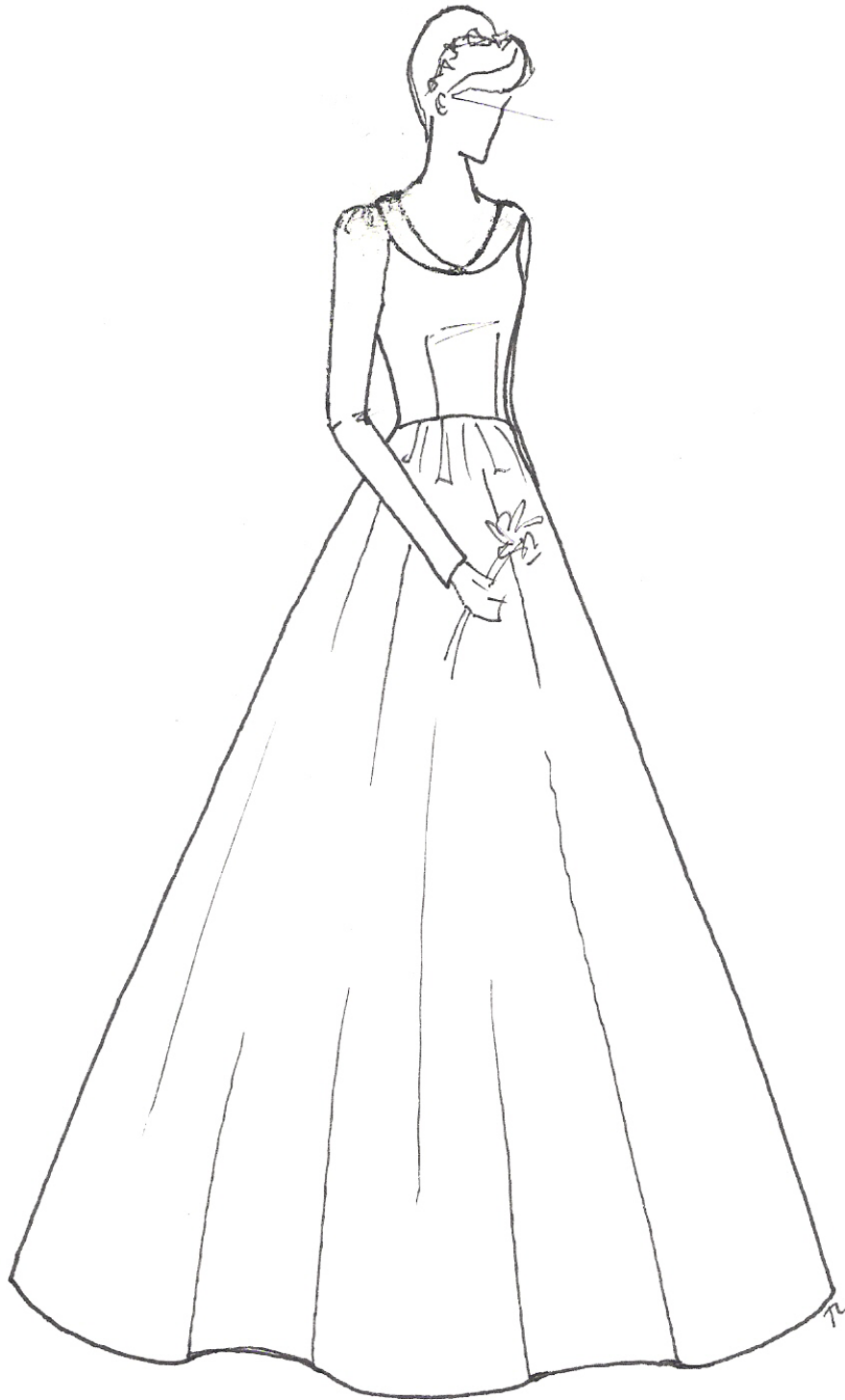


Figure 24. An illustration of a wedding dress utilizing the style details that occurred with the highest frequency.

While the results of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population, the picture of fashionable wedding dress styles drawn from this data was in line with what fashion historians have written about World War II era wedding dress. Zimmerman (1985) cites the lack of trains, use of man-made fibers and use of the sweetheart neckline, all consistent with this data. Probert (1984) cites abundant use of the fitted bodice and full skirt as well as the use of jersey, crepe, brocade and satin. She also notes the use of the high neckline early in the period and low neckline later. Probert's findings are also consistent with the finding of the present study.

Both Zimmerman and Probert note the practicality and frugality of World War II era wedding dress. Although the wedding dress in this study was generally traditional and formal there was definitely a tone of practicality and frugality apparent in some of the associated magazine articles such as *Vogue's* "Marrying in Haste" (Chase, 1942) and "Accelerated Wedding Plans" (Chase, 1943). According to the *Zeitgeist*, the predominant fashions displayed in magazines will reflect the times in which they were created and existed (Brannon, 2005). Fashion influence in the form of dominant events, ideals, social groups, attitudes and technology is in fact reflected in the fashions displayed in the high fashion magazines of the World War II era.

The *Zeitgeist* of this era was largely affected by the country's involvement in World War II. The limited use of L-85 restricted items (wide ruffles, wide or double collars, French cuffs, etc.) in the present study may have been due to attitudes about conservation of resources and frugality in effort to support the war. It may also be a possibility that these restricted items experienced limited use because they were no longer fashionable, having been restricted from regular day dress. In this manner, the

prevailing events and ideals of the era may have had an effect on wedding dress fashion.

Societal attitudes about conservation of resources and supporting the war effort, in addition to the often necessary hurried wedding all can be seen in wedding dress design of this era. There were a considerable amount of wedding dresses present in the data sample that would be considered informal. For example, nine percent of the gowns were not the traditional floor length (N=9), and five percent (N=5) had a floral print rather than the traditional white. Many times it was suggested that these dresses could be used again. Quite frequently, the wedding dress had no train, possibly an attempt to conserve material resource.

Despite societal attitudes about preserving resources, economic prosperity allowed the ideals of the traditional wedding to flourish. The use of the traditionally conceived notion of what a wedding dress should look like was apparent in the data sample. Attitudes of tradition were also apparent in the articles accompanying the images in the data sample. For example, an article in the April 15th, 1942 issue of *Vogue* states, "...wear a real wedding-dress, if it's humanly possible...On this one day at least, have a little romanticism" (Chase, 1942, p. 77). These attitudes dictated that, when possible, the wedding dress should follow the modes of custom and convention. It was possibly this prosperity and these attitudes that helped keep wedding dress from being subject to political intervention in the form of War Production Board regulation, and it was defiantly the exemption from these regulations that helped to keep wedding dress traditional.

The Zeitgeist as it relates to new technology also likely had an effect on wedding dress. Rayon and rayon/silk blends were frequently used in the dresses in this study. The use of rayon reflected the adoption of new fiber technologies, high tenacity rayon having been developed in the 1940s (Kadolph and Langfield, 2002). Production technology also made it possible for hurried weddings to uphold tradition because ready-to-wear wedding dresses were available and affordable (Chase, 1942, p. 77). The wedding dress both proposed and adopted therefore reflected the spirit of the times in the manner of technology used in its production.

Wedding dress styles proposed in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* reflected those that were adopted by society women in these same magazines. Sociological theories of fashion offer an explanation to the similarity of proposed and adopted styles. According to the sociological theories of fashion, fashion exists as a process of conformity and collective selection, this process involving innovators, leaders and followers (Blumer, 1969). Within the context of these high fashion magazines, fashion was presented to potential innovators and leaders as well as followers and fashionable wedding dress was diffused from fashion opinion leaders to those in their circle of influence, in line with the Diffusion of Innovations model outlined by Rogers (2003).

Fashion followers may have taken their cues from the dress presented by fashion leaders at the impersonal level via magazine communication. There was also likely a 2-step flow process (Katz, 1957) occurring as fashion leaders disseminated this information at an interpersonal level within their own social network. In this manner, fashions presented in these magazines became known and recognized as

being fashionable. The wish to be in fashion, according to sociological theorists, is a factor that would have led to the adoption of these proposed fashions.

As a designer, this present study offers a wealth of information and design inspiration. Knowing what styles were commonly used offers many possibilities to the designer. The knowledge of the predominant silhouette and style lines is a great starting point to aid in capturing the look of the day. This research could be extremely useful to one wishing to produce a wedding dress with the look of the World War II period.

Future Research

The present study prompted many ideas for future research. This study might be expanded in several ways. One recommendation would be to utilize the same methods for magazines targeted to other segments of the population such as *Ladies Home Journal*. It would be interesting to explore the styles both proposed and adopted for this segment of the population, although images of adopted styles may be harder to come by within the pages of these magazines. It would likely be possible, however, to find images of adopted wedding dress styles for this segment of the population within newspaper bridal announcements. Similarities and differences between styles at the high fashion level and at other levels would add an interesting perspective to the findings of this study.

The same study could also be utilized for different time periods. Commonly used wedding dress styles could be determined for several different eras. Once data for

other time periods is collected, it would be of interest to compare time periods for differences and similarities in adoption of proposed styles to discern what similarities and differences existed in society and if there could be any correlation to popular dress styles and adoption of proposed styles. It would be of interest to compare this data from the World War II period to both times of peace and times of other wars. In this manner, it may be possible to determine possible effects of war on fashion.

Likewise, it would also be of interest to compare the data from the present study to data from the time period directly before and after World War II. This would likely offer information as to how fashions and fashion adoption changed both pre and post war. Similarities and differences may offer insight as to possible effects of World War II.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A CODE BOOK

Image Selection

To ensure that each of the images provide similar content as well as enough information to accurately categorize the style as a whole, only analyze images that meet this criteria:

1. At least 2.5 inches tall
2. Extends to mid thigh or further
3. Clear enough to see necessary detail
4. No more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the dress obscured by people or objects in the image frame

Image Information

Magazine Name- List either *Vogue* or *Harper's Bazaar*

Issue Date- List both month and year

Page Number- List the page number that the image was found on.

Image Number- Assign a number to the image beginning at 101, making sure that every number is used only once.

Image- Circle "full length" if the person in the image is standing and the dress is visible from neckline to hem. Circle "upper torso" if the person in the image is standing and the dress is visible from neckline to knee. Circle "sitting" if the person wearing the dress is in a seated position. Circle "other" and explain the image view if it does not fall into one of the previous three categories.

View- Circle either “front,” “back,” or “side” depending on the presentation of the person in the image.

Photo/Illustration- Indicate if the image is a photograph or an illustration

Proposed/Adopted- Categorize the image as either a proposed dress style or an adopted dress style. If the image is categorized as adopted, please record the bride’s name and location. *Proposed styles* are those suggested by the magazine editors as the “up-and-coming” fashion. Proposed images include those from yearly bridal sections and bridal features. Advertisement images will also fall into the proposed category.

Adopted styles are those that are actually worn by real people for real weddings.

Images of adopted styles will be the wedding announcements found within featured articles and the society pages of the magazines. Wedding announcements for weddings occurring outside the United States will be omitted.

Design Details

Categorize the unit of analysis for each detail given. When the category “other” is used, please specify the feature on the coding form. If an element of the design is obscure or not visible, please place it in the “not discernible” category.

Images and definitions for design details not defined below are available in the reference *Fashion Terms and Styles for Women’s Garments*¹ hereafter referred to as “*Terms & Styles.*”

¹ Oregon State University Extension Service. (1993). *Fashion terms and styles for women’s garments*. Corvallis, OR: Agricultural Communications.

A. Primary Fabric- List all available information about the fabric used for the majority of the dress. Refer to text. Do not make inferences. If the color, fiber or weave is not stated in the image description, categorize as “non discernible.”

B. Secondary Fabric- List all available information about any secondary fabrics used (those that comprise less than 50% of the dress). Follow the same guidelines use for primary fabric categorization. Please also list where this fabric was used (sash, underlay, etc.).

C. Silhouette- Select “ball gown/bouffant” if the dress follows the curves of the body through the bodice and flares from waist to hem. Select “sheath/tubular” if the dress follows the curves of the body through the bodice and is straight from waist to hem.

D. Bodice Fit- Select “fitted/semi-fitted” if the bodice is shaped to closely fit the wearer. Select “bloused/shirtwaist” if the bodice is not fitted closely to the body and resembles a blouse of button-up shirt.

E. Skirt Length- Select the appropriate length. Refer to p. 36 of *Terms & Styles*.

F. Neckline Placement- Select the appropriate category.

G. Neckline Treatment- Refer to *Terms & Styles* pp. 4-7.

H. Armscye Placement- Select the appropriate category.

I. Sleeve Style- Refer to *Terms & Styles* p. 14.

J. Sleeve Length- Refer to *Terms & Styles* p. 13.

K. Sleeve Edge- Select the appropriate category. “Plain” refers to a sleeve edge that is hemmed or faced. “Turned back” refers to a rolled sleeve edge or a cuff. “Sleeve band” refers to a banded sleeve edge with no vertical opening.

L. Waistline Placement- Select the appropriate category.

M. Waistline Treatment- Select either “not applicable” if there is no added design detail at the waist, or select the appropriate category.

N. Skirt Treatment- Refer to *Terms & Styles* p. 37.

O. Train- Select the appropriate category. Select “short/sweeping train” if the back of the dress sweeps the floor, but is less than 2 feet long. Select “medium/cathedral” if the train extends 2 -7 feet. Select “long/monarch” if the train extends beyond 7 feet.

P. Ornamentation- Refers to embellishments added to the dress. Select each method of ornamentation used as well as where it occurs on the dress. “Lace” is only considered ornamentation when it is added to small areas of the dress. It is not considered when it is used as the primary fabric. “Pleats” refer to vertical folds in the cloth, whereas “tucks” will refer to horizontal folds (with the exception of pin tucks which will refer to very small horizontal or vertical folds). Indicate on the form any information relevant to understanding the use of the method of ornamentation.

Q. Other Garment Details- List any other information not listed elsewhere that would be important to understanding the design of this dress.

R. Use of L-85 Prohibited Items- Check “yes” or “no” for each listed item. Refer to *Terms & Styles* for item definitions.

APPENDIX B DATA COLLECTION FORM

Magazine: _____ **Issue Date:** _____
Page #: _____ **Image #:** _____
Image: full length upper torso sitting other, explain:
View: front back side **Photo/Illustration**
Proposed/Adopted (if adopted, person's name & location):

A. Primary Fabric:

Color:

Fiber:

Structure:

B. Secondary Fabric:

Color:

Fiber:

Structure:

Location:

C. Silhouette:

__1. Ball gown/bouffant

__2. Sheath/tubular

__11. Other:

__12. Not discernible

D. Bodice Fit:

__1. Fitted/Semi-fitted

__2. Bloused/Shirtwaist

__11. Other:

__12. Not discernible

E. Length:

__1. Below knee

__2. Mid-calf

__3. Ankle

__4. Floor

__12. Not discernible

F. Neckline Placement:

__1. High

__2. Natural

__3. Low

__12. Not discernible

G. Neckline Treatment:

__0. Not applicable

__1. Jewel

__2. Scoop

__3. Square

__4. V-shaped

__5. Sweetheart

__6. Bateau

__7. Décolletage

__8. Collared

__9. Off the shoulder

__10. Strapless

__11. Other:

__12. Not discernible

H. Armscye Placement:

__0. Not applicable

__1. Natural

__2. Below shoulder line

__3. Above shoulder line

__4. Sleeve-bodice combo

__12. Not discernible

I. Sleeve Style:

__0. Not applicable

__1. Straight

__2. Fitted

__3. Puff

__4. Balloon

__5. Bell

__6. Leg-of-mutton

__7. Bishop

__8. Pagoda

__9. Kimono

__10. Dolman

__11. Other:

__12. Not discernible

J. Sleeve Length

__0. Not applicable

__1. Cap

__2. Short

__3. Elbow

__4. Three quarter

__5. Long

__12. Not discernible

K. Sleeve Edge:

__0. Not applicable

__1. Ruffled

__2. Plain

__3. Turned back

__4. Sleeve band

__11. Other:

__12. Not discernible

L. Waistline Placement:

__1. Empire

__2. Raised

__3. Natural

__4. Dropped

__5. Sloped to hips

__6. Basque/V

__12. Not discernible

M. Waistline Treatment:

__0. Not applicable

__1. Peplum

__2. Sash

__3. Yoke

__4. Belt

__11. Other:

__12. Not discernible

N. Skirt Treatment:

__1. Straight

__2. Gathered

__3. Bell/flared

__4. Tiered

__11. Other:

__12. Not discernible:

O. Train:

__0. No train

__1. Short/sweeping

__2. Medium/cathedral

__3. Long/monarch

__12. Not discernible

P. Ornamentation:

	neckline	bodice	sleeve	skirt	cuff	waist	hem
Appliqué							
Beading							
Bows							
Buttons							
Embroidery							
Feathers							
Fur							
Gathers							
Lace							
Pleats							
Ribbons							
Ruffles							
Rouching							
Scallops							
Shirring							
Take-ups							
Tucks							
Other:							
Other:							
Other:							

Q. Other Garment Details:**R. Use of L-85 Prohibited Items:**

	Yes	No	Not discernible
1. Belt or sash over 2 inches wide			
2. Balloon, Dolman or Leg-o-mutton sleeve			
3. French cuffs			
4. Cuffs with more than 2 buttons			
5. More than 1 sleeve ruffle			
6. Sleeve ruffle over 3 inches wide			
7. Collar or Rever on top of another			
8. Collar or ruffle over 5 inches wide			

APPENDIX C MAGAZINE ISSUES USED

Units of analysis were found in 21 of the 84 monthly issues of *Vogue* and in 16 of the 84 monthly issues of *Harper's Bazaar* during the years 1939-1945.

Vogue

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1939	X			X						X	X	
1940						X				X	X	
1941			X	X				X		X		
1942			X	X				X		X		
1943				X				X		X		
1944		X								X		
1945								X				

Harper's Bazaar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1939				X				X	X	X		
1940				X		X		X		X		
1941			X									
1942				X				X				
1943				X		X						
1944				X		X						
1945						X						