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## The influence of values and other social and psychological factors on the dress and appearance of African American college students

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THE INFLUENCE OF VALUES AND  
OTHER SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS  
ON THE DRESS AND APPEARANCE OF  
AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Human Ecology

by  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	iii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	vii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	ix
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	x
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>I INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	3
Significance of Study .....	3
Objectives .....	5
Hypotheses .....	5
Research Model .....	5
Definition of Terms .....	6
<b>II REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b> .....	9
Dress and Appearance .....	9
African American Dress and Appearance .....	12
Theory .....	21
Values .....	26
Social Factors .....	31
Psychological Factors .....	37
College Students and Consumer Behavior .....	39
African American Consumers .....	42
African American College Students (AACS) .....	45
Summary .....	47
<b>III METHODOLOGY</b> .....	49
Sample .....	49
Procedure .....	49
Variables Instrumentation .....	52
Data Analysis .....	57
<b>IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	59
Profile of Respondents .....	59
Descriptive Analyses of the Variables .....	61
Hypotheses Testing .....	75
Discussion .....	77
<b>V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	88
Summary .....	88
Limitations .....	89

Conclusions.....	90
Implications.....	92
Recommendations.....	94
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	
<b>A    APPROVED APPLICATIONS FOR USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>B    SURVEY EMAILS AND MESSAGES (PRE-TESTING) .....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>C    SURVEY INSTRUMENT .....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>VITA .....</b>	<b>121</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Summarized Estimated 2004 Expenditures for All Black Households .....	44
2. Estimated 2004 Expenditures by All Black Household.....	45
3. Income of 15 – 24 Year Olds in the United States .....	46
4. Demographic Profile of AACS Respondents .....	60
5. Reliability Scores for Scale Items.....	62
6. Dress and Appearance Scale Items Factor Loading Using Principal Component Analysis.....	63
7. Distribution of Dress and Appearance Items .....	64
8. Rating of Values Importance in Daily Life of AACS.....	66
9. Most Important Value Each Day to AACS.....	67
10. Media’s Influence of AACS .....	68
11. Descriptive Statistics of Media’s Influence of AACS .....	68
12. Referents Influence Scale Items Factor Loadings Using Principle Component Analysis.....	69
13. Referents’ Influence of AACS.....	70
14. Self-Consciousness of AACS .....	71
15. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Consciousness of AACS .....	71
16. Self-Confidence of AACS .....	72
17. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Confidence of AACS .....	72
18. Fashion Leadership of AACS .....	73
19. Descriptive Statistics of Fashion Leadership of AACS.....	73
20. Shopping Enjoyment Scale Items Factor Loadings Using Principal Component Analysis.....	74
21. Shopping Enjoyment of AACS.....	74



22. Descriptive Statistics of Shopping Enjoyment of AACCS .....	75
23. Correlations of Dress and Appearance and Internal and External Values.....	75
24. Multiple Regression Analysis Summary: Means, Standard Deviations, Beta, Standard Error, and Beta Coefficients for Dress and Appearance and Predictor Variables – Media Influence and Referents Influence .....	76
25. Multiple Regression Analysis Summary: Means, Standard Deviations, Beta, Standard Error, and Beta Coefficients for Dress and Appearance and Predictor Variables – Fashion Leadership, Self-Confidence, Self-Consciousness, and Shopping Enjoyment.....	77
26. Review of Hypotheses Testing .....	88

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

1. Conceptual Research Model .....	6
2. Empirical Research Model.....	7
3. Selected Expenditures for Black Households for 2004 .....	43

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to investigate values and other social and psychological factors influence on dress and appearance of African American college students (AACS). The dependent variable was dress and appearance. Independent variables consisted of external values (being well-respected, security, warm relationships with others, and sense of belonging) and internal values (self-respect, sense of accomplishment, fun and enjoyment, self-fulfillment, and excitement). Included in the independent variables were social factors (media and referents' influence (peers and family)) and psychological factors (self-consciousness, self-confidence, fashion leadership, and shopping enjoyment). Social adaptation theory provided the theoretical framework. The theory encompasses the social and psychological aspects of an individual's thinking and reasoning. The underlying basis of social adaptation theory states that information is absorbed into existing cognitive structures, such as an individual's values.

A web-based survey was used to collect data of 282 AACS, freshman through graduate level, on two college campuses in a U.S. southern state. It was emailed to students by university personnel. As an incentive to complete the survey, participants were offered a university logo item.

External values had a positive relationship with this group of AACS' dress and appearance. Internal values were most important in the daily lives of AACS in this study. Those internal values were sense of accomplishment, self-respect, fun and enjoyment and self-fulfillment. The most important value of all values was self-respect.

Of the social factors, media was a better predictor of dress and appearance than family and peers. In regard to the psychological factors, all of the variables contributed to the influence of dress and appearance, with fashion leadership having the greatest influence.

Hypothesis one: Internal and external values influence dress and appearance of AACS, was partially supported. Hypothesis two: Referents will be the most influential social factor on dress and appearance was not supported. Hypothesis three: Fashion leadership will be the most influential psychological factor on dress and appearance was supported. Dress and appearance of AACS was influenced by external values, media, and the psychological factors - fashion leadership, self-consciousness, self-confidence, and shopping enjoyment.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Dress and appearance are forms of non-verbal communication that consist of an individual's outward assemblage of apparel on the body as well as all alterations and additions to the body. Also included are genetic traits such as gender, ethnicity, hair texture, height, and physical build. On an individual level, dress and appearance can provide information about the wearer's values, attitudes, interests, lifestyle, and social and personal relationships.

Dress and appearance are highly visible and allow others to formulate opinions or derive various cues about the wearer including personal information. Personal and social values are communicated through dress and appearance, and the manner in which an individual dresses expresses personal values (Damhorst, 1999, p.2). Research has indicated that values affect behavior (Kahle, 1983, 1984). Each individual possesses and follows a set of principles that guides thoughts and influences behavior. It is not exactly certain how these guiding principles or values function. Values are described as the most abstract form of social cognition (Kahle, 1996); and are useful in understanding attitudes and behaviors (Beatty, Kahle, Homer, & Misra, 1985).

Values may be categorized as either external or internal. Externally-oriented or social values are defined by the perception of others and centered on interpersonal relationships (Rose et al., 1994). External values include being well respected, security, warm relationships with others, and sense of belonging. Internally-oriented values focus on the individual. People who place a greater emphasis on internal or psychological values tend to want to control their lives (Kahle, 1996) and are far less concerned with the opinions of others. Internal values include: self-respect, sense of accomplishment, fun and enjoyment, self-fulfillment, and excitement.

Social-cultural and economic research indicates that a change in social values, attitudes, and culture is currently taking place with the growth and spending power of Generation Y. Members of Generation Y are the nation's present and future college students. This group is emerging with youthful attitudes and values and are expected to heavily influence business markets, politics, careers, and culture just as the Baby Boomers did in the early 1970s (Weiss, 2003). There are 13 million young people in this country between the ages of 18 and 24 enrolled in college (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). The size and economic impact of this cohort of the growing Generation Y makes this a consumer group to watch (Leo, 2003; Weiss, 2003).

African Americans or blacks are another group that is ideal for studying consumer behavior, fashion, and dress and appearance. African Americans spend a significant percent of their income on apparel and related items (U.S. Census, 2003) in an effort to maintain a current appearance. Blacks are a dynamic social and consumer group with considerable economic power and fashion influence. African Americans have taken a noticeable role in influencing fashions for blacks and mainstream society (Tulloch, 2004). As a fashion force, this group's influence in fashion can be described as social, political, and economical. Today, there are numerous apparel choices available to black people that will allow the group to further express its cultural, social, and individual aspects of identity through dress and appearance.

African American college students (AACS) have distinctive opinions about dress and appearance. A survey conducted by *Ebony* (2003), a black news and fashion magazine, indicated that black college students are more materialistic than previous generations and place a significant amount of emphasis on the newest apparel, and are more brand-conscious (Simon, 2003). Additionally, the goals of AACS are: to be personally fulfilled and to have the good life which is described as a good job, good car, and good house (Simon, 2003). AACS's goals, as described, are the equivalent of Generation Y's desire to have a successful life. These findings

suggest two salient traits of AACS: fashion consciousness and willingness to spend money on apparel items to maintain a current appearance.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Black college students are a segment of the larger American population, yet they are often overlooked by researchers in dress and appearance and consumer research. Limited information is available about dress and appearance issues concerning AACS particularly with regards to values and psychological and social influencers. This group is fashion conscious with opinions about dress and appearance, and is willing to spend money on apparel items to maintain a current appearance (Simon, 2003). Therefore, the purpose of the study is to investigate values and other social and psychological factors influence dress and appearance of AACS.

### **Significance of Study**

This study is important because it will contribute to understanding the influence of values and other social and psychological factors on dress and appearance for African American college students. This consumer group has the potential to have a positive impact on apparel and related markets. Values of AACS are important because of the rich information they could provide about this fashion-conscious consumer group. Values provide additional elements to the profile of the fashion-conscious market (Goldsmith et. al, 1991). With the younger black population currently driving some trends in the fashion industry (Graves, 2003), more information could assist marketers and retailers in better meeting the needs of AACS. Better understanding of this consumer group can result in more direct and effective marketing strategies. Also, a better understanding of the AACS's values may aid retailers in offering more desirable apparel selections for this fashion-conscious financially-able group of young adults.

The study of external and internal values is crucial to the study of dress and appearance because values influence individuals' behaviors and attitudes, which are reflected in dress and

appearance. Researchers have recommended additional studies concerning the relationships between values (psychological and social) and fashion, fashion leadership, and consumer behavior. It is also important to study cultural groups to obtain specific information about different consumer groups (Beatty, Kahle, Homer, & Misra, 1985; Kahle, Beatty, & Homer, 1986; Goldsmith, Heitmeyer, & Freiden, 1991; Rose, Shoham, Kahle, & Batra, 1994).

African Americans were the cultural group of interest in a study on the current manifestation of dress and appearance. In this study, O'Neal (1998) expressed the need to establish an African American aesthetic of dress because America's aesthetic judgments and values are founded on European philosophy, values, and beauty standards. The need to establish a dress aesthetic for African Americans may suggest that African Americans do not fully adhere to the aesthetic of mainstream America and seek to differentiate their dress and appearance in ways that are more individualistic and self-expressive. According to O'Neal (1998), the current African American aesthetic of dress and appearance emphasizes uniqueness, self-expression, and being and doing things differently. If indeed, emphasis is centered on differences, then there is a need to study external and internal values to understand how and why African Americans, who are a part of America and consumer segments within America, desire to be aesthetically different. AACS are one segment of the African American population that can be studied to provide insight.

There was little information available about dress and appearance and African Americans, particularly AACS. Many studies have addressed the influence of values on dress and appearance with several dominant fashion-conscious consumer segments (i.e., women, and female college students). However, none of the studies reviewed focused specifically on African American college students. Since this group is believed to have a major impact on consumer behavior, more information regarding AACS would enable businesses to develop appropriate



promotional strategies. The problem being addressed in this study is that very few studies have focused on the relationship of dress and appearance of AACS, while even fewer have studied and identified African American values and their role in dress and appearance.

### **Objectives**

The objectives for the study are:

Objective 1: To investigate values that are important to AACS as measured by the List of Values scale.

Objective 2: To investigate social factors' (media and referents) influence on dress and appearance.

Objective 3: To investigate psychological factors' (self-consciousness, self-confidence, fashion leadership, shopping enjoyment, and finances) influence on dress and appearance.

### **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses for the study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Internal and external values influence dress and appearance of AACS.

Hypothesis 2: Referents will be the most influential social factor on dress and appearance.

Hypothesis 3: Fashion leadership will be the most influential psychological factor on dress and appearance.

### **Research Model**

In thoroughly reviewing available literature, psychological and social factors have not been found to mediate any type of relationship between values and dress and appearance. Instead, external and internal values and the social and psychological factors are associated with one other and both are believed to equally influence dress and appearance. The following conceptual model (Figure 1) is based on a thorough review of the literature and has been developed for this research study.

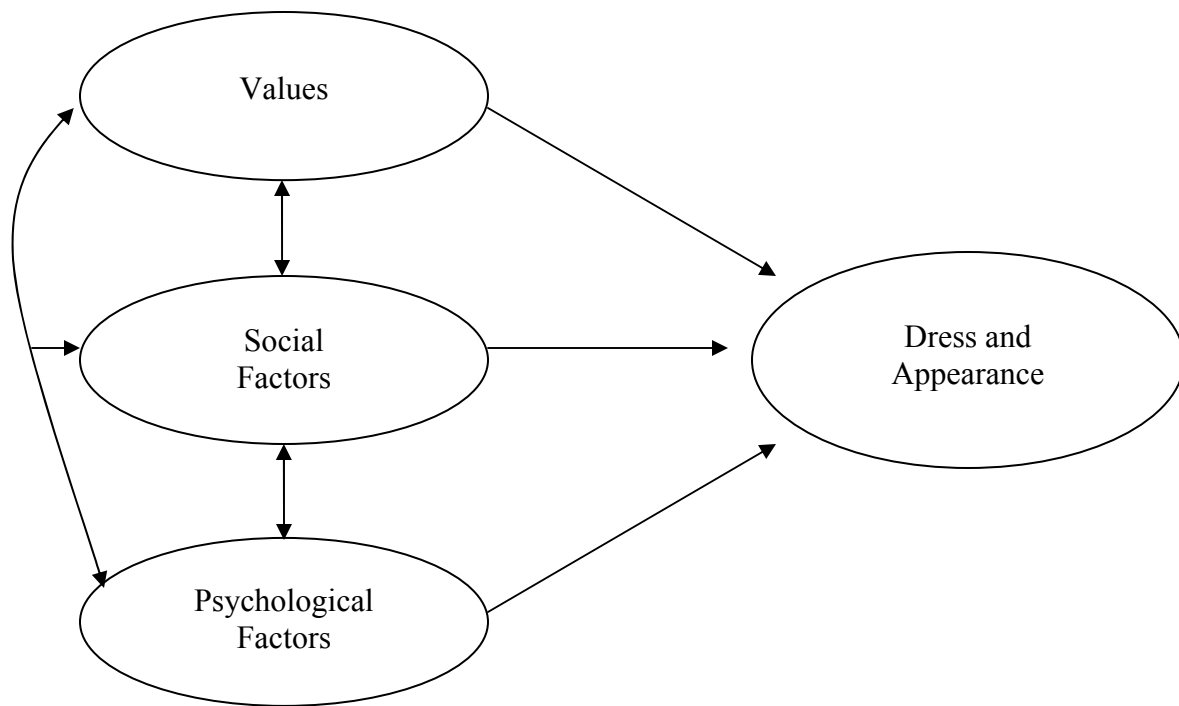


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model.

Empirically, each variable has its own opportunity to influence/have a positive or negative relationship with dress and appearance. The empirical research model (Figure 2) details the potential, yet equal influence each independent variable in the study has on dress and appearance, the dependent variable.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Dress and Appearance:** A non-verbal means of communicating personal or social values (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992) projecting an image before any words are spoken (Syber & Roach, 1962). For African Americans, dress and appearance is best defined as an expression of the ways in which African Americans negotiate and define their sense of self (Tulloch, 2004). The importance of this concept is not what is worn but how it is worn.

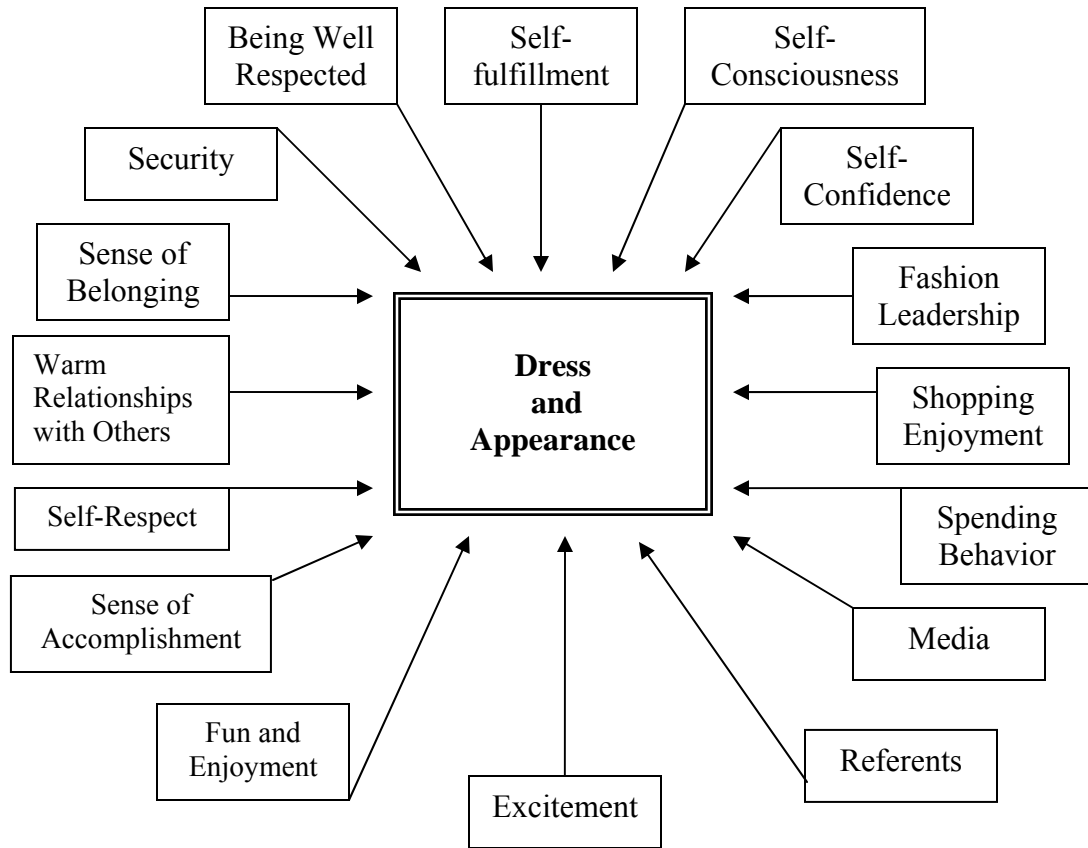


Figure 2. Empirical Research Model.

**Dress:** In apparel research, dress is defined as an assemblage of modifications to the body and/or supplements to the body (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992; Johnson, Schofield & Yurchisin, 2002). “Dress includes the total presentation of all coverings and ornamentations worn on the human body” (Sproles & Burns, 1994, p. 7). As defined in the African American dress aesthetic, the term is used “to signify that which is set apart, revered or respected and that which is not to be made common” (O’Neal, 1998; p. 171).

**List of Values (LOV):** A validated scale that measures American values. The LOV survey contains a high percentage of values that people feel influence their lives daily.

**Media:** Social influencers such as television, newspapers, magazines, music and internet.

**Referents:** Social influencers of the sample, including family and peers.

**Style:** In mainstream America, the concept of style is synonymous with fashion, in that, it is the distinctive quality or manner in which apparel is worn and considered acceptable or fashionable. In the African American culture, it is a “means of expression through behavior, defining and redefining self ... for African Americans the integration of the whole – [apparel], accessories, how they are worn, and the attitude of the wearer” (O’Neal, 1998; p. 170) is also included.

**Values:** “...Self-organizing principles that guide our thoughts and actions” (Kahle, 1996) and shape individual preferences and choices (Kaiser, 1997, p.289). Values are social cognitions that summarize adaptive behaviors (Kahle, 1983).

**External values:** Values learned from a variety of sources including peers, relatives, and personal experiences and learned indirectly via the media (Kahle, 1983, p.40). External values are developed from life experiences (Kahle, 1996).

**Internal values:** Related to an individual’s belief system. Internal values tend to provide an explanation or reasoning for an individual’s perception of self as a social object.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter addresses the key topics investigated in the study: dress and appearance; theoretical framework; values and their influence; and consumer behavior of college students; characteristics and behaviors of African Americans; an overview of African American dress and appearance in the United States; and African American college students (AACS) as consumers of products that influence dress and appearance.

#### **Dress and Appearance**

Dress is a broad term in apparel research defined as an assemblage of modifications to the body and/or supplements to the body (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992; Johnson, Schofield & Yurchisin, 2002). “Dress includes the total presentation of all coverings and ornamentations worn on the human body” (Sproles & Burns, 1994, p. 7). The supplements and modifications to the body communicate to others (perceivers) “abstract characteristics of the wearer, relationships the wearer has with others, and the type of situation in which the wearer is involved (Damhorst, 1999, p. 128). More specifically, dress communicates three main messages: 1) personal characteristics which include traits, values, attitudes, interests, lifestyle, and mood; 2) relationships such as cultural background, group membership, group roles (family, occupation, friendship, and gender), status, and prestige; and 3) definition of situation such as intention to act and orientation (formal, casual, serious, playful) (Damhorst, Miller, & Michelman, 1999, p. 128).

As Damhorst (1999) explained, dress is significant in defining self identity to others. Items selected to be worn by an individual reflect his/her interests, personality, roles, membership in groups, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and more. Dress is a form of non-verbal communication because it is used to convey personal information about the wearer.

Appearance is also a form of non-verbal communication. It can convey personal or social values (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992), thereby generating an image before any words are spoken (Syber & Roach, 1962). It “includes features of the undressed body, such as its shape or color” (Johnson et al. 2002, p. 125). Appearance, as it relates to dress, has been found to be an effective means of communication during social interaction (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992).

When combining these two highly visible forms of communication, “dress and appearance often provide the most immediate and apparent visual cues about age, gender, ethnicity, social status, and social roles” (Damhorst, 1999, p. 2). Dress consciously and unconsciously encodes multiple messages or cues for others to interpret, in which perceivers translate these messages into meanings whether intended, unconscious, or imagined, from another’s dress and appearance (Johnson, Schofield & Yurchisin, 2002). Much can be learned about an individual by observing his/her dress and appearance.

A study by Johnson et al. (2002) examined how dress and appearance cues were used to formulate impression. The researchers documented the kinds of visual and non-visual dress and appearance cues individuals use to form impressions of others in addition to exploring the types of information obtained from the cues. In this qualitative study, researchers found that the participants formed impressions of others based on their appearance and dress using visual aspects of dress including body modifications and attachments. Impressions were also formed by observing “how clothing was worn on the body or how outfits were assembled” (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 130). Visual aspects of the body such as body surface, body motion, and body forms were also found to develop impressions.

The study provided support that information inferred about the wearer is based on dress and appearance, and observers felt their impressions were accurate. Overall, based on an individual’s dress and appearance, others can make inferences about that individual’s personality

traits, physical and biological characteristics, demographic and social position, attitudes and emotions, occupational role, and intentions or motives (Johnson et al., 2002). This study and other literature reviewed supports the need to study specific ethnic groups or subcultures to discover additional useful consumer information (such as values) that may be helpful to researchers and marketers in understanding special consumer groups. Dress and appearance provide very specific information about the wearer and are therefore necessary to examine to gain more insight about the African American college student segment.

Apparel is a visual component of dress and appearance that, according to Biecher, Keaton & Pollman (1999, p. 17), “people see first and remember” making apparel a highly visible form of communication. Apparel is defined as three-dimensional objects that enclose and envelop the body in some way (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). Sproles & Burns (1994) define apparel as a decorative body covering. “Clothing is frequently used as a generic term for any coverings for the human body” (Sproles & Burns, 1994, p. 7). For the purposes of this research the term apparel will be used to refer to clothing per se.

Apparel, an essential part of dress and appearance, supports a sense of identity while at the same time reinforces the images held by peers and associates. “It has been repeatedly documented that individuals are capable of making inferences or forming impressions of others on the basis of dress, specifically [apparel]” (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 126).

In Biecher, Keaton & Pollman’s (1999) study, apparel serves as tangible items used by individuals to create or project an image to others, establishing the perceived person in a particular role or class. In 1999, Biecher et al., found apparel to function on both an individual and group level. When apparel represents the individual, it is always a symbol of who that individual is (Biecher et. al., 1999) or strives to be. An example of such use of apparel was previously documented by Horn (1975).

Horn (1975) suggested that minority groups tend to subconsciously use apparel to compensate for lack of recognized status. More recently, Fisher (1998) observed that African Americans spent a significant amount of money as a status indicator, using apparel to let others know they have “made it” and to enhance their image. Therefore, apparel is significant in the study of dress and appearance because it immediately establishes an individual in some sort of social role (Biecher et. al., 1999). However, visible apparel constituting an individual’s dress can only provide a surface-level interpretation which may not accurately explain the meaning of dress (Damhorst, 1999).

“Dress and appearance are worthy of study because they are laden with meanings” (Damhorst, 1999, p.2). Apparel, the major component of dress and appearance, provides many clues about the wearer. Apparel may provide clues as to the sex, age, occupation, socioeconomic status, group membership/affiliation, marital status, intelligence, values, attitudes, and personality of the wearer (Ryan, 1966). As a matter of fact “patterns of everyday life are reflected in dress” (Damhorst, 1999, p.2). The concept of dress and appearance is more inclusive than apparel. On an individual and personal level, dress and appearance “reflects how people feel about themselves, and expresses personal values and values of the society in which an individual lives” (Damhorst, 1999, p.2).

### **African American Dress and Appearance**

Significant to this study is the ethnicity and age of the sample. Young African Americans have been chosen to study to gain insights into the use of values in influencing their particular style, seeking to uncover underlying meanings, whether social or individual, associated with the manner in which apparel is selected and worn to create appearance. Available literature can provide a limited understanding of African Americans’ clothing behaviors and attitudes. Research indicates that African Americans represent a “distinct subculture that possesses a



complex of behaviors, tradition, language, values, and icons that are unique, profound, and distinct from [Anglo-American] subculture (Pitts, Whalen, O’Keefe, and Murray, 1989).

Tulloch (2004) believes in order to examine what is ‘black’ about African American dress and appearance or style, insight must be gained from the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which meanings are encoded in dress and appearance, the material substrates – skin, hair, fabric from which style works upon and cuts into when it inscribes itself into the culture. Therefore, to gain a further understanding of black dress and appearance, it is necessary to study black culture and black society independent of the dominating American mainstream culture and society.

When studying black dress and appearance in the United States, careful attention is given to the overall appearance of the African American individual or group of people. The concept of style is synonymous to fashion, in that it is the distinctive quality or manner in which apparel is worn and considered acceptable or fashionable. Perhaps African American dress and appearance is best defined as an expression of the ways in which African Americans negotiate and define their sense of self (Tulloch, 2004). The importance of this concept is not what is worn but how it is worn.

### Historical Context of African American Dress and Appearance

The chronicled history of fashion in the United States is recorded and presented with distinct references to gender and social class but without any mention of race until the 1960s when African Americans’ appearance became more Afro-centric. Fashion theories have been developed based on social class and fashion influences. In 1904, Simmel offered the classic trickle-down theory that suggests that the fashions of upper class society are adopted by the lower classes. Once the fashion has reached the lowest class, a new fashion is introduced by the upper class. Cultural theories or models emerged in the 1970s (Solomon, 1985) to explain fashion influence from the lower classes and subcultures within society (i.e., African Americans

and teenagers). These developments signified that the innovation and leadership in fashion was shifting from the dominant society in the U.S. to subculture groups. Possible origins of the African American subculture's innovation and leadership in fashion may be revealed by reviewing their historical relationship with apparel beginning with the groups' arrival in the United States.

Slavery. The enslavement of Africans in America is where the history of black Americans and apparel will begin for the purpose of this study. Hundreds of thousands of African men, women, and children were transported from their native lands and forced into manual labor. The human slave was the property of his/her owner and had no human or civil rights. The slave was made to labor for the benefit and prosperity of his/her owner.

The early years of slavery were poorly documented. The information available for research on apparel and social behavior are found in various formats – interviews, letters, photographs, newspapers – and have been compiled.

In the 1700s, America practiced the system of social divide which legally designated social classes by fashion. Fabrics and styles were sanctioned to the different classes. Apparel for the upper class was fitted, tailored, stylish and made from the luxurious and fine fabrics such as velvet, silk, lace, and chintz; slaves wore loose clothing made of the coarsest available cloth appropriate for physical labor typically made of plain cottons and poor quality wool and linen (White & White, 1998).

Slave apparel lacked style and variety as a result of the legal mandates. Slave apparel throughout north and south “tended to be drab, uniform and limited to relatively a few items” (White & White, 1998). However, miraculously, a type of style was developing among the enslaved blacks. Slaves made attempts to incorporate African style into the mandatory drab appearance. Many slave women innovatively used mandated fabrics and their skills in weaving

and dyeing to fashion apparel to their own liking. For example, negro cloth was used to create “wrappers” or covers for women’s normal dress (White & White, 1998). Dyes were used to add color to the cloths’ appearance (White & White, 1998); thus demonstrating that “through the ways they fashioned their appearance, African American slaves discovered an often surprising degree of social and cultural space” (White & White, 1998).

While at the same time, a desire for fine apparel was developing. Newspaper descriptions of runaway slaves described them in the most extraordinary and fine apparel of the time of which they had somehow acquired. Slave owners began to notice slaves’ love of fine apparel. Soon, slave owners were using ‘fine clothing’ as part of a system of rewards and punishment.

“Clothing was embedded in the system of rewards and punishments and was designed to make the plantations and indeed, the whole institution of slavery run smoothly” (White & White, 1998). Also, when slaves were given the opportunity, by their owner, to earn extra money typically by farming on the side and selling their products, they would spend much of their earnings on clothing (White & White, 1998). Apparel became a form of currency among slaves (White & White, 1998). It was used to trade or sell in order to acquire or purchase more apparel. “[The slaves’] consumption of apparel mirrored the colonial elite and middle class consumption and fashion” (White & White, 1998). Apparel was greatly valued by slaves (White & White, 1998) possibly because of its social and personal meanings and use among enslaved blacks.

The Early 1900s. After institutionalized enslavement ended, African Americans were freely able to select and wear any apparel they choose and could afford. The best apparel was worn on Sundays to church services and afternoon socializing activities (White & White, 1998). This practice carried over from slavery. By the 1920s, fashion had become the focus of African Americans and ushered in an urban culture of consumption. For all of America, including African Americans, department stores were at the center of the fashion obsession because they

brought fashion to ordinary Americans in the forms of fashion shows and pageants (White & White, 1998).

Both black and white newspapers heavily reported on African American fashions and dress and appearance. White papers reported black fashion related information negatively and without photographs. Black sources of media focused on fashion shows, trends, and provided fashion advice, all while featuring black models. Fashion shows quickly became “cultural extravaganzas” and were almost immediately adapted by the black middle class as means of separating themselves from the working class black by showcasing fashions only respectable blacks should wear (White & White, 1998).

As time progressed, more black-owned retail businesses and hair salons emerged. Beauty products, including hair and skin care products were available for African Americans. Blacks’ consumption of apparel and apparel related products and services were solidified by their need to maintain a fashionable dress and appearance. The apparel restrictions and limited-to-no-availability of products for African Americans were obsolete. The practices of slavery were discarded. Historically, African Americans have nurtured and developed opportunities to express their heritage, culture, and self through dress and appearance.

#### Cultural and Social Context of African American Dress and Appearance

African Americans represent a subculture within the American culture. Group affiliation of subcultures may be based on race, caste, language, or even location. Individuals identify with their subculture. By accepting the beliefs and values of their subculture, they allow other areas of their lives to be influenced. One such area is clothing (Wickliffe, 1999, p. 235).

Syber and Roach (1962) believed that an individual’s apparel conforms to his/her reference group. Following the apparel trends of a subculture can be defined as counter-conformity according to Miller (1999) who feels that the followers are rejecting the prevailing

societal appearance and conforming to the guidelines of the subculture (p. 210). Examples of such behavior are the highly Afro-centric dress of the 1990s, when cultural awareness was an issue in the African American community and retailers responded by offering African inspired fashions, which were greatly accepted by blacks; and the current street trend known as hip-hop primarily seen in the younger segment of the black population.

Afro-centric dress and hip-hop have been identified as the two main style trends in African American's dress and appearance in the late twentieth century. Each major style trend is different from the other, according to Tulloch (2004) in its appearance, its meaning and its relation to mainstream consumption.

Afro-centric dress first occurred in the 1960s as a form of social and political protest against dominant society. During that time some African Americans proudly wore apparel that reflected their African heritage. Resisting American's fashion standards, blacks sported natural hair styles, bold colors, and African inspired garments such as dashikis and caftans. Society viewed this manner of dressing as rebellious; however, it was very influential.

The resurgence of Afro-centric fashion appeared again in the 1990s and was supported by African Americans who were motivated by cultural awareness. Retailers such as JCPenney began to offer African-inspired fashions in an attempt to gain African-American consumers (Tulloch, 2004). According to the Crain's New York Business report, retailers were awakened by an economic reality and sought to lure minority shoppers as new customers to increase sales for their stores (Gault, 1997). Blacks were targeted by retailers to increase sales. Retailers expanded their product offerings to include fashions and other general merchandise that catered directly to African Americans. The Afro-centric trend ended by the end of the 1990s because the cheap manufacturing cheapened the aesthetic qualities and the political meanings of the original

African-inspired dress, however, culturally aware blacks continued to wear the styles (Tulloch, 2004).

The most outstanding expression of black fashion, at this time, is the hip-hop culture. Originating on the streets of the inner-city, hip-hop fashion has had a tremendous amount of influence on mainstream culture and mass production; in fact hip-hop styles are adopted and approved instantly. As quickly as a hip-hop innovation is introduced the look is copied by non-blacks and will be mass produced. According to Tulloch (2004), hip-hop styles are continuously appropriated by mainstream culture and corporate mass production such that “no sooner...does an innovator turn his baseball cap backwards than white middle-class youth adopts the look and manufacturers produce baseball caps made to be worn backwards with an extra logo stitched across the back.”

Despite its profound influence and acceptance amongst mainstream culture, hip-hop is viewed as an expression of rebellion. Hip-hop resists mainstream culture just as afros and Afro-centric clothing of the 1960s resisted the dominant cultures' dress. Hip-hop is viewed as rebellious “when African-inspired fashion confronts white supremacy by expressing a proud dignity. Hip-hop subverts establishment notions of racial difference through cutting-edge styles that throw back in the face of mainstream America its own stereotypes of inner city black youth” (Tulloch, 2004).

Appearance through apparel refers to a particular reference group (Syber & Roach, 1962). Apparel is used within the black culture to give individuals and their subculture agency and power of expression that strengthens the individual despite societal opinions (Lynch, 1999, p. 115).

On the surface, subculture followers are perceived to be non-conformist (Miller, 1999, p. 210). However, the attempt is not to determine whether African Americans were conformist or

non-conformists within the black subculture. The purpose is to show how a group connected by ethnicity expresses its shared beliefs through appearance. Historically, African Americans in America have used appearance as an aesthetic expression to reformulate cultural definitions (Lynch, 1999, p. 82). Interestingly, black fashion defined itself as a racial constituent, which is something mainstream or white fashion has never had to do (Winter, 2004). Blacks' dress and appearance is motivated by the concept of respect and viewed as a form of rebellion. What should be most salient is whether "fitting in" or "standing out" becomes prominent when groups develop a particular style of dress or appearance (Miller, 1999, p. 210).

O'Neal (1998) requested an African American aesthetic of dress be established because the current manifestations of African American dress aesthetic are centered on the aesthetic differences between African Americans and the dominant culture. O'Neal's (1998) analysis and interpretation suggest a new African American aesthetic may be developing in the direction that is entirely inclusive of various values and attitudes and differ from those of dominant culture. According to the study, observable manifestations of visible expression include style, color, and pattern. Also, the element of "style" or individual expression is redefined in the current African American manifestation. 'Style' is not only a means of expression through behavior, defining and redefining self, but it also includes for African Americans the integration of the whole – [apparel], accessories, how they are worn, and the attitude of the wearer" (O'Neal, 1998, p. 170).

Also in the current manifestation of African American dress aesthetic the term "dress" takes on a different meaning. 'Dress' is now used "to signify that which is set apart, revered or respected and that which is not to be made common" (O'Neal, 1998, p. 171). O'Neal (1998) believes it is for this reason many African Americans are attentive to dress for several occasions. The dress aesthetic assists in understanding the function and meaning of dress and appearance among African Americans in the social context.

Outside African American culture, an African American or black individual may feel the need to maintain and express their ‘blackness’ through dress and appearance to others in the social settings. This need of black expression through dress and appearance is termed “black fashion expression” (Winter, 2004). Scholars in psychology and apparel have identified four transformative stages in which African American identity evolves through dress and appearance. Stage one is pre-encounter/discovery in which the apparel worn emulates Hollywood images (Winter, 2004). In stage two, called encounter, the apparel of choice is Afro-centric (Winter, 2004). This stage is often seen in teens when they think of themselves as individuals and separate from mainstream culture. The third stage is known as immersion/emersion (Winter, 2004). It is this stage, where persons present themselves according to their societal or professional role. It is this stage where the individual may find the most opposition with his/her personal style or image but he/she is able to create a style that is professional and inclusive of his/her blackness (Winter, 2004). Internalization is the fourth and final stage, where emphasis on apparel is not critical in personal and social perception (Winter, 2004).

It is certain that “the mainstream fashion industry is becoming more inclusive of other cultures and sub-groups” (Winter, 2004). Research proclaiming the need for a current African American dress aesthetic and a black fashion expression may be viewed as foundational studies in the area that may become African American social-psychological apparel behavior. Nevertheless, the impact of black culture on mainstream society is rising as evidenced by the influence hip-hop has had on fashion.

In social and cultural contexts, blackness or ethnicity is expressed in an individual’s dress and appearance and is differentiated by certain characteristics of style and dress that are distinctly related to the African American culture. The opportunities for research on African Americans’ dress and appearance are infinite and are presently gaining interest in various fields



of study. As more information that contains historical, cultural, and societal perspectives of African American dress and appearance is presented, the greater black America will be understood as a subculture in America.

### **Theory**

Theories in social psychology of apparel are relatively young compared to other disciplines. The history of social psychology in apparel research is brief. Early documentation of the efforts of pioneer scholars is provided by Sybers & Roach (1962). Interest in the sociological aspects of apparel gained increasing emphasis as researchers sought to acquire knowledge about human behavior (Sybers & Roach, 1962). Prior to the interest in sociological studies in apparel and human behavior, apparel research reflected the problems of the period and focused on standardization, consumer buying, conservation, and garment construction (Sybers & Roach, 1962).

One of the pioneer scientists in social psychology theory was George Simmel (1904), a sociologist. He is credited as one of the founding fathers of social/psychological and apparel theory. As early as 1904, Simmel published an article titled “Fashion” which reflected fashion in terms of human behavior and introduced the trickle-down theory. He was the first scientist to study the effect of fashion on human behavior.

Though Simmel’s contribution was significant to the area, the limited apparel and human behavior research published in the following years suggested that apparel was a manifestation of man’s inner needs (Sybers & Roach, 1962). A series of professional meetings were held by home economists as early as 1947 to formally explore possible research areas in textiles and apparel related to social sciences. The meetings were attended and hosted by home economists, sociologists, psychologists, and economists from leading universities; who “raised questions concerning values sought in [apparel] and, generally, how [apparel] serves society” (Sybers &

Roach, 1962). In the 1950s, authors within the home economics clothing and textile area began publishing journal articles and pamphlets on the social meaning of dress (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). Meetings continued until 1959.

According to Douty (1963) detailed knowledge in this area accumulated over the years and progressed in the development of effective research methods and theoretical frameworks in which hypotheses were tested. By 1963, social psychology offered “an organized body of knowledge and theory” and aided “in clarifying the influence of clothing on interrelations of people” (Douty, 1963, p. 197). By the late 1960s and 1970s, formal courses and research about the social significance of dress had developed leading to published books in the area (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992).

In 1969, Herbert Blumer, a sociologist, contributed to fashion theory called collective selection. Blumer’s article, *Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection* focused on stability and change through fashion in society. He used the term “collective taste” to refer to fashion. His article provided support for Simmel’s trickle-down theory. In the following decades, as the social psychological area advanced, Fred Davis’ (1982) contributions bridged various levels of fashion by studying the social process. Davis examined the social process in terms of the group dynamics and the individual. His later research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s was focused more on consumer behavior.

Lennon & Davis (1989) presented information on integrated theories and research in social cognition with research in apparel and human behavior. Then in 1991, Nagasawa, Hutton and Kaiser; offered a paradigm for studying social-psychological theories associated with the meaning of apparel. In 1995, Kaiser, Nagasawa, and Hutton applied symbolic interaction to fashion suggesting that all aspects of dress have symbolic meaning and those meanings change over time. This landmark research invited others to begin communicating about the current

status of social psychological research (Nagasawa et al., 1991). In years that followed, other researchers (Kean, 1997; Pannabecker, 1997) from different apparel areas responded to the call placed by Nagasawa et al., (1991). The maturing of the social psychological area of apparel is continuing as theories and effective research methods evolve. There are many theories that can be used as a foundation for this type of research.

### Theoretical Framework

However, social adaptation will form the theoretical foundation for this research because it encompasses the social and psychological aspects of an individual's thinking and reasoning which aids in the development of values. Social adaptation is based on one of the most sophisticated interactive theories in psychology. "According to social adaptation theory, individuals adapt to various life roles in part through value development and value fulfillment" (Kahle, 1996, p. 135). The Piagetian theories (Kahle, 1984, p.147), on which social adaptation theory is based, state that information is absorbed into existing cognitive structures, such as values. Information may also assist existing cognitive structures to be refined as a result of additional interaction. The information is then organized to synthesize the new information with prior knowledge. This process can change new and old information, which leads to greater integration of information (Kahle, 1996). In other words, "A person absorbs external information and transforms both the information and himself or herself in such a way as to promote adaptation" (Kahle, 1984, p. 38). "The integration and specific meanings will be unique for each individual, but similarities in experiences and semantic environments, such as those shared by individuals within a particular demographic category, will lead to measurable similarities and patterns of responses" (Kahle, 1996, p 136). This may also work for individuals in subcultures. People gain information by experiencing interaction with their environments and values, develop from these life experiences (Kahle, 1996).

Social adaptation is a psychology-based cognitive model that fits within the paradigm of social psychology theories for studying the meaning of apparel. The theories in apparel research devoted to studying dress and appearance are linked to cognition – specifically social cognition. Social cognition examines the cognitive process or more precisely “the bases for the perceptions and cognitions individuals use to make judgments about people” (Lennon & Davis, 1989, p.41). Social cognition is concerned with how people form impressions of others and make sense of themselves (Johnson et al. 2002). It “emphasizes the use of cognitive psychological processes with social objects” (Lennon & Davis, 1989, p. 41). Because social adaptation provides both a social and psychological basis for study of the individual and dress and appearance, it is ideal to use in this study to determine whether values influence the dress and appearance of African American college students.

Nagasawa, Hutton & Kaiser (1991) offered four models that are found most often in social psychology research. The four models are cognitive, behavioral, bio-volitional, and symbolic. Of the four, the cognitive model focuses on the individual as the thinker by viewing this person as an “active agent who receives, uses, manipulates, and transforms information” (Nagasawa et al., 1991). The broader scope of the cognitive social psychology model is as follows: “1.) Humans are rational, thinking organisms who try to make sense of the social world; 2.) Humans process external stimuli by an internal mechanism (cognitive structure) that receives and organizes information; 3.) The cognitive structure helps the organism to make sense of the environment and to construct social realities; 4.) The key to understanding human behavior lies in the understanding of how people perceive and process external stimuli” (Nagasawa et al., 1991). The researchers narrowed the scope to a cognitive perspective typically used in social psychology of apparel research. In a more refined state, “the cognitive perspective focuses primarily on how people form impressions of others and of themselves” by using apparel cues

(Nagasawa et al., 1991). The cognitive perspective is limited to merely explaining appearances by way of perception, social interactions, and environmental stimulation (Nagasawa et al., 1991) where an individual is being perceived by someone else. Unfortunately, this particular cognitive model does not allow for self-evaluation or self-examination of internal and external mechanisms, such as values, that may influence dress and appearance.

Despite the shortfall of the cognitive perspective in the Nagasawa et al. (1991) study, Lennon and Davis (1989) believed that a social cognitive framework has useful theoretical foundation in which to study apparel and human behavior because “it provides researchers in the [apparel] and human behavior field with insight as to gaps and deficiencies in the research.” Lennon and Davis (1989) discussed the self-perception theory, a derivative of the attribution theory. The self-perception theory allows individuals to view themselves to determine causality of their own social behavior in the same manner in which they would determine others’ social behavior (Lennon and Davis, 1989). At the time of the study, very limited work had been done in the area to further develop the self-perception theory and its parent theory – attribution. Nevertheless, the researchers strongly supported the use of social cognition as a framework for studying apparel and human behavior due to its broad, social, cognitive, and psychological perspectives.

In a more recent study in apparel and textile research, social cognition is linked to impression formation. When studying impression formation, we notice that “people are able to make inferences because they develop mental categories to deal efficiently with the vast amounts of information they have gathered about each other” (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 126). These mental categories “function to classify information, infer additional information, guide attention, and facilitate interpretation. Thus, they aid the perceiver in the development of impressions” (Johnson et al. 2002, p. 126). “The observer’s choice of target cues and the meaning he or she

attaches to those cues may be impacted by several observer characteristics, including recent experience, personal goals, and preferences” (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 126). Individuals often link mental categories to physically perceptible features such as apparel. Because dress and appearance are related to impression formation, the use of social adaptation as the theory for this research was logical.

The social cognitive studies and theories discussed are all limited to individuals inferring information about someone else based on dress and appearance. Only the self-perception theory provided an option to gaining insight to the person based on that person’s evaluation of himself or herself. This particular theory falls within the framework of social cognitive psychology and can be viewed as a perspective within the social adaptation theory because it allows for the individual evaluation component, absent from the other theories discussed or considered. The theory centers on the individuals in a social setting. It is necessary, for this study, to focus on individuals as well as social factors because of the essential information that can be provided by both. Social adaptation is an appropriate theory to use for this study because it allows the foundation for the individual to be evaluated where each person can cognitively self-examine himself or herself both internally (personally) and externally (socially) in order to explain their apparel and human behavior.

### **Values**

Prior to the extensive research conducted by Kahle (1983) and his colleagues on values in the early 1980s, psychologists primarily thought of values as a “stable personality characteristic molded in childhood, a part of one’s character” (p. xvii). Their research has revealed the highly abstract nature of values (Kahle, 1984) suggesting that they are defined and redefined from internal and external dynamics (Kahle, 1983). Values are the most abstract form of social cognition that summarize adaptive behaviors (Kahle, 1983) and that are used to guide general

responses to stimuli (Kahle, 1996). Values are “self-organizing principles that guide our thoughts and actions” and shape individual preferences and choices (Kaiser, 1997, p.289). The guiding nature of values seeks to uncover those pursuits and goals that will enhance the quality of an individual’s life and further the human condition in general (Kahle, 1983, p.5).

Values are learned from a variety of sources including peers, relatives, and personal experiences, and indirectly via the media (Kahle, 1983, p.40). “Values develop from life experiences” (Kahle, 1996, p.135). People obtain experiences by interacting with their environment causing values to have a highly social nature. Being socially cognitive may both guide and motivate people as they deal with their surroundings (Kahle, 1983, p.52).

Values have been found to be “more inherently useful than demographics in understanding attitudes and behaviors” (Beatty, Kahle, Homer, & Misra, 1985, p. 184). Goldsmith et. al. (1991) demonstrated that social values can supplement the usual demographic and attitudinal data on consumers by offering insights into the motives underlying fashion purchase” (p.39). Unger & Raymond (1974) were able to identify links between value systems and appearance. They found a relationship between apparel and hairstyle and value systems.

The interest of apparel and consumer behavior related to values first peaked in the 1960s (Sybers & Roach, 1962; Douthett, 1963; Taylor & Compton, 1968). Prior to the 1960s the Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey Scale of Values (AVL) was heavily used in consumer behavior research. The use of the AVL continued through the 1980s. The AVL scale of values was created in the 1930s and measures theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political and religious values (Allport, Vernon, Lindzey, 1960; Taylor & Compton, 1968; Sharma, 1980). Studies reviewed using AVL, were typically correlation studies to determine relationships between clothing behavior, personality and values (Sharma, 1980) and personality and dress conformity (Taylor &

Compton, 1968). The AVL scale of values is limited by the type of values it examines, and may not be appropriate for studies investigating more contemporary consumer behavior.

#### List of Values (LOV)

“The absence of a universally agreed-upon set of values and their operationalization has hindered progress in the empirical study of this area” (Goldsmith, Heitmeyer & Freiden, 1991). Kahle (1983) and colleagues developed a simple operationalized list of American values as a direct response to the many complex and lengthy operationalizations of values that made surveying inconvenient and limited the scope of values in studies of consumer behavior (Goldsmith, Heitmeyer & Freiden, 1991). The LOV survey was found to contain a high percentage of items that people feel influence their lives daily (Beatty et al., 1985). LOV is based on Maslow’s (1954) theory of hierarchy and Rokeach’s (1973) study of 18 human values. The nine values included in the LOV instrument are self-respect, sense of accomplishment, being well respected, security, warm relationships with others, excitement, self-fulfillment, fun and enjoyment in life, and sense of belonging.

The external values from the LOV include being well respected, security, warm relationships with other, and sense of belonging. The internal values from the LOV are self-respect, sense of accomplishment, fun and enjoyment, self-fulfillment, and excitement. Kahle (1996, p. 138) defines the values as follows: “Being well respected: to be admired by others and to receive recognition. Security: to be safe and protected from misfortune and attack. Warm relationships with others: to have close companionships and intimate friendships. Sense of belonging: to be accepted and needed by our family, friends, and community. Self-respect: to be proud of yourself and confident with who you are. Sense of accomplishment: to succeed at what you want to do. Fun and enjoyment in life: to lead a pleasurable, happy life. Self-fulfillment: to



find peace of mind and to make the best use of your talents. Excitement: to experience stimulation and thrills” (p. 138).

When studying values in consumer behavior research, the Rokeach Values Survey (RVS), the Value and Lifestyle Survey (VLS), and the LOV are most commonly used (Rose et al., 1994). Two very significant studies compared the use of LOV to other value surveys in understanding consumer behavior. Kahle, Beatty, Homer, & Misra (1985) compared and contrasted LOV and RVS in regard to marketers’ interest, social desirability, and measure of assessment. The findings related directly to assessment suggested LOV contains a more relevant set of values than RVS. Additionally, values aid understanding and interpreting important areas of consumption attitudes and behaviors and have empirical validity for consumer behavior research. The study concluded that LOV contained a higher percentage of items said to influence individuals’ daily lives.

A second study conducted a year later by Kahle, Beatty, & Homer (1986) compared and contrasted LOV and Values and Life Style (VALS). The results of their study implied that LOV predicted consumer behavior trends more often than did VALS. Their study concluded that LOV had greater predictive utility than did VALS in consumer behavior trends. LOV had an advantage of obtaining demographic predictions and readily identifying the source of influence. Kahle et al. (1986) findings provide strong support for the use of LOV in determining which values are most influential in guiding dress and appearance behavior.

External values from the LOV have been found to have an impact on fashion as it relates to appearance. Goldsmith, Heitmeyer, & Freiden (1991) attempted to reveal the external values of fashion leaders. Their study examined the relationships between fashion leadership and the nine values in the LOV. More specifically, the researchers compared hypothesized differences in the importance placed on external values between fashion leaders and fashion followers. Using

an all female sample, they found that fashion leaders or those found to be more fashion conscious placed a greater importance on two of nine values: fun/enjoyment and excitement. Goldsmith et al. (1991) found that external values and fashion leadership demonstrated that external values offer insights into the motives underlying fashion purchases.

Values have been found to vary among different groups. In 1989, Pitts, Whalen, O'Keefe and Murray took a values-based approach to examining culturally targeted television commercials. The study found that black respondents viewing black culture oriented commercials were more positively affected by the commercial's message. As a result the black oriented television advertisements elicited a positive strong response to the brand and commercial itself, and generated a significantly different response in terms of perception of the value message (Pitts et al., 1989). The researchers concluded that being well-respected was rated the highest value in all commercials by African American respondents followed by self-fulfillment, self-respect, and accomplishment (Pitts et al., 1989).

Using the LOV, Rose et al. (1994) associated external values with need for affiliation, group identification and conformity, which linked external values with an increased importance on style, brand name, and the utilitarian qualities of a garment. All of the previous cited studies support the importance of studying values using LOV to produce useful information which contributes the study of values, dress and appearance, and human behavior.

Individual ambivalences relating to issues of individuality bring fashion to a very personal level (Kaiser, 1997, p.481). Internal factors may not have as obvious an influence as external factors and have not been studied as extensively. Internal factors are more closely related to individual values and belief systems and tend to provide an explanation or reasoning for an individual's perception of self as a social object. Internal factors that are useful in

determining appearance are typically those that have been studied in dress and appearance research.

By using the LOV researchers are able to identify consumers' values and contribute to their understanding of motivated consumer behavior, which benefits retailers because they are then able "to understand how values...toward fashion affect their customers' decisions about apparel purchases" (Goldsmith et al, 1991, p.43). More succinctly stated, the understanding of values is essential to retailers so that they may offer more appropriate apparel to the fashion conscious market segment that drives the spread of new fashion to other consumers (Goldsmith et al., 1991). The examination of the social and psychological values that influence a portion of the growing African American market will contribute to the insights that motivate their dress and appearance behavior. This will add to the literature in psychological apparel behavior, particularly among African Americans. "The highly abstract nature of values implies that we hold very few values" (Kahle, 1984, p.7). This study will attempt to begin identifying the values African Americans possess by use of the operationalized LOV.

### **Social Factors**

Social factors are different from external values. Emphasis placed on dress and appearance by an individual is influenced by social and other factors. In this study, social factors include media and referent groups such as peers and family members who are believed to have a direct influence on individuals' dress and appearance.

### **Media Influence**

Individuals are usually receptive to the various social influences around them. Influencers of dress and appearance may be associated to media. Media are used as a source for gaining knowledge and are known to significantly shape value systems (Villani, 2001). Media helps form beliefs, ideals, and structures everyday life (Al-Obaidi, Lamb-Williams, and Mordas, 2004). It

has the ability to teach which in turn may directly or subtly influence the user's behavior (Villani, 2001). The influence of media is phenomenal in today's society because media are carriers of popular culture (Cusic, 2001) which includes dress and appearance.

Media's ranges of influence are evident in following example. For example, a percentage of African American youth enjoy hours of music videos on television. However watching videos may negatively influence dress and appearance, communication, spending habits and self-esteem. In the April 2004 issue of *Essence*, an article appeared regarding the negative effects music videos had on one college student. The author writes,

“[My younger sisters and] I learned to dress, style our hair and speak by watching videos...I bought \$20 lip glosses – well beyond my student budget... I dug deep, maxing out two credit cards with purchases for trendy purses and leather boots I could barely walk in.” “...My professor pointed out the negative impact of videos on my self-esteem. He suggested I stop watching them for a time to see what would happen.”(pp. 114) Zukaika Jumaralli

In the above example, television had the potential to condition its regular viewers to more readily accept and support negative imagery and behaviors. The influence of various media may be more powerful than research has reported.

Today's younger generations are bombarded by numerous forms of media on a daily basis that may include television, movies, radio/music and music videos, magazines, newspapers, and internet. This generation has access to the internet, television, music, and print media and it dominates their leisure activities. “Each week 18-24 year olds spend an average of 10 hours online, 10 hours in front of a television and 5 hours listening to radio” (Weiss, 2003, p. 31).

Internet. The internet is believed to be indispensable in the daily activities of today's society (Hoffman, Novak, and Venkatesh, 2004). It is a great tool for communicating and information. Its general daily uses are: email, games and hobbies, news and information, travel

and vacation planning, online shopping, and health information seeking. Its most extensive use is online shopping and financial management (Hoffman et al., 2004).

A total of 126 million Americans use the internet with an average of 66 million users on a typical day (Hoffman et al., 2004). Among the growing users are African Americans and college students. In 2003, 51% of the African American population used the internet (Hoffman, 2004). According to Hoffman et al. (2004), college students are the heaviest internet users when compared to the general population. The internet is viewed as an essential enhancement to a college student's educational experience because it is used in both their academic and social life (Hoffman et al., 2004). Academically, college students use the internet for class discussions and research purposes (Al-Obaidi et. al, 2004). Socially, it offers certain means of entertainment and a way to connect people for discussion (Al-Obaidi et. al, 2004).

The internet has influenced the way fashion changes. The internet is credited for speedier fashion cycles because it allows young people opportunities to discover the most peculiar budding trends. Neuborne (1999) states "...the rise of the internet, which has sped up the fashion life cycle by letting kids everywhere find out about even the most obscure trends as they emerge" (online source). Neuborne (1999) believes the internet is responsible for varied and faster-changing fashions of today's college students.

The internet is the medium of choice for this age group (Neuborne, 1999) and highly important and useful in their daily life. The internet has influenced the daily activities of society so much so that it is becoming indispensable. College students' use of the internet suggests that its content can be highly influential in certain aspects of their lives, particularly those areas concerning fashion or dress and appearance.

Print Media. Print media such as magazines have an advantage over other forms of media because they are tangible items that can be held and passed around while electronic forms of

media are considered perishable (Cusic, 2001). “New ideas for fashion may first be introduced by designers or innovative individuals. Fashion magazines may promote the style as “fashionable,” “the latest thing,” and “attractive” (Damhorst, 1999). Reading print media are a leisure activity among college students, however compared to previous years; the reading of newspapers and weekly news magazines has decreased (Hendel & Harrold, 2004).

Television. Television is a primary medium that reaches national audiences (Cusic, 2001). It is found in nearly every home in the United States. Television is primarily utilized at home and is therefore considered an “at-home” medium (Cusic, 2001). For many, television is utilized daily. College students enjoy watching the daily news, weather and sports on television (Hendel & Harrold, 2004). Television is the leading source for news among college students because of the combination of audio and visual television offers (Al-Obaidi et. al, 2004).

Today’s cohort of 18-24 year olds enjoys far more media options than all other generations preceding them. This generation of young adults is media literate and knows exactly what is desired from media and what medium satisfies those desires (Al-Obaidi et. al, 2004).

### Family and Peers

Through socialization, family and peers play an important role in influencing young people’s dress and appearance. According to Meyer & Anderson (2000), “social influences are strong variables in the susceptibility of individuals to peer and reference groups” (p. 244). The day to day social activities allow an individual the opportunity to interact and communicate with others, particularly family and peers. This daily interaction is known as socialization, which is essential in shaping both the individual’s social and psychological basis needed to function in society (Sanders-Thompson, 1994).

Family socialization “transmits values, norms, morals, and beliefs from one generation to the next” (Sanders-Thompson, 1994, p. 175). The family’s influence can be identified in various

areas of an individual's life. For example, positive support and influence from family can lead to academic achievement of college-aged individuals (Hall & Rowan 2001), while negative influence and a single-parent family may contribute to materialism and compulsive consumption behavior by young adults (Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Denton, 1997).

The influence of AACS' family on dress and appearance is important in this study because of the role families play in value development. The earlier discussion on African Americans as a subculture in American society suggested that this group adhered to beliefs and behaviors of mainstream society as well as a separate set from their cultural group. African Americans are believed to conform to the standards set forth by their cultural group and in doing so they participate in racial socialization – lead by the family and supported by the ethnic group. In the African American culture, the family functions by transmitting values and beliefs that support the beliefs and behaviors of the culture. According to Stevenson (1994), “cultural transmission of values and beliefs has long been a factor in understanding effective African American family functioning” (p. 447).

At an early age African Americans are culturally socialized by their family to be black (Stevenson, 1994) or to express their ethnicity. This behavior or belief of being black carries over to young adulthood. Dress and appearance are one form of expressing blackness. In Winter's (2004) article, one goal of young adult black Americans adhering to the 'black fashion expression' was to be stylish while maintaining blackness through dress and appearance. This behavior suggests that the values instilled by family at an early age continue to influence young African Americans into adulthood.

The family, particularly parents, has a significant influence on dress and appearance of young children. During preadolescence (8-12 years old), the role the parent plays in shopping and selecting apparel decreases while the friend/peer role in shopping increases (Meyer &

Anderson, 2000). The family's role in influencing dress and appearance diminishes significantly during adolescence and into young adulthood as the young person begins to conform to peers while developing an identity for themselves (Damhorst, et. al., 1999).

Peer acceptance or approval of an individual's apparel is important. Persons as young as 11 and 12 years old have expressed the importance of peers liking the apparel they purchased (Meyer & Anderson, 2000). At this age there is also evidence of group affiliation and conformity in apparel behavior. According to Meyer & Anderson (2000) "as pre-adolescents age, they become more sensitive to others' opinion and will try to conform to those in the peer group, at least in clothing behavior" (p. 250). During high school, teenagers become obsessed with their appearance and dress (Damhorst, et. al., 1999). Teens begin to make independent apparel choices and shop alone or with friends, as a matter of fact, "teens prefer to shop with friends; they need the social consensus of help in making purchase decisions" (Damhorst, et. al., 1999, p.285).

As teens become young adults and enter college, their need and use of apparel changes. As college students, young people become more autonomous and self-reliant in making apparel choices. A significant percent of college students can be classified as fashion leaders and an even larger percent as fashion followers (i.e., Stanforth, 1995). Based on the results of Stanforth (1995) and Workman & Kidd (2000) undergraduate fashion leaders are non-conformist and seek to use apparel to express their own unique identity. Undergraduate fashion followers are conformists and seek to adhere to the apparel standards of a comparison group within the college community.

Workman & Kidd (2000) found that college fashion leaders strived to be unique in comparison to other individuals or groups in their surroundings (college campus). The moment a college fashion leader perceived their dress and appearance to be similar to others on campus they would quickly adopt a newly introduced style. College fashion followers were labeled



conformist because once this group perceived their dissimilarity to a comparison group, presumably college fashion leaders, they quickly adopted the new style.

Stanforth (1995) found a difference between undergraduate fashion leaders and fashion followers in using clothing to express individuality. The study suggests that undergraduate fashion leaders use apparel to differentiate themselves from others and to create a unique public identity. It seems, fashion leaders desire to use apparel to establish individuality. Stanforth's (1995) results are based on a sample of 142 undergraduate students where 36 were identified as fashion leaders and the remaining 106 were labeled as fashion followers. However, there were no results reported on the use of clothing for fashion followers.

The study supports the influence of family on apparel selection. It is clear that college students are interested in being unique from or conforming to others in the college community. In either situation, "college students are constantly faced with influences from reference groups" (McKinney et al., 2004, p. 391). It will appear that college students' dress and appearance are internally influenced. However, one can assume that the internal influence is based on the values and beliefs developed in childhood from various sources including family, peers, media and even school. Schools provide the type of environment that transmits values and provides a setting for the exchange of ideas within peer groups (Horn, 1975). College campuses are ideal for this type of social exchange. Nevertheless, during childhood and pre-adolescence, the influence from family and peers on apparel behavior is evident. Adolescence and adulthood limit the amount and type of influence family has on certain areas of an individual's life. Other sources of influence exert different levels of influence that are negotiated internally by the college student.

### **Psychological Factors**

Psychological factors may not have as obvious an influence as social factors. Psychological factors are more closely related to individual values and belief systems, and tend

to provide an explanation or reasoning for an individual's perception of self as a social object. Psychological factors that are useful in determining appearance are typically those that are found in dress and appearance research. Psychological factors include self-consciousness, self-confidence, fashion leadership, shopping enjoyment and spending behavior. Self-confidence and self-consciousness are two personality characteristics that are capable of providing understanding regarding the individual in relation to self.

Apparel and fashion are means through which individuals may express their unique personalities and views of themselves (Goldsmith, Flynn & Moore, 1996). It is fashion leaders who are more fashion forward and strive for individuality or uniqueness in dress and appearance. Persons who emphasize their own individuality and personal interest in order to set themselves apart from others are inner-directed. An inner-directed person has an inclination to internalize standards in an effort to be a non-conformist in dress and appearance, a follower of a subcultural style, or a fashion leader (Miller, 1999, p. 207). Those individuals who strive to meet dress and appearance expectations of others are other-directed. Other-directed individuals adopt fashion in an effort to conform to others in dress (Miller, 1999, p. 208) and in doing so become a conformist or a fashion follower.

Fashion leaders have different internal and consumer characteristics than fashion followers. Fashion leaders are more involved with fashion and apparel. They tend to be more abreast of fashion; they shop more, and spend more money on apparel than fashion followers (Stanforth, 1995; Goldsmith et. al, 1996; Workman & Kidd, 2000; Belleau, Nowlin, Summers, and Xu, 2001; McKinney et al, 2004). They are early adopters of new styles and are risks takers. Nevertheless, the choice to be a fashion leader or fashion follower is guided by personal values.

Consumer research as well as apparel research regarding shopping enjoyment and finances has indicated that African Americans are very much interested and aware of fashion --

they enjoy shopping and spend a significant portion of their income on apparel and apparel related products and services (Fisher, 1996; Simon 2003; The Buying Power, 2003; McKinney et al., 2004).

Fisher's (1996) study of the characteristics of black consumers indicated that African Americans in his sample believed that shopping was fun and they enjoyed making a trip to the mall a social event. These findings support other research (Goldsmith, Heithmeyer & Freiden, 1991; Stanforth, 1995) that fashion leaders gain fun and excitement from activities related to fashion. Financially, African Americans are willing to spend money to acquire the best (Fisher, 1996). They choose to purchase brand name goods which may be perceived by others as a sign of success; however brand name apparel is important in enhancing individuals' personal appearance. Shopping enjoyment and shopping behavior are psychological factors of African American college students that will be investigated in this study.

### **College Students and Consumer Behavior**

Today's college students are a part of a new generation of Americans known as Generation Y. This cohort is also referred to as the echo boomers, the millennials, or the millennium generation. This group of young people is replacing the Baby Boomer generation (Weiss, 2003) and is predicated to outnumber the older Generation X within 10 years (Manning-Schaffel, 2002). Their population size separates them from the two previous generations. By some accounts, Generation-Yers were born between 1977 and 1994 ranging from 72 million to 78 million in size (Leo, 2003; Weiss, 2003). Generation Y is expected to change society and social institutions just as their predecessors, the Baby Boomers, had done by the early 1970s (Weiss, 2003). In 20 years, this group will represent the bulk of the adult population (McCleneghan, 2005). Already a small percentage has reached the age of 21 and their impact is

being felt in society. Obvious changes are apparent in business, education, health care, entertainment, government and every other institution in our society (Alch, 2000).

The characteristics of Generation Y vary greatly from previous generational groups. Members of Generation Y are technologically savvy (Manning-Schaffel, 2002), having grown up with technology at home and in school; they are extremely comfortable with changes in new technology (Alch, 2000). They are family oriented (Leo, 2003) very much connected in a physical and emotional relationship with their parents (Weiss, 2003), and are deeply committed to authenticity and truth-telling (Leo, 2003). Yet, they challenge authority (Weiss, 2003) and are less rooted in traditional social mores and ethics (Manning-Schaffel, 2002).

Generation Y is believed to be heavily stressed (Leo, 2003) but display a strong work ethic (Alch, 2000) and would like to succeed in life. According to Alch (2000) “optimism, civic duty, confidence, achievement, morality, and diversity are core values of Generation Y” (p. 44). “They care about the world, the environment, poverty, and global issues in general... [and are] strong advocates of social responsibility” (Alch, 2000, p. 43). “Authenticity and integrity are prime values” (Leo, 2003; p 60) for this group as well.

Generation Y is more ethnically diverse. It has been reported that one of three members of this generation is not Caucasian (Neuborne, 1999; Weiss, 2003). According to Leo (2003) the “distinctions of race, ethnicity, and gender are of little interest to [Generation Y] – they tend to overlook differences and treat everyone the same” (p. 60.) Differences are so meaningless in this generation that in the marketplace, Generation Y is characterized as urban (Weiss, 2003). This group is well informed and media savvy (Alch, 2002) and live in a boundary-less world (Leo, 2003) where the internet is their preferred medium (Neuborne, 1999), buying items is a part of life (Manning-Schaffel, 2002), and shopping is considered a fun activity (Alch, 2000).

Generation Y is financially equipped and enjoys spending. Generation Y has \$150 billion in direct purchasing power and about \$500 billion in indirect purchasing power (Alch, 2000). This growing cohort of economic power has on average \$100/week in disposable income (Manning-Schaffel, 2002). College attending members of Generation Y earn their own income. Sixty percent (60%) of college students in 2003 worked while in college (Shin, 2005). Of the females students 29% worked full time while 31% were employed part time (Shin, 2005). Thirty-two percent (32%) of male students worked full time and 28% had a part time job (Shin, 2005).

Eighteen to 24 year-olds are considered impulse shoppers (Weiss, 2003) however, the entire group is said to purchase what they desire at that moment (Alch, 2000). Generation Y's top three purchases are apparel, entertainment, and food (Alch, 2000). A recent study investigating credit card spending habits of college students as influenced by gender revealed that females in the study purchased apparel while male students bought electronics, entertainment, and food away from home (Hayhoe, Leach, Turner, Bruin, & Lawrence, 2000).

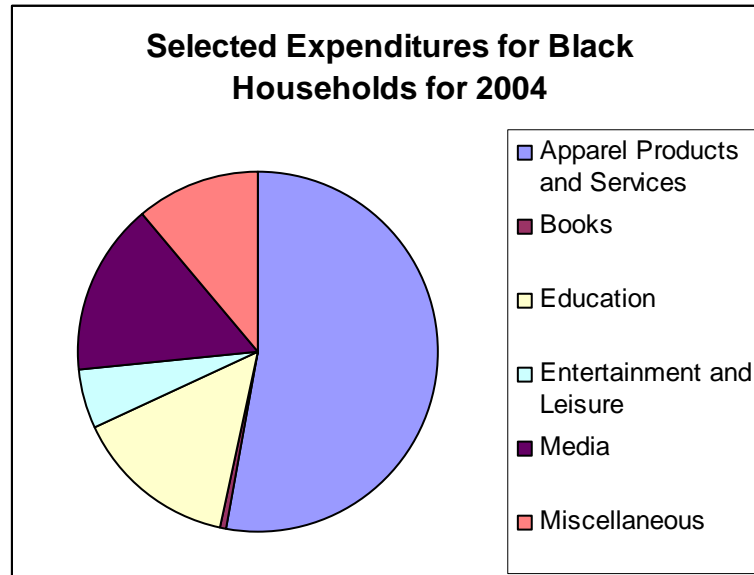
Manning-Schaffel (2002) believes that impulse purchasing is characteristic of Generation Y because they have grown up in a culture of pure consumerism and have embraced "shameless consumerism". Their distinctive buying habits exhibited now will likely remain with them as they enter the high-spending years of young adulthood (Neuborne, 1999).

The brands feeling the greatest economic impact from this group are heavily concentrated in the fashion and entertainment industries (Neuborne, 1999). However, companies should be leery of Generation Y because they are "much less brand loyal than previous generations and are more accepting of generic labels" (Weiss, 2003; p. 34). This consumer group is found to switch their loyalty to brands they feel will place them ahead of the fashion curve (Neuborne, 1999).

### **African-Americans Consumers**

African Americans have been described as caring a great deal about their appearance and constantly enhancing appearance and image (Fisher, 1996). “African Americans are historically and culturally known for paying attention to style” (Kaiser, 1997, p. 570). The importance placed on appearance is reflected in their spending behavior. In 2004, African Americans spent \$21.9 billion dollars on apparel products and services (Target Market News, 2005) such as shoes, children’s apparel, women’s and girls’ clothing, personal care products and services, and men’s and boys’ apparel (Humphreys, 2003; Target Market News, 2005). According to Humphreys (2003) report of the multicultural economy in America, which focused specifically on minority groups in America; it was reported that African Americans, or blacks, outrank other minority groups in the United States in buying power growth and are predicted to maintain the top ranking as their spending increases. African Americans are growing in population and purchasing power (Cornitcher, 1999). A gross national income (GNI) of \$656 billion makes black America the world’s eleventh largest economy when compared to the gross national income of other nations (The Buying Power of Black America, 2005). Black America is barely preceded by Spain (\$700 billion) and Canada (\$773 billion); and immediately followed by Mexico (\$637 billion), The Republic of Korea (\$576 billion), and India (\$570 billion) (The Buying Power of Black America, 2005). In the southern city where the data for this research will be collected, the income for African Americans in 2004 was \$2.9 billion (The Buying Power of Black America, 2005).

African American spending is increasing in proportion with rising income (The Buying Power, 2005). Humphreys (2003) stated that buying power is the result of more than population growth and inflation but is directed by an increased number of jobs nationwide, favorable



Source: The Buying Power of Black America, 2005

Figure 3. Selected Expenditures for Black Households

demographic trends, and the widespread African American consumer market. Buying power is defined as “the total personal income of residents that is available, after taxes, for spending on goods and services – that is, the disposable personal income of the residents of a specified geographic area” (Humphreys, 2003, p. 1).

*American Demographics* reported on the spending behaviors of black women in America between the ages of 18 and 49 (Yin, 2003). The report stated that 18 – 49 year old African American women are earning and spending more while becoming more autonomous with their spending. Aside from large purchases (i.e. cars and houses), black women spend their money on apparel and personal care products and media. Specific purchases support the conclusion that black women are very conscious of their appearance. Goldsmith, et al. (1991) found that women fashion leaders tend to spend more on apparel, read more fashion-oriented magazines, shop more often for clothes, and buy more new fashion items.

In African-American homes across the country, women and girls spent nearly 50% more than men and boys on apparel products and services, \$7.7 billion to \$4 billion, respectively (The

Table 1. Summarized Estimated 2004 Expenditures for All Black Households

<b>Summarize Estimated 2004 Expenditures for All Black Households</b>	
(Figures in millions of dollars, 1000 = \$ 1 billion)	
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
Books	258
Sports and Recreational Equipment	475
Housewares	596
Appliances	1,727
Computers and Related Equipment	2,068
Toys, Games and Pets	1,679
Entertainment and Leisure	2,241
Tobacco Products and Smoking Supplies	2,454
Personal and Professional Services	3,384
Consumer Electronics	3,724
Education	6,061
Transportation, Travel and Lodging	4,637
Beverages	5,092
Media	6,378
Personal Care Products and Services	6,310
Miscellaneous	4,657
Gifts	7,174
Contributions	11,402
Household Furnishings and Equipment	10,754
Telephone Services	14,028
Insurance	16,674
Health Care	17,935
<b>Apparel Products and Services</b>	<b>21,938</b>
Cars, Trucks and Related Services	48,293
Food	53,819
Housing and Related Charges	110,213
Source: The Buying Power of Black America, 2005	

Buying Power, 2005). Of those totals, men 16 and older spent \$2.4 billion on apparel products while women 16 and older spent \$6.1 billion (The Buying Power, 2005). The following table



comparatively itemizes the spending on apparel products and services among African American women and men 16 and older.

African Americans are huge media consumers. In 2004, African Americans spent \$6 billion dollars on media; nearly \$6 billion alone was consumed by cable television subscriptions (The Buying Power, 2005). This group purchases and/or subscribes to numerous magazines. The influence of family and peer external factors is significant in that, blacks spend a large percentage of their leisure time socializing with others (Yin, 2003). College students, particularly have a greater opportunity to interact and socialize on a college campus with other students.

Table 2. Estimated 2004 Expenditures by All Black Households

<b>Estimated 2004 Expenditures by All Black Households</b>		
(Figures in millions of dollars, \$1000 = \$1 billion)		
<b>Apparel Products and Services</b>	<b>Women 16 and over</b>	<b>Men 16 and over</b>
Coats and jackets	614	367
Dresses	819	N/A
Vests and sweaters	353	111
Sportscoats, tailored jackets	52	90
Shirts (tops, blouses)	969	322
Skirts	189	N/A
Pants	1,019	504
Shorts, short sets	122	46
Active sportswear	403	173
Sleepwear/Nightwear	227	24
Undergarments/ Underwear	382	169
Hosiery	162	110
Suits	364	409
Accessories	276	109
Uniforms	110	16
Costumes	55	23
Footwear	2,701	1,455

Source: The Buying Power of Black America, 2005

### **African-American College Students (AACS)**

According to the US Census, in 2002, slightly more than 2,230,000 individuals between the ages of 18-24 graduated from traditional high schools. The African American population has

maintained an overall steady increase since the late 1990s until 2002 (Brown, 2002; US Census, 2002). Since 1996, the percentage of blacks enrolled in college has steadily increased from 27% to 31.3% of all black high school graduates in 2002.

Most African American college students are employed students. Fifty-two percent (52%) of AACS are working. The income of 15-24 year olds in the United States range from \$1 - \$20,000 and higher. The following chart represents the income of 15-24 year olds in the United States.

Table 3. Income of 15-24 Year Olds in the United States

\$Amount	No. of People
\$1-\$2,499	818,000
2,500-\$4,999	470,000
\$5,000-\$7,499	450,000
\$7,500-\$9,999	248,000
\$10,000-\$12,499	281,000
\$12,500-\$14,999	205,000

Source: U.S. Census, 2003

Recently, black college students have been the focus of consumer behavior research bridging social and psychological factors with buying behaviors. The findings can be used to separate black consumers, more specifically AACS, from the typical minority segment homogeneous grouping. The college-aged segment of the black population has money and fashion interest – two major components of a viable market segment (McKinney et. al, 2004). It is important to mention that popular publications report current trends of African Americans apparel and consumer behavior more regularly than referred journals. The interest in black fashion in scholarly publications can be described as slowly emerging, at best.

AACS are members of the Generation Y cohort. Many of AACS consumer characteristics correspond to those of Generation Y, however there are some differences presented by McKinney et al. (2004). A salient finding in the study was that prestigious brand

names and fashion oriented apparel appeal most to AACS (McKinney et al., 2004). This does not correspond with the brand-conscious behavior of Generation Y. Members of Generation Y are not brand loyal and will constantly switch to brands that will allow them to be ahead of the fashion curve (Neuborne, 1999). Fashionably speaking, AACS are fashion conscious and willing to spend money on apparel (Simon, 2003). Furthermore, black students, who want to establish prestige and status based on their dress and appearance characteristically shop on impulse and will purchase items when they are introduced as opposed to waiting for sales. Buying desired items and impulse purchasing are also characteristics of Generation Y.

Therefore, the goals of AACS are assumed to be guided, ordained, or prescribed by the values they possess. Studying AACS is important to show their unique consumer characteristics and opinions regarding dress and appearance. The results from the McKinney et al. (2004) study have positive implications for this study and clearly identify some characteristics of AACS that will be useful in understanding the influence social factors have on AACS's and apparel. The McKinney et al. (2004) findings imply that AACS were influenced by others and the need to be social. The sample also relied on individual benefits received from apparel and their fashion interest.

### **Summary**

Personal information is communicated about the wearer to others through their dress and appearance. The manner in which an individual presents himself to others in public and private spaces is associated with his/her values or internal belief system. Values are, therefore, useful in studying dress and appearance as well as consumer behavior because they are capable of internally organizing an individual's thoughts and actions which are necessary in shaping preferences and choices for an individual (Kaiser, 1997). The List of Values (LOV) will be

helpful in identifying values that have the most significant influence on AACS dress and appearance.

African Americans have experienced and endured a fascinating history in regard to dress and appearance that is significant in understanding the current cultural and social context in which dress and appearance derives its meaning and is interpreted in society. The social adaptation theory encompasses cognitive structures in the social and psychological aspects of an individual's thinking and reasoning which assist in explaining value development. This is essential in explaining how information is processed into existing cognitive structures in order for an individual to formulate impressions about themselves. Some of the information being processed originates from social and psychological factors such as media, referent groups, fashion leadership, shopping enjoyment, and shopping behavior.

AACS are an ideal consumer group to study because they are a part of two of the largest consumer groups in America, specifically African Americans and Generation Y. It is important to be aware of the different consumer types that constitute the diversity within the overall African American consumer group because of the growth in population and purchasing power (Williams & Qualls, 1989). Although, "very limited information is available about this group of consumers" (McKinney et al., 2004, p. 390); they have been found to be fashion conscious (Simon, 2003), major apparel consumers, and an influential consumer group (Graves, 2003). They are an ideal social behavioral group to study because they possess the economic and social characteristics of vastly studied consumer groups. However, more in-depth information is needed about the group to develop a holistic view of this market segment of African Americans.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methods for the study are addressed in Chapter III. Sections include sample, procedure, instrument, and data analysis. The procedures for pilot tests are described. A description of each scaled used in the study is provided.

#### **Sample**

A non-random convenience sample of African American college students enrolled at two universities in the southern region of the United States constituted the sample. The universities selected for the study were ideal because of the number of African Americans enrolled. This was significant because the study focuses on African American college students.

#### **Procedure**

##### Pilot Tests

Paper Pilot Test. A pre-pilot test was administered at a majority African American university to a class of fashion majors, in an effort to evaluate clarity of the instrument's questions/items. Arrangements were made in advance with faculty in the department. Based on the results of the pre-pilot test, necessary changes were made to the instrument.

A second paper pilot test was completed with a larger sample size. Data collection was completed in the student union of a predominately African American university in May 2006. A table, with signage announcing free snacks for students' fashion opinion, was set-up just outside of the food court area. A total of 41 surveys were collected at the location in a four hour period (11 a.m. – 3 p.m.) on a Monday.

During the same week eight (8) classes were administered the survey by the researcher on the same majority African American campus. The eight classes were as follows: Black American Literature, Arboriculture, Urban Forest Management, Speech, Textiles Evaluation, Computer

Applications in Design, Apparel Marketing & Analysis, and Consumer Issues. A total of 126 surveys were collected from the majority African American campus.

Data collection continued at a predominately Caucasian campus the following week in May. A table was set-up in the main walk way in front of the student union from 10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. on a Monday. The same signage announcing free snacks for students' fashion opinion was displayed. A total of 41 surveys were received during the data collection period. Other arrangements were made in advance to meet with predominately African-American student organizations on the predominately Caucasian campus. Emails were sent to 27 predominately African-American student organizations on that campus. An example of the email is included in the Appendix. Three positive responses were received from the email request. However, the organizations later cancelled meeting with the researcher.

A total of 10 – 15 minutes was needed to complete the paper questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were collected and prepared for statistical analysis. The reliability scores were high for all the validated scales utilized in the survey. The dress and appearance scale, developed by the researchers, had an alpha of less than .40 (N=125). The low alpha indicated a need for a larger sample to yield a higher reliability score in order to use the scale for the study.

#### Data Collection Procedure

The paper survey used for the pilot study was converted into an electronic format or web-based survey. The web-based survey was developed in Sensus 4.2 software by a professional survey developer. The software recorded the participant's responses to each question and automatically compiled it into a semi-pre-coded data set that was made available as a SPSS file and Microsoft Excel file.

The survey consisted of 82 questions. The electronic survey was assigned a web address. Once established, the link was emailed to graduate students within the School of Human Ecology

to test accessibility, ease of maneuvering through the survey, and identifying any technological problems the survey manager and researcher did not anticipate. Graduate students emailed their comments to the researcher. Necessary changes were made as a result of the electronic pre-test.

A message was composed to explain the purpose of the study and to introduce the survey link as shown in Appendix C. Since the survey was electronic, a consent form could not be signed. Instead student participants granted their consent to participate in the study by clicking on the link in the emailed message. Included in the message were instructions for participants who wished to receive university logo items for completing the web-based survey.

The message was emailed to all students at the predominately African American university. Alternately, at the other university all African American students and an equal number of randomly selected non-African American students received the email message. Broadcast emails to the entire student body for graduate research was not allowed as part of the university emailing policy. Additionally, the university required that the survey be received by a diverse group of students. Appropriate university personnel were responsible for sending the email notification of the survey to the student population. The web-based survey was set-up such that participants were required to provide a response to each question before proceeding to the next question. Failure to provide a response prompted the survey not to advance forward. Once the survey session was complete, the participants received an automatic thank you message.

The duration of the data collection period was six weeks. The Dillman, Tortora & Bowker (1998) method for electronic surveys was followed. At least 2-3 reminder emails were sent to the population during the data collection period on both campuses. After the initial email was sent, two reminder emails were sent. A 10-day period was allowed between each of the emails. As students responded to the electronic survey, their answers were automatically received and compiled into a semi-pre-coded data file. The professional electronic survey

developer provided the researcher with semi-pre-coded data files days after the web-based survey period ended. The survey developer monitored the web-survey and data collection throughout the duration of the data collection period.

### **Variables Instrumentation**

The web-based survey was used to measure the dependent and independent variables under investigation in the study. The dependent variable is dress and appearance. A dress and appearance scale was developed by the researcher based on the literature reviewed. The independent variables consist of the social factors (media, peers and family) and psychological factors (self-consciousness, self-confidence, fashion leadership, shopping enjoyment, and spending behavior). Also included in the independent variables are the external values (being well-respected, security, warm relationships with others, and sense of belonging) and the internal values (self-respect, sense of accomplishment, fun and enjoyment, self-fulfillment, and excitement).

A combination of Likert-type scales and open ended questions were used to elicit information from the participants. Demographic information was collected. Validated scales were used from published studies, with the exception of the dress and appearance scale, which was created by the researcher based on literature.

#### **Dress and Appearance**

A 7-item, 5 point scale derived from the literature reviewed on dress and appearance was used. Each item was measured on a 5-point scale with 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. Dress and appearance are forms of non-verbal communication that consist of an individual's outward assemblage of apparel on the body as well as all alterations and additions to the body. Also included in dress and appearance are genetic traits such as ethnicity, hair texture, height, and physical build. As defined in the African American dress aesthetic, the term is used



“to signify that which is set apart, respected and that which is not to be made common” (O’Neal, 1998; p. 171). From this conceptual base, measures of dress and appearance were developed for this study.

Using principal components factor analysis, construct validity of the instrument scale was completed. Data were analyzed based on 281 AACS’s useable responses. Those participants with responses missing were eliminated from the analysis of construct validity. The reliability was calculated to be .60. For the purpose of the study, a definition of dress and appearance was provided when reading and responding to the scale items: *...dress and appearance is defined as all clothing, accessories and modifications and alterations to the body including makeup, perfume, tattoos, piercings, hairstyle, etc.* The definition was provided so that respondents would not draw their own conclusions about the meaning or concept of dress and appearance. High scores on this scale would suggest that the respondents were aware of their dress and appearance.

#### List of Values

The List of Values (LOV) was used to gain information on the external and internal values. The LOV, developed by Kahle et al. (1983), “can serve as a useful value measurement instrument in the study of consumer similarities and differences across social units ranging from individuals to countries” (Kahle, 1996). Research (Beatty et al., 1985) has suggested that LOV offered two important advantages: easy administration and easy and quick completion.

The LOV measures those values that are central to people in living their lives, particularly the values of life’s major roles (i.e., daily consumptions) (Bearden & Netemeyer, 1999). The LOV is related to and/or predictive of consumer behavior and related activities (Kahle, 1983). The LOV is measured on a 9-point scale, with 1= very unimportant to 9= very important. Participants are asked to circle the one value that is most important to them in daily

living and rank order others. This study adopted both evaluation methods (e.g., Kahle, 1983; Kahle, Homer, & Misra, 1985; Kahle et al., 1986; Kahle & Kennedy, 1988).

### Social Factors

Media. The media usage scale, used by Belleau, Broussard, Summers, and Didier (1994) was adopted to measure the degree to which a consumer utilizes various media as sources of fashion information. One modification of the 7-item, 5-point Likert-type scale was completed. The term “accessories” was replaced with “clothing” in each item for the proposed study. Each item is measured on a 5-point scale with 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. The media influence score was computed as the sum of the 7-items in the survey. High scores indicate media’s influences are considered by respondents when making decisions regarding apparel.

Referents (Peers and Family). Xu’s (2000) Consumers’ Normative Beliefs of Specific Referents scale consisting of five items was considered for use in this study. The original scale was designed by Rabolt & Drake (1985) and was later modified by Fisher (1993) and called the Normative Outcomes Scale. As in Xu (2000) and Rabolt & Drake (1985), the items were structured for specific referents and specific apparel items, and modified to fit this study. Four of Xu’s (2000) five items were modified to reflect the specific referents in this study. The specific apparel item used in Xu’s (2000) study was also changed to the phrase “the latest fashions” since there was no specific apparel item to investigate. An additional four (4) items were generated: “Friends who are important to me will not object if I buy the latest fashions,” “My family will not object if I buy the latest fashion”, “Most of my friends think I should buy the latest fashions”, and “My family’s opinion of my fashion is more important than my friends’ opinions”. These items were necessary to collect data on all the referents included in the study.

Using principal component factor analysis, construct validity of the modified instrument scale was completed. Two of the items were eliminated from the scale as a result of the factor

analysis and low corrected item-total correlations of the reliability test. The items removed from the referents scale were “My family’s opinion of my fashion is more important than my friends’ opinions” and “The fashion media suggests that I should buy the latest fashions.” Once these items were removed the alpha score for the scale equaled .75 based on 282 respondents. A referents influence scale score was computed by using the mean score of the remaining five scale items.

The final scale for this study consisted of five items. Each item was measured on a 7-point scale with 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree. High scores indicate referents’ opinions are considered by the respondent when making decisions regarding clothing and fashion choices.

### Psychological Factors

Personality Characteristics. Several Likert-type scales that directly evaluate personality characteristics of self-confidence and self-consciousness, and other internal variables (fashion leadership and shopping enjoyment) have been identified. The Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss (1975) Public Self-Consciousness Index was used to measure the degree to which a person expresses an awareness of self as a social object with an effect on others (Brunner & Hensel, 1996). The scale has received reliability scores of .83, .74, and .79 by Bearden & Rose (1990) in their studies. The scale consists of seven items on a 7-point scale with 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree. A self-consciousness score was computed as the sum of the 7-items in the survey. A high score would suggest that a person is aware of their public self as a social object.

The Self-Confidence (Generalized) Scale developed by Wells & Tigert (1971) was used for this study. The scale measures consumers’ perceptions of themselves as leaders and having confidence. The study used the 6-item scale. Each item was measured on a 6-point scale with 1= strongly disagree and 6= strongly agree. Reported reliability scores for the scale are .69 (Davis &

Rubin, 1983), .61 (Dickerson & Gentry, 1983) and .73 (Lumpkin & Hunt, 1989). The self-confidence score was computed as the sum of the 6-items in the survey. A high score would suggest that an individual has confidence in oneself.

Fashion Leadership. The Goldsmith, Freiden, and Kilsheimer (1993) Fashion Leadership Scale was used to measure the degree to which participants considered themselves fashion leaders. The scale consists of 6-items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. An alpha for the 5-item scale was .85 in the United States and .74 in the United Kingdom. The fashion leadership score was computed as the sum of the 6-items in the survey. High scores indicated the respondents were considered fashion leaders.

Shopping Enjoyment and Spending Behavior. The study adopted O'Guinn and Faber's (1989) Shopping Enjoyment Scale, which measures the enjoyment received from shopping. The 3-item, 5-point Likert-type scale with responses of 1 to 5, 1=strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree, has a reported alpha of .89 (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Faber & O'Guinn, 1992). High scores on the scale suggest that shopping is a fun activity for participants, whereas low scores indicate lack of shopping enjoyment (Brunner & Hensel, 1996).

The second Shopping Enjoyment Scale, developed by Marmorstein, Grewal & Fiske (1992), was adapted to measure the degree to which a consumer expresses enjoyment of pre-purchase shopping-related activities rather than shopping as recreational activity (Brunner & Hensel, 1996). The reported alpha of the scale is .82 (Mamorstein, Grewal, & Fiske, 1992). A high score suggests that a participant gains pleasure or enjoyment from shopping prior to making a purchase where as a low-score indicates the participants dislike shopping (Brunner & Hensel, 1996). This 7-point Likert-type scale consists of four items where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Both Shopping Enjoyment scales described above were combined to create the Shopping Enjoyment scale to be used in this study. Because one scale uses a 5-point scale and the other a 7-point scale, it was necessary to rescale at least one of the Likert-type scales. The 7-point scale was rescaled to make the responses equivalent to the 5-point scale by multiplying the 7-point items by 5 and then dividing them by 7. A high score of the combined scale would suggest that the activities related to shopping and the act of shopping is fun or enjoyable.

Spending behavior includes amount of time spent shopping for apparel and spending for apparel. Two scales were adopted from Goldsmith, Flynn, & Moore (1996). No reliability scores were reported. The item asked “How often do you shop for clothing for yourself?” The responses were: 5- more than once a week, 4- once a week, 3- once every two weeks, 2- once a month, and 1- only for special occasions. The second item asked “How much do you spend each month on clothing?” The responses were in 5-tier increments of \$100 with 1= \$0 - \$100 to 5= \$401 - \$500. The increments in this study were modified from \$25 increments in the Goldsmith, Flynn, & Moore (1996) study.

The validated scales, utilized in this study were selected for three reasons. The first is their high reliability scores. Secondly, these scales have been used by other researchers. Lastly, the scales have been determined to be valid and reliable measures of the variables under investigation.

### **Data Analysis**

The semi-pre-coded electronic SPSS data file that was generated from the web-based survey was completely coded for analyses. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were completed to identify any problems with the data set. Missing data were addressed accordingly. Factor analysis was conducted on modified measures and dress and appearance items. Reliability analyses were completed on the scales utilized in the study for internal consistency.

Hypotheses testing were conducted as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Internal and external values influence dress and appearance of AACCS.

Analysis: Pearson Correlation

Hypothesis 2: Referents will be the most influential social factor on dress and appearance.

Analysis: Multiple Regression

Hypothesis 3: Fashion leadership will be the most influential psychological factor on dress and appearance.

Analysis: Multiple Regression

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the results of data from the web-based survey. Characteristics of the respondents are described and descriptions of the main variables are presented. Factors hypothesized to influence the dress and appearance of African-American college students (AACS) were tested and the results presented. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the results and the theoretical framework.

#### **Profile of Respondents**

A total of 499 surveys were completed and electronically received. Only one survey was omitted because the participant indicated he was no longer enrolled as a student. Approximately 282 or 57% of the responses were from African American college students (AACS). Only two completed surveys had missing observations; therefore, the reported frequencies were based on valid observations only. The average time for the sample to complete the web-based survey was 16.18 minutes (N=282, SD= 8.56).

The sample consisted of 282 African-American or black college students. Females accounted for 82% (N=230) of the sample while males represented the remaining 18% (N=52). The sample ranged in age between 17 and 46 years of age. Respondents age 17 to 21 represented 60% of the sample, with 23% between the ages of 22 to 26. The remaining 16% were over the age of 28 (Table 4).

A fourth, 24.6%, of the respondents were classified as freshmen, the second largest group, 21%, were college seniors. Each classification was well represented in the sample. Sixty-five percent (65%) lived off-campus and were single (88%). Only 2.8% identified their martial

Table 4. Demographic Profile of AACCS Respondents

<b>Age (N=279)</b>			<b>Classification (N=282)</b>		
	N	%		N	%
17	7	2.5%	Freshman	69	24.5%
18	60	21.5%	Sophomore	48	17.0%
19	40	14.3%	Junior	54	19.1%
20	33	11.8%	Senior	60	21.3%
21	30	10.8%	Master	37	13.1%
22	25	9.0%	Doctoral	14	5.0%
23	15	5.4%	<b>Monthly Income (N=280)</b>		
24	7	2.5%	\$0 - \$500	120	42.6%
25	8	2.9%	\$501 - \$1000	59	21.1%
26	10	3.6%	\$1001 - \$2500	47	16.8%
27-37	41	14.6%	\$2501 – and more	16	5.7%
43-46	4	1.5%	Prefer not to answer	38	13.6%
<b>Marital Status (N=282)</b>			<b>Monthly Spending (N=280)</b>		
Single	251	89.7%	\$0 - \$100	144	51.4%
Married	21	7.4%	\$101 - \$200	73	26.1%
Separated	1	.4%	\$201 - \$300	40	14.3%
Divorced	2	.7%	\$301 - \$400	13	4.6%
Cohabiting	7	2.5%	\$401 - \$500	6	2.1%
			\$501 and over	4	1.4%
<b>Appearance and Beauty Aide Payment Method (N=280)</b>			<b>Clothing Payment Method (N=280)</b>		
Cash/debit card	277	98.9%	Cash/debit card	271	96.8%
Credit cards	3	1.1%	Credit cards	9	3.2%
<b>Budget for Clothing Expenses (N=280)</b>			<b>Budget for Appearance and Beauty aide products (N=280)</b>		
Never	61	21.8%	Never	74	26.4%
Rarely	62	22.1%	Rarely	49	17.5%
Sometimes	77	27.5%	Sometimes	65	23.2%
Usually	54	19.3%	Usually	49	17.5%
Always	26	9.3%	Always	43	15.4%
<b>Shopping Frequency (N=280)</b>			<b>Wardrobe Contents (N=280)</b>		
More than once a week	16	5.7%	Attending class	157	56.1%
Once a week	29	10.4%	Going to the club/party	60	21.4%
Once every two weeks	65	23.2%	Going to work/job	24	8.6%
Once a month	106	37.9%	Exercise/workout	3	1.1%
Special occasions only	64	22.9%	Other	36	12.9%



status as cohabitating and 7.4% as married. A large percent of the sample, 63%, indicated their hometown was urban, while the remaining 37% lived in a rural area. Their primary sources of income were parents, part-time jobs, and scholarships.

Forty-three percent (43%) of AACS reported a monthly income between \$0 - \$500 dollars. Over half of the participants spent between \$0 - \$100 per month on clothing and clothing accessories. Thirty-eight percent (38%) reported shopping at least once a month for clothing.

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the respondents indicated that they *sometimes* budget for clothing while a slightly smaller percentage, 22% rarely or never budget for clothing. Interestingly, 26% of the AACS sample *never* budget for appearance and beauty aide products (Table 4). Ninety-nine percent (99%) of AACS identified cash/debit card as the primary method of payment for clothing and appearance and beauty aide products. AACS in this study reported that most of the clothing in their current wardrobe is for attending class. Those who indicated “other” listed activities such as attending church and weekend activities.

### **Descriptive Analyses of the Variables**

All of the scales utilized in this study, except the dress and appearance scale, were selected because of their high reliability scores. However, non-validated scales were tested for validity. Factor analysis was first completed on the dress and appearance scale (Table 6) because it was a non-validated scale. The dress and appearance scale was created by the researcher and therefore was necessary to test for internal consistency and validity. Reliability scores were generated for each scale used in the study (Table 5). Below are the reported alpha scores based on valid survey respondents.

Referents influence scale and the shopping enjoyment scale were tested for validity and reliability because of modifications made to the original validated scales to adapt them to this study. Four items were added to the existing referents influence scale therefore validity testing

was necessary. The shopping enjoyment scale items were tested because two validated shopping scales were combined to create one measure for shopping enjoyment. Results of the factor analysis for the referents influence scale are found in the social factors influence section. Factor analysis results for the shopping enjoyment scale are found in the psychological factors section.

Table 5. Reliability Scores for Scale Items

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Alpha</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Dress and Appearance	.60	280	17.54	3.16
Media Influence	.86	280	22.64	6.41
Referents Influence	.75	281	23.81	5.55
Self-Consciousness	.75	281	32.58	8.04
Self-Confidence	.70	281	28.21	4.31
Fashion Leadership	.82	280	13.46	4.08
Shopping Enjoyment (Rescaled)	.76	280	22.67	5.61

As discussed in Chapter 3, some of the variables were measured by single items, while others were measured by scales. For single-item variables, descriptive analyses were conducted, and results follow. For each multi-item variable, factor analysis and then reliability analysis were conducted, then a variable score was computed as the mean of the items, and finally descriptive analysis was conducted on the variable.

Principal component factor analysis was conducted on the non-validated 7-item dress and appearance scale. Items with a suppressed absolute value of less than .30 were excluded from the scale (Table 6). Two items were removed from the scale due to low suppressed absolute values. The remaining 5-items were used as the dress and appearance factor. The factor score computed during the factor analysis was saved as a variable and used as the dress and appearance

variable for statistical analysis. Reliability was conducted to validate the construct. The five item factor had an alpha of .60 (SD=3.16, N=280).

Table 6. Dress and Appearance Scale Items Factor Loadings Using Principal Component Analysis

Item	Factor Loading
My dress and appearance expresses who I am to others	.707
Although my apparel is similar to what everyone else wears it is how I wear it that makes it different from other students on campus	.624
I feel my cologne/perfume is part of my dress	.571
My hairstyle is a major part of my appearance	.555
I express my ethnicity through my dress and appearance	.542
If I run a quick errand I don't care about my appearance (reverse)	---
I dress appropriately for all events	---
Eigenvalue	2.06
% of variance	29.38

After factor analysis, the dress and appearance measure consisted of 5-items that were found to measure awareness of the dimensions of the dress and appearance construct. The reliability score for the scale was .60 (N = 280) (Table 5). High scores on this scale suggested that the respondents were aware of the components that constituted their dress and appearance. The majority of the respondents were in agreement with the items. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the sample agreed that their hairstyle is a major part of their appearance, while 65% agreed that their dress and appearance expressed who they are to others. Fifty-five percent (55%) felt their cologne/perfume was a part of their dress. Concerning how their apparel is worn in comparison to others, 66% agreed that although their apparel was similar to what everyone else wore, it is how the individual wears it that makes it different from other students. The only item

with which respondents were neutral was the dimension of ethnicity. Of the AACS, 41% were neutral that they use dress and appearance to express their ethnicity (Table 7).

Table 7. Distribution of Dress and Appearance Items

Item	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
My dress and appearance expresses who I am to others	12.9%	22.1%	65%
Although my apparel is similar to what everyone else wears it is how I wear it that makes it different from other students on campus	15%	18.6%	66.4%
I feel my cologne/perfume is part of my dress	19%	26%	55%
My hairstyle is a major part of my appearance	9.3%	11.8%	78.9%
I express my ethnicity through my dress and appearance	41%	41.8%	17.1%
N=282      Missing = 2			

A Likert-type scale measured media usage with 1 = strongly disagree, 3= neutral, and 5= strongly agree. Based on the mean score computed for the entire dress and appearance scale (N=281, M=3.51, SD=.63), respondents, overall, agreed that they were aware of their dress and appearance.

#### Values Importance on a Daily Basis

Nine values considered to be important to Americans every day were measured. These values are categorized as either internal or external values. The internal values are excitement, self-fulfillment, fun and enjoyment in life, self-respect, and a sense of accomplishment. The external values are sense of belonging, warm relationships with others, being well-respected, and security. Each value was measured by a single item. Results of frequency analyses for each

attribute are shown in Table 8. The response categories were collapsed into three categories to present in table format.

Four of the five internal values in the List of Values, ranked highest of all values considered most important in the daily lives of this group of AACs. The results are as follows: a sense of accomplishment (94%), self-respect (93%), fun and enjoyment in life (90%) and self-fulfillment (89%) as shown in Table 9.

The value considered to be the most important to AACs in this study on a daily basis was self-respect (33%). Self-respect, an internal value was defined as being proud of yourself and confident with who you are. The second most important value on a daily basis was self-fulfillment (21%), also an internal value, defined as finding peace of mind and making the best use of your talents. The third most important value was the external value being well-respected (18%), defined as being admired by others and receiving recognition. Results of frequency analyses conducted to determine the most important value on a daily basis are shown in Table 9.

#### Results and Findings of Social Factor Variables (Media and Referents Influence)

In regards to the social factor, media influence, respondents indicated that they noticed clothing in movies (44%), television shows (59%), magazines (72%) and music video (61%) Table 10. However, half the group said that they did not buy advertised clothing (50%). Three-fourths (75%) of the group indicated their disagreement with the likeliness of purchasing more clothing if the apparel has been worn by a celebrity. Over half (60%) disagreed with using the internet to seek out the latest fashions; while 65% indicated they would not purchase clothing from up-scale catalogs.

A Likert-type scale measured media usage with 1 = strongly disagree, 3= neutral, and 5= strongly agree. Based on the mean score computed for the entire media influence scale (N=280,

Table 8. Rating of Values Importance in Daily Life of AACCS

Type of Value	Value	Very Unimportant	Mixed	Very Important
External	<i>Sense of belonging</i> (to be accepted and needed by our family, friends, and community)	12%	15%	71%
Internal	<i>Excitement</i> ( to experience stimulation and thrills)	10%	33%	56%
External	<i>Warm relationships with others</i> (to have close companionships and intimate friendship)	6%	15%	79%
Internal	<i>Self-fulfillment</i> (to find peace of mind and to make the best use of your talents)	3%	8%	89%
External	<i>Being well-respected</i> (to be admired by others and to receive recognition)	5%	29%	66%
Internal	<i>Fun and enjoyment in life</i> (to lead a pleasurable, happy life)	2%	8%	90%
External	<i>Security</i> (to be safe and protected from misfortune and attack)	4%	9%	88%
Internal	<i>Self-respect</i> (to be proud of yourself and confident with who you are)	2%	5%	93%
Internal	<i>A sense of accomplishment</i> (to succeed at what you want to do)	3%	4%	94%
N = 280	Missing = 2			

Table 9. Most Important Value Each Day to AACCS

	Daily Most Important Value	Group(N=280)	Female(N=228)	Male(N=52)
External	<i>Sense of belonging</i> (to be accepted and needed by our family, friends, and community)	4%	4%	8%
Internal	<i>Excitement</i> ( to experience stimulation and thrills)	1%	1%	0%
External	<i>Warm relationships with others</i> (to have close companionships and intimate friendship)	10%	10%	9%
Internal	<i>Self-fulfillment</i> (to find peace of mind and to make the best use of your talents)	21%	21%	19%
External	<i>Being well-respected</i> (to be admired by others and to receive recognition)	18%	18%	15%
Internal	<i>Fun and enjoyment in life</i> (to lead a pleasurable, happy life)	8%	7%	13%
External	<i>Security</i> (to be safe and protected from misfortune and attack)	6%	5%	8%
Internal	<i>Self-respect</i> (to be proud of yourself and confident with who you are)	33%	34%	26%
Internal	<i>A sense of accomplishment</i> (to succeed at what you want to do)	1%	1%	2%
N = 280	Missing =2			

Table 10. Media's Influence of AACS

Item	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I often buy clothing that is advertised	50.3%	28.2%	21.4%
I buy more clothing items if I have seen them worn or used by a celebrity	75.3%	16.4%	8.2%
I tend to notice clothes in movies	38.9%	16.4%	44.6%
I notice clothing in television shows	26.8%	13.9%	59.3%
I notice the clothing in magazines	16%	11.1%	72.9%
I seek out the latest fashions on the internet	60.4%	17.5%	22.1%
I like to buy clothes from up-scale catalogs	65.3%	16.8%	17.9%
I notice clothing in music videos	25%	13.9%	61.1%
N= 280 Missing = 2			

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics of Media's Influence of AACS

N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum	Median
280	2.83	.80	1	5	2.88

M=2.83, SD=.80), respondents, overall, had mixed feeling about media's influence suggesting that they may believe that media does not influence their clothing choices. The media influence scale had an alpha of .86 (Table 5).

Principal component factor analysis was conducted on the 7-item referents influence scale. Items with a suppressed absolute value of less than .30 were excluded from the scale (Table 12). The remaining 5-items with suppressed absolute values greater than .30 comprise the referents influence factor. As a result of the factor analysis and poor inter-item correlations of the reliability test, two items were removed from the scale. The items removed from the scale were:



“My family’s opinion of my fashion is more important than my friends’ opinion” and “the fashion media suggests that I should buy the latest fashions.” The factor score was saved as a variable and used as the referents’ influence variable for statistical analysis.

Table 12. Referents Influence Scale Items Factor Loadings Using Principal Component Analysis

Item	Factor Loading
My family will object if I buy the latest fashion	.820
My boyfriend/girlfriend will not object if I buy the latest fashions	.709
Friends who are important to me will not object if I buy the latest fashions	.701
My family thinks I should buy the latest fashions	.694
Most of my friends think that I should buy the latest fashions	.628
Eigenvalue	2.58
% of variance	36.83

Respondents agreed that friends (81%), family (77%) and boyfriend/girlfriend (73%) would not object to their purchasing the latest fashions. Slightly more than one-third (37.4%) believed their friends support their decision to buy the latest fashion while nearly half of the sample (48%) felt that their family would support their decision to buy the latest fashions. In summary, respondents’ friends and significant others support them in buying the latest fashions. However for this study, the AACS believe the family may support their purchasing the latest fashion in order to stay current but will not encourage the AACS to buy the latest fashions.

A Likert-type scale was used to measure referents’ influence with 1 = strongly disagree, 4= neutral, and 7= strongly agree. Based on the mean score computed for the entire referents influence scale (M=4.76, SD=1.11), respondents, overall, felt positive about referents’ influence, including family and friends on their decisions to buy the latest fashions.

Table 13. Referents' Influence of AACS

Item	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
My family will object if I buy the latest fashion	14.3%	8.5%	77.2%
My boyfriend/girlfriend will not object if I buy the latest fashions	7.8%	18.9%	73.3%
Friends who are important to me will not object if I buy the latest fashions	8.2%	11.7%	80.1%
My family thinks I should buy the latest fashions	48%	31.7%	20.3%
Most of my friends think that I should buy the latest fashions	32.4%	30.2%	37.4%
Missing = 1 N=282			

Results and Findings of Psychological Factor Variables (Self-Consciousness, Self-Confidence, Fashion Leadership, Shopping Enjoyment, and Spending Behavior)

Self-Consciousness. AACS in this sample were self-conscious. The large majority of the respondents (89%) indicated that they are usually aware of their appearance; 79% looked in the mirror before leaving their house. Over two-thirds of the sample (69%) was concerned about the way they present themselves and usually worried about making a good impression (61%). Slightly less than half (45%) of this group was concerned about what other people think of them. However, regardless of their high level of self-consciousness, there was somewhat of an uncertainty regarding their style of doing things. Forty-four percent (43%) disagree while 42% agree that they were concerned about their style of doing things. Based on the mean of the computed self-consciousness score, respondents in general are self-conscious regarding their appearance and others' perception of them, (N=281, M= 4.65, SD=1.15). See Table 15.

Self-Confidence. Self-confidence in this group was high. Almost half indicated they have more self-confidence than most people; with 61% agreeing that they were more

independent than most people. A total of 85% agreed they had a lot of personal ability and 62% liked to be considered leaders, while only 48% believed in their ability to talk others into doing something. Three-fourths of the sample (75%) described themselves as having been really outstanding at something. Based on the mean of the computed self-confidence scale score, respondents in general were self-confident (N=281, M= 4.70, SD=.72). See Table 17.

Table 14. Self-Consciousness of AACS

Item	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I'm concerned about my style of doing things	43.8%	14.6%	41.5%
I'm concerned about the way I present myself	26.7%	5%	68.4%
I'm self-conscious about the way I look	34.5%	10.7%	54.8%
I usually worry about making a good impression	25.6%	13.9%	60.4%
One of the last things I do before leaving my house is look in the mirror	16.7%	4.6%	78.7%
I'm concerned about what other people think of me	40.9%	14.2%	44.8%
I'm usually aware of my appearance	2.8%	7.8%	89.3%
N=281 Missing =1			
1= "strongly disagree" 4= "Neutral" 7= "strongly agree"			

Table 15. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Consciousness of AACS

N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	Median
281	4.65	1.15	1.29	6.86	4.71

Fashion Leadership. More than half (61%) of AACS in the sample (Table 18) felt they were confident in their ability to recognize fashion trends. However, 76% of the sample did not feel the importance of being a fashion leader; nor did the respondents feel they should be regarded as fashion leaders by others. Fifty-three percent were not aware of fashion trends and did not want to be one of the first to try them. Less than half agreed that clothes were one of the

most important ways they have of expressing their individuality. Based on the mean of the computed fashion leadership score, respondents in general had a neutral opinion in regard to their being fashion leaders.

Table 16. Self-Confidence of AACCS

Item	Disagree	Slightly Agree/ Slightly Disagree	Agree
I think I have more self-confidence than most people	11.1%	43.1%	45.9%
I am more independent than most people	6.1%	33.4%	60.5%
I think I have a lot of personal ability	.8%	14.7%	85.1%
I like to be considered a leader	4.3%	33.5%	62.3%
I have never been really outstanding at anything	75.1%	18.5%	6.4%
I often can talk others into doing something	9.2%	42.7%	48%
N = 281 Missing = 1			
1= "Disagree" 2= "Slightly Agree/Slightly Disagree" 3= "Agree"			

Table 17. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Confidence of AACCS

N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	Median
281	4.70	.72	2.50	6.00	4.66

A Likert-type scale was used to measure fashion leadership with 1 = strongly disagree, 3= neutral, and 5= strongly agree. The scale items were used to compute the mean scale score. Based on the mean score computed for the fashion leadership scale (N=281, M= 2.70, SD=.82), respondents, overall, had a neutral opinion regarding themselves as fashion leaders (Table 19).

Table 18. Fashion Leadership of AACS

Item	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I am aware of fashion trends and want to be one of the first to try them	52.1%	28.2%	19.7%
I am the first to try new fashion; therefore, many people regard me as a fashion leader	64.6%	21.4%	14%
It is important for me to be a fashion leader	75.3%	16.8%	7.9%
I am confident in my ability to recognize fashion trends	11.4%	26.8%	61.8%
Clothes are one of the most important ways I have of expressing my individuality	34.6%	21.8%	43.6%
N=280 Missing=2			
1= “strongly disagree” 3= “Neutral” 5= “strongly agree”			

Table 19. Descriptive Statistics of Fashion Leadership of AACS

N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	Median
280	2.69	.82	1.00	5.00	2.60

Shopping Enjoyment. The shopping enjoyment scale was tested for validity and reliability as a result of combining two validated shopping scales to create one measure for evaluating shopping for this study. Factor analysis results for the shopping enjoyment scale are found below in Table 20.

The sample least enjoyed talking to salespeople before making a purchase (53%) instead the majority (69%) enjoyed gathering information before making a purchase (Table 21). Almost half did not get a real “high” from shopping. The large majority of the sample (71%) really enjoyed shopping before making a purchase and almost equally (69%) enjoyed visiting stores before making a purchase. Over two-thirds (72%) of this group of AACS agreed that shopping

Table 20. Shopping Enjoyment Scale Items Factor Loadings Using Principal Component Analysis

Item	Factor Loading
Overall, I really enjoy shopping before I make a purchase	.810
Shopping is fun	.753
I get a real “high” from shopping	.681
I shop because buying things makes me happy	.657
I really enjoy visiting stores before I make a purchase	.653
I really enjoy gathering information before I make a purchase	.518
I really enjoy talking to salespeople before I make a purchase	.413
Eigenvalue	2.98
% of variance	42.62

Table 21. Shopping Enjoyment of AACCS

Item	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I shop because buying things makes me happy	35.3%	20%	44.7%
Shopping is fun	11.4%	16.8%	71.8%
I get a real “high” from shopping	48.2%	23%	28.9%
I really enjoy gathering information before I make a purchase	28.3%	20.5%	51.2%
I really enjoy visiting stores before I make a purchase	18%	13.4%	68.5%
I really enjoy talking to salespeople before I make a purchase	53%	20.5%	26.5%
Overall, I really enjoy shopping before I make a purchase	16.6%	12.4%	71%
N=281 Missing = 1			
1= Disagree 3= Neural 5= Agree			

was fun; while 44% agreed that it made them happy. Based on the mean score computed for the entire shopping enjoyment scale (N=282, M=3.24; SD=.80), respondents, overall, had a neutral opinion regarding shopping enjoyment (Table 22).

Spending Behavior. Spending behavior includes amount of time spent shopping for apparel and spending for apparel. Items selected from Goldsmith, et. al., (1996) study were used to measure spending behavior. However, poor factor loading and a low reliability score indicated that the items were not the best construct for measuring spending behavior, and therefore, it is not included in the analysis. The items related to spending behavior are presented with the respondents' profile (Table 4).

Table 22. Descriptive Statistics of Shopping Enjoyment of AACS

N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	Median
282	3.24	.80	.84	4.90	3.38

### **Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis One: Internal and external values influence dress and appearance of AACS. Associations between dress and appearance and the internal and external values were tested by a Pearson's correlation. The direction of the correlation was positive, which suggested that AACS who have great interest in their dress and appearance tend to possess high external values. There was a significant positive correlation between dress and appearance and external values,  $r(280)=.173$ ,  $p<.01$ , as shown in Table 23. Hypothesis one is partially supported.

Table 23. Correlations of Dress and Appearance and Internal and External Values

Variable	Internal Values	External Values
Dress and Appearance	.048	.173**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

Hypothesis Two: Referents will be the most influential social factor on dress and appearance. A regression analysis was conducted to determine the best linear combination of media's influence and referents' influence for predicting dress and appearance. The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 24. This combination of variables explained dress and appearance,  $F(2, 279) = 35.87$ ,  $p < .001$ . The beta weights of the variables suggested high scores in media influence contributed primarily to predicting dress and appearance. The adjusted R squared value was .21. This indicates that 21% of the variance in dress and appearance was explained by the model. Hypothesis two was not supported.

Table 24. Multiple Regression Analysis Summary: Means, Standard Deviations, Beta, Standard Error, and Beta Coefficients for Dress and Appearance and Predictor Variables – Media Influence and Referents Influence (N= 281)

Variable	M	SD	B	SEB	$\beta$
Dress and Appearance	3.51	.63			
Predictor Variables:					
Media Influence	2.82	.80	.528	.070	.422**
Referents Influence	4.75	1.10	7.82E-02	.056	.078
Constant			-1.50	.206	
$R^2 = .21$ ; $F(2,279) = 35.87$ , $p < .001$					
** $p < .01$					

Hypothesis Three: Fashion leadership will be the most influential psychological factor on dress and appearance. Multiple regression was conducted to determine the best linear combination of self-consciousness, self-confidence, fashion leadership and shopping enjoyment for predicting dress and appearance. The means and standard deviations can be found in Table 25. This combination of variables significantly predicted dress and appearance,  $F(4, 277) = 43.76$ ,  $p < .001$ , with all four variables significantly contributing to the prediction. The beta weight, present also in Table 25, suggests that high scores in fashion leadership contribute most to



predicting dress and appearance, and that positive self-confidence, self-consciousness, and the enjoyment of shopping also contribute to this prediction. The adjusted R squared value was .39.

This indicates that 39% of the variance in dress and appearance was explained by the model.

Hypothesis three was supported.

Table 25. Multiple Regression Analysis Summary: Means, Standard Deviations, Beta, Standard Error, and Beta Coefficients for Dress and Appearance and Predictor Variables – Fashion Leadership, Self-Confidence, Self-Consciousness, and Shopping Enjoyment (N= 282)

Variable	M	SD	B	SEB	$\beta$
Dress and Appearance	3.51	.63			
Predictor Variables:					
Fashion Leadership Scale	2.84	.81	.55	.066	.451**
Self-Confidence Scale	4.70	.72	.21	.067	.154**
Self-Consciousness Scale	4.65	1.15	.11	.042	.131*
Shopping Enjoyment Scale	3.24	.79	.19	.067	.156*
Constant			-3.66	.393	
$R^2 = .39$ ; $F(4,277) = 43.76$ , $p < .001$					
* $p < .05$ ; ** $p < .01$					

## Discussion

This study was unique in that little, if any research had been conducted concerning the relationship between AACS, values and dress and appearance. This is significant because gaining a greater understanding of this segment of the black population was the focus of the study. In similar studies or related studies in this area, the percentage of African-Americans was typically small, and as a result their responses were not distinctly expressed in the findings and conclusions of the studies. As a result a void existed in apparel and related research that provided information on this particular minority ethnic group. This study on the influence values and other social and psychological factors have on dress and appearance of AACS contributed greatly to

filling the existing void in research and, therefore, is a major contribution to the field of social psychology and consumer apparel behavior research.

Another major contribution provided by the study was its examination of the smaller segment of a major minority ethnic group. In some cases, members of ethnic groups are homogeneously classified, carry the characteristics of the major group, and lose their distinct traits. In many studies, college students are a convenience sample. However, in this study, college students were the focus because of their unique characteristics as part of two groups with major purchasing power and influence in fashion and business. Those two groups were African-Americans and Generation Y. However, studying AACS independently of the two major groups allowed for the development of a smaller segment (consumer) profile, which has provided useful information about individuals who are a significantly important part of our society.

In addition to contributing to the apparel research area and providing a better understanding of the young black population, the findings may be used by companies who wish to target college-aged AACS for products and services. The more information a company has regarding a particular target market, the better its products and services can be tailored to meet the needs and desires of the group. Media greatly influenced dress and appearance for this group. AACS are huge consumers of media (television, music and music videos, internet, etc.) and businesses can benefit by targeting their marketing campaigns and adjusting their products to meet the needs of this segment of the black population. Awareness of the values, interests, and needs of a consumer group such as college-aged African Americans can translate into higher profits.

In reviewing the literature for this study, there was evidence that the independent variables in the study were correlated; however no one independent variable was believed to be greater than the other in influencing dress and appearance. The conceptual model proposed for

this study was accurate. Because this is an exploratory study, the conceptual model successfully illustrated the relationship of the variables. Results from the study found that media influence, fashion leadership, self-confidence, self-consciousness, and shopping enjoyment were found to influenced dress and appearance. Referents, such as family and friends, were not a significant influence.

Determining the influence of internal and external values on dress and appearance was one of the main objectives for this study. AACS' responses to the items in the dress and appearance scale suggested that this particular sample was conscious of the concept that constituted dress and appearance. The findings support O'Neal's (1998) study that suggest African-Americans feel that although they wear the same apparel as other people it is how they wear the items that make them different.

AACS in this study indicated that internal values were most important in their daily lives. Previous studies have concluded that the List of Values (LOV) contained a higher percentage of items said to influence individuals' daily lives. LOV has been used in many value and apparel research studies to produce useful information in understanding individuals and their consumer behavior. Through the LOV, AACS in the sample showed that four of the five psychological values were most important to their daily lives. High ranking values were sense of accomplishment (94%), self-respect (93%), fun and enjoyment (90%) and self-fulfillment (89%). The most important daily value was **self-respect** – an internal (psychological) value. Self-respect is defined as: being proud of yourself and confident with who you are. The other most important daily values were self-fulfillment (an internal value) and being well-respected (an external value). The high ranking and importance AACS in this study placed on internal values brings us closer to understanding and informs us of AACS' perceptions of self as social objects.

Social adaptation theory provides both a social and psychological basis for studying the individual and dress and appearance. It was logical to use in this study when investigating values and other social and psychological factors influence on dress and appearance of AACCS for two reasons. First, the underlying basis of social adaptation theory maintains that information is absorbed into existing cognitive structures, such as values. Secondly, because it encompasses the social and psychological aspects of an individual's thinking and reasoning.

Results of this study revealed that this sample of AACCS ranked internal values highly; however, external values had a positive relationship with their dress and appearance. Additionally, the psychological (internally-driven) factors were significant predictors of dress and appearance while media influence was the only social (externally- driven) factor to influence this group of AACCS's dress and appearance. Viewing these findings in light of the social adaptation theory, AACCS in the study are absorbing external information from various sources and integrating it into their value base thereby modifying existing internal values to meet external standards. According to social adaptation theory, information is gained through experiencing interaction with [an individual's] environments and values are developed from these life experiences (Kahle, 1996). Therefore, information is gained through interaction that redefines existing values. One means of demonstrating the adaptation is through AACCS dress and appearance. This means AACCS in this study are aware of their dress and appearance – a non-verbal form of communication – and have, as a result, adopted their internal values to meet their external needs. This statement can aid in explaining this group of AACCS value management and dress and appearance management.

The positive significant correlation of external values with dress and appearance as well as the influence of media suggested that through external behaviors such as interaction, socialization, and media exposure AACCS in the study have become aware of others' values and

behaviors and allow external influences to shape their own values and behaviors in order to meet the external expectations of others. In this process, they are not suppressing their own internal values; instead they have adapted to their social environment and at the same time managed to keep their personal or internal values a priority.

This behavior demonstrates that by being a part of a social environment such as a college campus, information that may influence an individual's values is unconsciously shared and integrated through regular interaction with others. Part of the interaction with others is non-verbal. It is important to mention that both an individual's dress and appearance are forms of non-verbal communication that convey personal information including internal and external values.

Social adaptation theory states that "the integration and specific meanings will be unique for each individual, but similarities in experiences and semantic environments, such as those shared by individuals within a particular demographic category, will lead to measurable similarities and patterns of responses" (Kahle, 1996, p. 136). The present study supported this component of the theory. Considering similar college experiences and the campus environment, this particular sample of AACS shared a practice or belief that self-respect may be gained through dress and appearance – an external practice. For AACS in this study gaining self-respect was most highly valued. Gaining self-respect was strongly internally valued by the majority of African American students in the study that it was unconsciously communicated through their social interaction.

Therefore, through the seemingly unconscious sharing and exposure to other students and media in the campus environment, AACS in this study are readily absorbing others' values and information in which to internally process those values and information. It is here that this group of AACS accepts and analyzes different values and factors – some were new; others were similar

or the same as their own - and they were mentally compared to their pre-existing value base. Social adaptation theory describes this process as organizing information to synthesize the new information with prior knowledge. As a result of the reorganization and synthesizing, new and old information leads to greater integration of information. In other words “A person absorbs external information and transforms both the information and himself or herself in such a way as to promote adaptation” (Kahle, 1984, p.38).

Thus, in order to gain the self-respect desired on a daily basis, this group of AACS have adjusted to meet the standards established in the daily social environment. By maintaining a dress and appearance that is in accordance with that of the social environment, AACS in this study have adhered to the social (external) standard and maintained the values that were most important to them. Hence, dress and appearance is managed in a manner that appeals to the social values or expectations but allows personal values and other internally-driven factors to remain prevalent and a priority in their daily lives.

Dress and appearance management allows AACS in this study to focus on the internal values that are important such as sense of accomplishment, self-respect, fun and enjoyment, and self-fulfillment. As college students, the focus is on succeeding at their goals (sense of accomplishment), being proud of and confident with themselves (self-respect), finding peace of mind and utilizing personal talents to the best of their abilities (self-fulfillment), and leading a pleasurable happy life (fun and enjoyment). These values are success oriented and therefore should be more internally valued than dress and appearance when considering undergraduate students. College is a time for many young individuals to focus on self and establish who they are in an effort to reach their personal goals.

## Social Factors

Media Influence scale score suggested that this sample of AACS had a mixed opinion about media's influence on their dress and appearance. Although the role of media's influence was ambiguous to the AACS in the study, it was more influential than that of friends and family, according to the regression analysis. Research (Villani, 2001) has indicated that media significantly shape value systems and influence behaviors. This group of AACS actively used diverse forms of media with which they were bombarded daily.

AACS in this study spent between 11 – 29 hours watching television weekly. Television consumption is higher among this sample of AACS than the average reported for the age group in general. Media consumption dominates the weekly leisure activities of 18-24 olds. Weiss (2003) reported that on average 18-24 year olds spend 10 hours online, 10 hours in front of the television and 5 hours listening to radio. AACS in this study noticed apparel seen in the various media and reported noticing clothing in movies, television shows, music videos and particularly in magazines. Magazines such as *Essence*, *Vogue*, *Jet*, *Seventeen*, *Cosmo*, *Black Hair* and *Sister 2 Sister* were read on a regular basis. All of these magazines contain a fair amount of content related to fashion that was provided to inform the reader of current trends in apparel, hair, and make-up. The majority of these regularly read magazines were targeted toward black consumers and featured persons of color throughout the publication.

The influence of media on dress and appearance was greater than that of referents including friends and family. This provides insight as to how effective media are to its users. AACS in this study spent a number of hours watching television weekly, reading fashion related magazines, and as members of the American society were exposed to numerous diverse media on a daily basis. This amount of planned and unplanned exposure to media allowed AACS in the study to be constantly reminded of current fashions and styles and provided the opportunity for

them to evaluate their dress and appearance more regularly; making this group more conscious of their dress and appearance.

This phenomenal amount of exposure to media might contribute to media having a greater influence than referents. The amount of time spent with family, in particular, is reduced greatly during the college years. The individual is more self-reliant, has more disposable income, and more external influences that have an impact on his/her decisions. Research has found that for children, family has the greatest influence on apparel and apparel choices, primarily because it was typically the parent who made the apparel related purchasing decisions (Meyer & Anderson, 2000). As teenagers, the decision became more autonomous and was influenced by several external factors, including other teenage friends, media, and family.

The family's role was expected to be important to young African Americans' value and belief development in regard to dress and appearance because of its role in cultural socialization. According to Stevenson (1994) young African Americans carry over the values and beliefs of their cultural socialization into young adulthood, where dress and appearance are one form of their cultural uniqueness. However, those conclusions were not supported by this study.

Referents' influence scale scores suggested that this sample of AACS believe their friends (peers) and significant others were supportive of their purchasing current fashions ultimately to stay current; however their family may support their purchasing the latest fashions but will not encourage them to buy the latest fashions. Therefore, the family would like AACS in the sample to dress and appear current but the family may not be in support of the latest fashions.

### Psychological Variables

Psychological factors influenced dress and appearance in the study. All of the factors contributed greatly to dress and appearance of AACS in this study. This group of AACS was very self-conscious and aware of their appearance. They reported checking their appearance in



the mirror before leaving home. A large portion of this group was concerned about making a good impression; yet they were not overly concerned of what others thought of them. Importance placed on internal values indicated that self-respect (internal value) was the most important value and sense of belonging (external value) one of the least important daily values.

This sample of AACS was very self-confident, which suggests they had a high inner belief in themselves. The group believed they are more independent than most people and had a lot of personal ability. Seventy-five percent of the AACS in the sample described themselves as being really outstanding at something. All of these internal characteristics reflect in the management of their dress and appearance. Self-confidence was a significant predictor of dress and appearance.

Interestingly, this group of AACS maintained a neutral stance in regard to being fashion leaders despite having high self-consciousness and high self-confidence. In Workman and Kidd's (2000) study, college female fashion leaders strove to be different and unique from others in an attempt to express their own identity. Fashion followers in the same study were considered conformists adhering to the acceptable standards within the college community. Stanforth (1995) found the greatest difference between undergraduate fashion leaders and fashion followers was the use of apparel to express individuality. Fashion leaders in Stanforth's (1995) study used apparel to differentiate themselves from others and to create a unique public identity.

AACS in this study did not identify themselves as fashion leaders or followers. For this study, AACS did not feel the importance of being fashion leaders and did not wish to be regarded as fashion leaders by others. This behavior and belief supports the higher rankings of the internal values on a daily basis. Being comfortable with self and leading a pleasurable life is easily achieved without the pressure of being a fashion leader and having others look to you for fashion direction. Perhaps, it was easier for most AACS in the study to conform to the prevailing

college style. A sense of accomplishment (to succeed at what you want to do) is so greatly valued because this group of AACCS find themselves in an academic environment where dress and appearance should not have any relationship to academic achievement.

The great majority of AACCS in the sample were not competing for the role of fashion leader as a result of their self-respect, which was the most important value to them each day. AACCS in the study have internalized being proud and confident with who they are. That is more important to them than being a fashion leader. However, they were confident in their ability to recognize fashion trends, and were conscious of their appearance. The group desired to be current in fashion; yet the majority of AACCS respondents did not desire to be one of the first to try a new style. The decision to be a fashion follower may derive from the majority indicating that their clothing was not the most important way of expressing individuality. The results from this study indicated that the majority of AACCS in this study were fashion followers. These findings concurred with Stanforth's (1995) findings when using a Caucasian undergraduate sample.

Shopping enjoyment was another important predictor of dress and appearance, although the sample was somewhat ambivalent in regard to activities related to enjoyment shopping. The large majority of the sample really enjoyed shopping before making a purchase and enjoyed visiting stores before making a purchase. This group of AACCS agreed that shopping was fun, although the interaction with salespeople was not an enjoyable component in shopping. Fortunately, AACCS in the sample feel the need to gather information before making a purchase. Technology such as the internet may be essential to this component of shopping. AACCS respondents indicated that they use the internet but not to seek out the latest fashions. Additionally, this segments' need to gather information before shopping presents companies with an opportunity to advertise more directly to this group.

These findings also supported McKinney et al, 2004 findings in regard to characteristics of black college students and their fashion consciousness and shopping behaviors. When researching the social and psychological factors related to buying behaviors of AACS, McKinney et al (2004) found that AACS had money and were willing to spend it on apparel, and that they possessed fashion interests and were fashion conscious. McKinney et al (2004) findings are supported by similar findings in this study.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of the study was to investigate values and other social and psychological factors that influence dress and appearance of African American college students (AACS). A web-based survey was used to collect data of 282 college students on two college campuses. The dependent variable was dress and appearance; independent variables consisted of the external values (being well-respected, security, warm relationships with others and sense of belonging) and the internal values (self-respect, sense of accomplishment, fun and enjoyment, self-fulfillment, and excitement). Also included in the independent variables were social factors (media influence and referents influence (peers and family)) and psychological factors (self-consciousness, self-confidence, fashion leadership, and shopping enjoyment). The social adaptation theory provided the theoretical framework for this study.

Table 26. Review of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Results and Analysis Method
H1: Internal and external values influence dress and appearance of AACS	Partially Supported – Pearson Correlation
H2: Referents will be the most influential social factor on dress and appearance	Not Supported - Multiple Regression
H3: Fashion leadership will be the most influential psychological factor on dress and appearance	Supported – Multiple Regression

The external values had a positive relationship with this group of AACS' dress and appearance. Internal values were most important to AACS in their daily lives. Four of five internal values were ranked the highest as most important to AACS in the study. Those values

were sense of accomplishment, self-respect, fun and enjoyment and self-fulfillment. The most important value of all values was self-respect.

Of the social factors, media was a better predictor of dress and appearance than family and friends. In regard to the psychological factors (self-consciousness, self-confidence, fashion leadership, and shopping enjoyment), all of the variables were significant to the model and contributed to the influence of dress and appearance. Of the psychological factors, fashion leadership had the greatest influence. Therefore, characteristically, AACS in the study were found to be conscious and confident of their dress and appearance. They like to wear current fashions but as a group did not consider themselves to be fashion leaders. This group of AACS enjoys shopping for current fashions.

### **Limitations**

Using a web-based approach to data collection was critical to the findings of this study. One limitation that existed was lack of web-based survey design, specifically the appearance and layout of the instrument. A professional web-based survey developer set-up the survey in which only one question and its potential responses appeared on one page at a time. By his professional opinion, this was believed to be the most user-friendly layout for the survey. There were 1055 attempts at the survey however on 499 completed it. Several respondents commented that a different set-up which included numbering the questions and placing more than one question per page would probably have been better format.

Another limitation was in regard to emailing the survey. Sending out the email announcements for the survey when scheduled was delayed originally by the universities' email policies and later by university personnel. The delays occurred despite the fact that the appropriate university offices and personnel had been made aware of the time frame for the data collection months in advance. The final limitation is in regard to the convenience sample. The

sample for the study was non-random and therefore cannot be generalized. The present data, however, were sufficient to test the hypotheses. The sample was confined to two universities in the southern region of the United States. A broader participation may have produced different results. Additionally, in regard to day analyses, there was no control for income, social economic status, and parents' income which could be useful in identifying other social factors that are important in understanding values and dress and appearance.

### **Conclusions**

This exploratory study was helpful in beginning to understand the importance values and other social and psychological factors play in dress and appearance of young people, specifically African American college students.

The model for the study illustrates that values and social and psychological factors had an equally significant opportunity in influencing the dependent variable dress and appearance. It was found that of the independent variables, referents (family and peers) were not a key influence to this group of AACS's dress and appearance.

The underlying basis of the social adaptation theory supports that information, including values, is absorbed into an individual's existing cognitive structures and synthesized in a way that promotes adaptation. AACS in this study placed greater emphasis on internal values and dress and appearance was found to be affected by all the psychological factors (fashion leadership, self-confidence, self-consciousness, and shopping enjoyment). However, external values were determined to have a significant influence on dress and appearance whereas; media influence was found to be the social factor affecting this group of AACS's dress and appearance. External values and social factors are being absorbed into AACS's in this study value base and processed in a way that adaptation is evidenced. Adaptation of the information is externalized in their outward expression or dress and appearance.

More specifically, this small sample of this particular segment of the American and black population values self-respect on a daily basis. That value begins with the individual consciously arranging dress and appearance until they are confident that they have achieved an appearance that adheres to their internal criteria as well as external values that have been found to influence dress and appearance. To achieve this task, AACS must be knowledgeable of current styles and external expectations which is where media plays a key role. Media provides a wealth of diverse information to consumers each day. Images of individuals wearing current fashion products and product information along with vendors/retailers information is shared making it easier for AACS and other consumers to purchase items and stay current.

By valuing self-respect, which is defined as being proud of yourself and confident with who you are, AACS in this study first meet their own dress and appearance criteria, confident that others will accept their appearance. However, external values are defined by the perception of others and centered on interpersonal relationships (Rose et al., 1994). Because dress and appearance is an outward assemblage of apparel on the body -- an external communicator, then it is logical that external values had a positive relationship with dress and appearance.

More research is needed to further understand the role values play in influencing dress and appearance of AACS and college-aged African Americans. Studying values is crucial to the study of dress and appearance because values influence individuals' behaviors and attitudes, which are reflected in their dress and appearance.

Using an online survey was an excellent tool for gathering information from a group of individuals who are typically hard to reach. The online survey provided an opportunity for every African America student on each of the campuses to be informed of the survey. It allowed students the convenience of survey participation at their own leisure, eliminating interruptions in classrooms, during group meetings, or the individuals' daily schedule. From the researcher's

perspective, it eliminated inputting data from paper surveys and transcribing participants' open-ended responses. Another benefit was the 24-hour opportunity to collect data from any AACS enrolled at the participating universities. However the greatest benefit of this research was the wealth of information gained from the sample. The information gained may be used to expand current or future research projects related to dress and appearance of this consumer group.

Research in regard to values of AACS may lead to a more accurate and current understanding of African-Americans, dispelling old beliefs and practices in apparel research, marketing, and business.

Future studies on the influence of dress and appearance should consider the role of the family on the dress, specifically of young African Americans since they are a minority group and families have been found to play a major role in socialization. Another special consideration should be the age of the participants. Black and other minority teenagers also adhere to values and are influenced when arranging their dress and appearance. Peer pressure is a part of teen culture regardless of ethnicity, and peer pressure may have an affect on the segments' values.

Studies related to dress and appearance may also include shopping and spending behaviors, specifically where do these young consumers shop and why? As well as, what is purchased and why? How much was budgeted and actually spent on specific purchases? What is the impact of AACS college income on purchasing? There is need for more studies on working African American graduates because they would possibly have more discretionary income.

Future studies may also wish to consider geographical location of the sample.

### **Implications**

This study provides useful information in identifying the important values of this segment of African Americans. This information can lead to understanding behaviors and attitudes more closely related to dress and appearance of African Americans. This study sheds light on a



segment of the population that is under researched and often homogeneously characterized. This study has also provided traits that are specific to the college-aged segment of the black population. Researchers in the area are encouraged to study values' influence on dress and appearance for other minority groups and segments of those minority groups to gain a holistic view of a particular minority group and to assign specific characteristics to the segment – not the entire group. Further studies regarding dress and appearance of AACS and the related age group should investigate various means of expressing their individuality, since apparel was not the primary means of self expression.

Using a web-based survey is encouraged for any researcher seeking to reach the college-age segment of any minority group. Researchers should consider replicating an apparel/consumer behavior study that used a small sample and a paper instrument, but using a web-based survey instead. This could provide the ideal sample plus data from other persons that could provide important comparisons.

Black consumers may learn more about themselves in seeing how values have a role in influencing dress and appearance. Often the consumer does not consider all aspects that go into their dress and appearance, which may also be related to their shopping behavior and practices and their apparel selection.

More consumer research on this group or any sub-segment of a minority ethnic group could lead to increased sales and the expansion of product offerings. The results of this study could be used by marketing firms, advertising agencies, and marketing departments of manufacturers and retailers in re-evaluating their current products, sales campaigns, and marketing strategies. Additional research centered on the influences of AACS dress and appearance could mean a very profitable future for businesses targeting this market and businesses in general.

Media suggest what are current and acceptable and where to buy it. The constant bombardment of media and the above average and consistent usage of certain media may require companies attempting to reach this segment of the black population to do more research. While utilizing media, values are consciously and unconsciously altered. According to Villani (2001) media has the ability to teach, which in turn may directly or subtly influence the user's behavior. Businesses interested in attracting and/or maintaining young black consumers should consider learning more about the media usage of this segment so that they may wisely and effectively market, advertise, and sell to this group. Effectively learning the target customer and catering to their needs and preferences could result in a long term profitable relationship between the business and the young black segment.

The need for directed market research seeking to determine specific information in regard to a specific segment of the African American population is necessary for those companies seeking to serve black consumers. It is critical however that black consumers actively participate in the research. Low or limited participation may lead to skewed results and limit companies in effectively meeting the needs of targeted black consumers. A well directed, thorough research effort with African American consumers actively involved may result in the development of new products or the redesign and marketing of old products. Success will be seen when there is an increase in spending among the group on certain products and services. Further studies regarding dress and appearance of AACS and the related age group should investigate various means of expressing their individuality, since apparel was not the primary means of self expression.

### **Recommendations**

A different web-based survey format/layout and appearance is suggested that is more appealing to college students should be considered if this study is reproduced. I would

recommend one that the student could save and return to complete later, or submit whenever they wish. Different submit options could produce more data to analyze. The negative side to submitting without completion involves the researcher having to deal with a large amount of missing and incomplete data.

It is recommended that the university offices/personnel assisting with the survey are well informed of the importance of timing when doing data collection. Also, because student email addresses are confidential on some campuses, it is recommended that the researcher check with the necessary university office(s) to determine the access and use of student information well in advance of the deadline for collected data.

It is recommended that this study be reproduced with a broader sample base. A broader sample may yield different results that may be influenced by geographic location. It will definitely provide greater information on this segment of the African American population.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **APPROVED APPLICATIONS FOR USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS**

IRB #: 390

LSU Proposal #: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised: 03/24/2004

LSU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) for 578-8692 FAX 6792  
HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECT PROTECTION Office: 203 B-1 David Boyd Hall

**APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT**

Unless they are qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research projects using living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.

**Instructions:** Complete this form.

**Exemption Applicant:** If it appears that your study qualifies for exemption send:

- (A) Two copies of this completed form,
- (B) a brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts A & B),
- (C) copies of all instruments to be used. If this proposal is part of a grant proposal include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
- (D) the consent form that you will use in the study

to: ONE screening committee member (listed at the end of this form) in the most closely related department/discipline or to IRB office.

If exemption seems likely, submit it. If not, submit regular IRB application. Help is available from Dr. Robert Mathews, 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu or any screening committee member.

Principal Investigator Devona L. Dixon Student? ☒ Yes

Ph: 718-4527 E-mail ddixon7@lsu.edu Dept/Unit Human Ecology-TAM

If Student, name supervising professor Bonnie Belleau Ph: 578-1535  
Mailing Address 1925 North Third St. #309, BR, LA 70802 Ph 225-387-9182  
Project Title The Influence of Values on Dress and Appearance of African American College Students

Agency expected to fund project N/A

Subject pool (e.g. Psychology Students) African American college 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.

I certify 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 institutions in which the study is conducted.

PI Signature Devona L. Dixon Date 11-30-05 (no per signatures)

Screening Committee Action: Exempted ☒ Not Exempted \_\_\_\_\_ Category/Paragraph \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer Mathews Signature Robert Mathews Date 12/1/05



Office of Research  
and Strategic Initiatives  
Post Office Box 9272  
(225) 771-3890 (voice)  
(225) 771-5231 (fax)

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
for the Protection of Human Subjects**

**Federal Wide Assurance # 00002518**

**IRB Registration # 00002445**

**Initial Approval Form for Exempt Research**

Investigator(s): Devona Dixon Unit: School of Human Ecology - LSU  
Project Title: The Effect of Values on Dress and Appearance of African American College Students  
Project Number: SU-BR IRB 2006 - 8E

I certify that the above research project was reviewed and approved by the Southern University – Baton Rouge (SU-BR) IRB for the Protection of Human Subjects in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45 Public Welfare Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects, on February 10, 2006 and was determined to be exempt from this policy – Research Category Title 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). However, before any changes to approved proposed protocols (e.g., subject selection or category, consent, risks, benefits, procedures, subject anonymity and confidentiality, etc.), the principal investigator is to present the proposed changes to the Chairperson of the SU-BR IRB for the Protection of Human Subjects for review and approval prior to implementation of these changes.

Signature:

Date:

2/10/06

Name: Sandra C. Brown, DNS  
School of Nursing  
Southern University – Baton Rouge  
Baton Rouge LA 70813

sandrabrown@suson.subr.edu  
(V) 771-5145 / (F) 771-2349

We certify that this institution applies Title 45 CFR 46 subparts A, B, C, and D to all research involving human subjects regardless of the source of support.

**Chairperson of the SU-BR Institutional Research Oversight Committee**

Signature:

Date:

2/14/2006

Name: Jimmy D. Lindsey, Ph.D.  
(V) 771-3950 / (F) 771-5852

jimmy\_lindsey@cxs.subr.edu  
Authorized Institutional Official

Signature:

Date:

02/14/06

Name: Mildred R. Smalley, Ph.D.  
Office of Research and Strategic Initiatives

(V) 771-3890 / (F) 771-5231

**Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813-9272**  
"A People's Institution Serving the State, the Nation, and the World."

## **APPENDIX B**

### **SURVEY EMAILS AND MESSAGES (PRE-TESTING)**

- Emails to Clubs and Organizations at LSU for Pilot Test Participation
- Emailed Survey Messages for each participating campus

**From:** "Devona Dixon" <ddixon7@lsu.edu>  
**To:**  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** Request to Survey Organization  
**Date:** Thu, 06 Apr 2006 13:33:48 -0600

---

Greetings Ms. XXX,

I am a Ph.D. student in the Textile, Apparel Design, and Merchandising program. I am conducting research on dress and appearance of African American college students at LSU. It is not such an easy task to locate the number of African American students I need to complete the data collection on the LSU campus. Therefore, I am writing you to request a meeting with members of your organization, the NAACP. **I would like to meet with your group or available members of your group anytime between Sunday, April 23 and Tuesday, May 2.** It is extremely critical to my doctoral research to gather information from African American college students. I do hope that you and your organization and/or friends are able to assist me in this matter. I would greatly appreciate any number of volunteers. I have gotten the approval of IRB to sample LSU students.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at [ddixon7@lsu.edu](mailto:ddixon7@lsu.edu) or call me at 225-718-XXXX (cell) 387-XXXX (home).

Thank you,  
Devona Dixon

**From:** "Devona Dixon" <ddixon7@lsu.edu>  
**To:**  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** Request to Survey Club  
**Date:** Thu, 06 Apr 2006 13:29:38 -0600

---

Greetings XXX,

I am a Ph.D. student in the Textile, Apparel Design, and Merchandising program. I am conducting research on dress and appearance of African American college students at LSU. It is not such an easy task to locate the number of African American students I need to complete the data collection on the LSU campus. Therefore, I am writing you to request a meeting with members of your organization, Excel II Higher Learning. **I would like to meet with your group or available members of your group anytime between Sunday, April 23 and Tuesday, May 2.** It is extremely critical to my doctoral research to gather information from African American college students. I do hope that you and your organization and/or friends are able to assist me in this matter. I would greatly appreciate any number of volunteers. I have gotten the approval of IRB to sample LSU students.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at [ddixon7@lsu.edu](mailto:ddixon7@lsu.edu) or call me at 225-718-XXXX (cell) 387-XXXX (home).

Thank you,  
Devona Dixon

**APPENDIX C**  
**SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

- Email Messages Accompanying Survey
- Survey Instrument
- Thank You Message/Logo Item Pick-up



## EMAIL Survey Message 1

**From:** University Officer  
**Sent:** Date  
**To:** Student  
**Subject:** Fashion Survey

Dear Student,

By clicking on the link below you agree to take the survey, and grant the researchers permission to use your responses for the purpose of the study.

<http://204.196.202.155/sw/wchost.asp?st=sapparel>

If you among the first 50 students to complete the survey **and** would like to receive a university logo item for your participation, please email the principal investigator, Devona Dixon at [ddixon7@lsu.edu](mailto:ddixon7@lsu.edu). You will later receive an email indicating the date and location to pick up your university logo item. If you choose to send an email, please type "**Fashion Survey**" in the subject area.

Of course, thank you for your interest in the **Dress and Appearance Fashion Opinion Survey**. Your opinion is very important to the researchers of this study. We are investigating the factors that influence individuals' clothing selection and appearance management; particularly that of college students. Please take ten minutes to complete the web-based survey. You are guaranteed complete anonymity; no identifying information is requested or will be transmitted with your completed survey. Participation is voluntary. As you answer the questions, you may discover something interesting about yourself and your clothing and related behaviors.

### **Participants' Rights:**

If you have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, please contact: Chairperson, Institutional Research Oversight Committee,; Voice @ XXX-XXXX; Facsimile – XXX-XXX-XXXX.

### **Researchers:**

The following investigators are available for questions about this study M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Devona Dixon at [ddixon7@lsu.edu](mailto:ddixon7@lsu.edu) or XXX-XXXX, and Dr. Bonnie Belleau at [hcbell@lsu.edu](mailto:hcbell@lsu.edu) or XXX-XXXX.

## EMAIL Survey Message 2

**From:** University Officer  
**To:** undisclosed-recipients;  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** Dress and Appearance Fashion Opinion Survey  
**Date:** Fri, 13 Oct 2006 12:08:43 -0500

Dear Student,

Thank you for your interest in the Dress and Appearance Fashion Opinion Survey. Your opinion is very important to the researchers of this study. We are investigating the factors that influence individuals' clothing selection and appearance management; particularly that of college students. Please take ten minutes to complete the web-based survey. You are guaranteed complete anonymity; no identifying information is requested or will be transmitted with your completed survey. Participation is voluntary. As you answer the questions, you may discover something interesting about yourself and your clothing and related behaviors.

If you are among the first 100 students to complete the survey and would like to receive a university logo item for your participation, please email the principal investigator, Devona Dixon at [ddixon7@lsu.edu](mailto:ddixon7@lsu.edu). You will later receive an email indicating the date and location to pick up your university logo item. If you choose to send an email, please type "FASHION SURVEY" in the subject area.

By clicking on the link below you agree to take the survey, and grant the researchers permission to use your responses for the purpose of the study.

<http://204.196.202.155/sw/wchost.asp?st=sapparel>

### Participants' Rights:

If you have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, please contact: Institutional Review Board, (225) XXX-XXXX.

### Researchers:

The following investigators are available for questions about this study  
M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Devona Dixon at [ddixon7@lsu.edu](mailto:ddixon7@lsu.edu) or XXX-XXXX, and Dr. Bonnie Belleau, at [hcbell@lsu.edu](mailto:hcbell@lsu.edu) or XXX-XXXX.

- The following is a list of things that some people look for or want out of life. Sometimes you find that you have to give up a little of something important because something else is most important to you.

Please study the list below carefully. **Rate each item** on how important it is *in your daily life*, where 1 = very unimportant, and 9 = very important.

Assuming that the following items are important, <b>RATE each item from 1 to 9</b> indicating its exact level of importance.									
	Very Unimportant				Very Important				
1. <b><i>Sense of belonging</i></b> (to be accepted and needed by our family, friends, and community)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. <b><i>Excitement</i></b> ( to experience stimulation and thrills)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. <b><i>Warm relationships with others</i></b> (to have close companionships and intimate friendship)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. <b><i>Self-fulfillment</i></b> (to find peace of mind and to make the best use of your talents)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. <b><i>Being well-respected</i></b> (to be admired by others and to receive recognition)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. <b><i>Fun and enjoyment in life</i></b> (to lead a pleasurable, happy life)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. <b><i>Security</i></b> (to be safe and protected from misfortune and attack)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. <b><i>Self-respect</i></b> (to be proud of yourself and confident with who you are)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9. <b><i>A sense of accomplishment</i></b> (to succeed at what you want to do)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Below indicate **which item is most important to you each day** of your life? You may refer to the brief explanation of each item listed on the previous page. **CHOOSE ONLY ONE.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of belonging             | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun and enjoyment in life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Security                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm relationships with others | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-respect              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-fulfillment               | <input type="checkbox"/> Being well-respected      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A sense of accomplishment      |  |

What is your personal **monthly** income?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$0 - \$500    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1001 - \$2500   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$501 - \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2501 – and more |

What is YOUR INDIVIDUAL **yearly** income? (K means thousand.)

- |                                       |                                      |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$5000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$21K—\$25K | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40K—\$50K |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$6K—\$10K   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$26K—\$30K | <input type="checkbox"/> \$51K—Above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$11K- \$15K | <input type="checkbox"/> \$31K—\$35K | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$16K—\$20K  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$36K—\$40K | <input type="checkbox"/> No Response |

How often do you shop for clothing?

- ☐ More than once a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Once every two weeks
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Only for special occasions

The **majority** of clothing in my wardrobe is for: (Select only one.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> attending class         | <input type="checkbox"/> going to work/job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> going to the club/party | <input type="checkbox"/> exercise/workout  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other, specify _____    |  |

How much do you spend on clothing and clothing accessories each month?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$0 - \$100   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$301 - \$400 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$101 - \$200 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$401 - \$500 |

\_\_\_ \$201 - \$300                      \_\_\_ \$501 and over

Do you budget for clothing expenses?

- \_\_\_ Never
- \_\_\_ Rarely
- \_\_\_ Sometimes
- \_\_\_ Usually
- \_\_\_ Always

Do you budget for appearance and beauty aide products (ex: haircut, relaxers, makeup, facial cleaner, shaving cream, etc.)

- \_\_\_ Never
- \_\_\_ Rarely
- \_\_\_ Sometimes
- \_\_\_ Usually
- \_\_\_ Always

What is your usual method of paying for your *clothing*?

\_\_\_ Cash/Debit Card                      \_\_\_ Credit Card(s)

What is your usual method of paying for *appearance and beauty aide products*?

\_\_\_ Cash/Debit Card                      \_\_\_ Credit Card(s)

***For the purpose of this survey, dress and appearance is defined as all clothing, accessories and modifications and alterations to the body including makeup, perfume, tattoos, piercings, hairstyle, etc.***

	• Strongly Disagree	• Disagree	• Neutral	• Agree	• Strongly Agree
My hairstyle is a major part of my appearance.....	1	2	3	4	5
My dress and appearance expresses who I am to others.....	1	2	3	4	5
I express my ethnicity through my dress and appearance.....	1	2	3	4	5

I dress appropriately for all events I attend.....	1	2	3	4	5
I feel my cologne/perfume is part of my dress.....	1	2	3	4	5
Although my apparel is similar to what everyone else wears it is how I wear it that makes it different from other students on campus.....	1	2	3	4	5
If I run a quick errand I don't care about my appearance.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am aware of fashion trends and want to be one of the first to try them.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am the first to try new fashion; therefore, many people regard me as a fashion leader.....	1	2	3	4	5
It is important for me to be a fashion leader.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am confident in my ability to recognize fashion trends.....	1	2	3	4	5
Clothes are one of the most important ways I have of expressing my individuality.....	1	2	3	4	5
I shop because buying things makes me happy.....	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping is fun.....	1	2	3	4	5
I get a real "high" from shopping..	1	2	3	4	5
I often buy clothing that is advertised..... .....	1	2	3	4	5
I buy more clothing items if I have seen them worn or used by a celebrity.....	1	2	3	4	5
I tend to notice clothes in movies..	1	2	3	4	5

I notice clothing in television  
shows..... 1 2 3 4 5

I notice the clothing in  
magazines..... 1 2 3 4 5

I seek out the latest fashions on  
the internet..... 1 2 3 4 5

I like to buy clothes from up-  
scale  
catalogs..... 1 2 3 4 5

I notice clothing in music  
videos.....  
..... 1 2 3 4 5

	• Strongly Disagree	• Disagree	• Slightly Disagree	• Neutral	• Slightly Agree	• Agree	• Strongly Agree
Friends who are important to me will not object if I buy the latest fashions.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My family will not object if I buy the latest fashion.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My boyfriend/girlfriend will not object if I buy the latest fashions...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My family thinks I should buy the latest fashions.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Most of my friends think that I should buy the latest fashions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My family's opinion of my fashion is more important than my friends' opinion.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The fashion media suggests that I should buy the latest fashions.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I really enjoy gathering information before I make a purchase.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I really enjoy visiting stores before I make a purchase...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I really enjoy talking to salespeople before I make a purchase.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall, I really enjoy shopping before I make a purchase.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm concerned about my style of doing things.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm concerned about the way I present myself.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm self-conscious about the way I look.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I usually worry about making a good impression.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
One of the last things I do before leaving my house is look in the mirror.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm concerned about what other people think of me...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm usually aware of my appearance.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



	• Strongly Disagree	• Disagree	• Slightly Disagree	• Slightly Agree	• Agree	• Strongly Agree
I think I have more self-confidence than most people...	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am more independent than most people.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think I have a lot of personal ability.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
I like to be considered a leader...	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have never been really outstanding at anything. ....	1	2	3	4	5	6
I often can talk others into doing something.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Provide your response in the blanks provided.**

On average, how many movies (including rentals, TV, theater) do you see per month? \_\_\_\_

On average, how many hours of music videos do you watch in one week? \_\_\_\_

On average, how many hours of television do you watch in one week? \_\_\_\_

What are your three favorite TV shows? \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following magazines do you read on a **regular basis**?

(Select all that apply.)

\_\_ Essence

\_\_ Source

\_\_ Vibe

\_\_ Vogue

\_\_ Ebony

\_\_ Elle

\_\_ Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Tell me about yourself. Provide your response in the blanks provided.**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_ Female

Which campus are you a student?

\_\_ Louisiana State University

\_\_ Southern University

Classification: \_\_ Freshman

\_\_ Junior

\_\_ Masters

\_\_ Sophomore

\_\_ Senior

\_\_ Doctoral

Ethnicity: ☐ Asian ☐ Black ☐ Caucasian  
☐ Hispanic ☐ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed  
☐ Separated ☐ Divorced ☐ Cohabiting

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Hometown: \_\_\_\_\_

My hometown is: ☐ Rural ☐ Urban

Were you displaced to this campus by Hurricane Katrina? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Where do you reside? ☐ On-Campus ☐ Off-Campus

What are the sources of your income? Check all that apply.

☐ Parents ☐ Part-time job ☐ Scholarship  
☐ Spouse ☐ Full-time job ☐ Fellowship  
☐ Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

What is your parent(s) income? If parents are divorced, indicate the parent's income you live(d) with most recently. (K means thousand)

☐ Under \$15,000 ☐ \$36K—\$45K ☐ \$66K — \$75K  
☐ \$16K— \$25K ☐ \$46K—\$55K ☐ \$76K — and up  
☐ \$26K—\$35K ☐ \$56K— \$65K ☐ Don't Know

How many years of schooling did your **mother** complete?

☐ K—8th grade  
☐ 9th—11th grade  
☐ High School graduate/GED  
☐ Trade school (Business, technical, or vocational after high school)  
☐ Some college, no degree  
☐ Some college, Associate Degree  
☐ College Graduate  
☐ Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college, no degree  
☐ Post-graduate degree (MA, PhD, JD, etc.)

How many years of schooling did your **father** complete?

☐ K—8th grade  
☐ 9th—11th grade  
☐ High School graduate/GED  
☐ Trade school (Business, technical, or vocational after high school)  
☐ Some college, no degree

- ☐ Some college, Associate Degree
- ☐ College Graduate
- ☐ Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college, no degree
- ☐ Post-graduate degree (MA, PhD, JD, etc.)

**If you would like to provide any additional information or make any comments, you may do so in the space below.**

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**Thank you  
for your participation!**

**Individual results of this study will be completely confidential. The information you have provided will help researchers understand values, influences, and shopping behaviors of college consumers.**

**Email response sent to participants by researcher after receiving respondents' request to receive a university logo item**

THANK YOU for completing the survey. It is very much appreciated. Please mention it to other XXX students and please email it to other XXX students that may not use their campus email addresses. I need several hundred responses ...so the more the merrier. So now... to receive your university logo item, please visit the Lobby of the ABC Building on Tuesday, October 31st between 10:15a.m and 1:30 p.m. Again, THANK YOU for completing the survey.

Devona Dixon

## **VITA**

Devona Dixon received her Bachelor of Science degree in clothing, textiles, and related arts from Southern University, May 1996. In December 1998, she received her Master of Science degree from Colorado State University in design, merchandising and consumer Sciences. While completing her master's degree, she was a graduate teaching and research assistant and interned at a local magazine and in the Publications Office at Colorado State University. Soon after graduation, Ms. Dixon gained employment as a Visual Merchandiser for Dillard's department store. In 2001, Ms. Dixon began working as a Research Associate in apparel, merchandising and textiles at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center working with various research and academic projects. By 2004, she had officially enrolled into graduate school at Louisiana State University in the School of Human Ecology, focusing on textiles, apparel, and merchandising. While in pursuit of a doctoral degree, Ms. Dixon maintained employment at Southern University Ag Center. Ms. Dixon expects to receive the Doctor of Philosophy degree in August 2007.