

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Pei-Chun Chen for the degree of Master of Science in
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Parent-Consumers' Evaluative Criteria Used In Purchasing
Pre-school Children's Apparel.

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The children's apparel industry is a fast-growing industry in the United States. It is important to determine what factors are considered as the most important when parents purchase their pre-school children's clothing. To gain a better understanding of parent-consumers' purchasing behavior of pre-school children's apparel, this study focused on parent-consumers' evaluative criteria used in purchasing pre-school children's apparel both in Taiwan and in the U.S.

The purpose of this study was to compare the evaluative criteria used by Taiwan and U.S. parent-consumers in their decisions to purchase children's apparel. The importance of intrinsic criteria directly related to the product itself and some selected extrinsic criteria were examined.

The theoretical framework used for the present study was the EKB consumer behavior model; with focus on the alternative evaluation stage of the consumer decision making

process. Previous research has examined evaluative criteria used in purchasing women's and men's apparel, but only limited research has investigated evaluative criteria used in purchasing children's apparel.

Survey methodology was used to collect data. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to two non-probability, purposive samples to collect quantitative data. Data were collected through two selected pre-schools at Oregon State University in the U.S. and at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan. The samples consisted of 200 parent-consumers with a child or children, ages 3 to 6. Subjects were given questionnaires through teachers or researcher, resulting in a 84.1% response rate.

Collected data were analyzed using two sample t-tests. Significant differences were found between the two groups in the importance of aesthetic and extrinsic criteria but not in the importance of usefulness and performance criteria. Among all 22 criteria, significant differences were found between Taiwan and U.S. respondents in the importance of: fiber content, type of fabric, fabric print, having character/logo, color fastness, price, on sale, brand name, and country of origin. The most important criteria for both groups were comfort and size/fit.

By identifying the evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers of pre-school children's apparel in two countries, the results partially supported the EKB consumer behavior model. In addition, the findings about the importance of

purchase criteria used by parent-consumers may also benefit children's apparel manufacturers and retailers in revising or improving their competitive ability in global marketing.

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A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON OF PARENT-CONSUMERS'
EVALUATIVE CRITERIA USED IN PURCHASING
PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S APPAREL

by

Pei-Chun Chen

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**A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON OF PARENT-CONSUMERS'
EVALUATIVE CRITERIA USED IN PURCHASING
PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S APPAREL**

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The children's apparel industry was projected to be a \$23.2 billion industry in the United States in 1994 (Girone, 1994). With more than 50 million children under the age of 13 in the United States, children made up 4.9% of the population at the beginning of this decade (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990). Although some children's apparel is acquired through gifts and "hand-me-downs," parents also buy apparel for their children. Understanding consumers' needs and wants becomes increasingly important for children's apparel manufacturers and retailers to satisfy their customers (Norum & Wang, 1994). Therefore, it is important to determine what factors are considered as the most important when parents select their children's clothing. To gain a better understanding of parent-consumers' purchasing behavior of children's apparel, the purpose of this research was to study the evaluative criteria used by parents in purchasing children's apparel.

This study focused on parent-consumer behavior of pre-school children's apparel both in the U.S. and in Taiwan.

The study provided direction for U.S. children's apparel manufacturers and retailers in better understanding part of Asian markets, especially Chinese markets. Asian markets include China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and other Asian areas. These countries play an increasingly important role in today's global economy. Thus, increased understanding about Asian markets can help industries improve their global competitiveness in apparel products.

Taiwan was specified as one of the two sample groups in this research because it was considered a useful model representing part of Asian markets in terms of culture and economics. First, its ethnic characteristics make the Taiwan market a useful sample group for investigating parts of the Asian markets. The population of Taiwan is made up almost entirely of ethnic Chinese, the same as that of mainland China, which accounts for about one-fourth of total world population (Taiwan Government Information Office, 1991). Many of the other Asian markets (such as Singapore, and Indonesia) are partially made up of ethnic Chinese. Second, as one of Asia's economic "dragons," the Republic of China is one of the richest countries in the world. Its "gross national product per person is above Saudi Arabia's and double that of Greece or Portugal; schooling and health care are universal; life expectancy is high and rising; foreign-exchange reserves are, absurdly, the largest in the world." ("A survey," 1992, p. 4). Therefore, the Taiwan

market was considered useful when studying Asian markets and was chosen for the present research.

A great deal of research has been conducted on the consumer decision-making process (e.g., Eckman, Damhorst, & Kadolph, 1990; Moschis & Moore, 1979; Sproles & Sproles, 1990; Thomas, Cassill, & Forsythe, 1991). Most of this research has focused on U.S. consumers. To gain a better understanding of consumer decision making within a global market, it is important to compare the decision making processes of U.S. consumers with consumers from other countries.

Children's Apparel Market

McNeal (1992) stated that children play an increasingly important role in today's business. Children are responsible for spending a lot of money through either buying goods by themselves or influencing their parents' consumption (McNeal, 1992; Schlossberg, 1992; Zimmerman, 1992). According to McNeal's research (1992), three areas of purchase decisions influenced by children are items for children in the family (such as toys, clothes), items for the home (such as furniture, television sets, stereos) and items for the family (such as vacations, automobiles, food). In 62 selected product categories, a total consumption amount of more than \$132 billion was influenced by children, and was about 17% of the total industry sales of 1990 in

these categories (McNeal, 1992). These figures clearly show that the little pleas do build big business.

The increasing importance of the children's market is occurring not only in the U.S. but also in the other countries. Toyoshima (1990) stated that children in Japan's market are rapidly requiring higher quality for their clothes. Although the decreased birthrate of Japan is a signal of a shrinking market in volume from one perspective, "the decline in the number of children also means that the amount of money spent to rear each child will increase" (Toyoshima, 1990, p. 60). The Japanese customers (most of them are parents or grandparents) are willing to pay more money for children's goods and to pay more attention to quality and brand name. Many of the department stores try to increase their sales by providing better service and supplying unique products. Many retail stores organize parent-consumers by offering parent clubs and provide selling information as well as discounts for group members (Toyoshima, 1990).

The present study will examine evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers. Although many studies have examined the evaluative criteria used by consumers in purchasing apparel (Behling & Wilch, 1988; Bucklin & Gupta, 1992; Davis, 1987; Eckman et al., 1990; Forsythe, 1991; Lee & Burns, 1993; McLean, Roper, & Smothers, 1986), most of the studies have focused on adult apparel. One exception was an apparel market study ("Girls' sportswear," 1986) which found

that quality and price were considered the most important factors by parents when buying their children's clothing. In this study, 92% of the respondents indicated quality was an influential factor. Among a sample of mothers, 37% of the respondents circled "quality" as the most influential factor in their buying decisions. Price, obviously, was also important. About 83% of the subjects in this survey said price was taken into account when buying their daughters' clothing. About 29% of the mothers in this research said that price was the most influencing factor and 48% of them were willing to pay \$10 or less for skirts for their daughters. Style and brand name, although they were not the first two factors, were also very important to parents who enjoy dressing up their children. Why? "Let's face it, my kid is an extension of myself, and I have a good time dressing him up," said one mother (Levine, 1987, p. 52).

Now, more and more retailers are interested in the children's market (Levine, 1987). For example, The Gap, Laura Ashley, Esprit, Benetton, Sears, F.W. Woolworth, and Kids 'R' Us all provide children's apparel under private labels (Levine, 1987). Due to the increasing population of children, according to Exter's (1992) survey, the businesses that provide products for elementary school children and teenagers will face stronger and stronger demand in the 1990's.

Three important sales periods for children's merchants in the U.S. are back-to-school season (Fall), Christmas (Winter/holiday), and Easter (Spring/Summer) (Levine, 1987; Rath, Peterson, Greensley, & Gill, 1994). For the Chinese children's market, Chinese New Year (in January or February), back-to-school season and Children's Day (April 4) are believed to be the most important sales periods. March and May are most important for Japanese industries selling children's merchandise because of "Girl's Day" on March 3 and "Children's Day" on May 5 (Toyoshima, 1990). To understand those consumption patterns of the children's apparel consumers may help retailers and manufacturers to improve or revise their marketing strategies in the future.

Overall, to increase our understanding of the children's market, the present research studied the children's market by focusing on parent-consumers' evaluative criteria used in purchasing pre-school children's apparel.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the evaluative criteria used by U.S. and Taiwan parent-consumers in their decisions to purchase pre-school children's apparel. The study focused on the alternative evaluation stage of the consumer decision making process in order to better understand consumer behavior of pre-school children's

apparel. This study was conducted to answer the following questions: What are the most important factors (evaluative criteria) used by parents to evaluate pre-school children's apparel when purchasing apparel for their pre-school child or children; and what are the differences between the U.S. parent-consumers and the Taiwan parent-consumers in the importance of factors used in evaluating purchase alternatives. The importance of intrinsic factors directly related to the product itself (such as style, type of fabric, color, ease of care, and fiber content) and some selected extrinsic factors (such as price, brand name, country of origin, children's influence, store preference, and advertisement) were examined. By identifying the evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers of children's apparel the results benefit children's apparel manufacturers and retailers in responding to future needs of U.S. and Taiwan consumers. This comparative study also provided insight to the differences between U.S. and Taiwan parent-consumers in their decision making regarding pre-school children's apparel products. Apparel manufacturers and retailers may use the findings to improve their competitive ability in global marketing.

Objectives of Study

The objectives for the present study were to:

1. Investigate the evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers for pre-school children's apparel when purchasing children's apparel in Taiwan and U.S. markets.
2. Identify the importance of extrinsic criteria and intrinsic criteria in purchasing pre-school children's apparel.
3. Examine the difference in the importance of evaluative criteria between Taiwan parent-consumers and U.S. parent-consumers.
4. Describe the differences in evaluative criteria used by Taiwan parent-consumers and U.S. parent-consumers in their purchases of pre-school children's apparel.

Nature of Research

The purpose of this research was to study parent-consumers' purchase decision making for pre-school children's apparel in the U.S. and in Taiwan markets. According to the statement of purpose and the objectives of the study, the nature of this research was classified as applied research using a cross-national field survey to examine quantitative data.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research, the following terms are defined as:

Children's Apparel--or children's wear, children's clothing.

Clothes for children including infants, toddlers, girls', boys', and preteen (Stone, 1990). Among those size categories, "children's size refers to apparel for girls and boys, age 3 to 6 " (Rath et al., 1994, p. 486). The present study focused on apparel for pre-school children ages 3 to 6.

Parent-consumers--consumers who are also parents and

purchase children's apparel for their child or children.

Alternative Evaluation--"the third stage of the nonhabitual

decision-making process in which a choice alternative is evaluated and selected to meet consumer need" (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1993, p. G-1).

Evaluative Criteria--"the standards and specifications used

by consumers to compare different products and brands" (Engel et al., 1993, p. G-5).

Intrinsic Criteria--"product attributes that cannot be

changed or manipulated without also changing the physical characteristics of the product itself" (Eckman et al., 1990, p. 14). In this study, intrinsic criteria included aesthetic criteria, usefulness criteria, and performance criteria.

Aesthetic Criteria--one dimension of intrinsic criteria

which focuses on the appearance characteristics of the product itself. In this study, aesthetic criteria included style, fiber content, type of fabric,

uniqueness, color, fabric print or design, and having particular character/logo on the clothing.

Usefulness Criteria--one dimension of intrinsic criteria which focuses on as the functions or utilitarian concerns of the product (Eckman et al., 1990). Versatility and matching were the two selected usefulness criteria for this study.

Performance Criteria--one dimension of intrinsic criteria which focuses on the practical considerations of the product. In the present study, performance criteria covered right size/fit, comfort for child, ease of care, colorfastness of fabric, durability of fabric, and quality of construction.

Extrinsic Criteria--"product attributes that are not component parts of the physical product but that are applied by the manufacturer or retailer" (Eckman et al, 1990, p. 14). In this study, extrinsic criteria included price, brand name, country of origin, children's influence, advertisement, and store preference.

Compensatory Decision Rule--an evaluative decision rule in which a weakness of a product can be overcome by other strengths of the product. A consumer still will purchase the product after knowing its weakness.

Non-compensatory Decision Rule--an evaluative decision rule in which a weakness of a product can not be overcome by other strengths of the product. A consumer will not

purchase the product because of the weakness of the product.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested for this study:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between Taiwan parent-consumers and U.S. parent-consumers in the importance of **aesthetic criteria** when purchasing pre-school children's apparel.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between Taiwan parent-consumers and U.S. parent-consumers in the importance of **usefulness criteria** when purchasing pre-school children's apparel.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between Taiwan parent-consumers and U.S. parent-consumers in the importance of **performance criteria** when purchasing pre-school children's apparel.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between Taiwan parent-consumers and U.S. parent-consumers in the importance of **extrinsic criteria** when purchasing pre-school children's apparel.

Assumptions

In this study, the parent-consumers were assumed to be rational decision makers when purchasing pre-school

children's apparel. Rational decision making is defined as "problem solving based on the careful weighing and evaluation of utilitarian or functional product attributes (Engel et al., 1993, p. G-10). Different from hedonic consumers, rational decision makers will go through an extended decision process including all decision making stages: need recognition, search for information, alternative evaluation, and purchase. It was also assumed that participants in the study responded to the survey truthfully and completely.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature includes sections on the theoretical framework, evaluative criteria and the purchase decision making process, evaluative criteria used in purchasing apparel, variables for this study, and summary.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this study was to examine the evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers in their purchase decisions regarding pre-school children's apparel. The theoretical framework for the present study was based on a model of consumer behavior. Because consumers' evaluation of alternative products is one aspect of the purchase decision making process of consumer behavior, the EKB (Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell) consumer behavior model as well as the purchase decision making process are briefly described in the first section of this chapter.

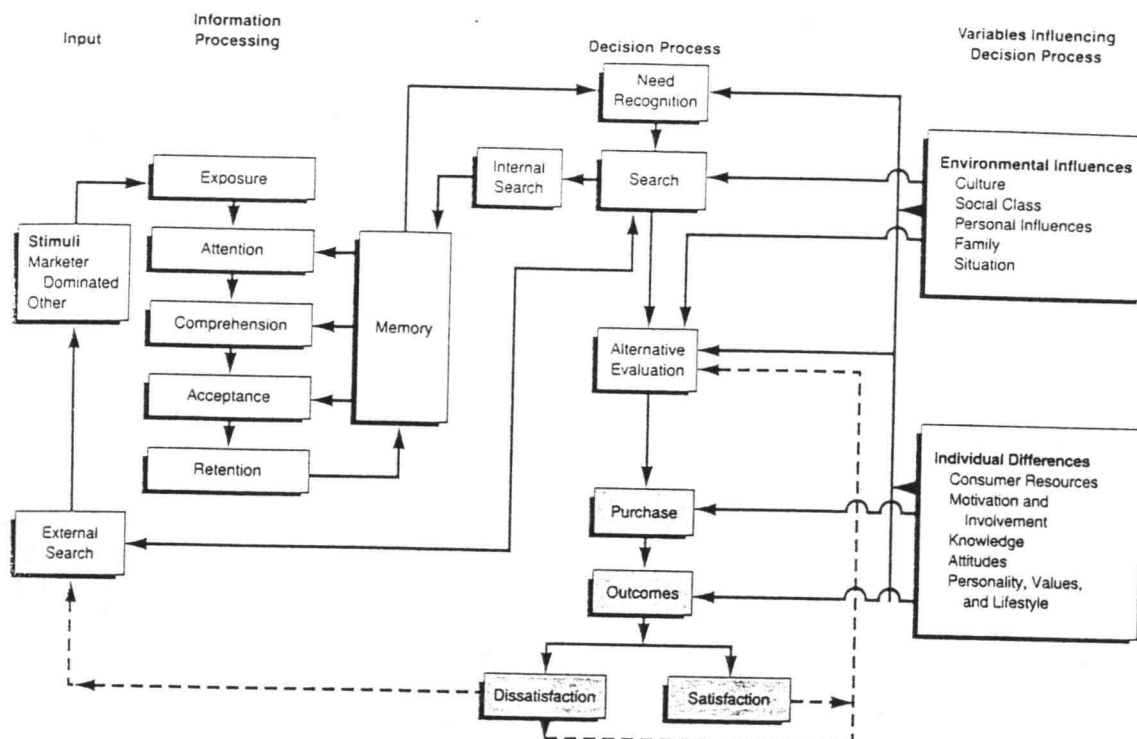
EKB Consumer Behavior Model

Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell's (EKB) model of consumer behavior (see Figure 1) served as a theoretical framework for this study (Engel et al., 1993, p. 53). This model

Figure 1

EKB Consumer Behavior Model

(A Complete Model of Consumer Behavior Showing Purchase and Its Outcomes)



Note. Engel, J.F., Blackwell, R.D., & Miniard, P.W., (1993), Consumer behavior (7th ed.). New York: The Dryden Press. p. 53.

outlines the relationships among stimuli input, the information process, the decision making process and variables influencing the decision process. The earliest draft of this model was presented in Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell's book, Consumer Behavior (1968) and has since been tested and revised (Engel et al., 1993).

According to the EKB model, the phrase "stimuli inputs" refers to the stimuli which come from marketers and social environments. The information process represents a series of stages including exposure, attention comprehension, acceptance, and retention. By going through information process, stimuli are "received, interpreted, stored in memory, and later retrieved" (Engel et al., 1993, p. G-7). The decision process includes need recognition, search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and outcomes (satisfaction or dissatisfaction). This specific part of the EKB model, the decision process, was the main focus of the present study and will be discussed later. The EKB model also outlines the effect of environmental influences (such as culture, social class, personal influences, family, and situation) and individual differences (such as consumer resources, motivation, involvement, knowledge, attitudes, and personality) on consumer behavior. In the EKB model, the relationships among these components are shown to be interrelated.

This model has been tested by many researchers who examined different aspects of the model. For example,

evaluative criteria, lifestyle, and cultural norms and values have been studied by Cassill and Drake (1987), and culture, one of the environmental factors, was the focus of Ho's study (1991). Evaluative criteria and cultural background, and self-consciousness have been examined by Lee and Burns (1993). Evaluative criteria of the decision making process and culture were examined in a leisurewear purchasing study by Hsiao (1993). The importance of evaluative criteria of the decision-making process was also used by Norum and Wang (1994) as the conceptual model in their study to investigate the purchase decisions made by children's wear consumers. This model has become very familiar to many researchers in consumer behavior. The present study utilized this model by focusing on one specific stage of the decision making process (the alternative evaluation stage) to examine parent-consumers regarding their purchasing of pre-school children's apparel.

Consumer Decision Making Process

The process of consumer decision making is the central component of the EKB consumer behavior model. As mentioned, the decision making process includes five stages: need recognition, search for information, alternative evaluation, purchase, and outcomes (Engel et al., 1993, p. 41).

Need recognition, the first stage of the decision making process, is defined as a "perception of a difference

between the desired state of affairs and the actual situation sufficient to arouse and activate the decision process" (Engel et al., 1993, p. G-8). Not until consumers see a difference between a desired situation (what they would like to have) and the actual situation (what they already have) do they realize the existence of the need. Once consumers recognize the needs, they will jump to the second stage--information search.

Searching for information starts with internal search in which consumers will first go to their memory for useful information about the need. If there is no useful information or not enough information, then consumers will look for help by searching other possible sources. This is referred to as external search. For example, consumers may ask other family members, friends, or salesperson; or will watch TV, or read magazines and books to gain useful information about a specific product.

Alternative evaluation takes place after consumers get useful information either from internal or external searches. During the alternative evaluation stage, consumers decide what alternatives they would like to use as well as how to evaluate the alternatives (e.g., what criteria will be used).

After the third stage, consumers now are able to make their final decision--purchase or not purchase. When consumers have enough information about a specific product and clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the

product, they will feel comfortable to make the purchase decision.

The purchase decision making process is not terminated when consumers make their purchase decisions. After purchase, it is the outcome stage which is the important stage of post-purchase evaluation. Either response of satisfaction or dissatisfaction influences consumers' attitudes toward the product and their future purchase decision making.

The above descriptions of the purchase decision making process are broadly viewed as rational decision making. The present study focused on the third stage, alternative evaluation, specifically with regards to the evaluative criteria used for purchases of pre-school children's apparel.

Evaluative Criteria And The Purchase Decision Making Process

In this section, descriptions are focused on the third stage of the purchase decision making processes. The concept of alternative evaluation, determining choice alternatives, and selecting decision rules are described as follows.

Alternative Evaluation

Alternative evaluation is defined as "the process by which a choice alternative is evaluated and selected to meet

consumer needs" (Engel et al., 1993, p. 534). In the third stage of the purchase decision process, consumers not only have to decide what criteria are important and will be used for evaluating products but also need to choose how to weigh those criteria. Therefore, determining choice alternatives and selecting decision rules are important concepts in this particular stage.

In going through the alternative evaluation stage, consumers can compare products using the criteria important to them. Apparel manufacturers and retailers also benefit by knowing their customers better. By providing better services or products to meet consumers' needs, manufacturers and retailers can improve their sales and/or market shares.

Eckman, Damhorst, and Kadolph (1990) noted the importance of studying evaluative criteria. They described that:

"evaluative criteria are manifestations of the consumer's underlying values and attitudes, stored information and experience, and various psychological, sociological, and economic influences development of models of the apparel purchase process is a formidable but challenging undertaking" (Eckman et al., 1990, p.13).

Determining Choice Alternatives

In the alternative evaluation stage, consumers need to determine what alternatives they would like to use. The very first step in the alternative evaluation stage is the formation of a "consideration set" or "evoked set" (Engel et

al., 1993). A consideration set is a list of alternatives from which consumer's decision will be chosen. For example, before shopping, consumers will need to decide where to go. Therefore, a consideration set of stores (KMart, Target, Meier & Frank, Nordstrom, etc.) will be formed according to consumers' needs and previous shopping experiences. It is very important for retailers to have their stores and products chosen into consumers' consideration sets. After forming a consideration set (evoked set) of shopping stores, a consumer will choose one or more by using different selection decision rules.

Selecting Decision Rules

Consumers use different decision rules to help them determine the priority of purchase decisions. There are two main rules used by consumers in making their decisions: a compensatory decision rule and non-compensatory decision rule.

Compensatory Decision Rule

The compensatory decision rule means that in consumers' minds the strengths of the product can make up for its weaknesses; so that consumers will still be willing to buy the product. For example, a girl's dress may have wonderful color, desired style, and inexpensive price. A mother may buy it for her five-year-old daughter even though she found that the dress is not fashionable; the fashionability was

not a very important evaluative criterion to this mother in purchasing a dress for her daughter.

Non-compensatory Decision Rule

On the opposite side, the non-compensatory decision rule represents a situation in which the weaknesses of the product can not be overcome by its strengths. Based on the former example, if the mother thinks that appearance is the most important criterion, the dress' poor of appearance would provide the basis for eliminating the dress from the consideration set.

In the present study, parent-consumers' uses of selecting decision rules for purchasing pre-school children's apparel were examined. The responses help in describing parent-consumers in their use of evaluative criteria for their purchase decision making.

Evaluative Criteria Used In Purchasing Apparel

The present study focused on evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers during purchase decision making of pre-school children's clothing. Although many previous studies (see Table 1) have examined various evaluative criteria relative to women's apparel (Bucklin & Gupta, 1992; Davis, 1987; Mclean et al., 1986; & Thomas et al., 1991) and to men's apparel (Behling & Wilch, 1988; Forsythe, 1991), there

Table 1

Previous Studies on Apparel Purchasing

Author	Products	Factors
Behling & Wilch (1988)	actual products (men's slacks)	brand name and price
Bucklin & Gupta (1992)	actual product (women's hosiery)	brand choice
Chang (1992)	children's clothing	children's preferences & selections of clothing, mother's yielding patterns when purchasing children's clothing
Davis (1987)	actual products (blouse)	care label, store, fabric fit general construction, neck label, price style, and salesperson's opinion
Dickerson (1982)	general garment	US-product and import
Eckman, Damhorst, & Kadolph (1990)	general garment	aesthetic, usefulness, performance and quality, and extrinsic criteria
Forsythe (1991)	actual products (men's shirts)	brand name, price and quality
Griffin & O'Neal (1992)	fabric for a casual dress	fabric quality
Hsiao (1993)	leisurewear	intrinsic & extrinsic factors
Jenkins & Dickey (1976)	written identification of product class	clothing-related factors, general value factors, information-related factors, activity-interest factors, and personality factors
Lee & Burns (1993)	actual products (women's jacket and dress)	fashion & attractiveness, quality, brand name, and style & price
McCullough & Morris (1980)	children's clothing	durability, color fastness, appearance, and ease of care
McLean, Roper, & Smothers (1986)	actual products (blouses)	blouse type, country of origin, store type, fabric structure, fiber content, and price
Norum, & Wang (1994)	children's wear	appearance, function, performance, fit, and price factors
Shim & Kotsiopulos (1991)	general apparel	product, individual company characteristics, buying situation, and vendor selection criteria.
Thomas, Cassill, & Forsythe (1991)	female apparel	apparel involvement and fiber information

is limited research on evaluative criteria used when purchasing children's clothing (Chang, 1992; McCullough & Morris, 1980; Norum & Wang, 1994). Therefore, studies focusing on evaluative criteria used in purchasing adult apparel in addition to children's apparel were reviewed and described in this section.

Evaluative criteria are "the standards and specifications used by consumers to compare different products and brands" (Engel et al., 1993, p. G-5). Jenkins and Dickey (1976) viewed evaluative criteria as "the specifications or standards used by consumers in comparing and assessing alternatives and play a prominent role in the decision process" (p. 151). They described the concept of benefit segmentation in marketing and indicated that an understanding of evaluative criteria used by consumers was essential in achieving marketing strategies (Jenkins & Dickey, 1976).

In Jenkins and Dickey's research, clothing evaluative criteria were divided into two major categories: product-related and person-related variables. Factors which influenced clothing evaluation were found in both product-related and person-related categories. This suggests that product-related criteria as well as person-related criteria should be examined to better understand apparel purchase behaviors.

Evaluative criteria used in apparel purchasing also were classified into categories by other researchers. Eckman

et al. (1990) agreed with Jenkins and Dickey in the importance of evaluative criteria to the understanding consumers' values, attitudes, and other concepts. Therefore, Eckman, Damhorst, and Kadolph decided not to use pre-selected criteria but chose to conduct in-store interviews in order to understand how multiple criteria were used and combined by respondents for women's apparel purchasing. Based upon the responses collected, Eckman et al. (1990) classified criteria into four categories by using a computer text analysis system for sorting collected responses. These four categories were aesthetic criteria (color, style, etc.), usefulness criteria (versatility, matching, etc.), performance and quality criteria (fit, comfort, etc.), and extrinsic criteria (price, brand, and competition) (Eckman et al., 1990).

Cassill and Drake (1987) investigated the relationship between lifestyle and evaluative criteria of women's apparel. Respondents in their study were employed and non-employed female consumers. The evaluative criteria were divided into three categories to examine the relationships with lifestyle factors used for social apparel. The evaluative criteria used for social apparel were appropriateness (suitability, fit, quality, comfort, fabric, etc.), economic (price, good value, ease of care, and durability), and other-people directed (prestige, sexy, brand and store name, and fashionable) (Cassill & Drake, 1987).

Forsythe (1991) described that evaluative cues included intrinsic factors (regarding physical characteristics) and extrinsic factors (regarding non-physical characteristics). Consumers will use both intrinsic factors (e.g., design, style) and extrinsic factors (e.g., brand name, price, store image) to evaluate products (Forsythe, 1991).

Based upon a factor analysis of evaluative criteria, Lee and Burns (1993) classified clothing purchase criteria into four major parts: fashion and attractiveness, quality, brand name, and style and price. Under the four factor categories, Lee and Burns examined the relationship among evaluative criteria, cultural background, and the personal trait of self-consciousness.

Norum and Wang (1994) investigated the patronage patterns of the children's wear consumers. Evaluative criteria refer to "physical product attributes as well as subjective factors that consumers consider to be important in the purchase decision" (p. 333). They categorized criteria into five groups: appearance (fashionability, style, color, and brand name), function (mix, match, self-help, growth feature, and Made in USA), performance (durability, ease of care, fiber content, and quality), fit (fit and comfort), and price.

Based upon this past research and according to the purpose of the present study, the evaluative criteria used for pre-school children's apparel purchase were divided into four categories: aesthetic criteria, usefulness criteria,

performance criteria, and extrinsic criteria. Aesthetic criteria included style, fiber content, type of fabric, uniqueness, color, fabric print or design, and having particular character/logo on clothing. Usefulness criteria covered versatility and matching. Performance criteria were right size/fit, comfort for child, ease of care, colorfastness of fabric, durability of fabric, and quality of construction. All the above three categories are considered intrinsic criteria. Extrinsic criteria included price, on sale, brand name, country of origin, children's influence, advertisement, and store preference.

Intrinsic Criteria

Style, fashion, and fabric and fiber content are all main characteristics directly related to evaluation of apparel. Several previous studies focused on one or more of these characteristics (Davis, 1987; Dickerson, 1982; Lee & Burns, 1993).

Eckman et al. (1990) found that styling was mentioned most often as a negative comment by consumers for rejecting a garment. On the other hand, style also was found as a positive comment for non-purchases. Therefore, the findings indicated that styling plays an important role in the decision process of in-store apparel purchases.

Fiber content is an important factor for consumers in their apparel selection process (Davis, 1987; Eckman et al.,

1990; Thomas et al., 1991). Davis (1987) indicated that fabric was selected as the main reason for all four brand blouses in decision making process. Fabric, like price, also was one of the most important factors for female consumers to judge clothing quality in her study.

Consistent with Davis' (1987) findings, Eckman et al. (1990) in personal in-store interviews, also found that fiber and fabric characteristics were very important factors influencing purchase decisions.

Thomas, Cassill, and Forsythe (1991) studied whether apparel involvement was composed of more than one dimension and if fiber information sources could explain the apparel involvement dimensions. The results indicated that apparel involvement is multi-dimensional. More important for the present study, they also found that fiber content was important information in explaining apparel involvement. Although Thomas' study did not directly examine the relationship between fiber content and apparel purchasing, the findings still support that fiber content influences consumers' perception with respect to women's apparel.

In Norum and Wang's (1994) study, performance criteria which related to practical considerations were found to be the most important to respondents while aesthetic criteria were moderately important. These practical-concerned criteria included comfort, fit, price, durability, and ease of care.

Extrinsic Criteria

Extrinsic criteria are product attributes which are not part of the physical components of the products. Although these factors are not directly related to the physical components of products, they have determinate influence on consumers in their purchase decision making. The main extrinsic criteria to be described in this section include price, brand name, country of origin, lifestyle, and children's influence.

Price

Most of the previous research which focused on multiple criteria of apparel evaluation included price as one of the main criteria to be investigated. Price was found in Eckman et al.'s research (1990) as one of the two criteria used most often by consumers in apparel selection while brand name was the other one.

As mentioned earlier, Jenkins and Dickey (1976) focused on consumer types and classified consumers into different segments based on evaluative criteria used in their decision making. Economy-consciousness, one segment in their study, was described as "exhibitive of eagerness to get the best clothing value for the money" (p. 154). According to the economy-conscious consumers, price was an important consideration for getting a "good buy." The findings indicated that economy-consciousness influenced attitudes toward clothing.

Davis (1987) investigated pre-purchase information search behavior used by female consumers for clothing purchase decisions. The most influential factors for rating clothing quality were: style, price, fabric, store, and fit whereas style, price, fit, and fabric were most often used for ratings of clothing fashionability. Overall, she found that price as well as type of fabric had the most impact on subjects in their clothing judgments.

Eckman et al. (1990) categorized price, like brand and competition, as an extrinsic criterion. Price was not mentioned by most subjects in their in-store interviews. Eckman et al. (1990) believed this occurred because consumers pre-selected price ranges based on their image about the store and consumers did not feel it necessary to mention price as a selecting criterion at the point of purchase. Forsythe (1991) found that shoppers especially those categorized as "brand conscious," believed that the higher the price, the better the quality.

Brand Name

Brand name is important for at least two main reasons. First, brand name influences consumers' perceptions of product quality (Forsythe, 1991). Forsythe (1991) described the importance of brand name in that it "stands for some indication of product features and is useful in positioning the brand in a product attribute space" (p. 1). Second, brand name also represents a symbol of social status (Behling & Wilch, 1988; Engel et al, 1993). Many previous

researchers described that people buy things for their functional (e.g., to protect body) as well as meaningful (e.g., to express personality) considerations (Behling & Wilch, 1988; Blumer, 1968; Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991).

Forsythe (1991) examined the effect of private, designer, and national brands on consumers' evaluations of apparel products with respect to quality and price. "Quality conscious" consumers (search for best quality) and "brand conscious" consumers (believe that higher price means better quality) were identified as two groups of subjects in the study. Brand conscious and quality conscious shoppers did not differ in their demographic characteristics such as gender, income, and education. The findings indicated that brand name did influence consumers' perceptions of price but not perceptions of quality. Consumers tended to use garment characteristics (style, color, etc.) more often than brand name to determine garment quality.

Behling and Wilch (1988) expanded previous research on the impact of brand name on men's perceptions of clothing quality and price. The results supported the belief that brand name is a determinate extrinsic factor for male consumers in their clothing purchase decisions and consumers were willing to pay more for certain brand names.

In Norum and Wang's (1994) study, the importance of brand name varied for shoppers of different stores. The results indicated that brand name was important to the shoppers of department stores and specialty stores while it

was less important to shoppers of discount stores and used clothing stores.

Country of Origin

With the continued increase of textile and apparel imports into the United States, it is important to understand the relationship between country of origin and consumers' apparel selection. Previously, researchers have investigated this specific variable (country of origin or import vs. domestic apparel) but report inconsistent findings.

Through telephone interviews, Dickerson (1982) examined consumers' views of imported apparel versus domestically--produced apparel and consumers' perceptions of quality of imported and domestically produced apparel. She found that most of the consumers were aware of the country of origin when making purchases decisions, and they believed that the quality of domestic garments was better than that of imported garments. The middle-income consumers were found to be most concerned about the country of origin of apparel products and preferred to have domestically produced ones.

Different from Dickerson's findings, McLean, Roper, and Smothers (1986) found that there was no significant relationship between country of origin and purchase motivation of female consumers in buying blouses. They concluded that country of origin had little influence on the subjects (women in age 25 to 44) whereas clothing color, coordination with existing wardrobe, and attractive price

were the most important factors influencing blouse purchasing.

In Eckman et al.'s research (1990) none of their subjects mentioned country of origin as a considered criterion used for assessing apparel.

Although inconsistent findings have been reported in previous research, country of origin is considered to play an important role in apparel marketing, and should not be ignored. The apparel industry needs to pay attention to the reactions of their customers to "country of origin" in order to be more competitive in apparel markets.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle, the patterns in which people live and spend their time and money, is an important determinant of evaluative criteria in the decision making process (Engel et al., 1993). Cassill and Drake (1987) investigated lifestyle and apparel criteria in order to better understand female consumers' apparel selections. Cassill and Drake's findings supported Engel et al.'s model in linking lifestyle and evaluative criteria together. Lifestyles were found to be related to a person's evaluative criteria for both social apparel and employment apparel. Evaluative criteria including self-confidence, attractive/fashionable, and buying an American-made product were found to be important for female consumers on social apparel and employment apparel.

Children's Influence

According to the nature of this study, children's influence on family decision making was considered as an important evaluative criterion and was examined. Pre-school children's apparel was usually purchased by adults such as parents, grandparents, relatives, or friends instead of by children themselves. Children, the product users, may have some opinions or specific needs and preferences for apparel which is purchased by their parents for them. Therefore, children's influence is regarded as one of the evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers when purchasing children's apparel. For the present study, previous research about children's influences in family decision making is briefly described to gain some understanding about this issue.

Previous research has found that children play an important role in the family decision making process. Lackman and Lanasa (1993) reviewed the traditional family decision making theory and the role children play in family decision making. The influence of children in family decision making is considered to be growing and should not be ignored (Lackman & Lanasa, 1993). Some researchers (Atkin, 1978; Childers & Rao, 1992; Douthitt & Fedyk, 1988) found that children influenced their family members, especially their parents, in different ways. Table 2 summarizes some previous studies of children's influence on family decision making.

Atkin (1978) examined the interactions between parents and children during cereal purchase decisions in supermarkets. The results indicated that children initiated two-thirds of all the interactions, and even more, many of them knew exactly what they wanted before asking. In the other one-third of the cases, even when parents initiated the interaction, children were asked by their parents to make a choice among several cereals. Because cereal is one of the items in which children, as product users, were directly involved, parents tended to be more influenced by children's opinions.

Children's influence in family decision making was also studied for other products such as televisions, automobiles, vacations, household appliances, and furniture (Belch, Belch, & Ceresins, 1985; Foxman, Tansuhaj, & Ekstrom, 1989).

Belch, Belch, and Ceresins (1985) studied the influence of the husband, wife, and teenage child in family decision making. They found that children's influence varied by product class and decision stage (initiation, search and evaluation, and final decision); whereas wives were involved in all decisions in a moderate degree and husbands' involvement varied depending on the product. The results were consistent with other studies on the importance of children's influence in purchasing products in which they were directly involved, such as vacations and breakfast

Table 2

Previous Studies of Children's Influence on Family Decision Making

Author (Year)	Product (s)	Respondent (s)
Atkin (1978)	cereal	parents & children
Belch, Belch, & Ceresino (1985)	television, automobile, vacation, household appliance, household furniture, breakfast cereal	parents & teenage child
Berey & Pollay (1968)	Cereal	mothers, children (8-11 years), & teachers
Carlson, Grossbart, & Walsh (1990)	general products	mothers
Chang (1992)	children's clothing	parents & guardian
Douthitt & Fedyk (1988)	durable items, food, & clothing	two-child family
Foxman, Tansuhaj, & Ekstrom (1989)	records, bicycle, & magazine for child, home computer, groceries, furniture, toothpaste, dress clothes, cable TV, and car	parents & adolescent child
Isler, Popper, & Ward (1987)	general products	mothers & children
Polachek & Polachek (1989)	general products	parents
Ward & Wackman (1972)	general products	mothers

cereal. The study also suggested that future research examining children's actual roles in family decision making was needed.

A diary study was designed to explore the relationships between children's purchase requests and parent's responses by Isler, Popper, and Ward (1987). Different request categories (types of products) such as snack foods, candy, toys, clothing, cereal, and other items were analyzed. The results showed that children's requests for cereal and snack food were in the highest frequency for all age groups (children ages 3-4, 5-7, and 9-11). Ten percent of all requests were for clothing, especially for footwear (4.1%). The results also indicated that different types of products were requested by different aged children. For example, clothing and sports goods were more often requested by older children (ages 9-11). Parents' responses were found to be related to prices.

Another study (Baxter, 1991) focused on how children used media and their influence on purchases. The products considered to be strongly influenced by children were movie rentals, cold cereals, sneakers, jeans, and sweatshirts. The study not only confirmed children's influence on their parents' purchases, but also pointed out that children's influence could reach to others around them such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, and peers.

Chang's research (1992) examined the roles of mothers and their children, ages 3 to 6, in children's clothing

selections. The study focused on mothers' perceptions of their children's roles in clothing purchases. The results indicated that girls more often shopped with their mothers and were more often making purchase decisions for themselves than were boys when shopping clothing with their mothers. The result also showed that children have their own preferences for clothing and would like to ask their mothers to purchase for them.

Based on the previous studies, children's influence was considered important when investigating parent-consumers' purchase decision-making on children's apparel. Therefore, children's influence was examined in the present study as an evaluative criterion.

Summary

Criteria that have been found to influence evaluation of apparel include aesthetic, usefulness, performance, and extrinsic factors. Previous researchers (see Table 1, p. 22) have studied a number of factors such as appearance, style, fabric, fiber content, fit, comfort, price, brand name, country of origin, ease of care, versatility, durability, store image, children's influence, lifestyle, and advertisement. However, few researchers have specifically focused on children's apparel. By studying this specific area, the present research serves as a missing

piece to help complete the picture of apparel purchase decision making.

Variables In This Study

According to the previous research, some of the evaluative criteria are clearly determinate factors when consumers were making their purchase decisions. The present study focused on evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers in purchasing pre-school children's apparel. Intrinsic and extrinsic criteria were considered important and selected as variables for this study. The variables of evaluative criteria of pre-school children's apparel used for the present study covered four categories. The four categories were organized according to Eckman et al.'s taxonomy (1990). These categories were also recommended by Lee and Burns (1993) to be used by researchers studying consumer's use of evaluative criteria.

Table 3 lists the four categories and specific factors in each of them which were selected for this study. Aesthetic criteria included style, type of fabric, fiber content, uniqueness, color, fabric print or design, and having particular character/logo on clothing. Usefulness criteria were versatility and matching. Performance criteria included right fit/size, comfort for child, ease of care, colorfastness of fabric, durability of fabric, and

Table 3

Variables in This StudyIntrinsic Criteria**Aesthetic criteria**

Style
 Fiber content
 Type of fabric
 Uniqueness
 Color
 Fabric print of design
 Having special character or
 logo on clothing

Usefulness criteria

Versatility
 Matching

Performance criteria

Comfort for child
 Right size or fit
 Ease of care
 Colorfastness
 Durability of fabric
 Quality of construction

Extrinsic Criteria

Price
 Item was on sale
 Brand name
 Country of origin
 Children's influence
 Advertisement
 Store preference

quality of construction. Extrinsic criteria covered price, item was on sale, brand name, country of origin, children's influence (my child specifically asked for the item), advertisement (I saw an advertisement for the item), store where I prefer to shop, and other (subjects were asked to specify it). All the above selected variables were examined and compared in this study.

Summary

The theoretical framework for this study was the EKB consumer behavior model. As part of this model, the purchase decision making process was the focus of the present study. Previous research related to evaluative criteria on apparel purchase was reviewed and discussed. Because of varying research purposes, the evaluative criteria studied in previous research were classified in different ways. In general, intrinsic criteria (e.g., style, fabric, fiber content, color, etc.) or extrinsic criteria (e.g., price, brand name, country of origin, etc.) have been examined. Therefore, the present study investigated parent-consumers' use of both intrinsic evaluative criteria and extrinsic evaluative criteria in their decision making regarding the purchase of pre-school children's apparel. Twenty-two selected evaluative criteria were divided into four criteria categories to be examined.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of the present study was to compare U.S. parent-consumers and Taiwan parent-consumers in terms of the evaluative criteria they use when purchasing pre-school children's apparel. According to the purpose and the hypotheses of the study, the procedure used in completing this study is described in this chapter. The research methods described include the following: research design, sample, research instrument, data collection, data analyses, and summary.

Research Design

In order to test the hypotheses, survey methodology was used to collect data. Two sample groups, U.S. parent-consumers and Taiwan parent-consumers, served as subjects for the study. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to a non-probability, purposive sample to collect quantitative data. The independent variable for analysis purposes was subjects' national citizenship/residence with two groups (U.S. and Taiwan). Dependent variables included evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers: aesthetic criteria, usefulness criteria, performance criteria, and extrinsic criteria. Several data

analysis techniques were used to analyze the data and to test the hypotheses. Demographic characteristics of subjects were analyzed to examine the differences in use of criteria between the two groups of subjects. Data collected in this survey help in describing parent-consumers' use of evaluative criteria relative to their purchase decision making for children's apparel.

Sample

According to the nature of this study, a non-probability, purposive sample was used in the present study. The sample was purposively identified to investigate evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers in the alternative evaluation stage of the purchasing process.

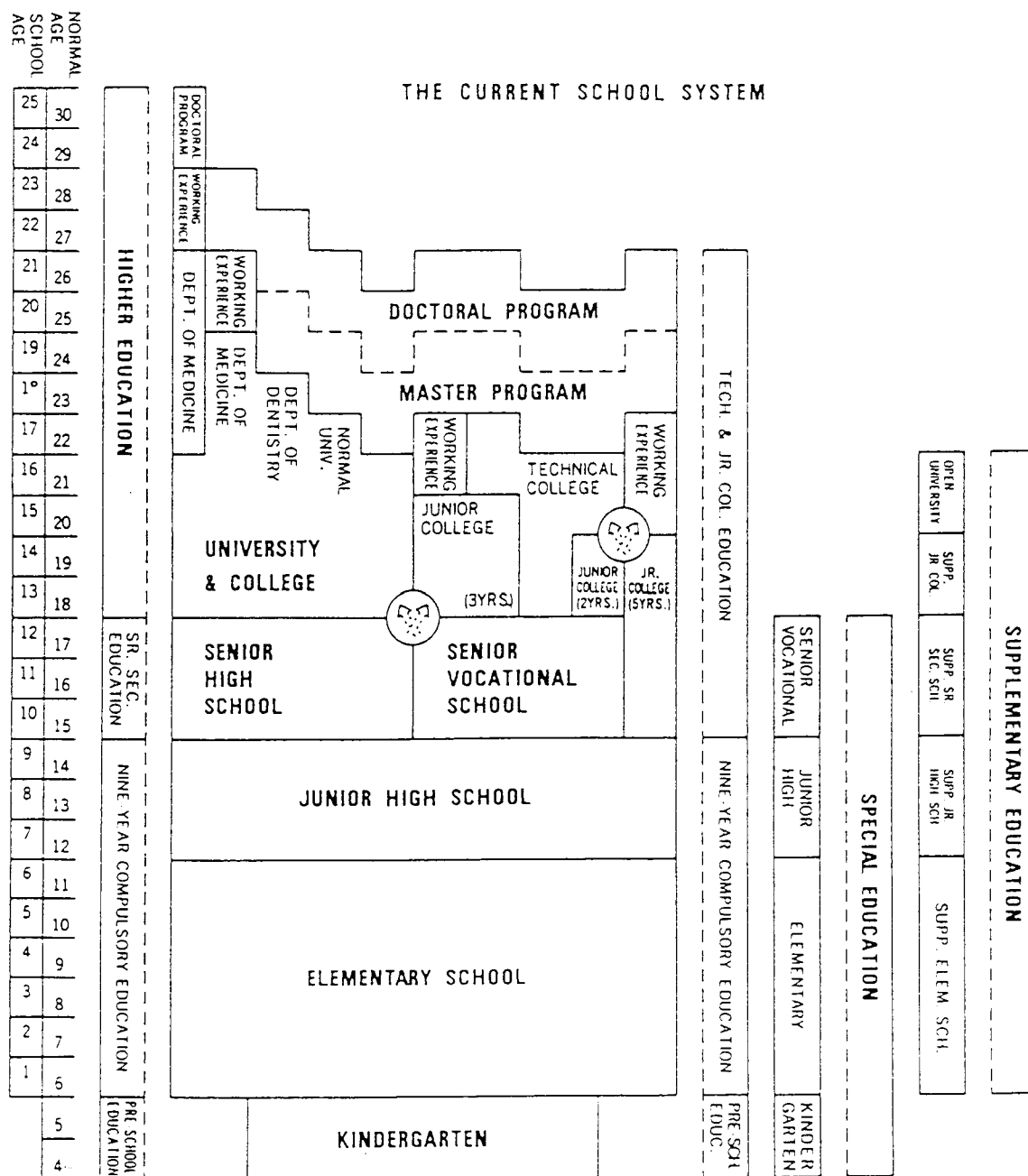
The sample for this study consisted of 200 parent-consumers with a child or children, ages 3 to 6. These parents had children enrolled either at the Child Development Center at Oregon State University (OSU) or at the Child Development and Family Study Center, Fu Jen Catholic University (FCU), Taipei, Taiwan during Winter term 1995. To be eligible subjects, the parents also must have bought children's apparel during the prior year. The subjects were asked to answer related questions in the beginning of questionnaire to identify their qualifications for inclusion in the sample.

Pre-schools were selected because the school system for children, ages 3 to 6, in Taiwan is similar to the school system in the U.S. Figure 2 shows the education system used in Taiwan. Children, ages 3 to 5, are classified in one category called pre-school or kindergarten. In the U.S., children, ages 3 to 4, are categorized as pre-school while 5-year-old children are in kindergarten. Children who just turn 6 will usually stay in kindergartens until the next school year. Therefore, the pre-school children selected in this study were in the range of ages 3 to 6. Because of the similarity in the school systems, the subjects for the present study were chosen from parents of pre-school children in the U.S. and in Taiwan.

For reasons of convenience, parents of children enrolled at the OSU Child Development Center, Department of Human Development and Family Sciences, Oregon State University, were chosen as an appropriate sample group for the present study. About 80 children, ages 3 to 6, were enrolled and divided into four sessions: two morning classes and two afternoon classes. Each class consisted of about 20 students, one supervisor and several assistant teachers. The sources of students included families from the OSU faculty, staff and students as well as from the Corvallis community.

Figure 2

The Current School System Used in Taiwan



Note. Ministry of Education. (1992). Educational statistics of the Republic of China. Taiwan, Republic of China: Ministry of Education office.

Since the sources of students for the OSU pre-school covered U.S. citizens and residents as well as non-residents from other countries, the subjects may not be homogeneous in their cultural (or sub-cultural) background. The characteristic of cultural background of the U.S. subjects represented the multicultural nature of the United States. Therefore, the present study was a "cross-national" rather than a "cross-cultural" comparison.

The Child Development and Family Study Center, Department of Applied Life Science, Fu Jen Catholic University, served as the other sample source for the present study. A total of 120 children, ages from 2 to 6, were enrolled in four different level classes (see Table 4). The number of students enrolled at the Child Development and Family Study Center for level I to level IV were 20, 30, 35 and 35. According to the purpose of this study, parents of children in all four levels (age 2 to 6) were included as target subjects to fill out the questionnaires. After data collection, ineligible (e.g., children under 2 or over 6 years) were excluded from data analysis.

The two child development centers chosen were considered similar in several ways. First, both of the child development centers are owned and managed by a university. Second, students enrolled at both centers come from families of faculty, staff, students and the community. Third, the age of students was considered similar (ages 3 to 6 versus ages 2 to 6). Therefore, the Child Development

Table 4

Information on The Two Pre-schools (FCU and OSU)A. The Child Development and Family Study Center, FCU, Taiwan

<u>Class Level</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Age of Students</u>
I	35	5-6
II	35	4-5
III	30	3-4
IV	20	2-3

Total Number of Students: 120

Total Number of Teachers and Staff: 8

Sources of Students: 50% from faculty and staff families.
50% from local community.

B. The Child Development Center, OSU, USA

<u>Class Section</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Age of Students</u>
Morning I	20	3-5
Morning II	20	3-5
Afternoon I	20	3-5
Afternoon II	20	3-5

Total Number of Students: 80

Total Number of Teachers and Staff: 15

Sources of Students: from faculty, staff, student families,
and local community.

Sex of Children: 50% of male and 50% of female.

Center, OSU and the Child Development and Family Study Center, Fu Jen Catholic University, were chosen for this cross-national comparative study.

Parents of about 120 pre-school students from Taiwan and 80 from the U.S. were asked to participate in the present survey. After approval by school officials (OSU and FCU), questionnaires were delivered to teachers or supervisors in each class to be given to the students' parents. Respondents who were not children's parents or who had no purchasing experience of children's apparel during the prior year were regarded as ineligible subjects and were excluded from the data analysis.

Research Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire was developed for this study as the data collection instrument. Though some previous researchers (e.g., Eckman et al., 1990; Nelson, 1989; Sheth, Newan, & Gross, 1991) used interviews as research instruments for their studies, many of the other previous researchers used questionnaires to achieve their research goals (Cassill, & Drake, 1987; Foxman et al., 1989; Lee & Burns, 1993; Thomas et al., 1991). The survey for the present study included questions addressing the evaluative criteria used by respondents as well as questions addressing demographic characteristics of respondents in order to describe and compare subjects from the two countries.

There are only a few previous studies that have focused on evaluative criteria for purchasing children's apparel (e.g., Chang, 1992; Norum & Wang, 1994). Therefore, some questions used in the questionnaire were adapted from previous related studies such as purchasing decision making for women's and men's apparel (Hsiao, 1993; Lee & Burns, 1992; McLean et al., 1986). The questions were edited to accommodate the specific research objectives of the present study.

Three parts of questions were included in the questionnaire: qualification questions, evaluation criteria and related questions, and demographic characteristics questions. The first part of the questionnaire was composed of two qualifying questions. By doing this, any ineligible subjects were identified and excluded at the data analysis stage.

The second part of the questionnaire included questions addressing the use and importance of evaluative criteria. Before answering the evaluative criteria questions, subjects were asked to think about one apparel item which their child would wear to pre-school that they had purchased for their children within the past year. Subjects were also asked to give some information about their purchases. For example, whether or not the clothing item was a gift; at what store the item was purchased; the approximate cost; and the child's age for whom the item was purchased.

Subjects, then, were asked to think about the clothing item to answer the evaluative criteria questions (see appendix B). A total of 22 different criteria were listed according to four categories: aesthetic criteria, usefulness criteria, performance criteria, and extrinsic criteria. Subjects rated each of the evaluative criteria that they checked from 5 points (very important) to 1 point (not important at all). An "NU" (not used) alternative was available for subjects to circle if they did not use a listed criterion in their purchase decisions.

After the evaluative criteria questions, subjects were asked to identify the three most important criteria which were used in their purchases for the clothing items. The reason for including the three most important was to identify the criteria perceived as most important criteria by parent-consumers in this study.

A non-compensatory or compensatory decision rule question was also included in the questionnaire. The responses provided information about how respondents used decision rules in purchasing apparel for pre-school children.

Demographic information was collected in order to describe and to compare the characteristics of the two sample groups, including gender, age, number and age of children, household income (before tax), occupation, education, marital status, and citizenship (for U.S. subjects only). Due to the perceived sensitivity of the

citizenship question in Taiwan, this question (question 8) was not included in the questionnaire for Taiwan subjects.

Due to the nature of the study (a cross-national comparison), the questionnaire was first developed in English and translated into Chinese (see Appendix C). The questionnaire was then back-translated into English by a third person who was not involved in this study in order to confirm the equivalency in meaning. The main concerns of the translation were meaning and wording. To assure equivalency in meaning, some of the wording in the Chinese questionnaire was different from the English one.

A small group ($n = 10$) of potential subjects pre-tested the questionnaire in the U.S. before data collection. The potential subjects included parent-consumers with a child or children of pre-school or kindergarten age that had purchased children's apparel during the prior year. Both English and Chinese questionnaires were pre-tested by either English or Mandarin speaking parent-consumers in the U.S.

In doing the pretest, the researcher obtained verbal and nonverbal feedback on potential problems. According to this valuable feedback, proper modifications were made to the questionnaire and in the instructions for the teachers or supervisors involved in distributing the questionnaire. The amount of time required by subjects to complete the questionnaire was also determined in the pre-test procedure.

Data Collection

The process of data collection consisted of distribution of the questionnaire packets to parents of pre-schoolers (3-6 years old) at two chosen pre-schools in Corvallis, Oregon and in Taipei City, Taiwan. Questionnaire packets included a questionnaire with cover letter, reply envelope, and a gift (children's book) for the respondent's child. The cover letter introduced the respondent to the research purpose and the importance of the study (see Appendix A). In the cover letter, individuals who were responsible for purchasing children's apparel were asked to complete the questionnaire. The gifts included in the questionnaire packets were to express the appreciation of the researchers and to encourage subjects to answer and return the questionnaires. After completing the questionnaires, parents returned the questionnaires in the enclosed reply envelopes to teachers or supervisors by a specific date.

The initial distribution of 200 questionnaire packets for both groups included 80 in the English version and 120 in the Chinese version. The Chinese questionnaires were sent to Taiwan for data collection. The handling of the questionnaires was similar between the two groups.

The follow-up sequence included two follow-up letters to remind subjects to finish and return questionnaires as scheduled (see Appendix A). Since the questionnaires were

given to subjects through school teachers or researcher instead of mailing to parents, it was found that the response rate was relatively high (see questionnaire response rate section, chap. IV, p. 55). Therefore, the third follow up letter, as recommended by Dillman (1978), was considered unnecessary and was omitted.

The formula used to calculate the return rate is the number of questionnaires returned divided by the number in the sample minus the non-eligible and the non-reachable subjects, multiplied by one hundred. (Dillman, 1978; Zikmund, 1991).

Data Analyses

The data collected were analyzed according to the objectives and the null hypotheses of the present study. The major data analysis technique used to test the hypotheses was the two-sample t -test. The two-sample t -test allows the researcher to examine whether there are statistically significant differences between two groups on some dependent variables (Zikmund, 1991).

The two-sample t -tests were used to examine each criterion to find out which of them contributed to any significant differences within the categories (aesthetic, usefulness, performance, and extrinsic criteria). Rejection of the null hypotheses was based on the results of t -tests in each of the categories. If significant differences were

found between Taiwan and U.S. respondents for at least half of the criteria in the category, the null hypothesis would be rejected.

Two subject groups were compared to examine the differences in the evaluative criteria used for purchasing pre-school children's apparel. The demographic characteristics of subjects were analyzed by descriptive statistics which included frequency distribution and percentages. Additional analyses of the most important criteria identified by respondents and comments from open-ended questions were also performed.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers for pre-school children's apparel. The importance of the intrinsic criteria as well as extrinsic criteria to parent-consumers was identified and described in this study. There are only a few previous studies about consumer decision making focusing on purchasing children's apparel. Therefore, this study plays a role in completing the research picture regarding the use of purchase criteria in the decision process.

The sample of this research consisted of 200 parent-consumers with a child or children, ages of 3 to 6, in the U.S. and in Taiwan markets. A self-administered questionnaire was developed according to the objectives of

this study. Aesthetic criteria, usefulness criteria, performance criteria, and extrinsic criteria questions, as well as demographic characteristics, were included in the questionnaire.

Collected data were analyzed by two-sample t -tests to test the four hypotheses. The research results benefit children's apparel manufacturers, retailers, and theoreticians in the area of purchase decision making.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results and discussion of the data analyses are presented. Included are the questionnaire response rate, sample descriptions, and results of testing the hypotheses by t-test analyses. Additional analyses and findings from the open-ended questions in the questionnaires are also provided.

Questionnaire Response Rate

The data collection method used in this study was a questionnaire survey. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to 120 parent-consumers in Taiwan and 80 parent-consumers in the U.S. Among the U.S. subjects, four of them spoke only Spanish. Therefore, four questionnaires were categorized as non-deliverables due to the difference in language. For the Taiwan subjects, 7 out of 120 questionnaires were non-deliverable either because the students were absent or the children did not live with their parents. Among the remaining 189 questionnaires, 159 were returned after two follow-up letters during the three week period.

As mentioned in chapter III, the calculation for response rate for this study followed the recommendation by

Dillman (1978). The response rate equaled the number of questionnaires returned divided by the total number in sample minus non-deliverables; the result then multiplied by 100. Therefore, the response rate for this study was 84.1% for the total sample; 94.7% for the U.S. subjects and 77% for Taiwan subjects (see Table 5).

Among the 159 returned questionnaires, 72 of them were from the U.S. Three of the 72 returned U.S. questionnaires were ineligible. One of the subjects identified herself as not the parent of a pre-school child. The other three ineligible subjects were all non-residents living in the U.S. for less than 3 years; thus, were not considered as representative of U.S. parent-consumers for this study. Therefore, a total of 68 questionnaires were used for the data analyses.

A total of 87 returned questionnaires were from the Taiwan subjects. Among them, 9 were categorized as ineligible. Three of the questionnaires were not usable because the ages of children were either under 3 or over 7 years. Six respondents indicated that their children were 7 years of age. Because of the difference in the way of calculating a child's age in Taiwan, some Chinese parents may have reported their children's ages one year older than the children actually were. However, these six questionnaires were also considered ineligible for this study because the children's ages were not in the range of 3 to 6.

Table 5

Questionnaire Response Rate

Item	Number	Percentage
Total Number of Questionnaires	200	100%
U.S. Subjects	80	40%
Taiwan Subjects	120	60%
Total Number Returned	159	100%
U.S. Subjects	72	45.3%
Taiwan Subjects	87	54.7%
Non-deliverables	11	
U.S. Subjects	4	
Taiwan Subjects	7	
Total Response Rate*		84.1%
U.S. Subjects		94.7%
Taiwan Subjects		77.0%

* Response rate = $\frac{\text{Total Number Returned}}{\text{Sample Number} - \text{non-deliverable}} \times 100$

As a result, data from 146 questionnaires (68 U.S. questionnaires and 78 Taiwan questionnaires) from the two subject groups were considered eligible data and were analyzed to test the null hypotheses in the present study.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Due to the nature of this study, a cross-national comparison, the demographic characteristics of the two groups of respondents served as background information about the two groups of respondents. The information about demographic characteristics of both groups of respondents is described in terms of gender, age, number of children, occupation, and marital status (see Table 6). Due to differences in categorization of some demographic characteristics, the descriptions about household income, education level, and citizen status (for U.S. subjects only) of U.S. respondents and Taiwan respondents are reported separately (see Table 7 and Table 8).

Table 6

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	<u>Taiwan</u>		<u>U.S.</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Gender</u>						
Female	72	92.3%	62	91.2%	134	91.8%
Male	4	5.1%	6	8.8%	10	6.8%
missing data	2	2.6%	0	0%	2	1.4%
Total	78	100%	68	100%	146	100%
<u>Age</u>						
Under 25	0	0%	4	5.9%	4	2.7%
25-29	2	2.6%	12	17.6%	14	9.6%
30-34	34	43.6%	26	38.2%	60	41.1%
35-39	32	41%	17	25%	49	33.6%
40-44	7	9%	7	10.3%	14	9.6%
45-49	0	0%	1	1.5%	1	0.7%
50 or above	0	0%	1	1.5%	1	0.7%
missing data	3	3.8%	0	0%	3	2%
Total	78	100%	68	100%	146	100%
<u>Number of Children</u>						
1-2	55	70.5%	40	58.8%	95	65.1%
3-4	21	26.9%	23	33.8%	44	30.1%
5 or above	0	0%	5	7.4%	5	3.4%
missing data	2	2.6%	0	0%	2	1.4%
Total	78	100%	68	100%	146	100%
<u>Occupation</u>						
Homemaker	26	33.3%	29	42.7%	55	37.7%
Professional or Technical	19	24.4%	18	26.5%	37	25.3%
Management or Executive	11	14.1%	2	2.9%	13	8.9%
Sales/Marketing	3	3.8%	2	2.9%	5	3.4%
Service worker	4	5.1%	3	4.4%	7	4.8%
Machine operator or Laborer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Retired	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Student	0	0%	7	10.3%	7	4.8%
Self employer	13	16.7%	6	8.8%	19	13%
Missing data	2	2.6%	1	1.5%	3	2.1%
Total	78	100%	68	100%	146	100%

Table 6 (continued)

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

<u>Item</u>	<u>Taiwan</u>		<u>U.S.</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Marital Status</u>						
Married	75	96.2%	63	92.6%	138	94.5%
Divorced/separated	1	1.35%	3	4.4%	4	2.7%
widowed	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Single	0	0%	2	3%	2	1.4%
Missing data	2	2.5%	0	0%	2	1.4%
Total	78	100%	68	100%	146	100%

Table 7

Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Respondents

<u>Item</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>U.S.</u> <u>%</u>
<u>Income (for U.S.)</u>		
Under \$14,999	17	25.0%
\$15,000-\$24,999	9	13.2%
\$25,000-\$34,999	7	10.3%
\$35,000-\$44,999	10	14.7%
\$45,000-\$54,999	6	8.8%
\$55,000-\$64,999	8	11.8%
\$65,000 or above	9	13.2%
Missing data	2	3.0%
Total	68	100%
<u>Education</u>		
Some high school or less	9	13.2%
Completed High School	4	5.9%
Vocational/technical school	3	4.4%
Some college	13	19.1%
Completed college	21	30.9%
Some graduate school	3	4.4%
Completed graduate school	15	22.1%
Missing data	0	0%
Total	68	100%
<u>Citizenship</u>		
Citizen or resident	62	91.2%
Non-resident ^a	6	8.8%
Missing data	0	0%
Total	68	100%

^a The non-resident respondents who were included in this study identified themselves staying the U.S. for at least four or more years.

Table 8

Demographic Characteristics of Taiwan Respondents

<u>Item</u>	<u>Taiwan</u>	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Monthly Income (NT\$)^a</u>		
Under \$10,000	0	0%
\$10,000-\$19,999	1	1.3%
\$20,000-\$29,999	1	1.3%
\$30,000-\$39,999	5	6.4%
\$40,000-\$49,999	4	5.1%
\$50,000-\$59,999	7	9.0%
\$60,000-\$69,999	12	15.4%
\$70,000 or above	46	59.0%
Missing data	2	2.5%
Total	78	100%
<u>Education</u>		
Self-educated	0	0%
Primary	0	0%
Junior high school	3	3.8%
Senior high school	2	2.6%
Vocational	22	28.3%
Junior college	17	21.8%
College & graduate school	32	41.0%
Missing data	2	2.6%
Total	78	100%

^a The exchange rate for US\$:NT\$ is 1:26.50 in January 1995.

Gender

The majority of the all respondents were female (91.8%) and only 10 were male (6.8%) in this study. Among the Taiwan respondents, 72 respondents were female and only 4 were male (another 2 respondents did not indicate their gender). Among the U.S. respondents, 62 were female and the remainder ($n = 6$) were male. Not surprisingly, it appears that the mothers in this sample were more likely than the fathers to purchase clothing for their pre-school children.

Age

For Taiwan respondents, the range of age was from 25 to 44 years. Most were in the range of 30 to 39 years (84.6%). Thirty-four (43.6%) of Taiwan respondents were between 30 and 34 years of age; thirty-two (41%) were 35 to 39 while only 7 (9%) were between 40 and 44 years old. Unlike the U.S. respondents, none of the Taiwan respondents were found to be younger than 25 years or older than 45 years.

The age range for the U.S. respondents was broader than for the Taiwan respondents. Four of the U.S. respondents were under 25 years and one was over 50 years. Sixty (41.1%) of the U.S. respondents were between 30 to 34 years and forty-nine (33.6%) were 35 to 39 years. For both groups, most of the respondents (about 75%) were in their 30's.

Number of Children

For both Taiwan and the U.S. samples, 95 of the respondents indicated that they had two children or fewer

(65%) and the other 44 (30%) indicated that they had 3 or 4 children. The U.S. respondents tended to have more children than the Taiwan respondents did. The mean number of children for the Taiwan respondents was 2.2 while the mean for the U.S. respondents was 2.5. Some respondents indicated that the number of children in their families did affect their use of evaluative criteria in purchasing children's clothing. These findings will be described later.

Occupation

For the Taiwan respondents, about one-third ($n = 26$) identified themselves as homemakers and another one-fourth ($n = 19$) as professional or technical workers. Eleven of the respondents were in management or executive positions and thirteen were self-employed.

Among the U.S. respondents, 43% ($n = 29$) identified themselves as homemakers. Similar to the Taiwan respondents, 26.5% of the U.S. respondents were professionals or technical workers ($n = 18$). Because many of the parents were staff or faculty at the University, 25% of the total respondents identified themselves as professionals. A total of 10% ($n = 7$) of the U.S. respondents were students whereas none of the Taiwan respondents identified themselves as students. Both groups had many homemakers (38% in total sample) followed by professional or technical workers (25% in total sample).

Marital Status

The two sample groups were very similar in their marital status. For both the U.S. and Taiwan samples, the majority of the respondents were found to be married (94.5%). Three of the U.S. respondents and only one Taiwan respondent indicated that they were divorced or separated. Two of the U.S. respondents were single.

Income

Different income categorizations were used for the two versions of the questionnaires. The categories of income levels in the Chinese version for Taiwan subjects followed the income categories used by Executive Yuan, Republic of China (Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, 1993). Over half (59%) of the Taiwan respondents made seventy thousand Taiwan dollars (about US\$2640 at exchange rate US\$:NT\$ = 1:26.5) or more as their monthly household income. About 15% identified that they were in the sixty thousand to sixty-nine thousand category.

The annual household income before taxes for the U.S. respondents varied. 25% of the respondents identified their income under \$14,999 and about 15% had income between \$35,000 and \$44,999. Nine of the U.S. respondents (13.2%) earned \$65,000 or more yearly. In general Taiwan respondents had higher incomes than U.S. respondents. Because of the school policy of the Child Development Center at OSU, some students were from low income families.

Therefore, more U.S. respondents were found in lower income categories than Taiwan respondents. In addition, the cost-of-living in Taipei City (location of FCU) is higher than Corvallis (location of OSU).

Education

Most of the Taiwan respondents had completed some form of higher education including college or graduate school (41%), junior college (22%), and vocational college (28%). Among the U.S. sample, about 57% of the respondents had completed college or graduate school.

Citizenship

To qualify as an eligible respondent, the U.S. subjects were asked to answer a citizen status question. If they were not U.S. citizens, subjects indicated how many years they had been in the U.S. The majority of the U.S. respondents identified themselves as either citizens or residents living in the U.S. from 7 to 15 years. Six of the respondents were non-resident but had lived in the U.S. from 4 to 12 years. Therefore, the six non-resident respondents were regarded as representative of the U.S. parent-consumers and were included in this study.

Overall, the demographic information about the Taiwan and the U.S. respondents shows that the two sample groups were quite similar in terms of gender, age, number of children, and occupation. The similarity in demographic characteristics of the two sample groups indicates that the two sample groups are comparable in many ways. Based on the

understanding about the demographics characteristics of the two sample groups, the results of the following analyses regarding parent-consumers use of and importance placed on evaluative criteria for pre-school children's apparel are presented.

Description of Clothing Item Questions

Respondents were asked to identify one clothing item they had purchased for their child to wear to pre-school. The main reason for including this question in the questionnaire was to give respondents an item of children's apparel (pre-school child's daily wear) for which all their answers about purchase criteria would be based on. A description of the clothing item identified in this question was also used to compare the clothing items purchased by the two groups of respondents.

The respondents were also asked to provide information about the clothing item identified such as cost, store or outlet (where it was purchased), and children's age (for whom the item was purchased).

A total of 12 clothing items were mentioned by the 146 respondents. These were divided into 5 categories: tops, bottoms, suits, dresses, and coats. Most of the clothing items used for this study were either tops or bottoms, or suits (top and bottom). These appear to be the common daily wear for pre-school children (see Table 9).

Table 9

Description of Identified Clothing Items

<u>Description</u>	<u>Taiwan</u>		<u>U.S.</u>	
	n	%	n	%
<u>Clothing Item</u>				
Top	24	31%	27	40%
Bottom	5	6%	21	31%
Suit (top and bottom)	45	58%	4	6%
Dress	1	1%	12	18%
Coat	3	4%	4	5%
Missing data	0	0%	0	0%
Total	78	100%	68	100%
<u>Store/outlet</u>				
Discount store	1	1%	33	49%
Department store	19	24%	5	7%
Specialty store	42	54%	21	31%
Off-price store	0	0%	3	5%
Yard sale	0	0%	1	1%
Mail order	0	0%	1	1%
Other outlet	0	0%	3	5%
Traditional market (in Taiwan)	11	14%	0	0%
Missing data	5	6%	1	1%
Total	78	100%	68	100%
<u>Child's Age</u>				
3	19	24%	11	16%
4	18	23%	37	55%
5	22	28%	19	28%
6	19	24%	1	1%
Missing data	0	0%	0	0%
Total	78	100%	68	100%
<u>Purchase Reason (Gift)</u>				
No	75	96%	48	71%
Yes	3	4%	17	25%
Missing data	0	0%	3	4%
Total	78	100%	68	100%
<u>Cost of Clothing Item</u>				
Range (US\$)	\$4 - \$151		\$2.50 - \$40	
Average (US\$)	\$32.80		\$13.10	

The stores from which the respondents purchased the identified clothing items for their pre-school children were somewhat different between the two countries. About 50% of the U.S. respondents purchased the items at discount stores such as KMart, Target, and Fred Meyer. Another 30% purchased the items at specialty stores including Lamont's, Nordstrom, and Hanna Andersson. For Taiwan respondents, most purchased the identified clothing items at specialty stores (for children's apparel) (54%) and department stores (24%) while some purchased the items at traditional markets (14%). The traditional markets in Taiwan are daily markets usually having 30 to 80 units of personal sellers showing their products together. The price ranges of children's apparel in traditional markets are considered much lower than in department stores or in specialty stores.

Because of differences in the class sections and children's ages between the two child development centers (see Table 4, p. 44), the ages of children of the U.S. respondents were primarily 3 to 5 years whereas the children of Taiwan respondents were evenly dispersed from 3 to 6 years.

More U.S. parents were found to purchase the identified clothing items as gifts (e.g., birthday gift or Christmas gift) for their pre-school children than did Taiwan parents in the present study (25% vs. 4%).

The costs of the clothing items varied within groups and between groups. The average cost for identified

clothing items of Taiwan respondents was US\$32.8 (US\$:NT\$ = 1:26.5) which was about 2.5 times the average cost (US\$13.10) of identified items of U.S. parents.

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

The mean importance scores for the evaluative criteria used by the two sample groups and descriptive statistics of variables are provided in Table 10 and Table 11. Criteria were organized as to aesthetic criteria, usefulness criteria, performance criteria, and extrinsic criteria (see Table 11).

The performance criteria included comfort (for child), right size or fit, ease of care, colorfastness, durability, and quality. For both Taiwan and U.S. respondents, the performance criteria elicited relatively high means (4.30 to 4.81 for Taiwan and 4.17 to 4.67 for the U.S.). The findings indicated that both groups of the parent-consumers in this study tended to view the performance criteria as very important and tended to use those criteria often when purchasing apparel for their pre-school children. Among the six performance criteria, comfort and size/fit were both ranked as the first and the second highest in importance.

Some extrinsic criteria were found by respondents to be less important when purchasing apparel for their pre-school

Table 10

Mean Importance Scores of Evaluative Criteria for Taiwan and U.S. Respondents

<u>Taiwan</u>		<u>U.S.</u>	
Used Criteria	Mean	Used Criteria	Mean
Comfort	4.81	Comfort	4.67
Size/fit	4.64	Size/fit	4.58
Ease of care	4.56	Quality	4.46
Colorfastness	4.55	Ease of care	4.37
Fiber content	4.50	Durability	4.31
Durability	4.36	Price	4.24
Quality	4.30	Colorfastness	4.17
Style	4.28	On sale	4.12
Versatility	4.13	Versatility	4.10
Matching	3.97	Style	4.09
Color	3.86	Fiber content	4.07
Price	3.77	Fabric	3.98
On sale	3.72	Matching	3.89
Fabric	3.29	Fabric print	3.89
Character/logo	3.09	Color	3.88
Brand name	3.03	Store preference	3.00
Uniqueness	2.81	Child asked	2.84
Child asked	2.79	Uniqueness	2.53
Fabric print	2.77	Character/logo	2.45
Store preference	2.70	Advertisement	2.39
Country of origin	2.62	Brand name	2.17
Advertisement	2.00	Country of origin	2.11

Table 11

Mean Scores of Evaluative Criteria for all Respondents

Variable	N ^a	NU ^b	Mean	SD
<u>Aesthetic Criteria</u>				
Style	142	0	4.19	0.80
Fiber content	142	3	4.30	0.82
Fabric	132	12	3.62	0.95
Uniqueness	106	37	2.67	1.32
Color	141	4	3.87	0.88
Fabric print	127	18	3.34	1.00
Character/logo	121	25	2.80	1.34
<u>Usefulness Criteria</u>				
Versatility	141	4	4.12	1.01
Matching	141	5	3.83	1.08
<u>Performance Criteria</u>				
Size/fit	145	1	4.61	0.71
Comfort	145	0	4.75	0.60
Ease of care	145	1	4.47	0.78
Colorfastness	141	5	4.38	0.86
Durability	143	3	4.34	0.89
Quality	143	3	4.37	0.73
<u>Extrinsic Criteria</u>				
Price	142	3	3.99	0.96
On sale	136	8	3.91	1.03
Brand name	121	23	2.62	1.08
Country of origin	105	39	2.37	1.08
Child asked	111	33	2.81	1.21
Advertisement	87	59	2.17	1.13
Store	113	30	2.85	1.16

^a Numbers did not include "not used" responses or missing data.

^b The total number of "not used" category chosen.

children in this study. The mean scores of uniqueness, child asked, country of origin, and advertisement in both groups were all less than 3 (Mean = 2.0 to 2.81). These four criteria also were found to have the highest "not used" numbers (NU = 37, 33, 39 and 59 respectively in pooled data).

The findings indicated that many respondents were not using advertisements, country of origin, child asked, and uniqueness as evaluative criteria when purchasing pre-school children's apparel. The respondents who used the four criteria for their purchases tended to view them less important than the other criteria in this study.

The importance of aesthetic criteria and usefulness criteria used by the respondents varied. Fiber content, style, color, versatility, and matching with existing clothing were found to be important for the respondents whereas having a character or logo on clothing was less important. Fabric print tended to be important for U.S. respondents (M = 3.89) but not for Taiwan respondents (M = 2.77).

Since the respondents answered the purchase criteria according to one item of clothing that their pre-school children would wear to school, the findings about those purchase criteria would not be applicable to other apparel categories. As mentioned by one respondent that "when buying playclothes I look for different factors than when buying party dresses" (U.S. respondent #19).

Results of Hypothesis Testing

The results of the tests for the four null hypotheses are presented in this section. Each null hypothesis was tested by the two-sample t -test to find out which of the criteria in each area (aesthetic criteria, usefulness criteria, performance criteria, and extrinsic criteria) were significantly different between Taiwan and U.S. respondents. Rejection of each hypothesis ($p < 0.05$) was based on t -test results for the criteria included in each criteria category (aesthetic, usefulness, performance, and extrinsic). If significant differences were found between Taiwan and U.S. parent-consumers for at least half of the criteria in the criteria category, the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 1 Aesthetic Criteria

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be no significant difference between Taiwan parent-consumers and U.S. parent-consumers in the importance of aesthetic criteria when purchasing pre-school children's apparel. This hypothesis was rejected.

Among the aesthetic criteria, significant differences were found between the two sample groups ($p < 0.05$) for fiber content, fabric, fabric print, and character/logo. The results of t -tests for hypothesis 1 regarding aesthetic criteria are presented in Table 12 and Table 13.

Table 12

Results of t-tests for Aesthetic Criteria

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t-value</u>
<u>Style</u>			
Taiwan	4.28	0.72	-1.46
U.S.	4.09	0.88	
<u>Fiber content</u>			
Taiwan	4.50	0.73	-3.08***
U.S.	4.07	0.92	
<u>Fabric</u>			
Taiwan	3.29	0.91	4.06***
U.S.	3.96	0.99	
<u>Uniqueness</u>			
Taiwan	2.81	1.24	-1.07
U.S.	2.53	1.40	
<u>Color</u>			
Taiwan	3.86	0.81	0.10
U.S.	3.88	0.96	
<u>Fabric print</u>			
Taiwan	2.77	1.01	6.29***
U.S.	3.89	0.98	
<u>Character/logo</u>			
Taiwan	3.09	1.11	-2.59*
U.S.	2.45	1.57	

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Table 13

Sample Numbers and Percentages for Use of Aesthetic Criteria

Variable	Used ^a	%	NU ^b	%
<u>Style</u>				
Taiwan	76	100%	0	0%
U.S.	66	100%	0	0%
<u>Fiber content</u>				
Taiwan	77	100%	0	0%
U.S.	65	96%	3	4%
<u>Fabric</u>				
Taiwan	68	89%	8	11%
U.S.	64	94%	4	6%
<u>Uniqueness</u>				
Taiwan	54	71%	22	19%
U.S.	52	78%	15	12%
<u>Color</u>				
Taiwan	74	96%	3	4%
U.S.	67	99%	1	1%
<u>Fabric print</u>				
Taiwan	62	81%	15	9%
U.S.	65	96%	3	4%
<u>Character/logo</u>				
Taiwan	66	85%	12	15%
U.S.	55	81%	13	19%

^a Numbers did not include "not used" responses or missing data.

^b The total number of "not used" chosen by respondents.

Compared to U.S. respondents, Taiwan respondents tended to view fiber content as being more important when purchasing apparel for their pre-school children ($M = 4.50$ for Taiwan, $M = 4.07$ for U.S.). In addition, no Taiwan respondent chose the "not used" category in their response to this criterion.

The findings indicated that U.S. parent-consumers in this study considered fabric and fabric print ($M = 3.96$, 3.89 , respectively) to be more important in their purchasing decisions than did the Taiwan parent-consumers ($M = 3.29$, 2.77). A higher number of Taiwan respondents identified that they did not use fabric print or fabric ($n = 15$, 8 , respectively) as purchase criteria than did U.S. respondents ($n = 3$, 4 , respectively).

A significant difference in the importance placed on the character/logo criterion was found between Taiwan and U.S. respondents ($M = 3.09$ and $M = 2.45$, respectively). Several U.S. and Taiwan respondents identified they did not use this criterion ($n = 13$, 12 , respectively).

Significant differences between the two groups of parent-consumers were found for four of the seven aesthetic criteria. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Hypothesis 2 Usefulness Criteria

Hypothesis 2 stated there would be no significant difference between Taiwan parent-consumers and U.S. parent-

consumers in the importance of usefulness criteria when purchasing pre-school children's apparel. This null hypothesis was accepted.

There was no significant difference between the Taiwan parent-consumers and the U.S. parent-consumers in the importance of usefulness criteria used for purchasing pre-school children's apparel. The results of t-tests for usefulness criteria are shown in Table 14 and 15.

Most of the respondents indicated that they had used versatility as a purchase criterion in their purchases. The mean importance scores were 4.13 and 4.10 for Taiwan and U.S. respondents, respectively, indicating that the two groups of respondents viewed versatility as a relatively important criterion. Several respondents mentioned in the open-ended question that versatility was so important to them that they would more willing to purchase an item which could be worn with other clothing items by their children (e.g., U.S. respondent #19, #31, and #43).

The importance of matching was also found to be similar level between Taiwan and U.S. sample groups ($M = 3.97$, $M = 3.89$, respectively). Most of the respondents indicated that they used matching as a criterion when they purchased apparel for their pre-school children.

Table 14

Results of t-tests for Usefulness Criteria

Variable	Mean	SD	t-value
<u>Versatility</u>			
Taiwan	4.13	0.89	-0.13
U.S.	4.10	1.13	
<u>Matching</u>			
Taiwan	3.97	0.94	-0.45
U.S.	3.89	1.23	

Table 15

Sample Numbers and Percentages for Use of Usefulness Criteria

Variable	Used ^a	%	NU ^b	%
<u>Versatility</u>				
Taiwan	76	99%	1	1%
U.S.	65	96%	3	4%
<u>Matching</u>				
Taiwan	77	99%	1	1%
U.S.	64	94%	4	6%

^a Numbers did not include "not used" responses or missing data.

^b The total number of "not used" chosen by respondents.

Hypothesis 3 Performance Criteria

Hypothesis 3 stated there would be no significant difference between Taiwan parent-consumers and U.S. parent-consumers in the importance of performance criteria when purchasing pre-school children's apparel. This null hypothesis was accepted.

The results of t-tests for the seven performance criteria are presented in Table 16 and 17. The results indicated a significant difference between Taiwan respondents and U.S. respondents in the importance of the colorfastness criterion. Taiwan parent-consumers in this study regarded colorfastness as more important than did U.S. parent-consumers ($M = 4.55$ and 4.17 , respectively).

Overall, performance criteria were viewed as very important by both U.S. and Taiwan parent-consumers. Among the performance criteria, the mean scores were all above 4 points ($M = 4.17$ as the lowest and $M = 4.81$ as the highest). In addition, few respondents indicated they had "not used" any of the performance criteria. These findings suggest that performance criteria were used very often by both groups of respondents in their purchasing of pre-school children's apparel.

Table 16

Results of t-tests for Performance Criteria

Variable	Mean	SD	t-value
<u>Size/fit</u>			
Taiwan	4.64	0.68	-0.49
U.S.	4.58	0.74	
<u>Comfort</u>			
Taiwan	4.81	0.47	-1.40
U.S.	4.67	0.72	
<u>Ease of Care</u>			
Taiwan	4.56	0.69	-1.45
U.S.	4.37	0.88	
<u>Colorfastness</u>			
Taiwan	4.55	0.71	-2.56*
U.S.	4.17	1.02	
<u>Durability</u>			
Taiwan	4.36	0.87	-0.30
U.S.	4.31	0.91	
<u>Quality</u>			
Taiwan	4.30	0.74	1.24
U.S.	4.46	0.73	

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Table 17

Sample Numbers and Percentages for Use of Performance Criteria

Variable	Used ^a	%	NU ^b	%
<u>Size/fit</u>				
Taiwan	78	100%	0	0%
U.S.	67	100%	1	0%
<u>Comfort</u>				
Taiwan	77	100%	0	0%
U.S.	68	100%	0	0%
<u>Ease of Care</u>				
Taiwan	78	100%	0	0%
U.S.	67	99%	1	1%
<u>Colorfastness</u>				
Taiwan	78	100%	0	0%
U.S.	63	93%	5	7%
<u>Durability</u>				
Taiwan	77	99%	1	1%
U.S.	66	97%	2	3%
<u>Quality</u>				
Taiwan	78	100%	0	0%
U.S.	65	96%	3	4%

^a Numbers did not included "not used" respondents or missing data.

^b The total number of "Not Used" chosen by respondents.

Hypothesis 4 Extrinsic Criteria

Hypothesis 4 stated that there would be no significant difference between Taiwan respondents and U.S. respondents in the importance of extrinsic criteria for purchasing pre-school children's apparel. This null hypothesis was rejected.

The results of t -tests indicated significant differences between Taiwan and U.S. parent-consumers for four of the seven extrinsic criteria. The results of t -tests for extrinsic criteria are reported in Table 18 and Table 19.

The mean importance scores for price and on sale ($M = 4.24, 4.12$, respectively) of the U.S. group were higher than those of Taiwan respondents ($M = 3.77, 3.72$, respectively). Although the mean scores of on sale for the two groups were different, several respondents from both groups indicated that they would purchase children's apparel only when it was on sale (e.g., U.S. respondent #17 and #24; Taiwan respondent #23, #49, #63).

On the other hand, Taiwan respondents considered brand name and country of origin ($M = 3.03, 2.62$, respectively) as more important than the U.S. respondents ($M = 2.17, 2.11$, respectively).

Among the seven extrinsic criteria, price and on sale were found to have higher mean importance scores and lower

Table 18

Results of t-tests for Extrinsic Criteria

Variable	Mean	SD	t-value
<u>Price</u>			
Taiwan	3.77	0.93	2.88**
U.S.	4.24	0.99	
<u>On sale</u>			
Taiwan	3.72	0.89	2.24*
U.S.	4.12	1.18	
<u>Brand name</u>			
Taiwan	3.03	1.11	-3.97***
U.S.	2.17	1.25	
<u>Country of origin</u>			
Taiwan	2.62	1.04	-2.39*
U.S.	2.11	1.13	
<u>Child asked</u>			
Taiwan	2.79	0.96	0.21
U.S.	2.84	1.52	
<u>Advertisement</u>			
Taiwan	2.00	0.84	1.61
U.S.	2.39	1.42	
<u>Store</u>			
Taiwan	2.70	1.16	1.32
U.S.	3.00	1.16	

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Table 19

Sample Numbers and Percentages for Use of Extrinsic Criteria

Variable	Used ^a	%	NU ^b	%
<u>Price</u>				
Taiwan	76	99%	1	1%
U.S.	66	97%	2	3%
<u>On sale</u>				
Taiwan	74	97%	2	3%
U.S.	62	91%	6	9%
<u>Brand name</u>				
Taiwan	64	84%	12	16%
U.S.	57	84%	11	16%
<u>Country of origin</u>				
Taiwan	53	69%	24	31%
U.S.	52	78%	15	12%
<u>Child asked</u>				
Taiwan	67	86%	11	14%
U.S.	44	67%	22	33%
<u>Advertisement</u>				
Taiwan	49	63%	29	37%
U.S.	38	59%	30	44%
<u>Store</u>				
Taiwan	55	72%	21	18%
U.S.	58	87%	9	13%

^a Numbers did not included "not used" responses or missing data.

^b The total number of "not used" chosen by respondents.

"not used" numbers. The findings suggest that parent-consumers in this study placed more importance on and were more likely to use price and whether or not the item was on sale as purchase criteria than the other extrinsic criteria.

Additional Analyses

In this section, additional analysis regarding the most important criteria for respondents, criteria for non-compensatory decision rule, and additional comments from respondents are reported.

The Most Important Criteria for Respondents

Subjects were asked to identify the three most important criteria which they used to purchase pre-school children's apparel. A listing of criteria indicated as most important by respondents is shown in Table 20. For both sample groups, respondents viewed comfort, size/fit, price, fiber content, style, ease of care, and versatility as more important than other criteria when purchasing apparel for pre-school children. Comparing this listing with the mean importance scores (see Table 10, p. 72), the above selected important criteria all received mean scores above 4 points.

For Taiwan respondents, the most important criteria indicated were as comfort, size/fit, fiber content, price, style, ease of care, and colorfastness. For U.S.

Table 20

The Most Important Criteria

#	<u>Taiwan</u> Criteria	#	<u>U.S.</u> Criteria	#	<u>Total</u> Criteria
1	comfort	1	comfort	1	comfort
2	size/fit	2	price	2	size/fit
3	fiber content	3	size/fit	3	price
4	price	4	fiber content	4	fiber content
5	style	4*	ease of care	5	style
6	ease of care	4*	quality	6	ease of care
6*	color fastness	7	versatility	7	versatility

* These criteria are ranked in the same importance levels by respondents.

respondents, comfort, price, size, fiber content, ease of care, quality, and versatility were indicated as the most important criteria.

Criteria for Non-compensatory Decision Rule

As mentioned in chapter II, evaluative criteria used in purchase decision making process include two different ways for selecting decision rules: compensatory decision rule and non-compensatory decision rule. The related questions were included to examine parent-consumers' use of selecting decision rules and to provide information for marketing implications. Respondents were asked if there was any criterion so important that they would not purchase a product if they were not satisfied with the criterion and, if yes, what the criterion was. The responses are reported in Table 21 and 22.

The results revealed how respondents used a non-compensatory decision rule in purchasing clothing items for pre-school children. The U.S. respondents were found to use a non-compensatory decision rule more often than were Taiwan respondents in their purchasing. In other words, the U.S. parent-consumers in this study were more concerned about the identified criteria used in purchasing pre-school children's apparel than were Taiwan parent-consumers. Those criteria used for non-compensatory decision rule by parent-consumers

Table 21

Responses for Non-compensatory Decision Rule Used

<u>Response</u>	<u>Taiwan</u>		<u>U.S.</u>	
	n	%	n	%
Yes	58	74%	56	82%
No	15	19%	6	9%
Missing data	5	7%	6	9%
Total	78	100%	68	100%

Table 22

Criteria Used as Non-Compensatory Decision Rule

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Taiwan</u>		<u>U.S.</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<u>Aesthetic</u>						
Style	9	13%	7	5%	16	7%
fiber content	15	21%	13	8%	28	12%
fabric	0	0%	2	1%	2	1%
uniqueness	1	1%	0	0%	1	0.5%
color	2	3%	8	5%	10	4%
<u>Usefulness</u>						
versatility	1	1%	4	3%	5	2%
matching	0	0%	3	2%	3	1.5%
<u>Performance</u>						
size/fit	0	0%	19	12%	19	8%
comfort	16	22%	25	16%	41	18%
care	1	1%	10	7%	11	5%
color fastness	7	10%	1	1%	8	4%
durability	1	1%	13	8%	14	6%
quality	7	10%	19	12%	26	12%
<u>Extrinsic</u>						
price	11	16%	24	16%	35	16%
on sale	0	0%	1	1%	1	0.5%
country	0	0%	1	1%	1	0.5%
child	1	1%	3	2%	4	2%
<u>Total</u>	72	100%	153	100%	225	100%

were identified as so important that the respondent would not purchase the item unless the criteria were satisfactory and should not be ignored by retailers.

Over 80% of the U.S. respondents indicated they would not purchase a clothing item if they were not satisfied with one or more of the evaluative criteria (see Table 21, 22, p. 89). Compared with U.S. respondents, more Taiwan respondents were found to use compensatory decision rules (9% and 19% respectively).

Among respondents using a non-compensatory decision rule, most of them indicated that they used comfort, price, fiber content, quality, size, and style as evaluative criteria for children's apparel (see Table 22, p. 89).

Additional Comments from Respondents

Through an open-ended question, respondents expressed their opinions, experiences, and comments about purchasing apparel for pre-school children. Comments reflected their needs and preferences as parent-consumers when purchasing apparel for their children. Many respondents mentioned comfort as a main concern in their purchasing (Taiwan respondent #2, #4, #22, #34, etc.). Several parents indicated that they would like to purchase 100% cotton or clothing with a high cotton fiber content because of this concern for comfort (Taiwan respondent #80, #41, #56, etc.).

Size was also mentioned by respondents as a concern. For some respondents, right size meant "a little bit bigger" but "still look good" so that children would "have room to grow" (U.S. respondent #1, #15, and #49; Taiwan respondent #73). Respondents indicated that sizing of children's apparel was inconsistent among brands. Sizing of pre-shrunk cotton clothing was also difficult to determine by some respondents.

Several U.S. respondents indicated that they did not buy clothing products which had particular characters or logos on them such as Lion King or Power Rangers. One respondent explained that the reason for doing this was that the clothing item could be passed on or handed-down more easily if it did not have a character or logo (U.S. respondent #4). On the other hand, one parent mentioned that she purchased a "Mighty Ducks" shirt because her child asked for it (U.S. respondent #30). Like some U.S. respondents, several Taiwan respondents mentioned that they would buy children's apparel only when items were on sale because of the high prices of children's clothing (Taiwan respondent #23, #49, #63, etc.). They would be more willing to purchase pre-school children's apparel at a medium price range.

Summary

The response rate for the present study was 84.1% for the total sample; 94.7% for the U.S. subjects and 77% for Taiwan subjects. A total of 146 eligible questionnaires were used to analyze and test the four null hypotheses. Demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that the two groups chosen for the cross-national comparison were similar in terms of gender, age, number of children, and occupation.

The statistical analyses revealed that the null hypotheses 1 and 4 were rejected while the null hypotheses 2 and 3 were accepted. The results indicated that significant differences were found between the two sample groups in the importance of aesthetic criteria and extrinsic criteria but not in the importance of usefulness criteria and performance criteria.

Among twenty-two purchase criteria in the four categories, t-tests indicated significant differences ($p < .05$) between Taiwan and U.S. parent-consumers in their use of nine criteria. The nine purchase criteria were fiber content, fabric, fabric print, character/logo, colorfastness, price, on sale, brand name, and country of origin.

The Taiwan respondents were found to place more importance on fiber content, colorfastness, character/logo,

brand name, country of origin than did the U.S. respondents in their use of these evaluative criteria.

The U.S. respondents placed more importance on price, on sale, type of fabric, and fabric print than did Taiwan respondents in their use of these criteria for purchasing pre-school children's apparel.

The most important criteria for purchasing pre-school children's apparel were comfort for child, right size or fit, ease of care, colorfastness, fiber content, and style. Additional comments and sharing from respondents provided valuable information for understanding parent-consumers in this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the last chapter, summary, findings, theoretical and marketing implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research are presented.

Summary

The children's apparel industry is a fast-growing industry in the United States. Although some children's apparel is acquired through gifts and "hand-me-downs," parents also purchase apparel for their children. It is important to determine what factors are considered as important when parents purchase their pre-school children's clothing. The present study was conducted to answer the following questions: What are the most important evaluative criteria used by parents to evaluate pre-school children's apparel when purchasing apparel for their pre-school child or children and what are the differences between the U.S. and Taiwan parent-consumers in the importance of criteria used in purchasing pre-school children's apparel.

The purpose of this study was to compare the evaluative criteria used by Taiwan and U.S. parent-consumers in their decisions to purchase children's apparel. The importance of intrinsic criteria directly related to the product itself

and some selected extrinsic criteria was examined. A total of fifteen intrinsic criteria were categorized into three categories: aesthetic criteria (e.g., style), usefulness criteria (e.g., versatility), and performance criteria (e.g., right size). Another six criteria were selected as extrinsic criteria including price, on sale, brand name, country of origin, children's influence, advertisement, and store preference.

The theoretical framework used for this present study was the EKB consumer behavior model. As part of this model, the alternative evaluation, the third stage of the purchase decision making process, was the focus of the study. Although previous research has investigated evaluative criteria used in the purchase of women's and men's apparel, there is limited research on evaluative criteria used when purchasing children's apparel. Children's influence (children asked for the clothing items) on parents' decision making was also examined in this study.

In order to test the hypotheses, survey methodology was used to collect data. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to two non-probability, purposive samples to collect quantitative data. Dependent variables were the importance of evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers: aesthetic criteria (7 criteria), usefulness criteria (2 criteria), performance criteria (6 criteria), and extrinsic criteria (7 criteria).

The subjects for the study consisted of 120 Taiwan parent-consumers and 80 U.S. parent-consumers with a child or children, ages of 3 to 6. The children of the parent-consumers included in the sample were enrolled either at the Child Development Center at Oregon State University or at the Child Development and Family Study Center, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei, Taiwan during Winter term (January) 1995.

Data were collected through the two selected pre-schools in two countries. Collected data consisting of 146 eligible questionnaires were analyzed by two-sample t-tests to test the four null hypotheses. Additional analyses to expand our understanding about parent-consumers in this study were performed.

Findings and Theoretical Implications

By identifying the evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers of pre-school children's apparel, the findings partially supported the theoretical framework used in this study--the EKB consumer behavior model. The relationship between subjects citizenship/residency and the third stage (the alternative evaluation stage) of the decision making process of the EKB model was investigated.

This study was conducted to examine the evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers to evaluate pre-school children's apparel and to compare the differences in the

importance of these criteria between Taiwan and U.S. parent-consumers when purchasing apparel for their pre-school children. The results indicated that significant differences were found between the two groups in the importance of aesthetic and extrinsic criteria but not in the importance of usefulness and performance criteria.

The findings showed that most of the performance criteria and some aesthetic criteria (intrinsic criteria) used by respondents in this study were more important than extrinsic criteria. These findings were consistent with the summary of findings from 21 studies of evaluative criteria for apparel made by Eckman et al. (1990).

Comfort for child, right size/fit, ease of care, durability, and versatility were all very important evaluative criteria for both groups of respondents. The results were consistent with Norum and Wang's study (1994) of children's wear in the importance of evaluative criteria. In their study, comfort, fit, durability, quality, and ease of care were found to be very important to respondents.

In the EKB model, culture is mentioned as an influencing factor to the decision making process (Engel et al., 1993). In this cross-national comparison, significant differences were found between Taiwan and U.S. respondents in the importance of nine purchase criteria: fiber content, type of fabric, fabric print, having character/logo, colorfastness, price, on sale, brand name, and country of origin.

The present study focused on the alternative evaluation stage of the consumer decision making process to better understand parent-consumers' behavior about pre-school children's apparel. The findings answered the two research questions (see chap. I, p. 7). Comfort for child and right size/fit were the most important criteria for parent-consumers and significant differences were found between Taiwan and U.S. parent-consumers in the importance of certain evaluative criteria for purchasing children's apparel. Thus, the EKB model was partially supported.

Marketing Implications

The findings from the present study about the importance of evaluative criteria offer information for children's apparel manufacturers and retailers. Thus, children's apparel manufacturers and retailers for the sampled groups may use the findings as part of their considerations to set up or revise marketing strategies.

The evaluative criteria used most by parents were comfort for child, right size/fit, price, fiber content, style, ease of care, and versatility. Comfort for child and right size/fit were found to be the top-rated criteria by the majority of the parents. Clothing made from cotton was regarded as comfortable for the child by parents in this study. Different from women's and men's apparel, the "right size" for children's apparel sometimes means that clothing

is a little bit large. Manufacturers of children's apparel may need to take this distinction into consideration when determining sizes. There is also a need to have consistent sizing to facilitate the purchase of children's clothing as gifts.

Similar to previous studies on adult apparel, price was an important factor in the purchase decision making for children's clothing. Because pre-school children grow fast, parents were likely to spend their money more effectively by purchasing inexpensive clothing items or purchasing them on sale. In addition, versatility was also an important consideration for most parent-consumers in this study. Respondents indicated that they would like to purchase clothing items which could be worn with other items or could be used in different seasons.

The importance of evaluative criteria used by parent-consumers in this study from the U.S. and Taiwan were not completely the same. For the Taiwan market, parents were more concerned about fiber content and preferred 100% cotton clothing. They also spent more money on the identified clothing item than did the U.S. parent-consumers. This is most likely because of the higher cost of clothing in Taiwan and the higher incomes of Taiwan respondents. Colorfastness, ease of care and ease for the child to put on were also important factors for Taiwan parent-consumers. For the U.S. market, comfort, price, and right size were important factors for the parent-consumers.

The two groups of parents also differed in the places/stores they purchased the identified clothing items. Most U.S. parent-consumers shopped at discount stores and specialty stores; some shopped at department stores or by mail order. Taiwan parent-consumers shopped at department stores and specialty stores, as well as at the traditional market. Children's apparel manufacturers and retailers need to recognize possible differences between consumers from different countries in their decision making processes and shopping behavior.

The findings also indicated that few parent-consumers in this study used advertisements as purchase criteria for pre-school children's apparel. Consumers may be unaware of the impact of advertisements on their consumers decision making process. Manufacturers and retailers could also improve the use of advertisement to express the products more effectively by focusing on the factors important to parent-consumers (e.g., comfort, size/fit, price). Parent-consumers in this study also mentioned that they expect to see more variety in fabric, fiber content, and color in children's apparel in their future purchases.

Limitations

There were several limitations of this study.

1. Due to the nature of the purpose of the study, the sample used was a purposive sample of U.S. and Taiwan

parent-consumers who were parents of children enrolled at the child development centers at OSU and FCU. Therefore, the ability of generalizing the results of this study to larger populations is limited.

2. Data collected for this study were through questionnaire surveys. As such the results can not be used to show cause and effect relationships between nationality and consumer decision making.

3. The sample of U.S. parent-consumers included U.S. citizens and residents who had lived in the U.S. for at least four years although they were citizens of other countries. The U.S. sample subjects could be considered multicultural. Therefore, the findings of this study were concluded to be a cross-national but not cross-cultural comparison.

4. The present study focused on purchasing pre-school children's apparel (daily wear) only. Therefore, the findings may not be applicable to consumer decision processes for other apparel products or other age categories of children.

5. Because of limited time and financial resources for this study, a non-probability sample was used. Therefore, the data may not fulfill the assumption of normality for t-tests.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations for further research are provided:

1. As mentioned in the previous section, the children's apparel industry is a fast-growing industry, the research could be expanded by including subjects with a broader range of children's ages. In addition, a larger sample or samples from different countries could be used to test the objectives of the research and increase the generalizability of the work.

2. More evaluative criteria (factors) relating to children's apparel could be included and tested in further research. Some respondents in this study identified several criteria which were always used in their purchasing. Those criteria are easy to put on and off (especially for younger children) and children's preferences (on color or style, etc.).

3. Other factors which may influence parent-consumers in their purchasing decision making need to be considered and examined in the further research. Those factors may include life style and cultural factors which may interact in purchase decision making processes.

4. Because children's apparel is also purchased as gifts, consumers' decision making on purchasing children's apparel as gifts needs to be investigated. The present study could be expanded by examining and/or comparing

evaluative criteria used by consumers as gift givers when purchasing children's apparel.

5. Samples from different countries (besides the U.S. and Taiwan) need to be examined to increase our understanding about the use of evaluative criteria for purchasing children's apparel.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Correspondence for the Survey

Appendix A -- Cover Letter for U.S. Subjects

Dear parent:

The children's apparel industry is a \$23 billion industry in the U.S. We are presently conducting a study to find out what factors parents use when purchasing pre-school children's apparel. Your responses, as a consumer of pre-school children's apparel, are important. The results will help children's apparel manufacturers and retailers better understand consumers' wants and needs.

You are part of a small group of parents selected to participate in the survey. Your opinions regarding pre-school children's apparel are very important to this study and we appreciate your taking the time (approximately 10 minutes) to complete the survey. Please find a gift (book) enclosed for your child.

The survey needs to be completed by the parent who is primarily responsible for purchasing clothing for your child or children. Please read each question carefully. There are no right or wrong responses. All your responses are completely confidential. Please do not put your name or your child's or children's name(s) on the questionnaire. After completing the survey, please return it to your child's teacher in the enclosed reply envelope. If you would like a summary of the results, please put your name and address on the reply envelope. **PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE NO LATER THAN FRIDAY JANUARY 13, 1995.**

We would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Please call Pei-Chun Chen at 752-3162 or Leslie Burns at 737-0983. Any suggestions or comments are also welcome.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Pei-Chun Chen
Graduate Student
Apparel, Interiors, Housing and
Merchandising
Oregon State University

Leslie Davis Burns, Ph.D.
Professor
Apparel, Interiors, Housing and
Merchandising
Oregon State University

Appendix A -- Reminder 1. for U.S. Subjects

Dear parent:

A few days ago a questionnaire seeking your opinions about purchasing clothing for pre-school children was given to you. If you have already completed and returned it to the teachers at the Child Development Center, please accept my appreciation. If not, please do so today. It is very important because it has been sent to only a small, but representative sample. Your participation will contribute greatly to the results of this study.

If you did not receive the questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please call me at 752-3162 or contact the teachers in the Child Development Center for another copy.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Pei-Chun Chen
Graduate Student
Apparel, Interiors, Housing and
Merchandising
Oregon State University
Milam Hall #224
Corvallis, OR 97330

Appendix A -- Reminder 2. for U.S. Subjects

Dear parent:

About two weeks ago a letter and a questionnaire seeking for your opinions about purchasing pre-school children's apparel were given to you. As of today, I have not received your completed questionnaire.

Your responses, as a consumer of pre-school children's apparel are very important. The results will help children's apparel manufacturers and retailers better understand their customers. You are part of a small group of parents selected to participate in the survey. Your participation will contribute a lot to the results of this study. There are no right or wrong answers. All your responses are completely confidential.

A replacement of questionnaire is enclosed, just in case your questionnaire has been misplaced. Please complete and return it to your child's teacher at the Child Development Center or send it to me today. If you have any questions or comments about this survey, please call me at 752-3162. I would be very happy to talk to you.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Pei-Chun Chen
Graduate Student
Apparel, Interiors, Housing and
Merchandising
Oregon State University
Milam Hall #224
Corvallis, OR 97330

Appendix -- Cover Letter for Taiwan Subjects

親愛的家長：

您好！我們是美國俄勒岡州立大學（Oregon State University）織品服裝系教授 Leslie Davis Burns 博士和碩士班學生陳佩君。目前我們正從事一項中美兩國幼稚園學齡兒童的服裝研究調查。此研究旨在了解中美兩國父母對於選購兒童服裝時，所考慮的因素。調查結果可反應消費者的實際需要，以便讓童裝業者能夠提供更令人滿意的服務。

美國俄勒岡州立大學附設幼兒中心為此研究調查的受訪對象來源之一。而在太平洋彼岸的台灣，經我們仔細挑選評估後，輔大幼兒中心不論在師資、規模、孩童年齡和人數上都與本校幼兒中心相近，故輔大幼兒中心從台灣眾多的幼兒中心中被挑選為唯一的問卷對象。由於受訪對象十分有限（僅約120份），每一份問卷的回收對我們都意義重大，因此特別需要您的合作來幫助我們提高回收率！

請由平時負責購買孩子服飾的家長（父親或母親）填寫此問卷。您所有的回答我們都會予以保密。請勿在問卷上寫出您或您孩子的姓名。請仔細閱讀並回答每一個問題，答案並無對錯之分。填完問卷後請將問卷放入回函信封中並於次日交給幼兒中心的老師。最遲請勿超過一月十二日。根據測試，回答此問卷約需五至七分鐘，故建議您現在就填寫！

如果您有任何有關此問卷的問題或寶貴建議，請與我們駐台助理研究員羅業先生（電話〔日〕2-755-3775〔夜〕2-503-8551）或幼兒中心老師聯絡。再次謝謝您的幫助，附上一件小禮物，希望您的孩子喜歡！敬祝：

生活愉快！

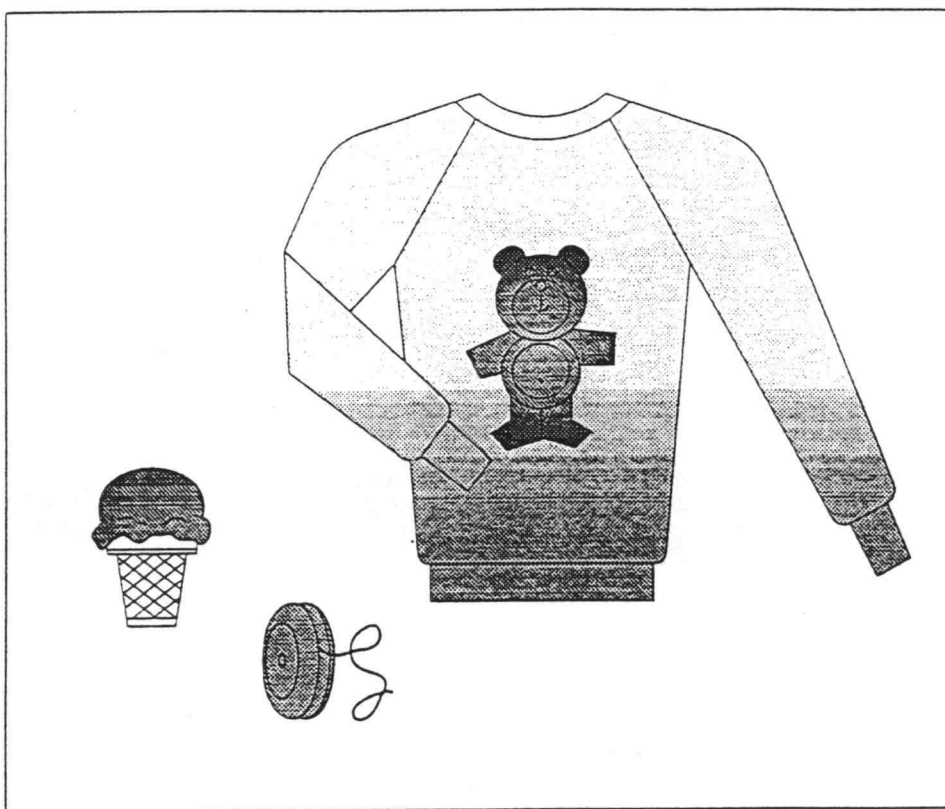
陳佩君
織品服裝系研究生
美國俄勒岡州立大學

Leslie Davis Burns, Ph. D.
Professor
Apparel, Interiors, Housing and Merchandising
Oregon State University

Appendix B
Questionnaire for U.S. Subjects

Purchasing Apparel For Your Child!

-- A Survey of Pre-school Children's Apparel



1995

Pei-Chun Chen
Department of Apparel, Interiors,
Housing and Merchandising
Oregon State University



Please circle the appropriate answer.

1. Are you the parent of a child or children enrolled in the Child Development Center at OSU?

1 NO Thank you. You may stop here. Please return this questionnaire to the teachers at the Child Development Center in the enclosed reply envelope.

2 YES Please go on to the next question.

2. Have you purchased any children's apparel for your child or children during the past year?

1 NO Thank you. You may stop here. Please return this questionnaire to the teachers at the Child Development Center in the enclosed reply envelope.

2 YES Please go on to the next question.

Please think about one item of clothing that **your pre-school child would wear to school (the Child Development Center at OSU)** that you **purchased** for your child during the past year.

Please name the clothing item (e.g., sweatshirt, top, pant, etc.).

Next, please think about this item and answer the following questions.

1. Was this item purchased as a gift (e.g., birthday, Christmas) for your child ?

1 NO

2 YES

2. At which store or outlet did you purchase this item? (e.g., K-mart, garage sale)

3. The approximate cost of this item was \$ _____ . (e.g., \$12, etc.)

4. My child for whom the item was purchased is _____ years old.

Please go to the next page.

Next, think about the reasons why you purchased this item.

Please circle the number which most accurately reflects the importance you placed on each of the following factors in purchasing this item.

If you did not use the factors in your purchase decision, circle NU (not used).

factor <u>number</u>		<u>very</u> <u>important</u>			not not <u>important at all</u>	<u>used</u>
1. Style	5	4	3	2	1	NU
2. Fiber content (e.g., cotton, linen, polyester)	5	4	3	2	1	NU
3. Type of fabric (e.g., denim, fleece, knit, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	NU
4. Uniqueness (can't be found in other stores)	5	4	3	2	1	NU
5. Color	5	4	3	2	1	NU
6. Fabric print or design	5	4	3	2	1	NU
7. Having particular character/logo on clothing	5	4	3	2	1	NU
(e.g., Mickey Mouse, Lion King, Power Rangers, etc.)						
8. Versatility (can be worn with other clothing)	5	4	3	2	1	NU
9. Matching (to match with existing clothing).....	5	4	3	2	1	NU
10. Right size/fit	5	4	3	2	1	NU
11. Comfort for child	5	4	3	2	1	NU
12. Ease of care	5	4	3	2	1	NU
13. Colorfastness of fabric	5	4	3	2	1	NU
14. Durability of fabric	5	4	3	2	1	NU
15. Quality of construction.....	5	4	3	2	1	NU
16. Price	5	4	3	2	1	NU
17. Item was on sale	5	4	3	2	1	NU
18. Brand name	5	4	3	2	1	NU
19. Where it was manufactured (Country of origin)	5	4	3	2	1	NU
20. My child specifically asked for the item	5	4	3	2	1	NU
21. I saw an advertisement for the item	5	4	3	2	1	NU
22. Store where I prefer to shop	5	4	3	2	1	NU
23. Other	5	4	3	2	1	NU
(please specify)						

Please go to the next page.

When you purchased this item, what were **the three most important factors** (listed on the previous page)? Please write down the factor numbers.

1. the MOST important factor is number _____
2. the SECOND most important factor is number _____
3. the THIRD most important factor is number _____

Is there any factor so important for you that you will not purchase a product if you are not satisfied with that factor? Please describe the factor(s) or write down the factor numbers.

1 NO

2 YES

FACTOR NUMBER(S): _____

Please use this space for any additional comments you have about purchasing apparel for your child.

Please go to the next page.

Below are a few questions about yourself so that we can accurately describe our sample. All answers will remain confidential.

Please circle or fill in the best answer to each question.

1. Are you female or male?

- 1 FEMALE
- 2 MALE

2. How old were you on your last birthday?

- 1 UNDER 25
- 2 25 TO 29
- 3 30 TO 34
- 4 35 TO 39
- 5 40 TO 44
- 6 45 TO 49
- 7 50 OR ABOVE

3. How many children do you have and what are their ages and gender?

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S AGE(S)

CHILDREN'S GENDER

4. What is your annual household gross income (before tax)?

- 1 UNDER \$14,999
- 2 \$15,000 TO \$24,999
- 3 \$25,000 TO \$34,999
- 4 \$35,000 TO \$44,999
- 5 \$45,000 TO \$54,999
- 6 \$55,000 TO \$64,999
- 7 \$65,000 OR ABOVE

5. What is your occupation?

- 1 HOMEMAKER
- 2 PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL
- 3 MANAGEMENT/EXECUTIVE
- 4 SALES/MARKETING
- 5 SERVICE WORKER
- 6 MACHINE OPERATOR/LABORER
- 7 RETIRED
- 8 STUDENT
- 9 SELF EMPLOYED/BUSINESS OWNER
- 10 OTHER (Please specify _____)

Please go to the next page.

6. What is your highest education level?

- 1 SOME HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS
- 2 COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL
- 3 VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL SCHOOL
- 4 SOME COLLEGE
- 5 COMPLETED COLLEGE
- 6 SOME GRADUATE SCHOOL
- 7 COMPLETED GRADUATE SCHOOL
- 8 OTHER (Please specify _____)

7. What is your marital status?

- 1 MARRIED
- 2 DIVORCED/SEPARATED
- 3 WIDOWED
- 4 OTHER (Please specify _____)

8. Are you a citizen or resident of the U.S.?

- 1 NO (Please specify _____)
- 2 YES (Please check one: ____ CITIZEN ____ RESIDENT)

If you are not a citizen of the U.S., how long have you been in the U.S.?

_____ YEARS

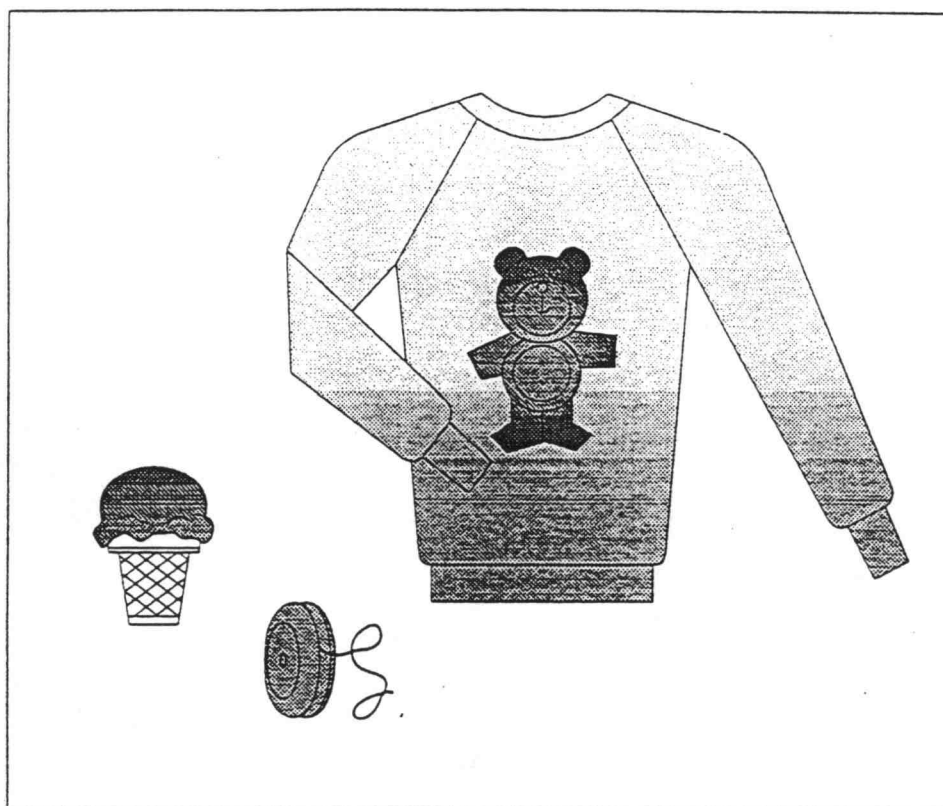
Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Please return the questionnaire to the teacher in the enclosed reply envelope or send to the following address:

Pei-Chun Chen
Department of Apparel, Interiors,
Housing and Merchandising
Oregon State University
Milam Hall #224
Corvallis, OR 97331

Appendix C
Questionnaire for Taiwan Subjects

當您為孩子買衣服時. . .

——選購兒童服裝之問卷調查表



1995

美國俄勒岡州立大學
織品服裝研究所
研究生：陳佩君



請圈選出適當的回答

一. 您的孩子是否目前就讀於輔仁大學附設幼兒中心？

- 1 否 請停止回答下列問題，並請把問卷放入回函信封內，交回給
幼兒中心的老師。謝謝您！
- 2 是 請繼續回答下列問題。

二. 在過去一年中，您是否曾經為您的孩子購買過兒童服裝？

- 1 否 請停止回答下列問題，並請把問卷放入回函信封內，交回給
幼兒中心的老師。謝謝您！
- 2 是 請繼續回答下列問題。

請試想出一件您的孩子平常上學（幼兒中心）時所穿著的衣服，並此件衣服是在過去一年內由您所購買的。

這件衣服的類別是：

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 上衣（例如T恤） | <input type="checkbox"/> 套裝 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 褲子（長褲，短褲） | <input type="checkbox"/> 洋裝 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 裙子 | <input type="checkbox"/> 其他（請說明_____） |

接下來，請依據此件衣服回答下列問題：

一. 您購買此件衣服是做為孩子的禮物嗎？（例如，生日禮物）

- ☐ 否 ☐ 是

二. 您在那一家店購買此件衣服？（例如，愛的世界）

三. 您大約花了 \$ _____ 購買此件衣服。

四. 這件衣服是為您 _____ 歲的孩子購買的。

請繼續下頁

接下來，請想一想您購買此件衣服時所考慮的因素。

請依照下列各項購買考慮因素，圈選出最能正確表達您購買孩子衣服時考慮因素之程度。如果該項因素不在您的考慮之內，請在「不考慮」欄內打「✓」。

代號	考慮因素	非常重要					非常不重要	不考慮
1.	樣式	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	布料的成份（如，棉，麻，耐龍）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	布料的種類或織法（如，針織，牛仔布，斜紋布）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	獨特性（別家店買不到）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	顏色	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	布料上有印花（非單色布）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	印有特殊的圖案或標誌（如，米老鼠，獅子王）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	組合性（易與其他衣服組合替換）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	搭配性（可與已有的某件衣服配成一套）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	尺寸/大小適合	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	舒適（吸汗、透氣）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	易清洗保養	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	不褪色	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	耐穿	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	品質	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	價格	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	拍賣折扣	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	品牌	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	在何處製造（製造國家）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	我的孩子要求買此件衣服	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	我在廣告上看過此產品	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	我對商店的喜好	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	其他因素（請說明_____）	5	4	3	2	1		<input type="checkbox"/>

請繼續下頁

請從上面所列考慮因素中，選出三項最能影響您購買該件衣服的因素。請寫出代號即可。

一．最重要的考慮因素是第_____項

二．第二重要的考慮因素是第_____項

三．第三重要的考慮因素是第_____項

上面所列考慮因素中，是否有那一項（那幾項）對您而言，非常重要，如果您對此項因素不滿意則絕對不會購買該件產品？請寫出代號。

☐ 否（沒有任何一項）

☐ 是

考慮因素代號：_____

請利用以下空白處說明您對於購買您孩子的衣服之任何看法或其他寶貴建議。

請繼續下頁

爲了正確的描述我們所收集的樣本，以下是一些有關於您基本資料的問題，請圈選或回答。您的所有回答都將絕對保密。

一. 您的性別是：

☐ 女性 ☐ 男性

二. 您的年齡是：

☐ 25 歲 以下
☐ 25 至 29 歲
☐ 30 至 34 歲
☐ 35 至 39 歲
☐ 40 至 44 歲
☐ 45 至 49 歲
☐ 50 歲 以上

三. 您有幾個孩子？他們的年齡和性別分別是：

共有_____個孩子

年齡分別爲：_____

性別分別爲：_____

四. 您的家庭每月的收入大約是多少（稅前）

☐ 少於 \$10,000
☐ \$10,000 - \$19,999
☐ \$20,000 - \$29,999
☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999
☐ \$40,000 - \$49,999
☐ \$50,000 - \$59,999
☐ \$60,000 - \$69,999
☐ \$70,000 或以上

五. 您的職業是：

☐ 家庭主婦
☐ 專業技術人員
☐ 經營管理人員
☐ 銷售行銷人員
☐ 服務業從業人員
☐ 機器操作員/勞工
☐ 退休人士
☐ 學生
☐ 自由業/公司負責人
☐ 其他（請說明_____）

請繼續下頁

六. 您的最高學歷為何？

- ☐ 非正式教育
- ☐ 國小
- ☐ 國中
- ☐ 高中
- ☐ 高職
- ☐ 專科
- ☐ 大學或以上
- ☐ 其他（請說明_____）

七. 您的婚姻狀況：

- ☐ 已婚
- ☐ 離婚或分居
- ☐ 寡居
- ☐ 其他（請說明_____）

非常感謝您回答以上問題。請您將此問卷放入回函信封內，交給幼兒中心的老師，或寄至：

羅業（助理研究員）
台北市信義路三段150號8F之1

Appendix D
Applications for Exemptions

Appendix D -- Approval for Exemption from OSU

OFFICE OF DEAN OF RESEARCH



OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

312 Administrative Services · Corvallis, Oregon · 97331-2140
 503-737-3437 · FAX 503-737-3093 · INTERNET scanlanr@ccmail.orst.edu

December 27, 1994

Principal Investigator:

The following project has been approved for exemption under the guidelines of Oregon State University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

Principal Investigator: Leslie Davis BurnsStudent's Name (if any): Pei-Chun ChenDepartment: AIHM

Source of Funding: _____

Project Title: A Cross-National Comparison of Parent-Consumer's
Evaluative Criteria Used in Purchasing Pre-School Children's
Apparel

Comments: _____

A copy of this information will be provided to the Chair of the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. If questions arise, you may be contacted further.

Redacted for privacy

Mary/E. Nunn
 Sponsored Programs Officer

cc: CPHS Chair

Appendix D -- Letter of Agreement from FCU, Taiwan

FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

地址：台北市
 中正路
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LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Date: Dec. 20, 1994

This letter is to agree of Chen, Pei-chun, graduate student of Apparel, Interiors, Housing and Merchandising Department, Oregon State University with her advisor Leslie Davis Burns, Ph. D. conduct a study named "A cross-national comparison of parents-consumers' evaluative criteria used in purchasing pre-school children's apparel" in Fu-Jen Catholic University Childcare Center to find out what factors parents use when purchasing pre-school children's apparel.

This study needs to be completed by collecting questionnaires from parents. We agree to having this process to be conducted by Miss Chen, Pei-chun here in early Jan. 1995.

Redacted for privacy

Agree by: Hsu, Ching-Yun
 Director of Fu-Jen Catholic
 University Childcare Center