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College students' apparel shopping orientation changes in relations to life events

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COLLEGE STUDENTS' APPAREL SHOPPING ORIENTATION CHANGES IN RELATIONS TO LIFE EVENTS

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
School of Human Ecology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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in

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by
Yang He
B.S., Shenyang Institute of Chemical Technology, 2001
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Overview and Background.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	3
1.3 Purpose of Study.....	4
1.4 Definitions of Selected Terms.....	4
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERVIEW	6
2.1 Patronage Behavior.....	6
2.2 Shopping Orientation.....	7
2.3 Apparel Shopping Orientation.....	7
2.4 Life Events.....	9
2.5 Store and Brand Patronage Preferences.....	9
2.6 Life Events and Changes in Consumer Behavior.....	10
2.7 Conceptual Model.....	11
2.8 Consumer Behavior as Strategies to Cope with Role Transition and Stress.....	13
2.9 Research Hypotheses.....	13
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	15
3.1 Procedure and Sample.....	15
3.1.1 Questionnaire.....	15
3.1.2 Pretesting.....	16
3.1.3 Sample and Sampling.....	16
3.1.4 Survey Administration.....	16
3.1.5 Measurements.....	17
3.1.6 Measurements in Life Events.....	17
3.1.7 Apparel Shopping Orientation Changes.....	18
3.1.8 Patronage Preferences Changes.....	18
3.2 Data Analysis Procedure.....	18
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	21
4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents.....	21
4.1.1 Demographic Profile.....	21
4.1.2 Experienced Life Events Profile.....	21
4.1.3 Anticipated Life Events Profile.....	22
4.1.4 Patronage Preference Changes Profile.....	23
4.2 Measurement Assessment.....	23
4.2.1 Factor Analysis of Apparel Shopping Orientation.....	23

4.3 Hypotheses Testing	26
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	30
5.1 Summary and Conclusion.....	30
5.2 Implications.....	32
5.2.1 Theoretical Implications.....	32
5.2.2 Practical Implications.....	33
5.3 Limitations.....	34
5.4 Recommendations for Future Research.....	34
REFERENCES.....	36
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL	39
APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE	40
VITA.....	47

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3-1. Data Constructions	20
Table 4-1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents.....	21
Table 4-2. Effects of Experienced Life Events.....	22
Table 4-3. Effects of Anticipated Life Events	22
Table 4-4. Changes in Store and Brand Preference	23
Table 4-5. Commonalities Result of Exploratory Factor Analysis.....	24
Table 4-6. Factor Structure of Changes in Apparel Shopping Orientation.....	25
Table 4-7. Descriptive Statistics of Apparel Shopping Orientation Factors	25
Table 4-8. Changes in Effects of Individual Events on Apparel Shopping Orientation. Results of Correlation Analysis	28
Table 4-9. Results of Correlations Analysis.....	29

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1. Darden's (1980) Patronage Model of Consumer Behavior (PMCD)	12
Figure 2-2. A Conceptual Model of Changes in Consumer Patronage Behavior	12

ABSTRACT

Apparel shopping orientation studies usually focus on categorizing shoppers into different segments based on individuals' characteristics. This study presents changes in college students' apparel shopping orientation, which result from experienced and anticipated life events and lead to store and brand preference changes in retail patronage context. Graduation serves as a milestone of life event leading to role transition in a college student's life. The experienced and anticipated life events around graduation create new consumption needs that demand readjustment. Graduating college students are likely to change their store and brand preferences since they attempt to change their apparel shopping orientation due to role transition from a student to an employee.

A research framework was developed based on review of literature on life event and retail patronage followed by hypotheses development. An online survey was administered to graduating students identified from a major university in southern state the United States. Empirical studies provide evidence to support research hypotheses. The research findings showed that all identified six dimensions of apparel shopping orientations had significant influence on changes in patronage preferences, both in store and brand preferences. Theoretical and practical implications were provided. Recommendations for future research are also discussed.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview and Background

About 25 years ago, Andreason (1984) suggested the importance of life events on understanding changes in consumer preferences. He found that the shoppers who were undergoing life status changes were more likely to change their brand preferences spontaneously, from either the perspective of direct effects of specific status changes or from stress perspective. Lee et al. (2001) also stated that the occurrence of life events or role transitions resulted in changes in patronage preference, which could also be explained by individuals adapting to stressful lifestyles or role transitions marked by life events. Recently, Mathur et al. (2003) suggested that consumers may change their consumption patterns in response to new lifestyles or roles.

Andreason's findings (1984) can best be explained by using stress as a mediating effect that links life status change to changes in consumer preferences. However, some occurred or anticipated life events, especially those that mark transitions to new roles, demand readjustment that may not already result in stress (Norris & Uhl, 1993). Therefore, there is a need to further study consumers' changes from other aspects than stress.

Shopping orientation reflects shopper styles and the consumers' needs for product and services (S Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993). Therefore, consumers with various characteristics show different shopping orientations, which reflect their unique needs and preferences (Gutman & Mills, 1982; J. R Lumpkin, 1985; S. Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992a, 1992b). Apparel shopping orientation is defined as the shoppers' particular styles when they are shopping for apparel products. Apparel shopping orientation can be determined by consumer characteristics, demographics, information sources and store attributes, such as store environment (Moschis, 1992).

Monroe and Guiltinan (1975) stated that patronage preference is characterized and determined by retailer attributes, store image, store loyalty, shopping orientation, consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Among these determinants of patronage preference, shopping orientation is an important variable predicting patronage behavior. Furthermore, previously research has shown that consumers with different shopping orientations place emphasis on different store and brand preferences (Swinyard & Rinne, 1995).

Transitional life events are critical phases in one's life (Cohen, 1988). Consumer behavior researchers have documented that transitional life periods are associated with significant changes in consumer behavior in general (Andreasen, 1984), therefore, experienced or anticipated life events that are related to role transitions (e.g., retirement) demand for readjustments. Individuals may handle this readjustment by making changes in shopping orientation that influence their store and brand preferences. Investigation of shopping orientation will determine why consumers patronize a particular type of store or choose a particular brand, which can benefit retailers for their marketing planning.

Apparel is a highly symbolic product category due to its high visibility. Individuals will often make assumptions about a person's self-concept simply on the basis of his/her clothing (Soloman & Rabolt, 1999). Self-concept is a dynamic structure that changes according to the nature of the social surroundings or situation (Banister & Hogg, 2006). Consumers will change their consumption behavior based on a current change in their self-concepts (Banister & Hogg, 2006). The symbolic nature of clothing as a visual expression of self-concept can incorporate various clothing styles, brands, retailer outlets and memberships in particular subcultures (Soloman & Rabolt, 1999).

Graduation is a significant event and creates a new role transition (student-employee) for college students, whereas other life events around graduation may also affect college students' shopping orientation. College students as a young consumer group have gained significant importance from marketers in recent years because of their growing purchasing power. They have easy access to credit

cards (Schor, 1998) and income from part-time jobs to spend. Students tend to spend money on clothing and beauty products, and find these items to be important. Therefore, college students' apparel shopping orientation is important to research because it is an important sector of consumer behavior. Our recent research of college student's apparel shopping orientation will promote and enhance efforts to increase sales at clothing stores and could guide future research.

Life events might also change apparel shopping orientation due to role transition. Schewe and Balazs (1992) discussed that role transitions may result in changes in consumer behavior due to the enactment of new roles. Therefore, we assume that changes in college senior students' apparel shopping orientations may be due to the student's need to redefine his or her self-concept as a result of the assumption of a new role (e.g., an employee) (Gentry, Kennedy, Paul, & Hill, 1995).

The purpose of this study was to examine whether graduation and other life events around graduation period affect graduating undergraduate and graduate college students' apparel shopping orientation, and consequently, whether these events lead to their retail patronage preference changes within the apparel product categories. First, this study discussed the concepts of apparel shopping orientation, patronage preference, life events and graduation/role transition. Then, a modified conceptual model (see Figure 2-2) applied in the study was explained. Lastly, the relationship between life events and college senior students' apparel shopping orientation was predicted to undergo spontaneous changes in store and brand preferences due to the occurrence of graduation as a role transition event.

1.2 Problem Statement

Graduation can be considered a significant life event to college students. During the graduation period, college students face role transitions (e.g., student–employee) and experience life events, such as looking for a job and starting a new career. Life event experiences directly cause changes in their lifestyles, and consequently, college students' consumption needs may change (Euehun Lee, 2001). In

other words, college students' shopping orientations may change due to the experience of graduation and other related life events. Thus, understanding the changes in college students' apparel shopping orientation is important to retailers so that they may adjust marketing strategies and operation to meet this group of consumers' shopping needs better around the graduation period. However, the research on this subject is limited. Therefore, relatively little is known about the relationship between life events and shopping orientation from recent studies.

1.3 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine whether graduation and related life event experience will change college students' apparel shopping orientations and their patronage preferences. The following is a summary of the goals:

- To examine whether graduation and related life events lead to changes in college senior students' apparel shopping orientation during the period of graduation.
- To examine whether the changes in graduating college students' apparel shopping orientations lead to changes in their retail patronage preferences during the period of graduation.

1.4 Definitions of Selected Terms

- **Life events** refers to life transitions that are critical phases in one's life and are associated with significant changes in one's life (Cohen, 1988).
- **Shopping orientations** are "mental states that result in various general shopping patterns" (Bellenger & Moschis, 1981).
- **Apparel Shopping orientation**: a consumer's style that places particular emphasis on certain activities (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 1989) or specific lifestyle encompassing shopping activities, interests and opinions, which reflect shopping as a complex social, recreational and economic phenomenon (Howell, 1979).

- **Patronage behavior of apparel shopping:** a store choice behavior which represents an individual's preference for a particular store for purchasing apparel products.
- **Confidence/Appearance or Fashion consciousness** refers to a shopper's degree of involvement with the styles of fashion apparel, accessories or other related goods. An individual does not need to be a fashion leader or a fashion innovator to be considered fashion conscious. Instead, fashion consciousness is characterized by individual interests in fashion apparel, and appearance.
- **Brand consciousness** refers to a shopper who believes brand image and good brand names stand for good quality, and are willing to pay premium price for the brand name.
- **Convenience/Time consciousness** refers to a shopper whom frequently uses fashion publications or internet websites to search current information for purchasing apparel products. He/she is moderately concerned with store visiting, and prefers catalogs or online shopping.
- **Shopping mall oriented consumer** refers to a shopper who enjoys shopping leisurely at the shopping mall because he/she believes the mall is the best place to shop.
- **Local store oriented consumer** refers to a shopper who favors local store shopping.
- **Economic/price oriented consumer** refers to a shopper who believes that he/she could save money by shopping around for bargains and reading ads for sales.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Patronage Behavior

Consumer patronage analysis is identified as the study of how individuals choose the outlet for shopping (Monroe & Guiltinan, 1975). Consumers' store choices are the results of processes that involve consumer perceptions, images, and attitudes. Meanwhile, these determinants are formed and reformed based on consumers' experiences, informations, and needs. A wide range of studies in various areas such as retailer attributes, store image, store loyalty, shopping orientation, consumers' satisfactions and dissatisfactions have been conducted to determine consumers' patronage preferences.

Belk (1975) suggested that physical and social surroundings such as locations, décor, noise, aromas, lighting intensity, physical layout, and the other persons who are present in a shopping environment may affect a consumer's patronage and purchasing behavior. Other research has noted that store environments have both affective and psychological elements (Jackson & Konell, 1993). Gardner (1985) and Bitner (1992) also suggested that the retail store environment creates moods and affects customers' perceptions, attitudes, and images, and thereby activates intentions. Pleasure and arousal are additional affective reactions that vary with environmental factors that directly influence consumers' patronage behavior (Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, & Nesdale, 1994).

The other dimension of consumer patronage patterns relates to consumers personal factors. The recent research findings showed that among age, income, gender, and store attitude, that only store attitude has been identified as a dominant predictor of shopping frequency (Pan & Zinkhan, 2006), which indicates consumers' attitude towards retail stores plays a key role in their choice of shopping mode. When a consumer holds a general attitude toward a store, that attitude is readily accessible and probably will have a direct effect on the person's store-specific quality perceptions (Lutz, McKenzie, & Belch, 1983).

2.2 Shopping Orientation

Moschis (1992) defines shopping orientation as a consumer shopping pattern that represents consumer activities, interests and opinions about shopping behaviors. His view of shopping orientation also includes an analysis of consumer mental states that result in various general shopping patterns. Similarly, Shim and Kotisopoulos (1993) state that shopping orientation reflects dimensions of consumer styles, representing consumer needs for products and services. Patronage behavior is characterized and determined by retailer attributes, store image, store loyalty, shopping orientation, consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Within the factors mentioned above, shopping orientation was identified as a key variable in patronage behavior context.

Researchers have found a link between shopping orientation and consumer patronage. Previous research has shown that consumers in different shopping orientation groups place emphasis on different store attributes, which influence what they value in store seeking and consumption out-shopping (S. Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992b; Trivedi, 1999). For example, price conscious consumers purchase products in outlets, which they normally locate outside of the local shopping area.

2.3 Apparel Shopping Orientation

Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1992b) researched apparel shopping orientation on the basis of nine factors: fashion/appearance consciousness, brand consciousness, convenience/time-consciousness, shopping mall-orientation, local store-orientation, apathy toward “Made in the USA”, catalogue-orientation, economy/price consciousness, and credit-orientation. They found that female shoppers who possess different shopping orientations were different in consumer characteristics and market behavior. Therefore, learning more about the distinctive characteristics of each shopping orientation factor is important for the study of apparel shopping orientation.

Apparel shopping orientations have also been influenced by other factors, such as family life cycle, psychographic characteristics, and demographic data. Similarly, Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1993) state

that shopping orientation is influenced by dimensions of consumer styles, which represents the consumers' needs for products and services. In current empirical studies, apparel shopping orientation is categorized as a consumer's approach to apparel shopping. The characteristics of shopping orientation include: brand consciousness, fashion consciousness, price consciousness and impulsiveness (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

Apparel shopping orientation varies from consumer to consumer based on his/her varying characteristics, such as consumer's personality and attitudes toward a specific store or brand. Thus, each consumer develops a unique shopping orientation based on his/her personality and attitudes toward stores or brands (Dash & Sarangi, 2008). The occurrences of life events can cause both stress and role transition. In this study, we assume that graduating undergraduate and graduate students have experienced life events (such as job hunting) that have led to their role change from a student to a full-employee after graduation and generate stress. Most of them will play their new roles as workers in the future; therefore, they will develop different attitudes towards their new lifestyles and needs in the context of consumer behavior. Young consumers place great importance on clothing and their apparel shopping orientations are important to research (Solomon, 2007; Spero & Stone, 2004).

Furthermore, senior students anticipate other life events, such as purchasing a car or a house. These moderate consumptions will change his/her financial situation after graduation. Financial change is another factor that affects apparel shopping orientation. We assumed that this change will mainly affect his/her shopping orientation from the price conscious perspective, which means he/she might go to discount stores more often or patronize comparably economic brands for their choice of apparel. However, there is no recent or continuing study that deals with the changes in shopping orientations that result from a graduating student's role change, particularly in regards to apparel shopping orientation.

2.4 Life Events

According to the recent consumer studies (Andreasen, 1984; McAlexander, Holman, & Solomon, 1991; Mehta & Belk, 1991), people are likely to change their consumer behavior during periods of life transition. Mehta and Belk (1991) stated that consumers engage in acquiring personal possessions to help define their self and express or enact their new roles. Mathur (2003) suggested that brand preference changes can be viewed as the outcome of adjustments to new life conditions and changes in consumption lifestyles. There are two perspectives that have been applied to explain these changes. The first point of view in consumer behavior change is based on new role transitions. Changes in consumer behavior are due to consumers' needs to redefine their self-concepts which come as a result of them assuming new roles (Mehta & Belk, 1991). Consumers modify their consumption behavior (such as brand preference) to adapt to their new roles and circumstances (Mathur, et al., 2003).

Life events, such as graduation, causes a transition into a new role for most college senior students (Shea, 1999). This role transition starts as students leave school and step into their careers as an employee, or get married for the role change from a student to a wife/husband, etc. Most senior students have identified personal, professional, and educational goals for their futures (Shea, 1999). Some of them are searching for a first job or starting their own businesses, others are prepared to pursue an advanced degree. There are some seniors who are concerned about their level of future income and whether they can manage to pay off debts and support a family. Whatever their future goals, every class of college graduates faces a transition in their lives upon graduation. Thus, graduation, not only creates a role transition but also raises the probability of the occurrence of other events, for example, relocation, which affects their shopping orientation (Schewe & Balazs, 1992).

2.5 Store and Brand Patronage Preferences

Pessemier (1980) suggested four major influences on patronage behavior: (a) customer characteristics: demographics, personality and values, lifestyle characteristics, market actions,

perceptions, and preferences; (b) store characteristics: clientele mix, lifecycle position of store type, merchandise offerings, location convenience, shopping pleasure, transaction convenience, promotional emphasis, integrity, and image; (c) competitive environments: the number of stores in an area, the volume of business produced by store types within metropolitan areas; and (d) socioeconomic environment-lifestyle and attitudinal factors that have clear relevance to the patronage behavior of interest.

Store choices are the results of consumer perceptions, images and attitudes. Meanwhile, consumer preferences are formed or reformed based on individual experiences, information, and emotional needs. Belk (1975) suggests that physical and social surroundings, such as location, décor, noise, aromas, lighting intensity, physical layout and store personnel, may affect consumer purchasing behaviors (e.g. brand preference or impulse purchase). Bitner (1992) also suggests that store environments affect customer perceptions, attitudes, and images, thereby activating purchasing intentions. Pleasure and arousal are effective reactions that vary with environmental factors (Donovan, et al., 1994).

The other dimension of consumer patronage patterns relates to consumers' personal factors. Recent research findings have shown that store attitude has been identified as a dominant predictor of shopping frequency among the factors of age, income, gender, and store attitude (Pan & Zinkhan, 2006). This indicates consumers' attitude towards store attributes plays a key role in their preferences of patronage behavior, and it probably has a direct effect on the person's store-specific quality perceptions (Lutz, McKenzie, & Belch, 1983).

2.6 Life Events and changes in Consumer Behavior

Marketing and consumer behavior researchers have documented that life transitional periods are generally associated with significant changes in consumer behavior (Andreasen, 1984; Belk, 1975) and changes in store preference in particular (Euehun Lee, 2001). The reasons for these changes were

identified from two different theoretical perspectives: the role transition perspective and the stress perspective.

The role transition perspective suggests that when people change roles, they assume new roles or relinquish old ones (Moschis, 1992). Role transitions are associated with disposal of products relevant to previous roles and acquisition of products relevant to new roles (McAlexander, et al., 1991). Based on this literature, college senior students may purchase social/work clothing to redefine themselves based on assumed new roles. The focus of this study is primarily on the changes in shopping orientations from the perspective of role transition due to college senior students' completion of school and their new roles in society outside of the university setting.

2.7 Conceptual Model

Darden's (1980) Patronage Model of Consumer Behavior (PMCB) was applied to this study as a guide to our research framework. Figure 1 shows the major part of the PMCB model, including the four primary variables (personal characteristics, stress, apparel shopping orientation, patronage behavior) that construct a relationship flow. Stress is an antecedent variable influenced by life event experiences as one perspective of the consumer's personal characteristics. Patronage preference change is an outcome that results from shopping orientation changes. According to Darden's Model (1980) (see Figure 2-1) shopping orientation serves as a key construct in a patronage choice model. The antecedent variables to shopping orientations include personal characteristics (lifestyle activities, social class, and family life cycle), as well as stress. The model also suggested that shopping orientations determine the importance of salient store attributes, which, in turn, have an impact on patronage behavior in a broad context (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992b).

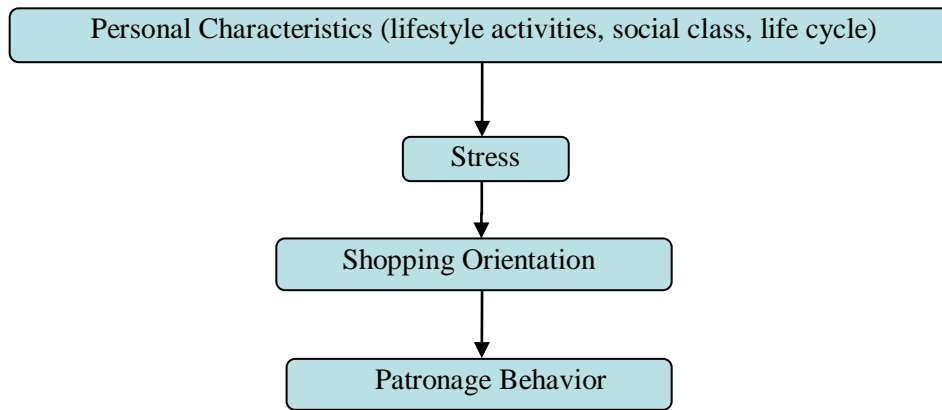


Figure 2-1 Darden's (1980) Patronage Model of Consumer Behavior (PMCB)

In this study, we profile college senior students' apparel shopping orientation changes based on the effect of their life event experiences (see Figure 2-2). The role transition is an antecedent variable instead of stress because graduation and related life events may or may not cause college senior students stress. Graduation may or may not be considered as a stressful life event, which means that stress does not specifically represent the situation of graduating senior undergraduate and graduate students. Thus, we decided to exclude stress from this model. The modified conceptual model for this study was based on Darden's Patronage Behavior Model and it was represented in Figure 2-2.

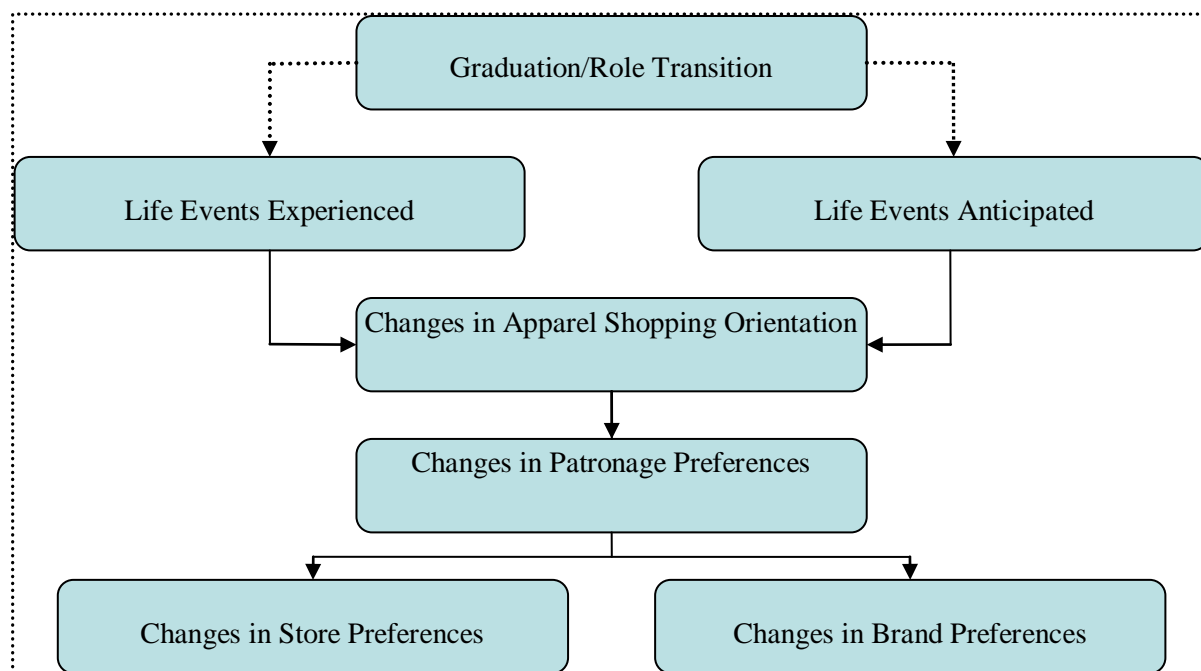


Figure 2-2 A Conceptual Model of Changes in Consumer Patronage

2.8 Consumer Behaviors as Strategies to Cope with Role Transition and Stress

Andreasen (1984) provided empirical evidence to support the influence of life events on consumer behavior changes. There are two types of consumption coping mechanisms (confrontative, or primary vs. avoidance, or secondary) for handling stress as an emotional need in consumer patronage behavior (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995). The first type of coping behavior (primary or confrontative) includes behaviors primarily directed at the external environment, such as store decorations, lights, background music, etc. The second type of consumption coping behavior (secondary or avoidance strategy) includes cognitive and behavioral activities directed at the self and reflects consumers' attempts to "fit in with the world and to flow with the current" (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995). A consumer consistently evaluates his/her various life events and circumstances, including important role transition points in life. These transition points are the sources of his/her shopping orientation changes.

2.9 Research Hypotheses

Regarding the previous literature on consumer apparel shopping orientation, college senior students might change their apparel shopping orientations due to the occurrence of life events around graduation. With the notion that college senior students experience job hunting or interviewing, they might change their store or brand preferences for apparel products.

Life events around graduation are expected to affect apparel shopping orientation based on their experiences or anticipation perspectives. Life events, such as attending job fairs and paying for student loans after graduation were factors discussed in previous research that may affect shopping behaviors during graduation periods. A college senior student may change his/her consumption behavior as a response to his/her new role as an employee. The life events that occur or that are anticipated to occur affect their perceptions of themselves. Thus, the degree of effects on life events or the anticipation of future events influences their apparel shopping orientation changes within a six month period. The

changes in apparel shopping orientation influence the students' new brand preferences or store preferences. Accordingly, the following research hypotheses were drawn for this study:

H1: The level of effects from life events experienced will be associated with changes in a student's apparel shopping orientation.

H2: The level of effects of life events anticipated will be associated with changes in a student's apparel shopping orientation.

H3: The apparel shopping orientation changes will be associated with the store type preference change.

H4: The apparel shopping orientation changes will be associated with the brand type preference change.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the instrumentation used to collect data, the sample, and the procedures of data collection in the research. A web-based, self-report survey was conducted.

3.1 Procedure and Sample

In this study, an online self-administered questionnaire consisting of 75 questions, was developed and sent by email to a systematically random sample of 1,200 current college senior students at Louisiana State University. Using an online survey format provides an easier way to access respondents, reduces interviewer bias, reduces the time it takes to administrate, provides a greater uniformity of responses, and is more easily processed (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996).

3.1.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of four major sections measuring college senior students' experienced and anticipated life events around graduation, individually perceived changes of apparel shopping orientations, and patronage preference changes toward types of stores and brands. The first section of the survey measured the effects of seventeen graduation related life events on graduating students' lives in general. Respondents were asked to indicate the type of effect on 3-liket scale (1positive; 2negative; 3 not sure) and the degree of effect on a 4-liket scale (1 no effect; 2some effect; 3moderate effect; 4great effect). Section two included questions measuring changes of students' apparel shopping orientation through 23 statements that were expected to influence apparel shopping behavior (Korgaonkar, 1981; S Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1993). The questions were adopted from previous research. Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-liket scale (1= much less; 2= less; 3= same as before; 4= more; 5= much more). Section three assessed whether respondents' preferences of store and brand type had changed during the previous 6 months. The respondents were asked to indicate where they purchased most of their work/social clothes and indicated which brand they purchased. The choices include discount stores, specialty stores, department stores, local fashion boutique, catalog shopping,

and online stores. Brand types include national/designer brand, private label and local brand. The last part of the questionnaire contained forced-choice questions on age, gender, ethnicity, academic year, major, and average expense on apparel monthly.

3.1.2 Pretesting

The questionnaire was subjected to one pretest. It was conducted with 59 college senior students in a major university in south area of the United States. The purpose of pretest was to (1) investigate whether the constructs identified from the relevant literature and incorporated in the research model are applicable to this study; (2) evaluate the clarity of each question statement. Some feedback was obtained regarding the question wording and the survey design. Then, the questionnaire was re-modified based on the comments from the participants. The revised version of the survey was released to be ready for use in collecting the data.

3.1.3 Sample and Sampling

The web-based survey was administered using Qualtrics.com, an online market research company. Qualtrics.com was selected because it is an easy-access survey platform. Target respondents were senior college students, including both undergraduate and graduate students. A random-selected sample email list was requested from the university's registration office, and 1,200 graduating students were identified as potential participants. A total of 279 responses were received with a response rate of 23%. After data cleansing and response verification, 190 completed and valid responses were used for the empirical study.

3.1.4 Survey Administration

Potential participants were invited through e-mail. Within the initial email invitation to participate was an anonymous survey link:

(http://lsu.qualtrics.com//SE/?SID=SV_d13CegquOBRkdco)

A follow-up reminder was sent out five days after the initial invitation. Once the participant completed the survey, he/she was eligible to win the prize of either a \$50 Target gift card or a 2GB flash drive.

3.1.5 Measurements

The Web-based survey questionnaire contained measures of the following constructs: types and level of effects of experienced and anticipated life events; changes in apparel shopping orientation; changes in store and brand type preferences (see Table 3-1).

3.1.6 Measurement in Life Events

The selection of the life events was guided by previous psychological and consumer studies (Andreasen, 1984; Cohen, 1988; Krueger & Clement, 1996; Linden, 1984; Norbeck, 1984). The modified scale from Norbeck (1984) was determined to be most suitable and effective for our student sample (college senior students). It was adopted for this study for the following reasons: (1) the scale provided a clearly defined set of items that are closely related to senior college students; (2) it classified different life events from different categories and perspectives. For example, it had 10 categories, which include “school”, “work”, “finance”, and “personal and social” etc. These specific categories make it easier for researchers to adopt the scale to fulfill identified research objectives.

We selected 18 life events that closely related to college senior students from the life events pool (Norbeck, 1984). Some events (e.g. pregnancy) in original scale were designed to measure the special needs of female respondents, so we removed those events from the scale, and selected the events that are likely to be experienced by college senior students. In this way, the newly modified scale excludes a large number of vague or non-related events. Respondents were requested to indicate whether they have experienced/expected the listed events. Additionally, respondents were asked to rate the level of effects caused by the life events they experienced by using a 4-liket scale from “less effect” to “great effect”.

3.1.7 Apparel Shopping Orientation Changes

The apparel shopping orientation scale for this study was adopted from Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1993) because: (1) the scale classified apparel shoppers into six unique apparel shopping orientation groups; (2) the shopper groups were identified by multiple well-considered perspectives, which include information sources, importance of store attributes, life events activities, patronage behavior and demographics; and (3) the scale was developed specially for the investigation of shopping orientations of apparel shoppers. Based on above three reasons for our choices of measurements, this scale is convenient and suitable for our study. In this scale, six dimensions of shopping orientations were identified as brand conscious, fashion/appearance conscious, local store oriented, price conscious, shopping mall oriented and time/convenient conscious. Scale statements were modified to assess changes on a five-point scale ranging from “much less” to “much more”.

3.1.8 Patronage Preferences Changes

The scale used to assess patronage preference changes was adopted from Shim and Kotsiopoulos's (1992b) research. The questionnaire asked respondents' store and brand preference changes on a 5-point scale (1=much less; 2= less; 3=same as before; 4= more; 5= much more) in order to indicate how the respondents change the stores and brands that they had shopped over the past 6 months (see Table 3-1).

3.2 Data Analysis Procedures

Statistical Packages for Social Sciences' (SPSS) software was used to conduct the data analysis. First, descriptive statistics and frequency tables were generated by SPSS for a data entry error check, demographics analysis, and an analysis of the consistency of shopping orientation variables. Then, principal component analysis with a reliability test was applied. The Pearson correlation test was conducted to test the hypothesized relationships.

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide a profile of respondents. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine the dimensionality of the research constructs: brand conscious, fashion conscious, local store oriented, price conscious, shopping mall oriented, and time conscious. Meanwhile, measurement validation was assessed. Summit indicators were created for research constructs and further analysis. Correlation coefficients between research variables were obtained to test hypotheses.

Table 3-1 Data Constructions

Construct/Dimension/Scale Item	Reference	Construct/Dimension/Scale Item	Reference
Experienced life events (previous 6 months)	Norbeck, (1986); Andeason, (1984); Cohen, (1988)	Shop where it saves me time	Shim& Kotsiopoulos (1992a)
Found a job/Have been looking for a job		Shopping mall oriented	
Completed a internship		Prefer to shop at smaller strip malls and independent stores rather than malls	
Attended a job fair		Time spend on planning my clothing shopping	
Have started a new job		Enjoy shopping and walking through malls	
Changed to a new type of work		Choosing shopping mall as the best place to shop	
Have been getting ready for a new job		Local store oriented	
Anticipated life events (next 6 months)		Local stores offer me good quality for the price	
Start paying student loan		Local clothing stores are attractive places to shop	
Make more new friends		Local clothing stores just do not meet my shopping needs	
Start graduate school		Price conscious	
Change school, college, or training program		I pay attention to clothing prices now	
Change career goal or academic major		The frequencies for me to read the advertisements for announcements of sales	
Move to a different town, city, state, or country		My belief that a person can save a lot of money by shopping around for bargains	
Get engaged/married (or begin to live with someone)		Patronage Preference	
Change my social activities (clubs, movies, visiting)		Store type	
Have a major change in finances			
Take on a major purchase or a mortgage loan, such as a home.			
Apparel Shopping Orientation	Korgaonkar (1981); Lumpkin, (1985); Lumpkin et al. (1986)	Discount stores (e.g. TJ'Maxx, Ross, Big Lots, Dollar Tree.)	
Fashion/appearance Conscious		Belief that a well-known brand means good quality	
The extent to which being considered well-groomed		Specialty stores (e.g. Chico's, Claries', Bergdorf Goodman)	
My confidence in my ability to shop clothing		Department stores (e.g. JCPenny, Dillard's, Macys, Kohl's,Sears)	
My ability to choose the right clothes for myself		Local fashion boutique	
Confidence of being good at clothing shopping		Catalog shopping	
The frequencies that I buy what I like without hesitation		Online stores	
The extent to which I try to keep my wardrobe up-to-date		Brand type	
Brand conscious, loyal			
The importance to buy well-known brands for clothing		National/Designer brand (e.g. Tommy Hilfiger, Eileen Fisher, Nike, Ralph Laurant)	
My attention to brand names		Private label/store brand (e.g. Coach, Levis, Abercrombie Fitch, Banana Republic, J.Crew, Black&White)	
Belief that a well-known brand means good quality			
Time/convenience conscious		Local brand	
Buy at the most convenient store			

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

4.1.1 Demographic Profile

Out of 190 respondents, 59.3% were females (see Table 4-1). In terms of age, 76.9% were in the range of 18–25 years old. In terms of academic rank, 74.6% were seniors and 25.4% graduate students. The majority of the respondents (70.4%) were Caucasian (see Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Respondent Information	N	%	Respondent Information	N	%
Gender			Ethnicity		
Male	77	40.7	African American	20	10.5
Female	112	59.3	Asian	18	9.4
Age			Caucasian	133	70.4
18-21 years old	23	12.0	Hispanic	11	5.8
22-25 years old	124	64.9	Others	7	3.7
26 years old and older	42	23.1	Academic Year		
Average Monthly Expense on Clothing & Accessories			Senior	141	74.6
Under \$100	112	59.3	Graduate	48	25.4
\$100-\$199	53	28.0			
\$200-\$299	17	9.0			
\$300-\$399	4	2.1			
\$400 and More	3	1.6			

4.1.2 Experienced Life Events Profile

Respondents were asked to choose the listed life events they had experienced during the previous six months. In addition, respondents were asked to evaluate the level of effects of life events in their lives during the previous six months. The statistics for experienced life events number and effect level mean are summarized in Table 4-2. About 77.4% respondents had experienced events of “found a job/have been looking for job”. About 57.9% of them have been getting ready for a new job, and 52.6% them had attended a job fair (see Table 4-2).

Regarding the level of effects of the experienced life events in their lives, the mean is at range of 2.20 to 2.92, which means that most respondents perceived some effects on their life from experiencing the listed life events. “Found a job/have been looking for a job” has the greatest effects on respondents’ lives (see Table 4-3).

Table 4-2 Effects of Experienced Life Events

Experienced Life Events	N	%	Mean
Found a job/have been looking for a job	147	77.4	2.92
Have been getting ready for a new job	110	57.9	2.67
Have started a new job	92	48.4	2.60
Completed a internship	94	49.5	2.56
Changed to a new type of work	84	44.2	2.46
Attended a job fair	100	52.6	2.20

4.1.3 Anticipated Life Events Profile

Respondents were asked to choose the listed life events they anticipated in the next six months. In addition, respondents were asked to evaluate the level of perceived effects of these life events as well. The statistics for anticipated life events number and effect level mean are listed in Table 4-3. About 77.4% respondents expected to find a job or have been looking for a job, and to have a major change in financial situation. 75.2% of respondents expected to make some new friends, 64.2 % respondents planned to move to a different town (see Table 4-3).

Among the anticipated life events in their lives, the mean of effects is at 2.38 to 3.10, which means that most respondents perceived effects from the anticipated life events in their lives. Specifically, moving to a different town and having a major change in finance have moderate effects on respondents’ lives (see Table 4-3).

Table 4-3 Effects of Anticipated Life Events

Anticipated Life Events	N	%	Mean
Have a major change in finances (increased or decreased income)	147	77.4	3.10
Move to a different town, city, state, or country	122	64.2	3.04

Table 4-4 Effects of Anticipated Life Events (con'd)

Make more new friends	143	75.3	2.72
Start graduate school	80	42.1	2.69
Get engaged/married (or begin to live with someone)	84	44.2	2.68
Start paying student loan	105	55.3	2.62
Change my social activities (clubs, movies, visiting)	117	61.6	2.56
Take on a moderate purchase, such as TV, car, freezer, etc.	103	54.2	2.56
Take on a major purchase or a mortgage loan, such as a home, business, property, etc.	72	37.9	2.53
Change career goal or academic major	72	37.9	2.50
Change school, college, or training program	68	35.8	2.38

4.1.4 Patronage Preference Changes Profile

Respondents were asked to evaluate changes in patronage preferences of stores and brands types. All respondents have experienced some changes in either store or brand preference during the last six months. Respondents chose to shop at discount stores and online stores more often than before they were preparing to graduate. Changes in brand preference are not as significant as store preference. However, there is some degree of changes that did emerge in the choice of private label/store brands (see Table 4-4).

Table 4-5 Changes in Store and Brand Preference

Store Preference	N	Mean	Brand Preference	N	Mean
Discount stores	190	3.19	National/Designer brand	190	3.02
Specialty stores	189	2.67	Private label/store brand	190	3.16
Department stores	190	3.12	Local brand	189	2.93
Local fashion boutique	190	2.81			
Catalog shopping	190	2.85			
Online stores	190	3.40			

Note: 1= much less, 2=less; 3=same as before; 4=more; 5=much more

4.2 Measurement Assessment

4.2.1 Factor Analysis of Apparel Shopping Orientation

The initial 23 items (see Table 4-5) for measuring apparel shopping orientation changes were represented in six dimensions (see Table 4-6) as expected. The dimensions were named as brand conscious, fashion conscious, local store conscious, shopping mall oriented and time/convenience conscious. All the items were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis. The first iteration of analysis extracted six factors with eigen values greater than 1.0. Four items with cross-loadings or low loadings were dropped. The remaining 19 items were again factor analyzed. This time the program extracted six factors with eigen values greater than 1.0. The second round of factor analysis observed one item with low loading that was dropped. The remaining eighteen items were once again factor analyzed. The final factor solution from the third iteration accounted for approximately 71.9% of the total variance (see Table 4-5). All commonalities ranged from .55 to .89. The pattern matrix showing the items and factor loadings are presented in Table 4-6. These factors reflected the changes in six dimensions of apparel shopping orientation.

Table 4-6 Commonalities Result of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Shopping Orientation Scale/Items	Commonalities
Feel confident in my ability to shop for clothing	.830
Fell that I have the ability to choose the right clothes for myself	.886
Think I am a good clothing shopper	.815
Try to stick to certain brands and stores	.778
Stick to a brand I like	.585
Feel a well-known brand means good quality	.689
Pay much attention to brand names	.770
Buy at the most convenience store	.742
Shop where it saves me time	.757
Spend time planning my clothing shopping	.545
Prefer shopping malls as the best place to shop clothes	.693
Prefer smaller strip malls and independent stores rather than malls	.606
Enjoy shopping and walking through malls	.600
Shop local stores since they offer me good quality for the price	.639
Shop local clothing stores since they are attractive places to shop	.807
Shop local clothing stores since they meet my shopping needs	.755
Read the advertisements for announcements of sales	.709
Pay a lot more attention to clothing prices	.740

Table 4-7 Factor Structure of Changes in Apparel Shopping Orientation

Factor Labels	Statements	Factor Loadings	Reliability
Brand Conscious	Try to stick to certain brands and stores	.856	.848
	Pay much attention to brand names	.836	
	Feel a well-known brand means good quality	.790	
	Stick to a brand I like	.692	
Fashion/appearance Conscious	Fell that I have the ability to choose the right clothes for myself	.909	.728
	Feel confident in my ability to shop for clothing	.894	
	Think I am a good clothing shopper	.866	
Local Store Oriented	Shop local clothing stores since they are attractive places to shop	.876	.809
	Shop local clothing stores since they meet my shopping needs	.846	
	Shop local stores since they offer me good quality for the price	.776	
	Prefer smaller strip malls and independent stores rather than malls	.613	
Price Conscious	Pay a lot more attention to clothing prices	.836	.697
	Read the advertisements for announcements of sales	.799	
Shopping Mall Oriented	Prefer shopping malls as the best place to shop clothes	.745	.507
	Spend time planning my clothing shopping	.619	
	Enjoy shopping and walking through malls	.611	
Time/convenience Conscious	Shop where it saves me time	.826	.617
	Buy at the most convenience store	.825	

The changes in six dimensions of apparel shopping orientation that emerged from exploratory factor analysis were consistent with the dimensions of the original apparel shopping orientation scale. As shown in Table 4-7, price consciousness has changed significantly. Fashion/appearance conscious has also changed to some degree.

Table 4-8 Descriptive Statistics of Apparel Shopping Orientation Factors

Apparel Shopping Orientation Factors	N	Mean
Brand conscious	190	3.01
Fashion conscious	190	3.26
Local conscious	190	3.01
Price conscious	190	3.62
Mall oriented	190	2.85
Time/convenience conscious	190	3.02
Valid N (listwise)	190	

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1 concerns the relationship between the level of effects of experienced life events and changes in apparel shopping orientation, expecting a positive relationship between the two variables. The data (see Table 4-8) showed that effects of experienced life event are associated with changes in shopping orientations in terms of brand conscious, but not other factors. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is partially supported.

Hypothesis 2 concerns the relationship between the level of effects of anticipated life events and the changes in apparel shopping orientation. There were three factors (fashion/appearance conscious, local conscious and price conscious) of apparel shopping orientation that changed due to three specific anticipated life events (see Table 4-8). Thus, there is a significant relationship between the two variables. However, not all the factors of apparel shopping orientation were expected to change. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is partially supported.

Hypothesis 3 concerns the relationship between changes in apparel shopping orientation and changes in store preference. A correlation analysis was conducted to test apparel shopping orientation changes in six factors of changes in store preference. The results (see Table 4-9) show that changes in brand consciousness had a significant positive influence on specialty store, local fashion boutique and online shopping preferences changes. Changes in the factor of fashion consciousness led to changes in online shopping. Changes in local store orientation had a significant influence on changes in local fashion boutique, specialty store, catalog shopping and online store preferences. Price consciousness changes had a significant relationship with discount and specialty store preference changes. Shopping mall orientation changes had a significant influence on specialty stores and local boutique preferences changes. Time consciousness changes had a significant relationship with discount store preferences.

All changes in the six factors of apparel shopping orientation resulted in changes in store and brand preference changes. Therefore, hypotheses3 was supported. That is, for example, if a college senior

student is brand conscious when he/she shops for apparel around the graduation period, he/she will visit specialty store more for some special brand apparel products. Similarly, if he/she is price conscious about apparel products, he/she will go to visit discount stores more frequently for clothes on sale.

Hypothesis 4 concerns the positive relationship between changes in apparel shopping orientation and changes in students' brand preferences. A correlation analysis was conducted to test apparel shopping orientation changes within the six factors of changes in brand preferences. The results (see Table 4-8) showed that brand consciousness changes had a significant positive influence on changes in all brands. Fashion consciousness changes had a significant relationship on changes within all brands as well. Local store orientation changes had a significant influence on changes in local brand preferences. Price consciousness change didn't affect brand preferences change. Shopping mall orientation changes had a significant influence on changes in designer and private label preferences. Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported by the result of correlation analysis. That is, for example, if a college senior student is brand conscious towards apparel products, he/she will prefer to shop for national/designer brands and private label brand apparel more frequently around graduation. Similarly, if he/she is local store conscious, he/she will shop for local brand apparel more often.

Table 4-9 Changes in Effects of Individual Events on Apparel Shopping Orientation

Results of Correlation Analysis

Independent Variables(life Events)		Dependent Variables (Apparel Shopping Orientation changes)					
		Brand Conscious	Fashion/Appearance Conscious	Local Store Oriented	Price conscious	Shopping Mall Oriented	Time/convenience Conscious
Experienced Life Events Effects	Found a job/have been looking for a job	.117	.146	.123	.059	.029	-.088
	Have been getting ready for a new job	.262**	-.027	.134	-.132	.011	-.104
	Have started a new job	.070	.196	.088	.035	-.104	.075
	Completed a internship	.138	.066	-.017	.080	.182	.022
	Changed to a new type of work	.143	-.070	.066	.008	-.127	.019
	Attended a job fair	.284**	.167	.004	-.022	.182	-.038
Anticipated Life Events Effects	Have a major change in finances (increased or decreased income)	.106	.055	.158	.099	-.080	.062
	Move to a different town, city, state, or country	.055	-.028	.079	.027	-.087	-.042
	Make more new friends	.120	.158	.177*	.164	.008	.100
	Start graduate school	.031	-.026	.015	-.090	-.144	.107
	Get engaged/married (or begin to live with someone)	-.052	-.121	.014	.186	-.095	-.078
	Start paying student loan	-.065	-.097	-.136	.195*	-.009	-.006
	Change my social activities (clubs, movies, visiting)	.120	.158	.177*	.164	-.008	.100
	Take on a moderate purchase, such as TV, car, freezer, etc.	.105	.015	.118	-.142	-.016	.034
	Take on a major purchase or a mortgage loan, such as a home, business, property, etc.	.076	.194	.064	-.063	.117	-.004
	Change career goal or academic major	-.108	-.267*	.148	-.034	-.116	.118
	Change school, college, or training program	-.070	-.234	.060	-.147	-.155	.114

Note: ** Correlation is significant, $P < 0.01$

*Correlation is significant, $P < 0.05$

Table 4-10 Results of Correlations Analysis

Apparel Orientation Factors	Shopping	Store Preference Changes					Brand Preference Changes			
		Discount Store	Specialty Store	Department Store	Local Fashion Boutique	Catalog Shopping	Online Store	National/Designer brand	Private Label	Local Brand
Brand Conscious		.086	.286**	.140	.164*	.120	.165*	.274**	.414**	.174*
Fashion//appearance Conscious		.110	.122	.099	.025	-.085	.238**	.192**	.146*	.199**
Local Store Oriented		.002	.167*	.017	.389**	.264**	.290**	.139	.117	.470**
Price Conscious		.285**	-.158*	.049	-.040	.070	.134	-.038	-.027	-.010
Shopping Mall Conscious		-.047	.253**	.102	.159*	.095	.054	.182*	.301**	-.062
Time Conscious		.157*	-.070	.089	-.107	.033	.022	.055	-.087	.123

Note: ** Correlation is significant, $P < 0.01$

* Correlation is significant, $P < 0.05$

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary and Conclusions

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate changes in college senior students' apparel shopping orientation due to experienced and anticipated life events around graduation. This research empirically examines college senior students' dynamic changes in their apparel shopping orientation within the newly modified framework. More specifically, six dimensions (factors) of apparel shopping orientation were formulated, and enabled the testing of various hypotheses to answer several research questions.

Apparel shopping orientation studies usually focus on profiling "loyal" consumer types based on different personal characteristics. This research presents a study focused on changes in college senior students' apparel shopping orientations, which directly result in store and brand preference changes within a patronage preference context. College senior students are likely to change their store and brand preferences to cope with the changes in their apparel shopping orientation, which may be caused by role transition. Based on the results of profiling apparel shopping orientation dimensions, we found that most college senior students have made some changes in their store and brand preferences as the outcomes of their apparel shopping orientation changes.

One of the findings is that a few of the experienced life events selected had a significant influence on graduating college senior students' apparel shopping orientations. Some of the selected anticipated life events around graduation were also significantly related to changes in college students' apparel shopping orientations. This finding might be due to the students' different perceptions toward the level of importance of anticipated life events in their lives and small variances of life events that exactly related to the role transition in the adopted life events scale (only 1 non-transitional event in anticipated life event scale). College senior students responded differently from our expectation based on the

reasons discussed above, and did not tent to change their apparel shopping orientations because of the occurrences of non-transitional life events.

Our framework was modified based on the Consumer Patronage Behavior of Apparel Shopping Model (Darden, 1980), which demonstrated four types of variables and their interrelationships as a flow within the context of patronage preference. We assumed that changes in patronage preferences (store and brand preferences) are associated with experienced and anticipated life events. College senior students perceived life events that are experienced prior to graduation and after graduation are associated with the assumption of a new role. In other words, this result confirmed that graduation, as a marker of role transition in a student's life, results in some consumer behavior changes around graduation.

Regarding the relationship between the changes in apparel shopping orientation and patronage preference, our sample provided evidence of the existence of positive relationships. That is, a change in the consumers' apparel shopping orientation results in an equivalent change in patronage preference. The extend of change in apparel shopping orientation, fashion consciousness and time consciousness did not cause changes in store and brand preferences. This result may be due to the fact that fashion/appearance and time consciousness are not exactly related to role transition. Different individuals have different perspectives and responses on these two factors, and they might not directly have a need for changes in store and brand preferences.

Another interesting finding was that among the apparel shopping orientations that strongly related to changes in store and brand preferences only brand consciousness and fashion consciousness lead to changes for all brands. Graduating students who favor brands and are fashion conscious are likely to switch brands when they shop for apparel products.

The main objective of this study was to assess the effects of graduation as a life event on college senior students' apparel shopping orientation and patronage preference changes. The result confirms

the major hypothesis that when college senior students experience graduation, they also intend to change their apparel shopping orientation and preferences in store and brand choices. Previously, Andreason's (1984) study showed that there was a positive relationship between brand preference changes and life status changes. Our recent research also confirmed the finding that life events and role transitions are positively associated with store and brand preferences, as outcomes of shopping orientation and patronage preference changes. It also confirmed the finding of Mehta and Belk (1991) that the acquisition of a new role may influence brand preferences because brand images are known to be associated with a person's self-concept and contribution to the person's self-definition (Mehta & Belk, 1991).

5.2 Implications

The purpose of this research is to examine the effects of experienced life events and anticipated life events around graduation in comparison with changes in apparel shopping orientation. Empirical data was collected through a web-based survey to assess how college senior students change their apparel shopping orientation. Finally, exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis were applied to test hypotheses. Overall, the successful data collection and well-analyzed results have contributed to a better understanding of the effects of life events on changes in apparel shopping orientation and have proven important implications from theoretical practical perspectives.

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The results of this study did not show a strongly significant relationship between the effects of life events and changes in apparel shopping orientation. Hypotheses on these relationships were partially supported. Current research provides evidence that the explanation of role transition as a mediator for changes in shopping orientation is not as successful in Darden's consumer patronage model with regards to stress. There might be some additional ways to conceptualize the application of the model from the role transition perspective. Our thinking should not be limited to this old model.

5.2.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this research have important practical implications for apparel retailers. The results have shown that senior college students with brand consciousness and fashion/appearance consciousness may change their apparel shopping behavior by patronizing specialty store more frequently. Meanwhile, their brand preferences tended to switch to private label. Senior college students may pursue private label social/work clothing in specialty stores more frequently. Thus, based on this research finding, the specialty stores with private label apparel products need to have a marketing strategy to promote their increased performance during the graduation period to meet senior college students shopping needs.

In addition, the findings for the effect of life events on changes in apparel shopping orientation provide a suggestion that senior college students may pay more attention to their appearance and spend more time on grooming. Therefore, apparel retailers need to provide sales staffs that are able to provide some suggestions on how to dress for working occasions. This implementation may help the retailers maintain and enhance their performance. At the same time, this strategy may enable retailers to attract more college students to increase their loyal customer base.

Based on the results, online stores have become the most popular store preference among college senior students. This result indicated that college students' online shopping behavior has changed the most. College senior students tend to reduce the traditional shopping trip and spend more money in online stores. Thus, online apparel stores should invest in a marketing campaign based on a job interview theme for this group of consumers in order to help them realize that there are more selections in the categories of work and social cloth from online stores. At the same time, online apparel retailers need to offer fashion forward, brand name products with relatively low prices in order to fulfill the needs of college senior students who are brand and fashion conscious.

5.3 Limitations

There are a number of derived limitations in the current study. The first limitation is that the sample size was small, and it was a convenient sample of students from Louisiana State University. Therefore, the study result may not represent all college students in the United States. In addition, the college student subjects might not have enough knowledge on the research topic, or have confusion about the questionnaire statements, thus, resulting in the inaccuracies in the survey answers. Furthermore, the variety of the students' chosen majors is limited. This might elicit a bigger portion of male students enrolled as engineering majors. Some of them may hold apathetic attitude towards apparel shopping, and their survey data might contain more missing data. Also, at some points, there may be abnormal data. The research collected one wave of cross-sectional data to examine changes. Longitudinal studies to examine changes across states of pre-graduation, graduation, and post-graduation would provide more insights on changes consumers go through during significant life events.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

There are several suggestions for future research on changes in apparel shopping orientation studies. Because the size of the sample used for this research was comparably small, the results would be more generalizable and reliable if the sample size was larger. Another recommendation is to explore more life events that relate to role transition. This might lead to deeper insights in the relationship between life events and changes in apparel shopping orientation and changes in patronage preferences.

The last recommendation that should be worth addressing in future research is the length of period in which college senior students intend to change their apparel shopping orientation to adjust their consumption needs following the experience of a role-transition event. For this study, we set up a six-month timeline for college senior students to recall and anticipate all the life events they ever experienced to date and all the events they plan to experience in the future. Therefore, the impact of shopping orientation changes on patronage behavior would be more obvious over a longer timeline. It

would be more accurate and rewarding to examine how college senior students responded to changes in their shopping orientation over a prolonged time, for example, to determine if attending job fairs more frequently can lead to greater likelihood of a brand switch from casual to formal brands.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL



LSU AgCenter Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Dr. Michael J. Keenan, Chair
School of Human Ecology
209 Knapp Hall
225-578-1708
mkeen@agctr.lsu.edu

Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

All research projects using living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU AgCenter IRB. This form helps the principal investigator determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.

- Applicant, please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-E, listed below, when submitting to the LSU AgCenter IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit the original and one copy to the chair, Dr. Michael J. Keenan, in 209 Knapp Hall.
- A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:
 - (A) The original and a copy of this completed form and a copy of parts B through E.
 - (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1 & 2)
 - (C) Copies of all instruments and all recruitment material to be used.
 - If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal.
 - (D) The consent form you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information)
 - (E) Beginning January 1, 2009: Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing and handling data, unless already on file with the LSU AgCenter IRB.
Training link: (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/hs/training.htm>)

1) Principal Investigator: Yang He Rank: _____ Student? Y/N Y
Dept: Human Ecology Ph: 225-650-9388 E-mail: yh2@lsu.edu

2) Co-Investigator(s): please include department, rank, phone and e-mail for each

- If student as principal or co-investigator(s), please identify and name supervising professor in this space
Dr. Chuanlan Liu, Assistant Professor, Human Ecology,
225-578-2400 clliu@lsu.edu
Dr. Frances Lawrence, Professor, Human Ecology,
225-578-1726 flawrence@lsu.edu

3) Project Title: Life events and changes of senior college students apparel shopping orientation

4) Grant Proposal?(yes or no) no If Yes, Proposal Number and funding Agency _____
Also, if Yes, either: this application completely matches the scope of work in the grant Y/N _____

OR

more IRB applications will be filed later Y/N _____

5) Subject pool (e.g. Nutrition Students) _____

- Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children<18, the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the aged, other) (Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.)

6) PI signature [Signature] **Date 11/10/2010 (no per signatures)

**I certify that my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU AgCenter institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at the LSU AgCenter for three years after completion of the study. If I leave the LSU AgCenter before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.

Committee Action: Exempted ☒ Not Exempted _____ IRB# HE10-21

APPENDIXB: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Dear Respondent,

This survey is designed to obtain a better understanding of how senior college students change their apparel shopping orientation to cope with their role transitions through experienced and anticipated life events.

The main goal of this questionnaire is to assess how senior students' experienced/anticipated life events lead to change in their apparel shopping behavior. You may feel stressful, worried or unsecure about your future as soon as you became a senior student. Most of you will soon graduate from college and become a full-time employee. This role transition creates a change in your shopping orientation. For example, the types of clothes you shop for may be affected by your job hunting progress. You might patronize formal apparel stores more often due to job interviews and future work occasions instead of going to casual clothing stores. We are going to ask you to think back to 6 months before and 6 months after your graduating period. Please answer the questions from your own perspective. There is no "right" or "wrong" answers toward the listed questions.

Thank you in advance for your participation, and we will keep your responses strictly confidential.

The researchers:

Yang He and Dr. Chuanlan Liu

School of Human Ecology

November 2010

THE STUDY TITLED:

Graduation, Life events and college students' apparel shopping orientation changes

PATICIPANTS: I am involved in a research study called "Life events and changes of senior college students' apparel shopping orientation" with Dr, Chuanlan Liu and Yang He at the Louisiana State University. We received your name from *University registration office of senior year student email list with IRB authorization*, and you (a senior college student) are eligible to participate in this survey.

PURPOSE OF STUDY:

We are asking you to take part in this research study because we are trying to learn more about the relationships between life events (e.g. graduation) and apparel shopping orientation among college students. You will be asked to answer an online survey, which includes 72 statement questions. We will invite all the current senior students in the university and target to obtain 300 complete responses. The maximal length of time to finish the whole procedure is about 10 minutes, and the survey procedure will be done on an exclusive website (***www. Qualtrics.com***). the survey instrument(s) are related to life events that students experienced/anticipated, and individual apparel shopping behavior (e.g. types of stores you preferred to buy clothes). It is easily accessed survey, the only requirement is to go to the website, read the questions and choose one answer by click the mouse. There is no any foreseen risk or discomforts will result from participation in the survey. There is no any other expenses will occur for your participation. Meanwhile, you will not benefit directly from participating in this research study.

This research is anonymous by directly answering the survey questions online. We **absolutely** will not be able to/try to identify the participants. At same time, your demographic information and research data will be stored and coded by using statistical software (SPSS) for research purposes. Only researchers (Ms. Yang He and Dr.Chuanlan Liu) have authorizations to access the database. The data

will be stored in secured computer as a data file in School of Human Ecology in Louisiana State University, and it will be stored November, 2013 approximately. Then it will be destroyed by deleting the dataset file permanently.

All of your answers will be coded by a special identifying number rather than your name. All of the papers pertaining to the study will be kept in a secured computer. Only people who are directly involved with the project will have access to those records. When the project is finished and results are reported, no individual will be identified in any way.

Your participation is **voluntary**. You can refuse to participate, and you can stop your participation at any time, if you wish to do so, without any negative consequences to you.

The online survey will be open to all respondents (senior students) from October 29, 2010 till 300 responses (samples) are collected.

By you answering the survey questions that we will ask, this means you consent to participate in this research project. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Yang He (yhe2@lsu.edu) or Dr. Chuanlan Liu (clliu@lsu.edu). If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact:

LSU AgCenter Institutional Review Board

Dr. Michael J. Keenan, Chair

209 Knapp Hall

Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Ph: 225-578-1708

Fax: 225-578-4443

E-mail: mkeen@agctr.lsu.edu

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I: Listed below are a number of events **around your graduation**, which may bring changes in your lives. Please circle the events that **have occurred** in your life *during the past 6 months* and Circle whether effects from experiencing these events were POSITIVE=1, NEGATIVE= -1 or NOT SURE=0.

Show how much the event affected your life by circling the appropriate number, which corresponds with the statement (0 = no effect, 1 = some effect, 2 = moderate effect, 3 = great effect)

NOTE: If you have not experienced a particular event in the six months, leave it **BLANK**. Please go through the entire list before you begin to get an idea of the type of event you will be asked to rate.

In the last 6 months, I...	Type of Effect			Effect of Event on Your Life		
	Positive	Not sure	Negative	Some Effect	Moderate Effect	Great Effect
Found a job/Have been looking for a job	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Completed an internship	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Attended a job fair	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Have started a new job	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Changed to a new type of work	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Have been getting ready for a new job	1	0	-1	1	2	3

For each of the following statements about your feelings around these days, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is the most appropriate in describing the change in your feelings *over the last six months* compared with before:

	Less often	The same	More often
Worrying about things	-1	0	1
Getting angry	-1	0	1
Feeling happy about your life	-1	0	1
Feeling unsettled	-1	0	1
Feeling under pressure	-1	0	1
Not sleeping soundly	-1	0	1

Please circle the events that **may occur** in your life *in next 6 months* and circle whether effects from experiencing these expected events will be POSITIVE=1, NEGATIVE= -1 or NOT SURE=0. Please indicate the type of event you will experience and evaluate how much they will affect your future life.

NOTE: If you have not experienced a particular event in the six months, leave it **BLANK**.

<i>In the next 6 months, I plan to/or I think I will...</i>	Type of Effect			Effect of Event on Your Life		
	Positive	Not Sure	Negative	Some Effect	Moderate Effect	Great Effect
Start graduate school	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Change school, college, or training program	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Change career goal or academic major	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Move to a different town, city, state, or country	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Get engaged/married (or begin to live with someone)	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Change my social activities (clubs, movies, visiting)	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Make more new friends	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Have a major change in finances (increased or decreased income)	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Take on a moderate purchase, such as TV, car, freezer, etc.	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Take on a major purchase or a mortgage loan, such as a home, business, property, etc.	1	0	-1	1	2	3
Start paying on student loan	1	0	-1	1	2	3

Part II: The following statements are about your individual apparel shopping orientation, which is referred as to how you think about the way you shop clothes **in general**. Please tell us whether you have experienced any changes of your apparel shopping orientation since you started preparing for graduation. Select a response that best describes the degree of your *change* specified by the following statements.

Compared to before I had not started preparing for graduation, I	Much less	Less	Same as Before	More	Much more
Feel confident in my ability to shop for clothing	-2	-1	0	1	2
Fell that I have the ability to choose the right clothes for myself	-2	-1	0	1	2
Think I am a good clothing shopper	-2	-1	0	1	2
Feel that dressing well is a important part of my life	-2	-1	0	1	2
Like to be considered well-groomed	-2	-1	0	1	2
When I find what I like, buy it without hesitation	-2	-1	0	1	2
Keep my wardrobe up-to-date with fashion trends	-2	-1	0	1	2
Try to stick to certain brands and stores	-2	-1	0	1	2
Stick to a brand I like	-2	-1	0	1	2
Feel a well-known brand means good quality	-2	-1	0	1	2
Pay much attention to brand names	-2	-1	0	1	2
Buy at the most convenience store	-2	-1	0	1	2
Shop where it saves me time	-2	-1	0	1	2
Spend time planning my clothing shopping	-2	-1	0	1	2
Prefer shopping malls as the best place to shop clothes	-2	-1	0	1	2
Prefer smaller strip malls and independent stores rather than malls	-2	-1	0	1	2
Enjoy shopping and walking through malls	-2	-1	0	1	2

Shop local stores since they offer me good quality for the price	-2	-1	0	1	2
Shop local clothing stores since they are attractive places to shop	-2	-1	0	1	2
Shop local clothing stores since they meet my shopping needs	-2	-1	0	1	2
Shopping around for bargains to save money	-2	-1	0	1	2
Read the advertisements for announcements of sales	-2	-1	0	1	2
Pay a lot more attention to clothing prices	-2	-1	0	1	2

Part III: The following section is to assess whether you have experienced any changes regarding your retail patronage since you started preparing for graduation. Please tell us how the amount of times you visit the stores listed below has changed compared to before you had not started preparing for *graduation*?

NOTE: work/social clothes are clothes that would be worn in public situations such as *church, go on a date, work, or social* gatherings.

How has the amount of times you visit the stores listed below changed compared to before you had not started preparing for <i>graduation</i> ?	Much less	Less	Same as Before	More	Much more
Discount stores (e.g. Walmart, Target, TJ'Maxx, Ross, Big Lots, and Dollar Tree.)	-2	-1	0	1	2
Specialty stores (e.g. Chico's, Claries', Bergdorf Goodman, Saks, Neiman Marcus.)	-2	-1	0	1	2
Department stores (e.g. JCPenny, Dillard's, Macys, Kohl's, Sears, Goody's)	-2	-1	0	1	2
Local fashion boutique	-2	-1	0	1	2
Catalog shopping	-2	-1	0	1	2
Online stores	-2	-1	0	1	2
Others _____	-2	-1	0	1	2
Compared with the brands I bought before I was preparing to graduate, I now buy social/work clothes with a <i>brand</i> of ...	Much less	Less	Same as Before	More	Much more
National/Designer brand (e.g. Tommy Hilfiger, Eileen Fisher, Nike, Ralph Lauren)	-2	-1	0	1	2
Private label/store brand (e.g. Coach, Levis, Abercrombie Fitch, Banana Republic, J.Crew)	-2	-1	0	1	2
Local brand	-2	-1	0	1	2

During the last 6 months, from what kind of retail stores have you chosen to purchase work / social clothes? (NOTE: work/social clothes are clothes that would be worn in public situations such as church, work, or social gatherings)

Discount Stores	Specialty Stores	Department Stores	Catalog Stores	Local Fashion Boutique	Online Stores	Others
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where have you purchased *most* of your work or social clothes? (**Please only choose one answer**)

Discount Stores	Specialty Stores	Department Stores	Catalog Stores	Local Fashion Boutique	Online Stores	Others
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

During the last 6 months, what following *brand(s)* you have purchased for your work /social clothes?

National/Designer brand	Private/Store brand	Local brand
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which brand of clothes you have purchased the most? (**Please only choose one answer**)

National/Designer brand	Private/Store brand	Local brand
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

At last, please tell us something about yourself:

Age: _____ Major: please specify _____

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Academic rank:

Junior _____ Senior _____ Graduate _____

Ethnicity:

African American _____ Asian _____ Caucasian _____ Hispanic _____ Others _____

On average, **how much** do you usually spend monthly on clothing and other fashion items

(handbags, watches, jewelry, athletic shoes, clothes, caps, sunglasses and perfume)?

Under \$100 _____ \$100 to \$199 _____ \$200 to \$ 299 _____ \$300 to \$ 399 _____ \$400 and more _____

VITA

Yang He was born in May 1978, in Shenyang, Liaoning, People's Republic of China. She finished her undergraduate studies at Shenyang Institute of Chemical Technology in June 2001 where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Chemistry degree in practical chemistry. In January 2008, she came to Louisiana State University to pursue graduate studies in fashion merchandising. She is currently a candidate for the degree of Master of Science in fashion merchandising with concentration in apparel shopping orientation, which will be awarded in May 2011.