AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Shi Jean Cho for the degree of Master of Science in
Apparel, Interiors, and Merchandising presented
on February 5, 1992.

Title: The Effect of Consumers' and Salespersons' Age
on Perceptions of Salespeople

Abstract approved:
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Physical appearance is one of the most important cues
that an individual uses in forming an impression of another
person. Researchers have found that perceptions of age are
negatively related to perceptions of physical attractiveness.
Because salespeople are influential in affecting a store's
sales, especially for nondurable goods (Undell, 1972),
consumers' perceptions of salespeople may influence the
store's image and sales outcomes. The purpose of the present
study was to investigate consumers' perceptions of salespeople
of different ages and to determine if differences in these
perceptions were related to consumers' age and salespersons'
age.

Two groups of subjects were investigated – younger adults
(between 18 and 28 years of age) and older adults (55 years of
age and older). Younger adult subjects were recruited from
university classrooms (n = 41). Older adult subjects were the
recipients of Oregon Home Economics Extension Newsletter (n =
46). The total sample size was 87. A questionnaire was used
in the present study to investigate a consumer's perceptions.

The questionnaire included three parts : questions on the respondent's shopping patterns, a consumer shopping scenario which included the salesperson's age manipulation, and questions asking demographic information. Three dependent variables were measured in the questionnaire: perceptions of the salesperson's fashionability, product knowledge, and job performance. The data were analyzed using the chi-square statistic and content analysis.

Results indicated that consumers' perceptions of a salesperson's fashionability was related to the age of the salesperson. Perceptions of a salesperson's fashionability was also related to the age of consumer and the age of the salesperson. Perceptions of the salesperson's product knowledge and performance were not related to the age of salesperson nor to the age of the consumers.

The Effect of Consumers' and Salespersons' Age
on Perceptions of Salespeople

by

Shi Jean Cho

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Science

Completed February 5, 1992

Commencement June 1992

APPROVED:

Redacted for Privacy
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Associate Professor of Apparel, Interiors, Housing and
Merchandising in charge of major

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Date thesis is presented _____February 5, 1992_____

Typed by _____ Shi Jean Cho_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Dr. Leslie D. Burns for serving as my major professor. Her guidance, enthusiastic support, and patient were paramount to the completion of this thesis.

I also thank my graduate committee, Dr. Harolod Koenig, Dr. Sally Francis, and Dr. Vicki L. Schmall, for their helpful advice and editorial suggestions.

I appreciate the support from my husband Ping, my family, and the staff of AIHM Department.

To all these people, I express my sincere gratitude.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

America is aging. Between today and the year 2000, the median age of Americans will rise from 32 to 35 years (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1989). The older population (over 55 years) will be the major proportion of the population in the year 2000. In the decade of 1990 - 2000, the age group of over 55 years will increase to 38.6 percent of the total U.S. population. During this same time the age group of 20-30 years will decrease to 18.9 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1989).

To the apparel retailer, the change of population composition has two implications. The first implication is the growth of the "grey market" and decreases in the youth market for apparel. The second implication is the possible shortage of young labor supply to serve as the sales associates for retailers. The present study will focus on this second implication.

When a shortage of younger workers exists for businesses, employment opportunities for older workers often increase. For manufacturing industries some of the jobs are often replaced by advanced technology. However in service

industries such as retailing, humans are needed on the front line selling goods to customers. Retailers are discovering the increased importance of quality customer service (Paajanen, 1990). For high ticket items, the role of the selling position is even more important.

In the apparel retailing business, many salespeople are young (salespeople aged 16-24 account for 32.1 percent of the sales force) ("Incentive Programs . . . ," 1988). With fewer people in this age group to serve as retailers' sales force in the future, recruitment of older people seems a good way to resolve this problem. However, how this practice may influence consumers is a concern to retailers (Taylor, 1986; "Incentive Programs . . . ", 1988).

Perceptions of salespeople and therefore perceptions of the store by consumers may be related to the age of the salespeople. In many instances, information about a message source is primarily based on visual cues such as appearance. Researchers have investigated how appearance cues influence perceptions and attitudes toward a person (Steinhaus & Laptisky, 1986; Lennon, 1988; Thurston, Lennon & Clayton, 1990). These researchers have demonstrated that persons characteristically make judgements of or form attitudes about others with very limited information, and communication effectiveness often is dependent on the perception of a message source based on superficial characteristics such as age and appearance.

Although there are many researchers who have studied the capability of older workers and individuals' perceptions of older people (Parker, 1982; Rosen & Jerdee, 1976; Thorson, Whately & Hancock, 1974), few studies have investigated perceptions of older workers (Bird & Fisher, 1986; Thorson et al., 1974), especially older salespeople. Older workers (age 55 and over) account for 15.1 percent (18 million) of the total labor force in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1989). Of older female workers (age 55 and over) (6.3 percent of all labor force), 13.8 percent are in sales positions. Approximately 869,400 older adult saleswomen are in contact with consumers every day (Herz, 1988).

Salespeople are in direct contact with customers. They are often considered part of the store image, and are often the primary factor that determines sales. Although the hiring of older workers may resolve the problem of labor shortage of young workers, and many employers are satisfied with older workers' performance (Taylor, 1986; Johnson, 1988), it is unclear how consumers perceive older salespeople.

Therefore, the present study is designed to examine consumers' perceptions of older adult salespeople. Specifically, the present study will investigate the perceptions of two ages of consumers: younger adult and older adult. Past research has suggested that perceived similarity between customer and salesperson may affect the selling interaction (Woodside & Davenport, 1974; Steinhaus & Lapitsky,

1986). Therefore, perceptions of older adult salespeople may be related to the age of the consumers.

Summary

Because retailers are faced with a rising problem of labor shortage, they may hire older workers to fill the gap. Regardless of the capability of older workers, how consumers perceive older adult salespeople may affect consumers' impressions of the store. Although, many older workers are currently in sales positions and the number is expected to increase, there is limited research on how consumers perceive older adult salespeople.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the present study is to investigate consumers' perceptions of older adult salespeople.

Given the likelihood that the number of older adult salespeople in retail stores will increase, it is important to know if consumers perceive older adult salespersons differently from younger adult salespersons. The present study is designed to help retailers gain a better understanding of the effect of hiring older adult salespeople on consumers' perceptions.

Operational Definitions

Salespersons (Salespeople) : Persons employed to sell merchandise in a store.

Older adult salespersons (salespeople) : Salespersons (salespeople) who are 55 years and older.

Younger adult salespersons (salespeople) : Salespersons (salespeople) whose age is between 18 and 28 years.

Older consumers : Consumers who are 55 years and older.

Younger consumers : Consumers who are between 18 and 28 years of age.

Perceived fashionability of salesperson : Salesperson was perceived as stylish and knowing the latest fashion trend.

Perceived performance of salesperson : Salesperson was perceived as a trustworthy source of information and as having influence on customers.

Perceived product knowledge of salesperson: Salesperson was perceived as knowing relevant information about apparel merchandise.

Hypotheses

Individuals tend to form mental constructs of expected behavior traits based on observation. For example, individuals perceive attractive females to have more capability in a job than unattractive females (Berschied & Dion, 1972). "These expectations of inferred traits help one

to organize information about people and also suggest other traits people might have" (Thurston, Lennon & Clayton, 1990, p.140). Age is one of the cues used when observing and drawing inferences about others. Age has been found to be associated with several attributes of individuals' perceptions. (1) Age affects perceptions of physical attractiveness. Researchers found that age was perceived to be negatively related to perceived attractiveness (Lennon, 1988; Wernick & Manaster, 1984). Physical attractiveness has been associated with many characteristics. Attractive people were perceived to have more positive personal traits, higher occupational performance, professional success and to be more trustworthy than unattractive people (Patzer, 1983; Berschied, Dion & Walster, 1972). This phenomenon occurs more frequently for females than for males (Hill & Landv, 1976). (2) Age denotes wisdom, competence and experience (Thurston, et al., 1990). Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that consumers' perceptions of salespeople might related to the age of the salespeople. Consumers' impressions of a salesperson may affect consumers' judgements of the fashion information provided by that salesperson. The image of salesperson's fashionability may influence consumers' perceptions of the store in which the salesperson works. Therefore, based upon this past research, the perceived traits of fashionability, product knowledge and performance were measured in the present study to investigate consumers' perceptions of salespeople.

Hypothesis 1: Consumers' perceptions of salespersons' fashionability will be related to age of salespersons.

Hypothesis 2: Consumers' perceptions of salespersons' product knowledge will be related to age of salespersons.

Hypothesis 3: Consumers' perceptions of salespersons' performance will be related to age of salespersons.

Simons, Berkowitz and Moyer (1970) suggested that similarity enhances communication between perceivers and sources. Age is one factor which individuals might use to assess the similarity between others and themselves. Hence, the perceptions of salespeople may be related to the age of consumers and the age of salespeople.

Hypothesis 4: Consumers' perceptions of the salespersons' fashionability will be related to the age of the salespersons and age of consumers.

Hypothesis 5: Consumers' perceptions of the salespersons' product knowledge will be related to the age of salespersons and age of consumers.

Hypotheses 6: Consumers' perceptions of the salespersons' performance will be related to the age of salespersons and age of consumers.

Assumptions

The effects of any differences among subjects with regard to prior experiences and role relationships with older adult people and their knowledge about aging and the aged on the results of the study will be minimized through random assignment of subjects to experimental conditions.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

The first section of this chapter will cover the theoretical framework regarding perception and people's perceptions of the older adult. The second part will discuss the importance and function of salespeople, and how similarity between consumers and salespeople affects the selling interaction. The third section will present trends in labor availability. The last part will evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of hiring older workers.

Theoretical Framework

The study of perception is a very broad field. In the present study, perception is examined in terms of those areas that are relevant to consumer behavior.

Roberston, Zielinski, and Ward (1984) suggested that the study of perception was based on six principles.

1. Perception is selective. An individual can not possibly perceive all stimulus objects within a perceptual field; therefore, only certain objects are selected.
2. Perception is organized. Perceptions have meaning for the individual: they do not appear to be a 'buzzing, blooming confusion.'
3. Perception depends upon stimulus factors. The nature of the stimuli presented have a strong bearing on whether something is perceived and how it is perceived.

4. Perception depends upon personal factors.
   The individual's psychological,
   emotional, and experiential
   characteristics have a powerful impact on
   perception.
5. Sensory threshold levels operate in
   perception. Human beings have upper and
   lower limits in responding to sensory
   stimulation and have differential
   thresholds in noticing minimal differences
   in stimuli.
6. Perception is subject to a halo effect.
   This is a tendency for the person to apply
   general impressions, frequently based on
   limited information, to specific
   attributes (p. 167).

Person Perception Research

Social perceptions, also known as impressions, "are

important because they influence real-life situations and once

formed they tend to be stable and resistant to change, even in

the face of contradictory information" (Thurston, Lennon &

Clayton, 1990). One aspect of social perception is that of

person perception. Person perception has been defined as

the process by which man comes to know and to
think about other persons, their
characteristics, qualities, and inner
states.... The observations or inferences we
make are principally about intentions,
attitudes, emotions, ideas, abilities,
purposes, traits, thoughts, perceptions,
memories -- events that are inside the person
and strictly psychological" (Bruner & Tagiuri,
1954, p.636).

Lennon and Davis (1989) suggested that

person perception is affected by two factors:
(1) object factors, and (2) perceiver factors.
Object factors include the visual
characteristics of the object (what is

actually perceived), the salience of these characteristics, and the similarity between these perceived characteristics and self perceptions. Perceiver factors are individuals' unique standard dimensions (accessible categories) which are used to encode people. There are individual differences in these dimensions (accessible categories) (p.48).

The influence of object factors on person perception is a compromise between the stimuli and the individual's personal interpretation of these stimuli. The object factors that affect person perception are varied. One factor that has received a great deal of attention is the physical attractiveness of the person (Hartnett & Elder, 1973). Physical attractiveness of a person has been found to affect the perceiver's impressions (Johnson & Pittenger 1984). Age is an important contributor to an individual's physical appearance. In studies examining the perception of age, researchers (Lennon, 1988; Thurston, Lennon & Clayton, 1990) suggested that younger individuals are perceived as more attractive than older individuals. In the study conducted by Wernick and Manaster (1984) subjects were shown twelve line drawing faces and asked to rate the age of these faces. These pictures represented three stages of age (young, middle and old). Older respondents rated the age of the picture of an old face as younger than did young respondents. It appears that older adults perceive themselves as "younger" than their actual age.

each day the consumer is exposed to a mass of stimuli in the total environment. But it is beyond the individual's capabilities and interests to "see" everything. The individual becomes more tuned to stimuli, in which s/he is interested. In addition, if the incoming stimuli are inconsistent with the individual's self-image they are selectively blocked to avoid ego threat. Research on person perception (Sujan, Bettman & Sujan, 1986) also has indicated that affective reactions to other individuals are governed by a person's prior experience and beliefs about the category of individuals.

Perceptions of the older adult

Perceptions of the older adult are often affected by a socially defined stereotype. Carver and Garza (1984) indicated that

> Stereotyping as a phenomenon begins when some specific group or category of people is identified as being distinct from 'people in general' for one reason or another. When this happens, a separate organization of knowledge is build up around that group or category label incorporating elements that distinguish that category of persons from 'people in general.' When an individual stimulus person is subsequently identified as belonging to that group, the specialized knowledge structure becomes activated. Once actived, the schema may influence subsequent behavior in variety of ways (p.70).

In most situations individuals' impressions of others are formed on the basis of the traits that are heard, read, or inferred (Schul & Burnstein, 1985). When individuals are in an unfamiliar situation or face a stranger, they will use

socially defined stereotypes as a basis for their perceptions.

Stereotypes can be positive or negative, but usually are negative in nature. People's stereotypes of older adults are often negative. There are numerous commonly held generalities about the older adult. The most common examples (Davis & Davis, 1985) are listed here:

1. Old people are rigid and inflexible.
2. Old people decline in intelligence.
3. Old people are less productive as workers.
4. Old people are institutionalized and dependent.
5. Old people are senile (p.55).

Researchers (Hicky, Hicky & Kalish, 1968) found that young people viewed the older adult more negatively relative to other age groups. Opposite results were found by Ivester and King (1977). In their study the majority of high school students held positive attitudes toward the aged. Some studies have shown that older people subscribe to negative stereotypes to a greater degree than younger persons (McTavish, 1971). However, a nationwide survey found evidence to the contrary. The result of this survey indicated that older adults have a more positive view of themselves than do younger persons. Education seems to be directly related to positive perceptions of the older adult in that the better educated have more positive attitudes toward the aged than those with limited formal education (Thorson, Whately & Hancock, 1974).

People's attitudes toward older workers are affected by their perceptions, which are often a stereotype of older

people. Rosen and Jerdee (1976) investigated four aspects of people's attitudes to different age of workers (age 30 and age 60). The four aspects were: (1) performance capacity, (2) potential for development, (3) stability, and (4) interpersonal skills. Rosen and Jerdee (1976) found that people perceived older workers as less capable than younger workers in performance capacity and potential for development, whereas people perceived that older workers were more stable than younger workers. In terms of interpersonal skills, there was not a clearly defined stereotype based on age differences. They also found that respondents' ages did not affect age stereotyping. In Rosen and Jerdee's study, subjects' ages ranged from 18 to over 53 years. The group of respondents age 53 and over only represented 8 percent of the sample, whereas 61 percent of the sample was under 32 of age meaning that the finding was probably affected by the unbalanced age composition. On the other hand, Thurston, Lennon and Clayton (1990) found that age may contribute to a professional image with older age conveying an impression of experience and, therefore, competence.

Perceptions of salespeople

Literature on consumers' perceptions of salespeople is limited. In general, people perceive salespeople in a negative manner. Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1986) reported that in a national survey conducted in 1979, consumers'

confidence toward salespeople's credibility was down 10 percent from the previous year.

Sujan, Bettman and Sujan (1986) suggested that "Consumers' schema for salespeople might influence their information processing in selling encounters (p.347)." They used a schema-triggered affect model as a conceptual framework for a study of how customers' beliefs about salespeople influenced their perceptions of the selling process. Sujan, et al. (1986) indicated that customers' perceptions of salespersons were associated with the type of product sold. For example from the pretest research, Sujan, et al. (1986) found that computer salespersons were perceived as having the most positive image; used car salespersons and clothing salespersons were perceived negatively.

As indicated in the previous section, older aged women were found to be associated with professional image (Thurston, et al., 1990), that may suggest that the use of older adult salespersons might change consumers' perceptions of clothing salespersons. On the other hand, older adult salespeople might arouse a negative store image because of people's stereotypes of older people.

Salesperson's Influence on Consumer Behavior

Because the sales interaction is a social situation between two persons, the outcome of the interaction depends upon the economic, social, and personal characteristics of

both the customer and the salesperson. Selling can be classified into two categories : (1) the traditional approach, emphasizing the salesperson and his/her performance characteristics relative to some criterion of sales performance and (2) the emerging perspective which focuses on the customer-salesperson interaction. Marketing and social researchers (Evans, 1963; Williams & Spiro, 1985) suggested that the characteristics of both the customer and salesperson were important determinants of the sales process, and therefore it is necessary to look at the parts of the sales interaction as a dyad.

The importance of salespeople

Purchasing behavior frequently requires direct contact with salespeople. Salespeople are usually the first people in the store to interact with customers on a face-to-face basis. Thus, they have tremendous influence on how consumers perceive a store. Salespeople are a significant factor who influence customers' total impression of the store. Researchers (Solomon, Suprenant, Czepiel & Gutman, 1985) also indicated that customer-salesperson interaction is important in determining customer satisfaction. Knowledgeable and helpful salespeople are an important element in store choice by customers (Engel, et al., 1986). A survey conducted by Udell (1972) found that executives of industrial firms rated the sales function as five times more important than advertising

in their marketing mixes. For markets of consumer durables, executives rated sales 1.8 times as important as advertising, and executives of consumer nondurables goods rated sales 1.1 times more important than advertising (James, Durand & Dreves, 1976).

Salespeople are more important to older-adult customers than to younger customers (Tongren, 1988). Because of physical changes and psychological needs of older customers, they like to shop where there is personal service, such as department stores and specialty stores (Tongren, 1988; Martin, 1976; Tongren, 1988). Gelb (1978) suggested that older adult consumers were likely to be served by salespeople in their own age group. On the other hand, Lumpkin, Greenberg, and Goldstucker (1985) found that when older adults did their apparel shopping they did not prefer to shop where there were older salespeople because they do not like to be reminded of their age.

Salesperson's influence

There are two primary types of influence that salespeople have on customers : (1) referent power, and (2) expert power. First, the salesperson may be seen as a means of personal identification, a source of friendship, attraction, or shared identity, which is referred to as "referent power." Second, the salesperson may be considered knowledgeable about the product category and a regular source of information, which is

referred to as "expert power."

Referent power.

Referent power is based on the perceived attraction of members in the dyad to one another. The source of this power may arise from friendship, identification with a successful model, or feeling of a shared identity. Studies in marketing suggest that perceived similarities in personal goals, interests, or values are sources that increase the effectiveness of this power base (Busch & Wilson, 1976, p.4).

Expert power.

Expert power is based on the influencee's perception that the influencer has valuable knowledge, information, or skills in a relevant area. Expertise is a source of influence that must come forth from the participant in the dyad and cannot be delegated by a third party. It seems that at least a threshold level of a salesman's expertise must be demonstrated to establish a sound interpersonal selling relationship (Busch & Wilson, 1976, p.3).

Several studies have been conducted to find whether referent or expert power was more important in the sales interaction. Evans (1963) and Busch & Wilson (1976) investigated the relative influence of referent and expert power on life insurance decisions. They found that expert power was more important than referent power as a factor affecting trust of an insurance salesperson. Brock (1965) studied the success of paint sellers who were characterized as similar to the consumer but inexperienced (referent but not expert power) and dissimilar to the consumer but experienced (expert but not referent power). The results indicated that

referent power was more important than expert power in this particular sales interaction situation.

To investigate the same question of which power has greater influence, Woodside and Davenport (1974) introduced four conditions: expert salesperson who was either similar or dissimilar to the customer and nonexpert who was similar or dissimilar to the customer. They concluded that the combination of both referent and expert power was needed to maximize sales.

Woodside and Davenport (1974) also inferred that for a specialty service such as life insurance, or a complicated durable good such as a car purchase, the expertise of the salesperson would be most important. However, if the item is less complicated, such as paint, referent power is likely to prevail. For a product such as clothing, it may be that referent power will be most important in the sales interaction.

Similarity - attraction

Researchers have suggested that similarity between customers and salespeople does affect the sales interaction success. Simons, et al. (1970) indicated that similar sources are alleged to be more credible than dissimilar sources. And similarity leads to trust, respect, and/or in group feelings. Also researchers in social and educational psychology have demonstrated that social and psychological similarity between

two people improves their ability to communicate (Williams & Spiro, 1985). The similarity of buyer-seller has been studied in terms of physical characteristics (age, sex, height, weight, race), other object factors (income, religion, education), and variables that may be related personality factors (politics, smoking) (Evans, 1963; Churchill, Collins & Strang, 1975).

An important link between similarity and communication effectiveness is believed to be the receiver's attitude toward the message source. Communicators perceived as similar to their audiences have been judged as more effective in eliciting positive responses than those perceived as dissimilar (Woodside & Davenport, 1974; Steinhaus & Lapitsky, 1986). Attitudes that appear to be most effective are : (1) interpersonal attraction which incorporates likability and friendliness (which is referred to as referent power), and (2) credibility which incorporates expertise, prestige and trustworthiness (which is referred to as expert power) (Woodside & Davenport, 1974; Steinhaus & Lapitsky, 1986).

Steinhaus and Lapitsky (1986) investigated the influence of a fashion model's age on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. Subjects were recruited from customer intercepts at a small women's ready-to-wear shop in a midwestern city. Photos of two age groups of models, mid-20s and mid-50s, were selected as the instrument to present to the subjects. They found that older customers felt more similar to the group in

which the model's age was older and showed positive attitudes toward older models. Young customers did not respond differently to the two groups of models.

The results of many studies suggested that the similarity of customer and salesperson does affect the sales process. Does this mean that retailers should employ salespeople who are similar to their target customers? A study conducted by Churchill, Collins, and Strang (1975) investigated whether salesperson-customer similarity affected the outcome and timing of the sales process. The characteristics of similarity investigated in this study were background similarity and visual similarity. Background similarity included : education, religion, and political preference. Visual similarity included education, age, height, nationality, race, and sex. Education was used as a visibility variable because a person's educational level may become manifest in the person's verbal and behavioral patterns. The findings indicated no significant difference in the sales process between similar and dissimilar salesperson-customer dyads. There was a significant difference in the amount of purchases between similar and dissimilar salesperson-customer dyads; with greater purchases being the outcome of similar dyads. The insignificant results were explained by the authors as a result of the research focus on transactions occurring in a retail store. In this situation salesperson-customers interaction time was limited, and there

was no time to establish a relationship between salesperson-customer. Churchill (et al., 1975) suggested that the customer-salesperson interaction in a retail setting may in part be affected by the similarity between the customer and salespersons, at least in terms of the outcome of the interaction.

Trends in Labor Availability

Changes in the population structure not only change the market but also the labor force supply. In the future, young employees may be difficult to find. As of 1981, the retail industry's single largest employee group was 16 to 24 years old and accounted for 32.1 percent of all sales workers. Based on this percentage, by 1990 the industry is likely to need 645,000 workers in the 16-24 year old age group. However, population figures show that there will only be 515,000 people available in this age group, resulting in a 20.2 percent shortage ("Incentive Programs ...", 1988).

As the retail industry grows, the labor shortage problem will become more serious. Employment of retail salespeople is expected to grow faster than the average of all workers (20% through the year 2000) due to anticipated growth in retail sales. In 1988, salespeople in the retail industry accounted for 3,834,000 people. The retail industry is projected to need 2,797,000 people to work in its stores by 1990. There are likely to be only 2,650,000, a 5.2% shortfall ("Incentive

Programs ...", 1988). In the year 2000, the need for salespeople will be 4,564,000, an increase of 19 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic, 1989).

Many reports have indicated a concern with the projected salesperson shortage. McDermott (1990) found that more than 95 percent of chain retailers responding to one industry survey rated the lack of workers as a serious problem. Another survey conducted by the National Retail Merchants Association (NRMA) among department and specialty store executives found that 80 percent considered the shortage of young workers a serious problem that cut profit.

As retailers consider the labor force shortage, they are turning toward hiring older workers (Taylor, 1986; Herz, 1988; McDermott, 1990). Cascio and McEvoy (1989) predicted that in the years between 1985 and 2000, the number of workers between the ages of 45 and 65 will grow 41 percent whereas the number in the 16 to 35 year age group will decline slightly. Workers aged 45 and over were 15 million in 1985; in the year 2000 this group of workers will be 17.3 million, representing 12.27 percent of all U.S. workers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1990). The total number of older workers is likely to increase in the coming years. Data from the U.S. census suggested that better educated people with high incomes tend to continue to work after retirement age.

Although, the attractiveness of older persons as a source of labor may have increased, male work force participation

among those aged 55 and over has, until the last few years, declined slightly, while female work force participation among those aged 55 years and over is growing steadily. In the 1990's, the group of male and female workers, aged 55 years and over, is projected to increase substantially (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1990).

Demand for work by older citizens

According to a 1982 Lou Harris Poll, 50 percent of 15 million retired Americans over 70 years of age wanted to return to work (Hergenrather, 1985). In Los Angeles, all six of the mature - worker placement programs, such as Second Careers, are able to place 2000 older people a year into jobs, which meets only about 5 percent of the demand in Los Angeles area from the eager-to-work elderly (Hergenrather, 1985). A survey conducted in the 1970s indicated that more than 90 percent of employees aged 55 years and over were interested in working part-time after retirement (Johnson, 1988).

Two major reasons why older adults keep working are economic reasons and psychological reasons. As one might expect, many workers in low socio-economic groups, who have relatively little if any savings and small occupational pensions, tend to continue working or take up new work after pension age because they need the extra money. Among older workers the main reason for preferring to remain at work is that retirement would bring some form of economic hardship or

at least a reduction in the standard of living. Inflation has also encouraged people to work longer (Kauffman, 1987). It has been believed that older adults are more adversely affected by inflation than are other demographic groups (Clark & Sumner, 1985).

Many older people works because they like to work. Happiness is a frequent theme. Older people respond more to intrinsic rewards such as a pat on the back for a good job or a feeling that work is a meaningful activity (Kauffman, 1987). The opportunity of leaving home for a few hours, contact with colleagues and work commitment make them feel joyous.

For older workers, employment is not only a means of making money, but also a means of enjoyment.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Hiring Older Workers

The growing population of older workers appears to be a great resource for retailers. There are both advantages and disadvantages to retailers in hiring older workers.

Advantages

A study conducted by the Center for Labor and Programs at Queen College in Flushing, New York, found that $235 million in social security benefits could be saved annually if just half of all older workers who had retired, returned to the labor force in New York City (Hergenrather, 1985). "Expanding job opportunities for older workers is cost effective for our

country," said Senator Lawton (D-Florida) in 1980 (Hergenrather, 1985). Older adults returning to work would not only help a social problem, but their work ethic and low turnover rate would help retailers.

Work ethic. Retailers hire older workers not only because these older populations are available, but also because they have found older individuals to be good workers. According to a company executive, his company was interested in older workers not only because they were plentiful but also because they had good social skills ("Incentive Programs ...", 1988). Claude Pepper, former chairman of the U.S. House Select Committee on Aging, mentioned that, "Businesses are finding that older workers have better attitudes toward work and [are] more committed to company objectives" (Kauffman, 1987, p.43). The fact that more older people are returning to college indicates their willingness to learn new skills (Kauffman, 1987). People who want to learn new things after the age of 40 are often more motivated to learn than when they were at a younger age (Hergenrather, 1985).

Employers, particularly in the fast food industry, such as Wendy's, Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's, and in the childcare field are delighted in their hiring of older employees. They are finding that retirees are excellent replacements for teenage and young adult workers (Johnson, 1988). Another example of a successful move to hire older

employees is Ames Department stores. Ames Department stores are filling the labor shortage in New England; they aggressively recruited older employees to work in their stores. They believed that employees in the older age bracket tended to be more personable than younger employees ("Incentive Programs ...", 1988).

Kirchner, McElwain and Dunnette (1960) investigated the relationship between age and sales effectiveness. Five-hundred and thirty-nine retail managers were asked to rank the performance of sales associates. The age range of the sales associate sample was from 23 to 65 years, with a mean age of 34.07 years. The results indicated that the age group 30 to 45 years had the highest mean (5.6) for performance (on a 7-point scale), and those in the age group 23 to 25 had the lowest mean (4.0). The sales associates aged 50 and over had a mean performance of 4.2. Kirchner reported possible reasons for the low means of older sales associates were: lack of motivation after many years on the job, actual physical deterioration, and promotion of better persons to more responsible positions. However, it should be noted that many older sales associates were ranked extremely high in sales performance. Kirchner concluded that an inference about sales performance based on knowledge of age alone would be unwise and could be substantially "off base."

Lower employee turnover. Sales force turnover is a

serious problem of the retail industry, that may be partially alleviated by the hiring of older employees. Salespeople are an important source of revenues as well as costs for organizations (Anderson, 1985). Fern, Avila and Grewal (1989) investigated the sales force turnover problem in a computer company, and found that the retention rate of salespeople for more than 2 to 3 years was 50 percent. The cost to replace a lost salesperson ranged from $25,000 to $75,000 per salesperson. The reasons for high turnover among salespeople are many. One research study found that salesperson's age, length of service and family were related to turnover (Fern, Avila & Grewal, 1989). Cotton and Tuttle (1986) classified reasons for employee turnover into three categories: (1) work related factors, such as pay, performance, job satisfaction and organization commitment; (2) personal factors, including age, education, sex and job tenure; and (3) external factors, including unemployment rate, employment perceptions and union presence. In general, older workers have a longer tenure than younger workers. This may be due to a fear of losing pensions and an uneasiness in changing jobs at an older age. Also, older workers often have more commitment to their jobs than do younger employees.

In a study conducted by Darden, Hampton and Boatwright (1987) at 82 convenience chain stores in southeastern U.S., 495 employees were asked to state their intentions to quit. They found that older employees were less apt to leave the

firm than were younger employees. The authors suggested that the turnover rate could be reduced by approximately 37 percent by hiring individuals in one higher age bracket.

The research cited has shown that older workers are a good source of employees for retailers, not only because of the increasing population but also because older employees have more social experience and a longer tenure than younger employees. Thus, hiring older workers will be the future trend in the labor force.

Disadvantages

In this society, there is a widespread belief that performance declines with age. This attitude often results in limited employment opportunities for older workers. Certain types of jobs are less suitable for older workers because of their reduced strength and endurance. However, if older workers are properly placed, they function effectively and have greater stability on the job, fewer accidents and less time lost from work than do younger workers (Parker, 1982).

A substantial proportion of men and women over pension age are in fact employed either full-time or more commonly part-time. However, the capability of older people for work may indeed be affected by physical and psychological changes that occur as one grows older.

Physical Capability. Viewed in purely physical terms,

the aging process does have an adverse effect on a person's ability to perform various actions. There may be certain tasks in an apparel salesperson's job, such as physically moving inventory, that may be difficult for older workers. But work is not merely a matter of the human body acting as a machine. Human activity (including thought not limited to work) is better conceived as a composite of physical, mental and social action (Parker, 1982).

Psychological capacity. Advancing age is usually accompanied by certain psychological changes. These changes occur gradually. In an investigation of the condition of older workers, Kauffman (1987) found that aging in itself did not lead to mental impairment, such as memory loss or a breakdown in intellect. Neither intelligence nor learning capacity decreased until at least age 70. Very large numbers of people aged 65 years and over are in sufficiently good health to be able to work. Dr. K. Warner Schaie at Pennsylvania State University has conducted extensive research on aging. He tracked mental changes in individuals over a seven year period and reported that from ages 60-67, approximately two-thirds of the subjects remained stable; one quarter declined, and 10 percent showed significant gains. Furthermore, half of the people studied from age 74-81 remained stable, with 10 percent also showing significant gains (Hergenrather, 1985, p.57). According to another study

conducted by Jarvik and Cohen (1973, cited in Parker, 1982, p.83). "...older learners differ from young learners in that they tend to respond more slowly, are more sensitive to interference while engaged in learning tasks, and often show a decline in immediate and short term memory. But they are by no means ineducable".

Summary

An individual's perception is formed by what is read, heard and observed. In a first impression situation, when the information is not sufficient to construct an impression, individuals tend to infer impressions from available information. The impression formed is often based on stereotyping.

In general, there is a negative stereotype toward older people. Regardless of age of the perceiver, there is agreement that young faces are more attractive than older faces; and people have more positive attitudes toward attractive appearance than toward unattractive appearance (Jasper & Klassen, 1990).

Salespeople are a great advertising tool for retailers. Because salespeople face the customers directly, they have great influence on customers. They not only provide information about merchandise (expert power), but they also have the influence of helping sales occur when they are similar to the customer (referent power).

Because older workers can provide the necessary work force for retailers, consumers' opinions of older workers are important to retailers who may be recruiting older workers. If the majority of consumers perceive older adult salespeople in a negative way or confine older adult salespeople to certain types of images, their perceptions of the store and subsequently their purchase behavior may be affected. Although there is concern that people's physical ability decreases with age, many studies reported that the working capability of older workers was the same as for younger workers except for jobs that require physical strength.

Two serious problems faced by retailers are a shortage of a young population causing the shortage of young workers, and the high turnover rate of young employees which increases the cost to retailers. The increase in older workers and the willingness of older people to work make the older adult population an available resource for retailers. Therefore, the present study will investigate younger and older consumers' perceptions of younger and older salespeople's fashionability, product knowledge and performance.

CHAPTER III

Method

The purpose of the present study was to investigate
consumers' perceptions of salespeople of different ages. In
this study perceptions of two age groups of female consumers
were examined.

Design

An experimental design was used with two independent
variables, salesperson's age and subject's age. Two levels of
salesperson's age (younger adult, older adult), and two levels
of subject's age (younger adult, older adult) were included.

The dependent variable was perceptions of the
salespeople. The dependent variable was measured by a
questionnaire designed to tap a subject's perceptions of the
salesperson to which she was exposed.

Questionnaire

Development

The title of the questionnaire was "Let's Go Shopping --
A Survey of How and Why You Shop" (see Appendix A). The
questionnaire consisted of both open-ended questions and
closed-ended questions. The questionnaire contained three
parts. The first part was a set of questions asking about the
respondent's shopping patterns and her work experience in a
retail store. These questions were included in the

experience of the respondents and to explore possible relationships between these characteristics and perceptions of salespeople. Subjects were asked in the first question how frequently they obtained clothing at different kinds of stores and other means of clothing acquisition. The second question asked subjects how often they shopped or browsed for apparel. These two questions provided the researcher with information regarding the shopping patterns of respondents. In general, department stores and specialty stores have more salespeople than other types of stores. Individuals who often shop at these types of stores may have more contact with salespeople than those individuals who obtain clothing in other ways. Therefore, questions regarding shopping patterns of respondents were included. The third question asked subjects if they had ever worked in an apparel retail store. If they had, a follow-up question asked how long and what the job title was. It may be that, people who have worked in apparel stores perceive salespeople differently than those who have not worked in apparel stores.

The second part of the questionnaire was a consumer behavior scenario and questions regarding the respondent's perception of the salesperson in the scenario. This part of questionnaire elicited subjects' responses with regards to their perceptions of the salesperson's product knowledge, fashionability and performance. The consumer behavior scenario incorporated the age of salesperson variable

manipulation. The scenario read as follows :

> On a Saturday afternoon you decide to go to the local shopping center to purchase a blouse as a birthday present for your best friend. Your friend is a trendy person. Her blouse size is the same as yours. In the shopping center you find a newly opened apparel store that you have never been to before. You decide to go in to take a look. As you enter the store you are approached by a sales associate. Her name is Kate Robins and she is 60(23) years old. She appears to be friendly with a ready smile. Although you know that you want to purchase a blouse, you are unsure about what style or color you wish to buy for your friend. Kate approaches you and asks if she can help you.

The purpose of this scenario was to investigate respondents' reactions when they faced the salesperson. In the set of following questions, subjects were asked their perceptions of salesperson's stylishness, fashion awareness, apparel knowledge, credibility and ability to convince. Two open-ended questions followed asking what the subjects expected the salesperson to know and what kinds of customers the salesperson would be best at serving. These two questions supplied additional information on what subjects thought of the salesperson.

Four photographs of female faces – two photographs of younger adult female faces and two photographs of older adult female faces were selected to represent the salesperson described in the scenario. The four photographs used for the study were selected from eight photographs from women's fashion magazines, catalogs, and magazines for older adults.

A pretest was conducted to determine the attractiveness and perceived age of each of the faces. Six female faculty members participated in the pretest. The pretest instrument included the eight photos printed black and white, with each photo covered by a white paper that could be lifted so that the rater only saw one photograph at a time. To control for order effects, two sets of photographs presented in different order were used. The participating faculty members were asked to rate the age and attractiveness of the face in each photograph. Based upon the results, two photographs of younger adult females, whose average age rated was 23 years and two photographs of older adult females, whose average age rated was 60 years, were chosen.

Johnson and Pittenger (1984) indicated that people who are perceived as physically attractive are assumed to have more positive performance and characteristics than those perceived as unattractive. Therefore, facial attractiveness was measured for each of the chosen photographs. The mean attractiveness ratings of the two younger female photographs that were chosen were very close, one was 5.67 and the other was 6 (on a 7-point scale, 7 representing very attractive). The mean attractiveness ratings of the chosen older adult female photographs were different, one was 5.67 and the other was 3. Therefore, the data were analyzed to determine whether the attractiveness of the face influenced respondents' judgements in this study. The results are discussed in the

"Results" chapter.

The third part of the questionnaire was questions asking about the subject's demographic characteristics. This set of questions included the ethnic identity, age, employment status, education level and household income of subjects. All were of a fixed-alternative question format, except the question on age which asked the respondents to indicate their age at their last birthday. These questions were included to better describe the sample studied.

Four questionnaires were developed; one for each of the four photographs of the salesperson. The four questionnaires were identical in format except for the incorporated photograph of the salesperson and the age indication in the text of scenario.

Pretest

The questionnaires were pretested by eight potential subjects to identify construction problems in the questionnaires. Four of the questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher in order to get verbal feedback on potential problems with understanding the questionnaire. The distribution of the other four questionnaires followed the mailing method. The comments from the pretest respondents helped the researcher recognize the problems with the wording of several questions. Therefore, revisions in wording of these questions were made following this pretest.

Subjects

Past research (Wernick & Manaster, 1984; Hicky, Hicky & Kalish, 1968) shows that younger adults and older adults have different opinions about age. However, there is no common definition of "younger adult" and "older adult" in terms of age range of each age group. Therefore in the present study the age range of each group was adapted from general definition of age used by past researchers. Two age groups of female subjects, younger adult and older adult, were investigated. Subjects whose age 55 years and over represented "older adult," subjects 18-28 years of age represented "younger adult."

Younger adult subjects

The sample of younger adult female subjects were recruited from a university class. A total of 47 subjects were included in the sample. Six of the respondents did not fulfill the age requirement of younger adult subjects. Therefore, the final sample size was 41. The sample was students enrolled in four different colleges, 61 percent were from the College of Home Economics, and 39 percent were from the College of Business, College of Liberal Arts and College of Education.

Older adult subjects

The recipients of Oregon Home Economics Extension

Newsletter served as the sampling frame for the older adult female subjects.

A systematic random sample was drawn from the list of names and addresses of newsletter recipients provided by the Oregon Home Economics Extension Office. A total of 120 subjects were included in the sample.

Procedure

For the younger adult subjects, questionnaires were completed in a university classroom. Subjects were given an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study, the importance of each response and the voluntary nature of participation. Questionnaires were distributed in random order to the subjects. After completing the questionnaires, respondents returned the questionnaire to the person who handed them out.

For the older adult subjects, questionnaires were distributed in random order through the mail. A cover letter was included with the mailed questionnaire. The letter explained the purpose of the study and the importance of each response. The initial mailing of the questionnaires was sent to the sample September 14, 1991. One subsequent mailing comprised the follow-up. Postcard reminders were sent one week after the initial mailing. Examples of the consent sheet, cover letters and postcard reminders can be found in Appendix A.

Of the 120 questionnaires mailed, 72 questionnaires were

returned by respondents in the older adult female sample. However, 26 of the returned questionnaires were non-eligible because the age of respondents did not fulfill the age requirement for the present study (age was less than 55 years or respondents failed to complete the age question) and fourteen questionnaires were not deliverable. Therefore, the final sample size was 80, resulting in a response rate of 57.5 percent. Response rate was determined using the formula suggested by Dillman (1978, p.50). The response rate formula is calculated by dividing the number of returned questionnaires by the number in the sample minus the number of noneligible and non-reachable subjects. Then, the quotient is multiplied by 100 to get a percentage. For the purpose of the study, the 46 useful returned questionnaires comprised the older adult sample.

The data for the two groups of samples were collected in different ways. The main difference in the two ways of data collection was that the response context for older adult subjects was not controlled by the researcher. However, random assignment of subjects among the four questionnaires was accomplished for both groups.

Data Analysis

Two kinds of data were collected: quantitative data (nominal and categorical) were collected as well as qualitative data (descriptive data) were collected. The nominal and categorical data were analyzed using nonparametric

statistics. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis.

The hypotheses were tested with the chi-square statistic (x^2). Chi-square tests were employed to make comparisons between frequencies rather than between means. Percentages were used to provide additional information. Differences in percentages indicated support of the hypotheses. The data from the open-ended questions assisted the researcher in interpreting the results of the hypotheses testing and contributed additional information.

The data from the open-ended questions were analyzed using content analysis. Galfo (1983) suggested that content analysis has five steps: (1) collection of written statements, (2) selection of the unit of content, (3) development of a classification system, (4) assignment of units of content to categories, and (5) quantification. Phrases from the descriptions from the open-ended questions (questions 9 and 10, see questionnaire in Appendix A) served as the units of content. Two classification systems were used, one for question 9 which stated, "What information about the merchandise would you expect Kate to know ?" and one for question 10 which stated, "Describe the type of customers you think Kate would be best at serving." (see Appendix A). The units of content collected from question 9 were assigned to four categories - fashion trend, merchandise information, customer service and personal skill (see Appendix G). Those

answers that did not directly relate to the question or were too general to be categorized were classified into an "others" category. The units of content collected from question 10 were assigned to three categories - characteristic traits, demographic information, and physical and biological characteristics (see Appendix H). Phrases that were too general were classified into an "others" category. For each respondent, the written perceptions were coded for the frequency of occurrence of the types of categories. The raw data were analyzed by two coders for assigning units of content to the categories. The inter-coder reliability or the percentage of agreement between two coders for assigning units of content to the categories was 92 percent.

Summary

The questionnaires were developed and data collected on campus and through the mail. Four questionnaires were used in the present study. The questionnaires varied only by the photographs used as stimulus materials and the age indication of the person in the photograph. Subjects were recruited from two age groups - younger adult and older adult. Younger adult subjects were Oregon State University students between 18 and 28 years of age. Older adult subjects were randomly selected from the members of the Home Economics Extension Organization, age 55 years or older. A sample of 47 younger adult subjects were recruited, six subjects did not meet the age requirement, resulting in a final sample of 41 younger adult subjects. A

total of 120 older adult subjects were mailed questionnaires. Fourteen questionnaires were not deliverable, 72 questionnaires were returned. However, 26 questionnaires were ineligible resulting in 46 useful questionnaires. The response rate was 57.5 percent. The total sample size used in the present study was 87 (41 younger adult and 46 older adult). The questionnaire include open-ended, closed-ended and demographic questions. Open-ended questions were analyzed by content analysis followed the suggestions of Galfo (1983). Results of closed-ended questions were analyzed by using Chi-square test.

CHAPTER IV

Results

This chapter includes presentation of the results of the data analyses. The characteristics of younger adult and older adult subjects are also described.

The information about the respondents will be described in terms of the following traits: age, ethnic identity, employment status, education, income distribution, shopping patterns, shopping frequency and work experience in apparel retail stores. These characteristics of the sample should be taken into account when interpreting the results of the present study. Response rates categorized by age group of respondents and by type of questionnaire are also reported.

Demographic Data

Age distribution and response rate of subjects

The age range of the younger adult respondents was from 18 to 28 years. The majority of the younger adult respondents were between the ages of 20 and 25 years, accounting for 53.66 percent of the younger adult respondents. The mean age of the younger adult respondents was 20.39 years.

The age range of the older adult respondents was from 55 to 82 years. The majority of the older adult respondents were age 70 years or older, accounting for 52.17 percent of the older adult respondents. The mean age of the older adult respondents was 69.78 years.

The sample size for each of the four experimental groups (four photographs) was very similar (see Table 1). Forty-three respondents were exposed to the older adult photographs (photos A & B) and forty-four respondents were exposed to the younger adult photographs (photos C & D).

Ethnic identity

The overwhelming majority of the sample indicated their ethnic identification as White (93.1%). Five subjects (5.7%) indicated an Oriental ethnic identification and one subject (1.1%) indicated a Black ethnic identification.

Employment status

Over half (56.1%) of the younger adult sample (n=23) were not employed. Seventeen (41.5%) younger adult subjects had part time jobs, most of them worked at Oregon State University. Only one (2.4%) of the younger adult subjects had a full time job.

The majority (89.1%) of the older adult sample (n=41) indicated they were not employed. Three (6.5%) older adult subjects had full time jobs, and two (4.3%) had part time jobs (see Table 2).

Education level of respondents

Because younger subjects were recruited from a university class, the educational background of the younger adult

Table 1

Distribution of Subjects by Experimental Group

Subjects' Age	Salespersons' Age (Photo)				
	Older Adult		Younger Adult		Total
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	
Younger Adult	11	10	10	10	41
Older Adult	12	10	11	13	46
Total	23	20	21	23	87

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Older and
Younger Adult Subjects by Employment Status

Employment Status	Age Group			
	Younger Adult		Older Adult	
	n	%	n	%
Not employed	23	56.1	41	89.1
Employed full time	1	2.4	3	6.5
Employed part time	17	41.5	2	4.3
Total	41	100.0	46	100.0

subjects was very similar. Twenty-one (51.2%) of the younger adult subjects indicated that they had some four-year college or university education, eight (19.5%) had a community college degree, and seven (17.1%) of the younger adult subjects had at least a high school education level.

Education levels of the older adult subjects varied. Fourteen (30.4%) of the older adult subjects had a community college degree or university degree. Four (8.7%) of the older adult subjects indicated some graduate school or professional education level. Eight (17.4%) had technical training, sixteen subjects (34.8%) had a high school degree, whereas four (8.7%) of the older adult subjects had completed up to grade 11 or less (see Table 3).

Income distribution

A large proportion of the younger adult respondents indicated that their total combined incomes for their households in 1990 were under $15,000 (36.6%). American family household income under $15,000 is 25.3 percent (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990). It may be that some of the younger adult respondents as students were independent from their families or they did not realize the meaning of the term "household income." Hence a greater percentage of respondents had a household income that was lower than typically found. Twenty-two percent of the younger adult respondents indicated that their household income in 1990 was greater than $60,000.

Table 3

<u>Level of Education Completed by</u>
<u>Older and Younger Adults</u>

Education Level	Age Group					
	Younger Adult		Older Adult		All Subjects	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Grade 11 or less	0	0	4	8.7	4	4.5
High school graduate or equivalent	7	17.1	16	34.8	23	26.4
Technical training or community college beyond high school	1	2.4	8	17.4	9	10.3
Community college degree or certificate	8	19.5	2	4.3	10	11.5
Some four-year college or university	21	51.2	12	26.1	33	37.9
College or University (Bachelors)	2	4.9	0	0	2	2.3
Some graduate school	0	0	1	2.2	1	1.15
Graduate or professional degree	2	4.9	0	0	0	2.3
Total	41	100.0	46	100.0	87	100.0

Note. Younger Adult = Subjects' age between 18 and 28 years
Older Adult = Subjects' age 55 years or over

The remaining (39.0%) younger adult respondents' household incomes were between $15,000 and $60,000 (see Table 4).

Nine (19.6%) older adult respondents indicated their total household incomes in 1990 were under $15,000. Only one (2.2%) older adult respondent indicated that her total household income in 1990 was over $60,000. Ten (21.7%) older adult respondents' total household incomes were between $20,000 and $29,999, with the remaining 23 respondents (49.9%) fairly evenly distributed among the other income categories (see Table 4).

Shopping Patterns of Respondents

Ways and places of apparel shopping

In order to determine the means for obtaining clothing most frequently used by subjects, responses were weighted according to the frequency of responses in each of the response categories. Respondents' answers in the category "always" were given a weight of 4, answers in the category "often" were given a weight of 3, answers in the category "sometime" were given a weight of 2, and answers in the category "never" were given a weight of 1 (missing data were not counted). The percentage of responses in each category was multiplied by the weight and then summed as a total score. Total scores were ranked in descending order to show the order of how frequently each means for obtaining clothing was used by respondents.

Table 4

Income Distribution of Subjects by Age Group

| Income Range | Age Group | | | | All Subject | |
| | Younger Adult | | Older Adult | | | |
	n	%	n	%	n	%
under $ 15,000	15	36.6	9	19.6	24	27.6
$ 15,000 to $ 19,999	3	7.3	6	13.0	9	10.3
$ 20,000 to $ 29,999	1	2.4	10	21.7	11	12.6
$ 30,000 to $ 39,999	2	4.9	6	13.0	8	9.2
$ 40,000 to $ 49,999	2	4.9	6	13.0	8	9.2
$ 50,000 to $ 59,999	5	12.2	5	10.9	10	11.5
$ 60,000 to $ 69,999	4	9.8	0	0	4	4.6
$ 70,000 or over	8	19.5	1	2.2	9	10.3
Missing data	1	2.4	3	6.5	4	4.6
Total	41	100.0	46	100.0	87	100.0

The places where the younger adult respondents most frequently shopped were specialty stores. Thirty-two (78%) younger adult respondents indicated specialty stores as where they always or often shopped for clothing. Department stores were the next most popular places (51.2%) where younger adult respondents always or often shopped for clothing. Next in order of where and how younger adult respondents obtained their clothes were off price stores, gifts, discount stores, mail order, used clothing stores, made by themselves and garage or rummages sales (see Table 5).

Department stores were found to be the places where older adult respondents most frequently obtained their clothes. Eight (39.2%) older adult respondents indicated that department stores were where they always or often shopped for clothing. Next in order of means of obtaining clothing by older adult respondents were discount stores, gifts, made by themselves, specialty stores, mail order, off price stores, garage or rummage sales and used clothing stores (see Table 6).

Department stores were indicated by over one-third of both age groups of respondents as where they always or often shopped for clothing and specialty stores were indicated by over three-quarters of the younger adult respondents as a store type at which they always or often shopped. These two types of stores are more likely to have salespersons involved with selling clothing than the other types of stores listed.

Table 5

Percentage of Responses for and Ranking of Means
for Clothing Obtainment by Younger Adult Subjects

| Means of Obtainment | Percentage of Response | | | | | Total | Rank |
| | Always | Often | Some Time | Never | Missing Value | Weight | Order |
(Weight)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	−		
Department Store	14.6	36.6	41.5	7.3	0	258.5	2
Speciality Store	34.1	43.9	14.6	7.3	0	304.6	1
Discount Store	4.9	9.8	46.3	39.0	0	180.6	5
Off-Price Store	2.4	31.7	43.9	22.0	0	214.5	3
Through Mail Order Catalogs	0	12.2	43.9	43.9	0	168.3	6
Garage or Rummages Sales	4.9	7.3	9.8	78.0	0	139.1	9
Used Clothing Store	2.4	7.3	34.1	56.1	0	155.8	7
Clothing was made by Subject	0	14.6	24.4	61.0	0	153.6	8
Clothing Obtain from Gifts	0	17.1	75.6	7.3	0	209.8	4

Table 6

Percentage of Responses for and Ranking of Means
for Clothing Obtainment by Older Adult Subjects

| Means of Obtainment | Percentage of Response | | | | | Total | Rank |
| | Always | Often | Some Time | Never | Missing Value | Weight | Order |
(Weight)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	−		
Department Store	2.2	37.0	80.0	8.7	2.2	228.5	1
Speciality Store	4.3	10.9	47.8	32.6	4.3	178.1	5
Discount Store	0	17.4	69.6	13.0	0	204.4	2
Off-Price Store	0	8.7	34.8	54.3	2.2	150.0	7
Through Mail Order Catalogs	2.2	13.0	45.7	32.6	6.5	171.8	6
Garage or Rummages Sales	2.2	8.7	15.2	71.7	2.2	137.0	8
Used Clothing Store	0	4.3	15.2	80.4	0	123.7	9
Clothing was made by Subject	6.5	15.2	37.0	41.3	0	186.9	4
Clothing Obtain from Gifts	2.2	10.9	67.4	17.4	2.2	193.7	3

Because the present study investigated perceptions of salespeople, the results may be relevant to these two types of retailers and to understand the perceptions of younger adult and older adult shoppers.

Shopping frequency

Younger adult respondents shopped for clothing more often than older adult respondents. Twenty-two percent of the younger adult respondents shopped for clothing more than four times a month, and 11(26.8%) of the younger adult respondents shopped for clothing three or four times a month. Sixteen (39.0%) of the younger adult respondents shopped for clothing one or two times per month. Five (12.20%) of the younger adult respondents indicated that they shopped less than once a month for clothing (see Table 7).

Twenty-six (56.5%) of older adult respondents shopped for clothing less than once a month. Fourteen (30.4%) older adult respondents shopped for clothing one or two times a month. Six (13.0%) older adult respondents shopped for clothing three or four times a month. None of the older adult respondents reported apparel shopping more than four times a month (see Table 7).

Work Experience in Apparel Retail Stores

Twenty-two of the younger adult respondents (53.66%) indicated that they had worked in apparel retail stores. Of those who had this experience, thirteen indicated that they

Table 7

Apparel Shopping Frequency by Age Group
(For Browsing or Purchasing)

Shopping Frequency (Per Month)	Age Group			
	Younger Adult		Older Adult	
	n	%	n	%
Less than once	5	12.2	26	56.5
One or two times	16	39.0	14	30.4
Three or four times	11	26.8	6	13.0
More than four times	9	22.0	0	0
Total	41	100%	46	100%

had 1 to 3 years experience.

Nine of the older adult respondents (19.57%) indicated that they had worked in apparel retail stores. Four of these respondents had over 10 years experience (see Table 8).

Eighteen of the 31 respondents who had work experience in apparel retail stores were sales associates, eight were sales clerks, three were stock persons, and the other two were a buyer and a manager.

Comparison of the Attractiveness of the Two Salespersons in Each Age Group

According to a finding of Johnson and Pittenger (1984), the attractiveness of a person's physical appearance will influence others' perceptions of this person. Photographs of four different female faces, two of older adults and two of younger adults, were used as stimulus materials in the present study. As you recall, the attractiveness of the two older adult female faces were perceived differently in terms of physical attractiveness. Photograph "A" received a mean attractiveness score of 5.67 (1 = not attractive at all, 7 = very attractive) and photograph "B" received a mean attractiveness score of 3 (see Appendix B). The mean attractiveness scores for the two younger adult female faces were similar. (5.67 for "C", 6 for "D"; see Appendix B). To investigate whether respondents' perceptions of salespersons were affected by the attractiveness of the female faces,

Table 8

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Work Experience in Apparel Retail Stores

Work Experience	Age Group			
	Younger Adult		Older Adult	
	n	%	n	%
No Experience	19	46.3	37	80.4
Under one year	9	22.0	3	6.5
1-3 years	13	31.7	1	2.2
4-6 years	0	0	1	2.2
7-9 years	0	0	0	0
10 years or over	0	0	4	8.7
Total	41	100.0	46	100.0

separate chi-square analyses were performed on the responses to photographs "A" and "B" and to photographs "C" and "D". Subjects' responses to photographs "A" and "B" were compared on the three measurements (fashionability, product knowledge and performance), which were designed to investigated consumers' perceptions. Subjects' responses to photographs "C" and "D" were also compared on the three measurements. The results indicated that respondents' perceptions were not related to the attractiveness of the stimulus photographs, at a significance level of .05. Table 9a and table 9b show the results of the chi-square analyses of the responses for the two photographs in each age group. Therefore, responses to photographs "A" and "B" were pooled and responses to photographs "C" and "D" were pooled for further analyses.

Correlation Analysis

In the questionnaire, questions 4 and 7 were designed to measure consumers' perceptions of the fashionability of the salesperson, questions 6 and 8 were designed to measure consumers' perceptions of the salesperson's performance. To investigate whether responses to questions 4 and 7, and questions 6 and 8 were related, correlation analyses on responses to each set of questions were performed.

A number called the correlation coefficient measures the strength of the relation between two variables. Values of correlation coefficient range from −1.0 to +1.0. Values of

Table 9a

<u>Chi-Square Test Results of Responses to</u>
<u>Photograph "A" Vs. Responses to Photograph "B"</u>

Dependent Variable	DF	Value	Probability
Stylishness	4	5.179	0.269
Fashion Trends	3	0.943	0.815
Product Knowledge	4	1.334	0.856
Credibility	4	2.730	0.604
Convincing Ability	4	9.380	0.052

Note. Significance Level = 0.05

Table 9b

<u>Chi-Square Test Results of Responses to</u>
<u>Photograph "C" Vs. Responses to Photograph "D"</u>

Dependent Variable	DF	Value	Probability
Stylishness	2	0.311	0.856
Fashion Trends	3	4.107	0.250
Product Knowledge	3	1.200	0.753
Credibility	4	5.253	0.262
Convincing Ability	4	4.492	0.343

Note. Significance Level = 0.05

correlation coefficient close to +1.0 means the two variables are positively related (Schlotzhauer & Littell, 1987).

The correlation coefficient for questions 4 and 7 was 0.276 meaning these two questions were positively related. The correlation coefficient for questions 6 and 8 was 0.523 meaning these two questions were also positively related.

Test of Hypotheses

Chi-square statistic is used for determining whether a systematic relationship exists between two variables. The requirements for using chi-square statistic are: (1) the sample size must be between 30 and 250, and (2) the expected cell count should be equal to or greater than five. If the data do not fulfill the requirement, chi-square statistic may not be a valid statistic (Mendenhall, Ott & Larson, 1974).

In the present study, chi-square was used as the analytic method because (1) data collected for investigating consumers' perceptions of salespersons were categorical in nature (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) and (2) the sample size of the present study was 87. Although some of the expected cells in the tests might be less than five, the advantages of chi-square (finding the relation of two variables and analyzing categorical data) were the major reasons for using chi-square statistic in this study.

Hypothesis 1 : Consumers' perceptions of salespersons' fashionability will be related to age of salespersons

Consumers may perceive the fashionability of younger adult salespersons and older adult salespersons differently. Question 4 (the stylishness of salesperson) and question 7 (the salesperson's knowledge of subjects' age group's latest fashion) in the questionnaire (see Appendix A) were used to measure subjects' perceptions of the salespersons' fashionability.

For question 4, the perceived stylishness of the salespersons, the result of chi-square statistical test showed there was significant evidence [x^2(4, N = 81) = 13.210, p < .05] that the perceptions of the stylishness of the younger adult salespersons and the older adult salespersons were different. An examination of the frequency distribution showed that 31(38.27%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that younger adult salespersons were stylish, whereas 17(20.98%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the older adult salespersons were stylish (see Table 10). In addition, four(4.93%) of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that the older adult salespersons were stylish, whereas none of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that the younger adult salespersons were stylish (see Table 10).

Question 7 asked subjects their agreement with the

statement "I think the salesperson knows the latest fashion of my age group". The result of chi-square statistical test points out there was no significant evidence [x^2(4, N =83) = 1.649, p > .05] that the respondents perceived the younger adult salespersons and the older adult salespersons differently. Results indicated that 24(28.91%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed the younger adult salespersons knew the latest fashions for their age group, and 24(28.91%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that older adult salespersons knew the latest fashions for their age group (see Table 11).

Therefore the hypothesis of consumers' perceptions of salespersons fashionability would be related to the age of salespersons was partly supported. Subjects' perceptions of the stylishness of salespersons was related to the age of the salespersons. Subjects' perceptions of the salespersons' knowledge of the latest fashion of the subjects' age group was not related to the age of the salespersons.

Hypothesis 2 : Consumers' perceptions of salespersons' product knowledge will be related to age of salespersons

In an open-ended question subjects were asked "what information about the merchandise would you expect the salesperson to know". Product knowledge was the most frequent theme that respondents expected salespersons to know (see Table 12). This open-ended question was analyzed by content

Table 10

Subjects' Perceptions of the Stylishness by
Age Group of Salespersons

Age Group of Salesperson		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Younger Adult	n	5	26	9	0	0	40
	(%)	(2.17)	(32.10)	(11.11)	–	–	(49.38)
Older Adult	n	1	16	20	3	1	41
	(%)	(1.23)	(19.75)	(24.69)	(3.70)	(1.23)	(50.62)
Total	n	6	42	29	3	1	81
	(%)	(7.40)	(51.85)	(35.80)	(3.70)	(1.23)	(100.0)

Statistic for Table 10

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	4	13.210	0.010

Effective Sample Size = 81
Frequency Missing = 6

Table 11

Subjects' Perceptions of the Latest Fashion Awareness
by Age Group of Salespersons

Age Group of Salesperson		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Younger Adult	n	9	15	11	7	0	42
	(%)	(10.84)	(18.07)	(13.25)	(8.43)	–	(50.60)
Older Adult	n	5	19	10	7	0	41
	(%)	(6.02)	(22.89)	(12.05)	(8.43)	–	(49.40)
Total	n	14	34	21	14	0	83
	(%)	(16.87)	(40.96)	(25.3)	(16.9)	–	(100.0)

Statistic for Table 11

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	3	1.649	0.648

Effective Sample Size = 83
Frequency Missing = 4

analysis. The classification system was developed based on the collected units of content and assigned to four categories: fashion trend, merchandise information, customer service and personal skill. Those answers that did not relate to the question or were too general to be categorized were classified into "others". The frequency of units of content categorized into each category are reported in Table 12. These frequencies were converted to the percentage of total information reported by the respondents. The greatest number of responses for what the younger adult salespersons and the older adult salespersons were expected to know was merchandise information.

Hypothesis 2 was tested by chi-square $[x^2(4, N = 80) = 4.307, p > .05]$. The statistical test indicated no significant evidence that the respondents perceived the younger adult salespersons and the older adult salespersons differently. In the study of respondents' perceptions of the knowledge of salespersons about apparel, it appears 23(28.75%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the younger salespersons had apparel knowledge, and 28(35%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the older adult salespersons had apparel knowledge. Whereas five(6.25%) of the respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed or disagreed that the older adult salespersons had apparel knowledge, only one (1.25%) of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that the younger adult salespersons had

apparel knowledge (see Table 13).

Therefore, the hypothesis that consumers' perceptions of salespersons' product knowledge would be related to age of salespersons was not supported.

Hypothesis 3 : Consumers' perceptions of salespersons' performance will be related to age of salespersons

Consumers may perceive the performance of the two age groups (younger adult and older adult) of salespersons differently. Question 6 (the credibility of salesperson) and question 8 (the convincing ability of salesperson) of questionnaire (see Appendix A) were used to measure subjects' perceptions of salespersons' performance.

Subjects were asked their agreement with the statement "I believe what the salesperson tells me about the clothes". The chi-square statistical test showed no significant evidence $[x^2(4, N =86) = 4.502, p > .05]$ that the respondents perceived younger and older adult salespersons' credibility differently. Results showed that 21(24.42%) of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed they would believe what the younger adult salespersons would tell them, and 29(33.72%) of the respondents made the same expression regarding to the older adult salesperson. Four (4.64%) respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed they would believe what the older adult salespersons would tell them about clothes, and three (3.48%) respondents indicated the same for the younger adult

Table 12

<u>Content Distribution of Merchandise Information that</u>
<u>Subjects Expect Salespersons to Know</u>

Category		Salesperson's Age Group	
		Younger Adult	Older Adult
Fashion Trend	n	36	37
	(%)	(32.4)	(31.1)
Merchandise	n	40	58
Information	(%)	(36.0)	(48.7)
Customer	n	20	11
Service	(%)	(18.0)	(13.6)
Personal	n	9	10
Skill	(%)	(8.1)	(9.2)
Others	n	6	3
	(%)	(5.4)	(2.5)
Total	n	111	119

Table 13

Subjects' Perceptions of the Apparel Knowledge by
Age Group of Salespersons

Age Group of Salesperson		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Younger Adult	n	5	18	14	1	0	38
	(%)	(6.25)	(22.50)	(17.50)	(1.25)	-	(47.50)
Older Adult	n	5	23	9	4	1	42
	(%)	(6.25)	(28.75)	(11.25)	(5.00)	(1.15)	(52.50)
Total	n	10	23	23	5	1	80
	(%)	(12.50)	(51.25)	(28.75)	(6.25)	(1.15)	(100.0)

Statistic for Table 13

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	4	4.307	0.366

Effective Sample Size = 80
Frequency Missing = 7

salespersons (see Table 14).

In the investigation of salespersons' convincing ability, the chi-square statistical test showed there was no significant evidence [x^2(4, N = 81) = 3.057, p > .05] to indicate that the respondents perceived the convincing ability differently by age of salespersons. Results indicated 15 (18.52%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed the younger adult salesperson would successfully convince them to make a purchase, 13 (16.04%) of the respondents expressed the same with regard to the older adult salespersons. There were seven (8.64%) of the respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed that the younger adult salespersons would successfully convince them to made a purchase, and 11 (13.58%) of the respondents indicated the same perceptions of the older salespersons (see Table 15).

Hence, the hypothesis that consumers' perceptions of salesperson's performance would be related to age of salespersons was not supported.

Hypothesis 4: Consumers' perceptions of salespersons' fashionability will be related to the age of salespersons and age of consumers

To investigate whether consumers' perceptions of older and younger adult salespersons would be related to their own age, the respondents were classified into four groups (by age

Table 14

Subjects' Perceptions of the Credibility of
Salespersons by Age Group of Salesperson

Age Group of Salesperson		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Younger Adult	n	1	20	19	2	1	43
	(%)	(1.16)	(23.26)	(22.09)	(2.32)	(1.16)	(50.00)
Older Adult	n	2	27	10	2	2	43
	(%)	(2.32)	(31.40)	(11.63)	(2.32)	(2.32)	(50.00)
Total	n	3	47	29	4	3	86
	(%)	(3.48)	(54.66)	(33.72)	(4.64)	(3.48)	(100.0)

Statistic for Table 14

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	4	4.502	0.342

Effective Sample Size = 86
Frequency missing = 1

Table 15

Subjects' Perceptions of the Convincing Ability of
Salespersons by Age Group of Salesperson

Age Group of Salesperson		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Younger Adult	n	2	13	18	6	1	40
	(%)	(2.47)	(16.05)	(22.22)	(7.41)	(1.23)	(49.38)
Older Adult	n	1	12	17	6	5	41
	(%)	(1.23)	(14.81)	(20.99)	(7.41)	(6.17)	(50.62)
Total	n	3	25	35	12	6	81
	(%)	(3.70)	(30.86)	(43.21)	(14.82)	(7.40)	(100.0)

Statistic for Table 14

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	4	3.057	0.548

Effective Sample Size = 81
Frequency missing = 6

of the respondents and age of the salesperson to whom they were exposed). The result of the chi-square statistical test [x^2(12, N =81) = 30.200, p < .05) indicated differences in perceptions of salespersons' fashionability were related to the age of the respondents and the age of salespersons (see Table 16).

To further understand the relationship between the age of consumers and their perceptions of different ages of salespersons, responses of younger and older adult respondents were examined separately. Results indicated 31(38.26%) of the respondents [17(20.98%) of the younger adult respondents and 14(17.28%) of the older adult respondents] strongly agreed or agreed that younger adult salespersons were stylish. None of the respondents who were exposed to the younger adult salesperson strongly disagreed or disagreed that the younger adult salesperson was stylish (see Table 16).

On the other hand, results also indicated that 17(20.98%) of the respondents [14(17.28%) of the older adult respondents and three(3.70%) of the younger adult respondents] strongly agreed and agreed that the older adult salespersons were stylish. In addition four(4.93%) of the younger adult respondents but none of the older adult respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that the older adult salespersons were stylish (see Table 16).

In testing consumers' perceptions of the salespersons' awareness of the latest fashion for consumers' age group, the

examination of the four groups of respondents (by age of respondents and by age of salesperson subjects perceived), revealed that differences in perceptions were related to the age of respondents and age of salespersons [x^2(9, N = 83) = 20.500, p < .05) (see Table 17).

For the younger adult salesperson, 18(21.68%) of the younger adult respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the younger adult salesperson knew the latest fashion of the their age group, and six(7.23%) of the older adult respondents made the same expression. However, seven(8.43%) of the older adult respondents did not think the younger adult salesperson knew the latest fashion of their age group. For the older adult salesperson, 14(16.86%) of the older adult respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the older adult salesperson knew their age group's latest fashion, whereas ten(12.05%) of the younger adult respondents agreed with that statement. Three younger adult respondents (3.61%) and four older respondents (4.82%) disagreed or strongly disagreed the older adult salesperson knew the latest fashion of their age group (see Table 17).

Hypothesis 4 was supported. The perceptions of the stylishness of salespersons and awareness of the latest fashion of the consumers age group were related to the age of consumers and the age of salespersons.

Table 16

Frequency Distribution of Consumers' Perceptions
of Salespersons' Stylishness

Frequency (Percent)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
YY	3	14	3	0	0	20
	(3.70)	(17.28)	(3.70)	0	0	(24.69)
YO	0	3	13	3	1	20
	0	(3.70)	(16.05)	(3.70)	(1.23)	(24.69)
OY	2	12	6	0	0	20
	(2.47)	(14.81)	(7.41)	0	0	(24.69)
OO	1	13	7	0	0	21
	(1.23)	(16.05)	(8.64)	0	0	(25.93)
Total	6	42	29	3	1	81
	(7.41)	(51.85)	(35.8)	(3.70)	(1.23)	(100.00)

Chi-Square Statistic for Table 16

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	12	30.200	0.003

Effective Sample Size = 81
Frequency Missing = 6

Note. YY : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
  YO : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons
  OY : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
  OO : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons

Table 17

Frequency Distribution of Consumers' Perceptions
of Salespersons' Fasion Trends Awareness

Frequency (Percent)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
YY	7	11	2	0	0	20
	(8.43)	(13.25)	(2.41)	0	0	(4.10)
YO	2	8	6	3	0	19
	(2.41)	(9.64)	(7.23)	(3.61)	0	(22.89)
OY	2	4	9	7	0	22
	(2.41)	(4.82)	(10.84)	(8.43)	0	(26.51)
OO	3	11	4	4	0	20
	(3.61)	(13.25)	(4.82)	(4.82)	0	(24.10)
Total	14	34	21	14	0	83
	(16.87)	(40.96)	(25.3)	(16.87)	0	(100.00)

Chi-Square Statistic for Table 17

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	9	20.500	0.015

Effective Sample Size = 83
Frequency Missing = 4

Note. YY : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
      YO : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons
      OY : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
      OO : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons

Hypothesis 5 : Consumers' perceptions of salespersons' product

knowledge will be related to the age of salespersons and age

of consumers

To examine the differences in perceptions among the four

groups of respondents (by age of the respondents and by age of

salespersons subjects perceived), chi-square analysis was

performed. The result of chi-square [x^2(12, $N = 80$) = 11.532,

$p > .05$), points out that the differences in the respondents'

perceptions of salesperson's product knowledge were related to

the age of respondents and age of salespersons.

An investigation of the frequency distribution showed

that when judging apparel knowledge of the younger adult

salespersons, 13(16.25%) of the younger adult respondents

agreed or strongly agreed the younger adult salespersons had

apparel knowledge, and ten(12.50%) of the older adult

respondents stated the same assertion. Only one younger adult

respondent disagreed with that; however no older respondents

disagreed (see Table 18). With regard to the perceptions of

the older adult salesperson, 14(17.50%) of the older adult

respondents strongly agreed or agreed the older adult

salesperson had apparel knowledge; and 14(17.50%) of the

younger adult respondents also strongly agreed or agreed with

that issue. Whereas 4(5.00%) of the older adult respondents

strongly disagreed or disagreed the older adult salespersons

had apparel knowledge, only one (1.25%) of the younger adult

Table 18

Frequency Distribution of Consumers' Perceptions
of Salespersons' Product Knowledge

Frequency (Percent)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
YY	4 (5.00)	9 (11.25)	5 (6.25)	1 (1.25)	0 0	19 (23.75)
YO	3 (3.75)	11 (13.75)	5 (6.25)	1 (1.25)	0 0	20 (25.00)
OY	1 (1.25)	9 (11.25)	9 (11.5)	0 0	0 0	19 (23.75)
OO	2 (2.50)	12 (15.00)	4 (5.00)	3 (3.75)	1 (1.25)	22 (27.50)
Total	10 (12.50)	41 (51.25)	23 (28.75)	5 (6.25)	1 (1.25)	80 (100.00)

Chi-Square Statistic for Table 18

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	12	11.532	0.484

Effective Sample Size = 80
Frequency Missing = 6

Note. YY : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
YO : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons
OY : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
OO : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons

respondents made the same statement (see Table 18).

Hypothesis 6 : Consumers' perceptions of salespersons' performance will be related to the age of salespersons and age of consumers

The dependent variable of salesperson's performance included two measurements: credibility and convincing ability. To examine differences in perceptions of credibility among the four groups of subjects (by age of subjects and by age of salesperson subjects perceived) chi-square analysis was performed. Results of the chi-square showed no significant evidence to support that consumers' perceptions of salespersons' credibility were related to the age of salespersons and age of consumers [x^2(12, N = 86) = 9.563, p > .05] (see Table 19).

To examine differences in consumers' perceptions of salespersons' convincing ability among the four groups of subjects (by age of subjects and age of salespersons subjects perceived) chi-square analysis was performed. The result showed that there was no significant evidence [X^2(12, N = 81) = 15.938, p > .05] to support that consumers' perceptions of convincing ability related to the age of salespersons and age of consumers (see Table 20).

Therefore, the hypothesis that consumers' perceptions of salespersons' performance would be related to the age of salespersons and age of consumers was not supported.

Table 19

Frequency Distribution of Consumers' Perceptions
of Salespersons' Credibility

Frequency (Percent)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
YY	1 (1.16)	8 (9.30)	10 (11.63)	1 (1.16)	0 0	20 (23.26)
YO	2 (2.33)	12 (13.95)	5 (5.81)	1 (1.16)	1 (1.16)	21 (24.42)
OY	0 0	12 (13.95)	9 (10.47)	1 (1.16)	1 (1.16)	23 (26.74)
OO	0 0	15 (17.44)	5 (5.81)	1 (1.16)	1 (1.16)	22 (25.58)
Total	3 (3.49)	47 (54.65)	29 (33.72)	4 (4.65)	3 (3.49)	86 (100.00)

Chi-Square Statistic for Table 19

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	12	9.563	0.654

Effective Sample Size = 86
Frequency Missing = 1

Note. YY : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
YO : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons
OY : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
OO : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons

Table 20

Frequency Distribution of Consumers' Perceptions
of Salespersons' Convincing Ability

Frequency (Percent)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
YY	2	7	10	0	0	19
	(2.47)	(8.64)	(12.35)	0	0	(23.46)
YO	0	4	10	2	3	19
	0	(4.94)	(12.35)	(2.47)	(3.70)	(23.46)
OY	0	6	8	6	1	21
	0	(7.41)	(9.88)	(7.41)	(1.23)	(25.93)
OO	1	8	7	4	2	22
	(1.23)	(9.88)	(8.64)	(4.94)	(2.47)	(27.16)
Total	3	25	35	12	6	81
	(3.70)	(30.86)	(43.21)	(14.81)	(7.41)	(100.00)

Chi-Square Statistic for Table 20

Statistic	DF	Value	Probability
Chi-Square	12	15.938	0.194

Effective Sample Size = 81
Frequency Missing = 6

Note. YY : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
     YO : Younger Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons
     OY : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Younger Adult Salespersons
     OO : Older Adult Respondents Perceived Older Adult Salespersons

Consumers' Expectations of Salespersons' Knowledge

Content analysis was used to analyze consumers'
expectations of salespersons' knowledge. The units of content
were categorized into each of the four categories (see
Appendix G) are reported in Table 21. These frequencies were
converted to the percentage of total information reported by
the respondents. The categories were ranked by the percentage
of responses in each. The knowledge most frequently expected
of salespeople(younger adult salespersons and older adult
salespersons) by the younger adult respondents was that
salespersons should know merchandise information, followed by
fashion trends. Customer service and personal skill were
ranked third and fourth (see Table 21). The rankings were the
same for both younger adult and older adult salespeople.

The older adult respondents indicated they most
frequently expected both the older adult and younger adult
salesperson to know fashion trends, followed by merchandise
information. Both younger adult and older adult respondents
more frequently expected older adult salesperson to know
merchandise information than the younger adult salesperson;
however the frequency showed that younger adult salespeople
were expected to provide customer service more than were older
adult salespeople.

Table 21

Content Distribution of Merchandise Information that Subjects Expect Salespersons to Know

Category		Age group of subjects			
		Younger Adult		Older Adult	
		Salespersons' age group		Salespersons' age group	
		Younger Adult	Older Adult	Younger Adult	Older Adult
Fashion Trend	n	16	11	20	26
	(%)	(25.4)	(18.6)	(41.7)	(43.3)
Merchandise Information	n	27	34	13	24
	(%)	(42.9)	(57.6)	(27.1)	(40.0)
Customer Service	n	13	8	7	3
	(%)	(20.6)	(13.6)	(14.6)	(5.0)
Personal Skill	n	6	5	3	5
	(%)	(9.5)	(8.5)	(6.3)	(8.3)
Others	n	1	1	5	2
	(%)	(1.6)	(1.7)	(10.4)	(3.3)
Total	n	63	59	48	60

Note: This table was used content analysis

<u>Consumers' Perceptions of Type of Customers Served by</u>
<u>Salespersons</u>

To investigate consumers' perceptions of the type of customers the salesperson would be best at serving, content analysis of the written responses was used. The procedure was the same as that used for investigating consumers' expectations of knowledge of the salespersons. Units of content were classified into four categories: characteristic traits and general habits, demographic information, physical and biological characteristics and others (see Appendix H). Physical and biological characteristics (see Table 22) were the most frequent feature mentioned by the two groups of the respondents of the two age groups of salespersons. In this category the idea of salespersons serving the same age group of customers was mentioned frequently by the respondents; especially for subjects exposed to a different age of salesperson. Characteristic traits was the second category reported by the respondents, and demographic information was the third. Descriptions that were too general or did not answer the question directly were categorized into "others". For example, a few respondents answered the salesperson could serve any kind of customers.

Table 22

Content Distribution of Subjects Perceptions
of Salespersons' Serving Type of Customers

		Age group of subjects			
		Younger Adult		Older Adult	
		Salespersons' age group		Salespersons' age group	
Category		Younger Adult	Older Adult	Younger Adult	Older Adult
Characteristic traits and general habits	n	5	4	2	3
	(%)	(20.0)	(14.8)	(9.1)	(13.0)
Demographic information	n	0	3	1	1
	(%)	–	(11.1)	(4.5)	(4.3)
Physical and biological characteristics	n	9	18	14	12
	(%)	(36.0)	(66.7)	(63.6)	(52.2)
Others	n	11	2	5	7
	(%)	(44.0)	(7.0)	(22.7)	(30.4)
Total	n	25	27	22	23

Additional Analyses

Department stores or specialty stores frequent shoppers and the perceptions of the salespersons

Salespeople are important, because they may influence customers' shopping decisions (Churchill, et al., 1975). Department stores and specialty stores are two types of stores that hire salespeople to promote merchandise and serve customers. Those subjects who most frequently obtain their clothing at these two types of stores may have more experience and contact with salespeople than subjects who do not obtain their clothing from these two types of stores. Therefore perceptions of salespeople may differ depending upon the degree to which a consumer obtains clothing at department stores or specialty stores. The frequent shoppers were defined as subjects who responded that they always or often shopped at either department stores or specialty stores.

Department store shoppers and specialty store shoppers were analyzed separately. Results of chi-square statistic indicated that department store frequent shoppers' perceptions of salespersons convincing ability were different from infrequent shoppers (see Table 23a). An examination of the frequency distribution revealed that 16(20.52%) of the department store frequent shoppers and 10(12.82%) of the department store infrequent shoppers strongly agreed or agreed that the salesperson they were exposed to would successfully

convince them to purchase the blouse. Five(6.41%) of the department stores frequent shoppers and 12(15.38%) of the infrequent shoppers strongly disagreed or disagreed that the salesperson to whom they were exposed would convince them (see Table 23b). The perceptions of specialty store frequent shoppers were found to be no different than those of infrequent specialty store shoppers (see Table 24).

Apparel retail stores work experience and the perceptions of the salespersons

People who have work experience in apparel retail stores may have different perceptions of salespersons from those who have no experience in apparel retail stores.

The statistic test (chi-square) showed no significant difference in respondents' perceptions for the respondents who have worked in apparel retail stores as compared to those who did not (see Table 25).

Table 23a

Chi-Square Test Results of Department Store
Frequent Shoppers Vs. Infrequent Shoppers

Dependent Variable	DF	Value	Probability
Stylishness	4	6.074	0.194
Fashion Trends	3	2.533	0.469
Product Knowledge	4	2.638	0.620
Credibility	4	3.042	0.551
Convincing Ability	4	10.69	0.030

Note. Significance Level = 0.05

Table 23b

Frequency Distribution of Department Store Shoppers
(Responses to Salespersons' Convincing Ability)

Frequency Percent	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Frequent	3	13	13	5	0	34
Shoppers	(3.85)	(16.67)	(16.67)	(6.41)	0	(43.59)
Infrequent	0	10	22	6	6	44
Shoppers	0	(12.82)	(28.21)	(7.69)	(7.69)	(56.41)
Total	3	23	35	11	6	78
	(3.85)	(29.49)	(44.87)	(14.10)	(7.69)	(100.00)

Sample Size = 78
Missing Value = 9

Table 24

Chi-Square Test Results of Specialty Store
Frequent Shoppers Vs. Infrequent Shoppers

Dependent Variable	DF	Value	Probability
Stylishness	4	2.124	0.713
Fashion Trends	3	7.734	0.052
Product Knowledge	4	5.044	0.283
Credibility	4	6.585	0.159
Convincing Ability	4	3.623	0.459

Note. Significance Level = 0.05

Table 25

Chi-Square Test Results of Subjects have
Work Experience Vs. have no Work Experience
in Apparel Retail Store

Dependent Variable	DF	Value	Probability
Stylishness	4	5.716	0.221
Fashion Trends	3	0.582	0.901
Product Knowledge	4	7.028	0.134
Credibility	4	2.696	0.610
Convincing Ability	4	6.241	0.182

Note. Significance Level = 0.05

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The population structure is changing in the United States. The older population (over 55 years) will be the major proportion of the population in the year 2000. This change has two implications for retailers: (1) the growth of the retail "grey market", and (2) the shortage of young labor supply. The present study focused on the second issue.

Recruitment of older workers to replace young workers seems a good way to resolve the young labor shortage problem, but the negative stereotype of older workers may influence consumers perceptions of the retail stores and subsequently of selling outcomes. Therefore, it is important to understand consumers' perceptions of different ages of salespeople.

Age was found to be a factor that affected a person was perceived by another individual (Lennon, 1988; Steinhaus et al., 1986; Wernick et al., 1984; Johnson et al., 1976). Previous studies also found younger adults and older adults have different perceptions of the age of others. Hence, the present study investigated two age groups of consumers -- younger adults and older adults. Younger adult subjects were Oregon State University students. The ages of the younger adult subjects were between 18 and 28 years. Younger adult subjects were recruited from college classrooms. A total of

A total of 41 younger adult subjects made up the sample. Older adult subjects were recipients of Oregon Home Economics Extension Newsletter. The age of the older adult subjects was 55 years and older. Older adult subjects were recruited by using a mail survey. A total 46 older adult subjects made up the sample. The total sample size was 87 subjects.

A questionnaire was used to investigate a consumer's perceptions of a salesperson. The questionnaire contained three parts: shopping patterns, questions on a consumer shopping scenario, and respondent's demographic information. Chi-square statistical methods were performed to analyze the quantitative data. Content analysis was used to analyze the written qualitative data.

Interpretation of Results and Conclusions

In past research a person with high physical attractiveness has been perceived to have a more positive personality, more social ability and credibility, and expected to be more professionally successful than someone low in physical attractiveness (Johnson et al., 1984; Patzer, 1983; Berscheid et al., 1972). Age has been found to be one factor that influences individuals' perceptions of another person's physical attractiveness (Lennon, 1988; Wernick, et al., 1984). Researchers (Lennon, 1988; Wernick et al., 1984) suggested an individual's perceived age to be negatively related to their perceived attractiveness. Rosen, et al. (1976) also indicated

that older workers were perceived as having less capability than younger workers. Jasper and Klassen (1990) found that consumers' perceptions of a salesperson's appearance did affect their evaluation of a salesperson's performance.

The present study investigated consumers' perceptions of three aspects of salespeople: fashionability, product knowledge, and performance. Two attributes (stylishness and latest fashion awareness) were used to measure salespersons' fashionability. Another two attributes (credibility and ability to convince) were used to measure salespersons' performance.

Steinhaus and Lapitsky (1986) suggested that older adult respondents were more influenced by older adult fashion models, whereas younger adult respondents were neither influenced by younger adult fashion models nor older adult fashion models. The present study had similar findings. A greater number older adult respondents had positive perceptions of the older adult salesperson compared to the younger adult salesperson. The younger adult respondents' perceptions were not related to the age of salesperson, except in their perceptions of the fashionability (stylishness) of the salesperson.

The results showed that respondents perceived younger adult salespersons and older adult salespersons differently. Overall more respondents perceived the younger adult salespersons as stylish than they did the older adult

salesperson. However, more older adult respondents perceived the older adult salesperson as stylish than did the younger adults. For both age groups of respondents, results showed that when they perceived the similar age group of salespersons a greater percentage thought the salesperson knew the latest fashion trend for their group than when they perceived a dissimilar age group of salespersons. More respondents perceived the older adult salesperson as possessing product knowledge than they did the younger adult salesperson.

It has been suggested (Busch, et al., 1976; Simmons, et al., 1970) that similarity between receivers and sources will increase the credibility of sources and improve the communication. Thurston, et al. (1990) also indicated that older adults were perceived to have a more professional image than younger adults. The results of the present study found that more respondents perceived older adult salespersons to be credible than they did younger adult salespersons. Also, more older adult respondents perceived the older adult salespersons to be credible than did younger adult respondents. It has been suggested that people are more persuaded by a communicator who is similar to themselves (Busch, et al., 1976; Steinhaus, et al., 1986). In addition younger adults have been found to have more convincing power than older adults (Steinhaus, et al., 1986). The results of the present study are consistent with the findings of Steinhaus, et al., in that a larger number of respondents perceived younger adult

salespersons to have convincing ability than older adult
salespersons. However, when respondents were exposed to a
salesperson of similar age more respondents perceived the
salesperson to have convincing ability than when exposed to a
salesperson of dissimilar age.

More younger adult respondents expected salespersons to
have product knowledge, and more older adult respondents
expected salespersons to know the latest fashion. This result
may be due to the notion that younger adults perceived
themselves as fashionable persons and therefore may rely on
salespeople more for product information than for fashion
trends. On the other hand, older adults may have more
experience in dealing with the clothing but have less
information about fashion trends, and therefore rely on
salespersons for this information. This may be because the
majority of mass media and store displays use young fashion
models.

Most respondents reacted that the salesperson they were
exposed to would be best at serving customers of a similar
age. This notion was particularly distinct when respondents
were exposed to the similar age group of salesperson.

Theoretical Implications

Person perception is influenced by two factors : (1)
object factors -- the characteristics of stimuli (visual,
salience, and similarity), and (2) perceiver factors --

individual's singular dimension (Lennon & Davis, 1989). In the present research the object factor investigated was age of salesperson, and the perceiver factor investigated was age of the perceiver. The results of the present research indicated that the object factor and the perceiver factor were not related to consumers' perceptions except in their perceptions of the salespersons' fashionability. Perceived fashionability was the characteristic of the salesperson most related to the object and perceiver factors investigated. Previous research has shown that age is negatively related to physical attractiveness. Physical appearance is the most visible element when an individual was perceived. Age is the significant factor that influences an individual's physical appearance (Lennon, 1988; Johnson. et al., 1984). Other attributes (product knowledge and performance) measured in the present study were invisible from the physical appearance. The present study indicated that subjects' perceptions were related to an object factor (age of salesperson) and perceiver factor (age of subjects) when they were judging a visible characteristic (fashionability), but subjects' perceptions were not related to the object factor or perceiver factor when they were judging an invisible characteristic (product knowledge and performance).

Applied Implications

The findings of the present research have implications

for apparel retailers. The results suggest that recruitment of older adult salespeople seems to be suitable for apparel retailers whose target market segment is older adults. Older adult salespersons are also appropriate for apparel retailers who are not pursuing a high fashion store image. Because younger adult consumers in the present study perceived older adult salespersons to be much less stylish than younger adult salespersons, these perceptions may subsequently influence their perceptions of stores' images.

Younger adult respondents rated product knowledge as the information they mostly expected the salesperson to know. Therefore, those apparel retailers whose target customers are younger adults should improve salespersons' product knowledge, such as apparel care instructions and fabric content. Older adult respondents pointed out that fashion trends were the information they mostly expected the salesperson to know. Hence, those apparel retailers whose target customers are older adults should enhance and educate salespersons about fashion. This may include informing salespersons about the latest fashion trends for their target customers and help salespersons give advice to customers as to the best outfit for them.

Limitations

There were several limitations of the present study.

1. The results of the present research only can be

generalized to female students of the classes sampled at Oregon State University and to the recipients of the Home Economics Extension Newsletter.

2. One restriction of the chi-square is the number of each expected observations per cell should not be less than five. In the present study in some of tests the cells did not fulfill the requirement of chi-square. Therefore, the tests were not 100 percent valid.

3. Younger adult subjects and older adult subjects were recruited by different methods that influenced the response rate and might have influenced subjects' responses.

4. The response to a questionnaire may not accurately reflect respondents' actual behavior in an apparel retail setting.

Recommendations for Further Research

The present study was based on information collected through a questionnaire. It would be more realistic and helpful to apparel retailers if the research was expanded as a field study with data of actual behavior collected through observational techniques. Researchers may find the setting of an actual apparel retail store as the setting for the experimental research to be more interesting and valuable.

The effect of perception of salespeople on stores' images has not been conspicuously explored. Further research investigating the relationship between consumers' perceptions

of salespersons and consumers' perceptions of store image should be conducted. Because male consumers are increasing their spending on apparel, this research area could also be expanded to include male subjects.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Questionnaire

LET'S GO SHOPPING

A Survey of How and Why You Shop
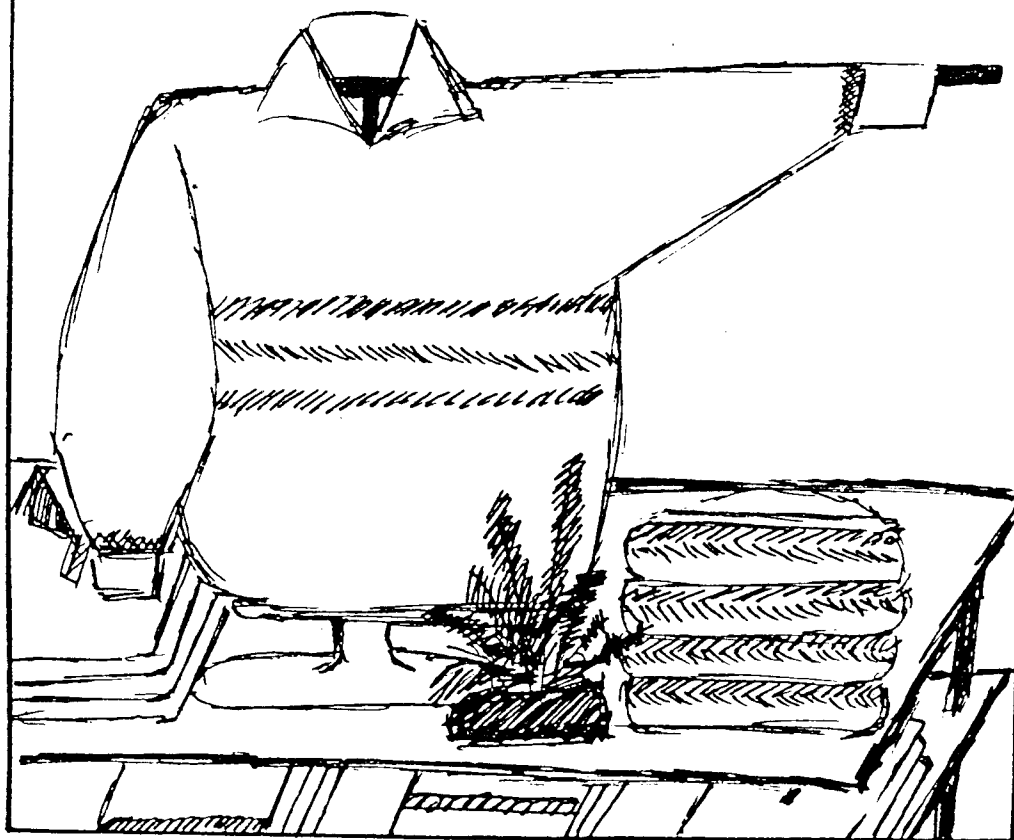
Department of Appparel, Interior, Housing and Merchandising
College of Home Economics
Oregon State Univeristy
1991

Your help with this effort is greatly appreciated! Thank you!

1. Below is a list of ways and places where people often obtain their clothing. Please indicate if you always, often, sometimes, or never buy or obtain your clothing from each of the following? (Circle one number for each)

	Always	Often	Some-Times	Never
a. Department store (e.g. The Bon, J.C.Penney)	1	2	3	4
b. Specialty store (e.g. Nordstorm, Jay Jacobs) ...	1	2	3	4
c. Discount store (e.g. Fred Meyer, K-Mart)	1	2	3	4
d. Off-price store (e.g. Ross', Marshall's, The Rack)	1	2	3	4
e. Through mail order catalogs	1	2	3	4
f. Garage or rummage sales	1	2	3	4
g. Used clothing store	1	2	3	4
h. I make the clothing I wear	1	2	3	4
i. The clothing I wear are gifts ..	1	2	3	4

j. In what other ways or places do you obtain the clothing you wear?

_____

2. On the average, how often do you shop for apparel (for browsing or purchasing)?
    1   LESS THAN ONCE PER MONTH.
    2   ONE OR TWO TIMES PER MONTH.
    3   THREE OR FOUR TIMES PER MONTH.
    4   MORE THEN FOUR TIMES PER MONTH.

3. Have you ever worked in an apparel retail store?
    1   NO.
    2   YES.
   If yes, how long did you work in an apparel retail store?

    _____ months

    What was your job title?

    _____

1
PLEASE GO ON THE NEXT PAGE

The following questions refer to a simulated situation about a purchasing experience that may or may not have happened to you before. Please assume you are in the situation, and answer as you would react in the situation. There are no right or wrong answers. The intent is to understand your reactions in this situation. We think you may find it very interesting.

Scenario

On a Saturday afternoon you decide to go the local shopping center to purchase a blouse as a birthday present for your best friend. Your friend is a trendy person. Her blouse size is the same as you. In the shopping center you find a newly opened apparel store that you have never been to before. You decide to go in to take a look. As you enter the store you are approached by a sales associate (as shown on the right). Her name is Kate Robins and she is 23 (60) years old. She appears to be friendly with a ready smile. Although you know that you want to purchase a blouse, you are unsure about what style or color you wish to buy for your friend. Kate approaches you and asks if she can help you.
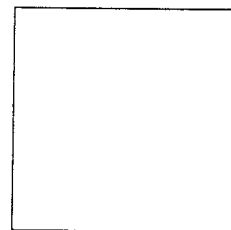
What is your fist impression of Kate Robbins and the store she works for? Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Circle one number for each)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Comment
4. I think she is a stylish person	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. I think she knows very little about apparel	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. I will probably believe what she tells me about the clothes	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. I think she does not knows the latest fashion garment about my age	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. I think she will successfuly convince me to buy the blouse	5	4	3	2	1	0

Below are questions about your expectations of Kate, as a salesperson.

9. What information about the merchandise would you expect Kate to know?

2

PLEASE GO ON THE NEXT PAGE

10. Describe the type of customers you think Kate would be best at serving.

The next series of questions is designed to help us interpret our results more accurately. We would very much appreciate your answers to these important questions about you. Your name will not be associated with your responses.

11. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethic identification? (Circle one number)

    1   BLACK (NEGRO)
    2   HISPANIC (MEXICAN-AMERICAN)
    3   NATIVE AMERICAN (AMERICAN INDIAN)
    4   WHITE (CAUCASIAN)
    5   ORIENTAL
    6   OTHER (Specify _____)

12. What was your age at your last birthday?

    _____ YEARS

13. Are you currently employed full time or part time for pay? (Circle one number)

    1   NO, I AM NOT EMPLOYED
    2   EMPLOYED FULL TIME
    3   EMPLOYED PART TIME

    _____JOB TITLE

    _____INDUSTRY

14. Which of the following best describe the highest grade you have completed in school? (Circle one number)

    1   GRADE 11 OR LESS
    2   HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR EQUIVALENT
    3   TECHNICAL TRAINING OR SOME COMMUNITY COLLEGE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL
    4   COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE
    5   SOME FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
    6   COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY DEGREE (BACHELORS)
    7   SOME GRADUATE SCHOOL
    8   GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE
    9   OTHER (Specify _____)

3

PLEASE GO ON THE NEXT PAGE

15. Before taxes, what is your estimate of the total combined income of your household in 1990?

    1   UNDER $15,000
    2    $15,000 TO $19,999
    3    $20,000 TO $29,999
    4    $30,000 TO $39,999
    5    $40,000 TO $49,999
    6    $50,000 TO $59,999
    7    $60,000 TO $69,999
    8    $70,000 OR MORE

Thank you for your participation. Please feel free to write any additional comments you may have.

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. If you would like a summary of the results of this study please write your name and address on the last page of the questionnaire.

Please return the questionnaire following these directions:
1. Fold the questionnaire into half allowing the return address to face up.
2. Staple(or tape) the questionnaire closed.
3. Mail the questionnaire (no postage is necessary).

Appendix B – Female Face Photos
Used in the Questionnaire

A

Age perceived : 63.33

Attractiveness
Perceived: 5.67

B

Age perceived : 54.17

Attractiveness
Perceived : 3

C

Age perceived : 23.33

Attractiveness
Perceived: 5.67

D

Age perceived : 23.8

Attractiveness
Perceived : 6

Note. On a 7 – point scale

Appendix C - Informed Consent: For Younger Adult
Respondents

DEPARTMENT OF APPAREL, INTERIORS,
HOUSING AND MERCHANDISING

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
Milam Hall 224 · Corvallis, Oregon 97331·5101
Telephone 503·737·3796

INFORMATION AND CONSENT

Title of project: EVALUATION OF A SALESPERSON

Projector directors: Shi Jean Cho and Leslie D. Burns
Apparel, Interiors, Housing & Merchandising

On the following pages you will be given a scenario about a sales associate at local store. You will be asked about your shopping reaction and thoughts of this person. Please answer the questions in terms of how you would actually respond, not how you think you should respond or how others would respond. There are no right or wrong answers and your name will not associated with the responses you write down. Please do not put your name or any other identification on the attached sheet. If you have any questions, or would rather not complete the questionnaire, please contact the person handing it out. We think that you will find the exercise interesting and we appreciate your time in answering the questions.

I voluntarily agree to complete the attached questionnaire.

.

_____   _____
Name (print)   Signature   Date

Appendix D - Cover Letter : For Mail Survey

DEPARTMENT OF APPAREL, INTERIORS,
HOUSING AND MERCHANDISING

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
Milam Hall 224 · Corvallis, Oregon 97331-5101
Telephone 503-737-3796

Dear   :

Oregonians spend approximately $956 million on clothing and accessories each year. We are interested in finding out how you purchase clothing in order to better serve your needs. This information will help retailers best meet the needs of Oregon consumers.

This survey requires less than fifteen minutes of your time. Please give each question careful consideration. There are no right or wrong answers, so fill out each question as you would normally react. Please return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible. Please fold the questionnaire into half and staple (or tape) it, then mail it.

You are part of a small group selected to receive this survey. However, you do have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you would rather not complete the survey, please fold the questionnaire into half and staple (or tape) it, then mail it.

Your questionnaire has been coded for follow-up purposes. All materials and responses are strictly **confidential** and under no circumstances will names and responses be connected. The purpose of this project is to better understand consumer behavior.

Thank you for your time and assistance. Should you have any questions please feel free to call me at (503) 737-0983. Your help is greatly appreciated -- THANK YOU !

Sincerely,

Shi Jean Cho
Master's Candidate

Léslie D. Burns, Ph.D
Associate Professor

Appendix E - Post Card for Mail Survey

Last week a questionnaire seeking your opinions on consumer shopping behavior was mailed to you. Your name was randomly chosen from a group of consumers. If you have already completed and returned it to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. It was sent out to a small sample representing consumers in Oregon. Therefore, it is very important that your answers be included in the study if the results are to be accurate.
If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, call us right now, collect(503-737-0983) and we will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Shi Jean Cho
Apparel, Interiors,
Housing, & Merchandising

Leslie D. Burns, Ph.D.
Apparel, Interiors,
Housing, & Merchandising

Appendix F - Application for Exemption

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Administrative Services A312 Coorvallis, Oregon · 97331·2140

503·737·3437 · FAX 503·737·3093 · Telex 5105960682 OSU·COVS

September 11, 1991

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 D. Burns

Student's Name (if any): Shi Jean Cho

Department: AIHM

Source of Funding:

Project Title: The Effect of Consumers' and Salespersons' Age on Perception of Salespeople

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 L. Perkins
Research Development Officer

cc: CPHS Chair

Appendix G

Categories of Consumers' Expectations of
Salespersons' Merchandise Knowledge

Category	Description	Example
Fashion Trends	Adjective, Knowledge of fashion trend and visual characteristics of clothing	color, style, coordinate texture, pattern, design outfit
Merchandise Information	Product related knowledge Manufacturers	fiber content, apparel care, care label size, wearability quality, comfort
Customer Service	Company policy, Store information	price, what available in store, merchandise location goods return
Personal Skill	Social skill General mannerism Observing skill	listen, advice for customers,
Others	Can not be categorized, Did not answer directly to the question, General answers	all, don't like to be bothered by salesperson

Appendix H

Categories of Salespersons' Serving Type of Customers

Category	Description	Examples
Characteristic Traits	Adjectives, personality characteristics,	stylish, attractive fashionable, trendy shy
Demographic Information	Social, financial, characteristics. Includes employement status	working women wealthy/poor/ middle class retired
Physical and Biological Characteristics	Sex, age, race, height, dress, physical appearance	young/teen ager middle age, old
Others	General, can't be categorized	all, most type of customer, any kind, people who need help