



A comparison of self-esteem and interest in clothing for elderly females in Bozeman, Montana  
by Judy Larson Morrill

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in  
Home Economics  
Montana State University  
© Copyright by Judy Larson Morrill (1982)

**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to explore self-esteem and interest in clothing for elderly females. The theoretical framework for this research is based on the acknowledgment of many social psychologists that self-esteem is a product of the social interaction process.

Since clothing can be considered an extension of self, a positive interest in clothing may then serve to enhance individual self-esteem and a low interest may have the opposite effect.

The following aspects were studied: 1) differences in self-esteem for confined and nonconfined elderly females; 2) differences in interest in clothing for confined and nonconfined elderly females; 3) a relationship between self-esteem and interest in clothing; 4) a relationship between either self-esteem or interest in clothing and the general variables, age, income, educational level, and health.

A questionnaire consisted of the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, an interest in clothing measure and a general information section. This questionnaire was administered to fifty-four elderly females.

A t-Test was used to determine differences between means for the confined and nonconfined on individual items on the self-esteem measure and the interest in clothing measure. Pearson Product-moment Correlation was used to determine relationships between interest in clothing and self-esteem. Spearman Rank Correlation was used to determine if a relationship existed between self-esteem and interest in clothing and the general variables age, educational level, and self-rated health.

Results of the research were tested at the .05 level. Findings indicated little difference in self-esteem between confined and nonconfined elderly females. Significant differences were found on five of the nineteen items on the interest in clothing measure. No significant relationship was found to exist between interest in clothing and self-esteem for elderly females. A significant negative relationship was found to exist between educational level and interest in clothing for the nonconfined elderly females. The same relationship was not found for the confined females. No significant relationships were found to exist between general variables age and self-rated health and self-esteem and interest in clothing. Results of income level were not analyzed.

A COMPARISON OF SELF-ESTEEM AND INTEREST IN CLOTHING  
FOR ELDERLY FEMALES IN BOZEMAN, MONTANA

by

Judy Larson Morrill

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Science

in

Home Economics

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Bozeman, Montana

November 1982

MAIN LIB.

N378  
M83  
cop. 2

ii

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Judy Larson Morrill

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

November 22, 1982  
Date

Margaret Briggs  
Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Approved for the Major Department

November 22, 1982  
Date

Margaret Briggs  
Head, Major Department

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

12-9-82  
Date

Michael P. Malone  
Graduate Dean

## STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Montana State University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made.

Permission for extensive quotation from or reproduction of this thesis may be granted by my major professor, or in her absence, by the Director of Libraries when, in the opinion of either, the proposed use of the material is for scholarly purposes. Any copying or use of the material in this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature

Judy Merrill

Date

Nov. 23, 82

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere appreciation is extended to Dr. Margaret Briggs, thesis advisor and major professor, for all her guidance and support throughout this research process. I wish to thank Dr. Gloria Gregg, Dr. Angelina Parsons, and Mrs. Barbara White for their time and willing assistance as members of my Graduate Committee.

Special acknowledgment is extended to Georgia Ziemba for her assistance with the statistical analysis, Mrs. Libby Bean, Mrs. Eileen Munshower, Mrs. Marsha Lydiard, and Mrs. Joyce Dynes for their aid in securing the participants for this research, and to the women who so willingly participated in the study. Without their cooperation this study would not have been possible.

The author wishes to express sincere gratitude to her husband, Wendell, for his constant encouragement and support.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER	
I. NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEM.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Objectives.....	6
Null Hypotheses.....	7
Assumptions..	8
Procedures.....	8
Definitions.....	8
Limitations.....	9
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	11
Self-Esteem.....	11
Self-Esteem and the Elderly.....	15
Clothing.....	18
Self-Concept and Interest in Clothing.....	19
Clothing and the Elderly.....	22
Summary.....	24
III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES.....	26
Description of the Population.....	27
Instrumentation.....	28
Self-Esteem.....	28
Interest in Clothing.....	29
General Information.....	30
Procedures for Data Collection.....	30
Analysis of Data.....	32
IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	33
Characteristics of the Sample.....	33
Age.....	34
Level of Income.....	36

TABLE OF CONTENTS--Continued

Educational Level.....	37
Self-Rated Health.....	38
Summary of General Information.....	39
Differences in Self-Esteem.....	40
Differences in Interest in Clothing.....	43
Relationship Between Interest in Clothing and Self-Esteem.....	49
Relationship Between General Variables and Interest in Clothing and Self-Esteem.....	51
Age.....	51
Educational Level.....	52
Self-Rated Health.....	53
Summary.....	54
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	56
Summary.....	56
Conclusions.....	56
Recommendations for Further Study.....	60
LITERATURE CITED.....	62
APPENDICES .....	67
A Questionnaire.....	68
B Source Data Table.....	75

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Number and Source of Participants.....	34
2. Age Group Frequency Distributions and Percentages for Confined and Nonconfined .....	35
3. Frequency Distribution and Percentages for Level of Income of Nonconfined Elderly Females..	36
4. Source of Income for Confined Elderly Females....	37
5. Frequency and Percentages for the Educational Level of Confined and Nonconfined Elderly Females .....	38
6. Frequencies and Percentages for Self-Rated Health of Confined and Nonconfined Elderly Females.....	40
7. Breakdown of the Self-Esteem Scale Scores for Confined and Nonconfined Elderly Females.. .....	41
8. Comparison of Means to Compute t-Values on the Individual Questions on the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale.....	43
9. Breakdown of Interest in Clothing Scores with Frequencies and Percentages for Confined and Nonconfined Elderly Females.....	45
10. Comparison of Means to Compute t-Values on the Interest in Clothing Measure for Confined and Nonconfined.....	46
11. Interest in Clothing Questions Significant at .05 Level.....	47
12. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for Interest in Clothing and Self-Esteem for Confined and Nonconfined Groups and for the Total Population.....	50



LIST OF TABLES--Continued

Table	Page
13. Spearman Rank Correlation for Mean Age in Relation to Interest in Clothing and Self-Esteem.....	52
14. Spearman Rank Correlation for Mean Educational Level in Relation to Interest in Clothing and Self-Esteem.....	53
15. Spearman Rank Correlation for Mean Self-Rated Health in Relation to Interest in Clothing and Self-Esteem.....	54
16. A Comparison of Frequency of Scores on the Interest in Clothing Measure for Confined and Nonconfined Elderly Females.....	74

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
I. Age Breakdown of Participants in Relation to Place of Residence.....	35
II. Educational Level of Participants in Relation to Place of Residence.....	39
III. Self-Esteem Scores Broken Down into Three Categories for the Confined and Nonconfined.....	42
IV. Clothing Scores Broken Down into Categories for Confined and Nonconfined Elderly Females.....	45

## ABSTRACT.

The purpose of this study was to explore self-esteem and interest in clothing for elderly females. The theoretical framework for this research is based on the acknowledgment of many social psychologists that self-esteem is a product of the social interaction process. Since clothing can be considered an extension of self, a positive interest in clothing may then serve to enhance individual self-esteem and a low interest may have the opposite effect.

The following aspects were studied: 1) differences in self-esteem for confined and nonconfined elderly females; 2) differences in interest in clothing for confined and nonconfined elderly females; 3) a relationship between self-esteem and interest in clothing; 4) a relationship between either self-esteem or interest in clothing and the general variables, age, income, educational level, and health.

A questionnaire consisted of the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, an interest in clothing measure and a general information section. This questionnaire was administered to fifty-four elderly females.

A t-Test was used to determine differences between means for the confined and nonconfined on individual items on the self-esteem measure and the interest in clothing measure. Pearson Product-moment Correlation was used to determine relationships between interest in clothing and self-esteem. Spearman Rank Correlation was used to determine if a relationship existed between self-esteem and interest in clothing and the general variables age, educational level, and self-rated health.

Results of the research were tested at the .05 level. Findings indicated little difference in self-esteem between confined and nonconfined elderly females. Significant differences were found on five of the nineteen items on the interest in clothing measure. No significant relationship was found to exist between interest in clothing and self-esteem for elderly females. A significant negative relationship was found to exist between educational level and interest in clothing for the nonconfined elderly females. The same relationship was not found for the confined females. No significant relationships were found to exist between general variables age and self-rated health and self-esteem and interest in clothing. Results of income level were not analyzed.

## CHAPTER I

NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEM

There are approximately twenty-five million residents in the United States over the age of sixty-five. Using chronological age to define elderly, this group constitutes approximately 11 percent of the total population (Census Supplementary Report, 1980). Projected figures for the year 2030 estimate that elderly, over the age of sixty-five will make up more than 18 percent of the population (Kalish, 1982). If this projected figure for the year 2030 is realized, the proportion of elderly in the population will be over four times greater than it was in 1900.

Life expectancy has increased significantly since 1900 due to improved nutrition, sanitation, health care, and working conditions. In 1900 the average life expectancy for both men and women was forty-eight years. By 1978 this figure had increased to seventy-seven years for women and sixty-nine years for men (Kalish, 1982). Of the children born in the United States in the 1980's, over 75 percent can expect to reach the age of sixty-five (Kalish, 1982). This increased life expectancy has created a greater proportion of individuals over the age of sixty-five.

Because the elderly do make up such a significant portion of the United States population, it becomes necessary to regroup the population

into smaller segments for further investigation. Bernice Neugarten, a scientist in the field of gerontology, suggests that if society is to understand and adequately meet the needs of elderly today, then the elderly segment must be broken down into three distinct groups. She conceptualizes the first of these three groups as "Young-old," those between the ages of fifty and seventy-five years of age. This group is characterized by those individuals who retire at an early age. Neugarten sees this group of elderly free of the social responsibilities of work or raising a family and basically healthy, active, and financially stable (Tavani, 1979).

The second group of elderly is described as "Middle-old," age seventy-five to eighty-five years of age. Figures for 1979 estimate nine million people in this category equaling one-fourth of the total elderly population; by the year 2000 this group is projected to comprise over one-third of the elderly population (Tavani, 1979). Further investigation shows that this sub-group of the elderly has increased ten times since 1900 (Tavani, 1979), and has increased at a rate three times faster than that of elderly between the ages of sixty-five and seventy-four (Woodruff and Birren, 1975).

The third group of elderly are described by Neugarten as the "Old-old," those over the age of eighty-five. These older individuals are often not financially stable, have more physical impairments, are frail, less educated, and are more dependent on family and community (Tavani, 1979). This "Old-old" age group is also predominantly female, with twice as many females as males living to the age of eighty-five or older (Tavani, 1979).

This greater number of females in the population has come about since the early 1900's. In 1930 there were as many men as women over the age of sixty-five. But by the year 2000 this ratio is expected to decline to sixty-five men for every one hundred women (Kimmel, 1980).

This larger elderly population has become recognized as a separate entity. Along with this recognition, the problems, needs, and interests of an aging population are beginning to be addressed.

Aging is a process that is sometimes favorable and sometimes unfavorable, but it is a natural and inevitable process. Being old, elderly, aged, a "senior citizen," a "golden ager," is a stage in this process, occurring just as naturally and just as inevitably as infancy and childhood. (Kalish, 1982, p. 1)

Even though this aging process takes place naturally throughout the life cycle, it occurs at differing rates for each individual. Adults tend to vary greatly both in biological and behavioral functioning. Curtin (1972) stated that the physical process of aging, even though the individual realizes a change must take place, can be a terrifying experience.

Due to these physical changes that accompany increased age, many elderly individuals develop physical impairments which necessitate extensive care. If this care cannot be provided through an extended family situation, a move to a nursing home facility becomes a reality. In 1963, one percent of the elderly between the ages of sixty-five and seventy-four were living in nursing homes, compared to 14 percent of those over eighty-five years of age (Woodruff and Birren, 1975). In the decade from 1960 to 1970 the number of individuals over the age of sixty-five who were living in institutions increased 105 percent.

(Krause, 1981). According to 1979 figures, 4.7 percent of the population over the age of sixty-five in the United States now reside in institutions (Krause, 1981).

The tremendous increase in institutionalized living for the elderly is a relatively recent phenomenon. In 1900, the elderly segment made up only five percent of the total population (Kimmel, 1980). At that time elderly individuals existed as an integral part of a multi-generation family. As the person aged and was no longer capable of doing strenuous physical labor, homemaking and child care tasks were relegated to them. But the elderly remained a vital part of the family unit, fulfilling an important need as a part of society.

Through the transition into homemaking and child care tasks, the elderly person was still viewed as productive. Since the 1900's there have been several significant changes in our American society:

- 1) the population has become extremely mobile;
- 2) the number of elderly in the United States has increased seven times (Tavani, 1979);
- 3) work and leisure time activities have replaced the close-knit family relationships;
- and 4) the extended family has given way to a rapidly increasing number of elderly who are living independently in homes and apartments. When living independently is no longer possible, care is often provided in public or private nursing homes rather than as an extended family unit.

Numerous studies have been conducted concerning the needs of the elderly including medical care, nutrition, financial planning, and recreational and leisure time activities. Even educational needs of the elderly are beginning to be addressed. Clothing is considered to be one

of the essential basic needs for all people, along with food and shelter. Not only is it essential for comfort and protection, but also as an expression of self-concept. In the past two decades, the psychological value of clothing for the elderly has also been investigated to a limited extent. Robert J. Havinghurst, a social psychologist, stated that ". . . clothing, a need common to all people, is also a rational defense against aging (Havinghurst, 1953, p. 16)." As the elderly female progresses through this inevitable aging process, physical changes result. These changes create a greater need for clothing designed to meet the needs of elderly individuals. "By dressing more carefully than younger people, older people can make better use of their physical attractiveness (Havinghurst, 1953, p. 16)."

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A number of studies have been conducted which have investigated a relationship between self-concept and various aspects of clothing for school-age children, college students, handicapped individuals, and adults. A review of literature indicates a limited amount of research regarding a possible relationship between self-esteem and interest in clothing for women over the age of sixty-five. What is the relationship of clothing and self-esteem for elderly females? Does interest in clothing for women living independently differ from those women who are confined to nursing homes? Is there a significant difference in self-esteem for these two groups? The limited research findings available in this area provide the basis for this research study.



### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was threefold:

1. To determine if differences existed in self-esteem and interest in clothing for elderly women confined to nursing homes and those living independently.
2. To determine if a relationship existed between self-esteem and interest in clothing for elderly females.
3. To determine if a relationship existed between the general variables age, educational level, income, and self-rated health and self-esteem and interest in clothing for elderly females.

### OBJECTIVES

Underlying this study were the following objectives:

1. To summarize the general information section of the questionnaire to provide an accurate demographic description of the elderly population used for this study.
2. To determine if there is a difference in self-esteem between elderly females who are confined to nursing homes and those who are living independently.
3. To determine if there is a difference in interest in clothing between elderly females who are confined to nursing homes and those who are living independently.
4. To determine if a relationship exists between self-esteem and interest in clothing for confined elderly females.

5. To determine if a relationship exists between self-esteem and interest in clothing for nonconfined elderly females.
6. To determine if there is a relationship between clothing and/or self-esteem and the general variables age, educational level, income level, and self-rated health for elderly females.

NULL HYPOTHESES

1. There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of the confined and nonconfined elderly females on the measure of self-esteem.
2. There will be no significant difference between the mean scores of the confined and nonconfined elderly females on the measure of interest in clothing.
3. There will be no significant relationship between the score on the self-esteem measure and the score on the interest in clothing measure for confined elderly females.
4. There will be no significant relationship between the score on the self-esteem measure and the score on the interest in clothing measure for the nonconfined elderly females.
5. There will be no significant relationship between interest in clothing and/or self-esteem and the general variables age, educational level, income level, and general health.

### ASSUMPTIONS

1. Clothing interest differs among individuals and can be measured using a Likert type scale developed by Ebeling, 1960.
2. Responses to the clothing instrument will represent the participants' realistic assessment of their own interest in clothing.
3. Self-esteem can be measured using the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, Rosenberg, 1965.

### PROCEDURES

1. Select a sample of:
  - a. confined elderly females
  - b. nonconfined elderly females
2. Administer selected instruments:
  - a. Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale
  - b. Interest in Clothing
  - c. General Information
3. Score all tests
4. Analyze results descriptively and statistically
5. Interpret findings
6. Draw conclusions and make recommendations for further study

### DEFINITIONS

The following terms are defined as they are used in the study:

Elderly: persons over sixty-five years of age.

Confined women: females over sixty-five years of age who are living in nursing homes in Bozeman, Montana.

Nonconfined women: females over sixty-five years of age who are living independently in Bozeman, Montana. Living independently has been defined by Walton, 1978, as "the ability to select and maintain a lifestyle consistent with desires, means, and expectations."

Self-esteem: " . . . a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self (Rosenberg, 1965)." Operationally defined, self-esteem is the total score on the ten items of the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale. Self-esteem scores are then broken down into three groups: High (0-1), Medium (2), Low (3-6) (Rosenberg, 1965).

Clothing interest: " . . . a basis for judgment which provides direction for action or behavior toward wearing apparel (Feather, 76)." Operationally defined, interest in clothing is the total score on the nineteen-item interest in clothing measure developed by Ebeling, 1960, and modified by the researcher for this study. Interest in clothing scores are broken down into three categories: High (24-35), Medium (36-47), and Low (48-58), based on Ebeling, 1960.

General information: demographic information on age, educational level, income, and self-rated health for elderly females.

#### LIMITATIONS

1. The selection of the confined and nonconfined sample of elderly females is not random.
2. The size of the confined elderly sample is limited due to the small number of nursing homes in Bozeman, Montana.

3. No inferences can be made beyond the population of this study.

## CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## Self-Esteem

Harry Stack Sullivan stated that "the deepest human need is for self-esteem, and that each of us has an obligation to help one another achieve and maintain it (Knowles, 1980, p. 87)." Self-esteem has become an accepted term used to define certain aspects of human behavior.

Wells and Marwell (1976) compiled the following related names that have been used in relation to this same behavioral concept: "self-love, self-confidence, self-respect, self-acceptance, self-satisfaction, self-evaluation, self-appraisal, self-worth, sense of adequacy, sense of competence, self-ideal congruence, ego strength (1976, p. 7)." Wylie (1961) used the term self-regard as an all-inclusive term for the self-evaluation of self-concept.

To provide a historical background for self-esteem research, it is necessary to go back to the late 1800's. William James (1842-1910), an early American psychologist, is generally considered to be the first behavioral psychologist. James broke down the self into three component parts: the material me, the social me, and the spiritual me.

In its widest possible sense, however, a man's self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account. (James, 1981, p. 279)

James conceptualizes the physical body as the basis for the "material me" with clothing being an extension of the body. "The old saying that the human person is composed of three parts--soul, body, and clothes--is more than a joke (James, 1981, p. 280)."

Social self is defined by James as the "recognition which he gets from his mates. . . .we have an innate propensity to get ourselves noticed, and noticed favorably, by our kind (James, 1981, p. 281)." James, therefore, views self-esteem as a product of the social interaction process.

C. H. Cooley (1864-1929) was the next behavioral psychologist to deal with the self. Cooley is probably the best known for his theory of the "looking-glass self."

Each to each a looking-glass  
Reflects the other that doth pass  
(Cooley, 1964, p. 184)

This theory is dependent on the social interaction process whereby an individual's conception of self is determined by his/her perception of other people's reactions to him or her (Cooley, 1964). Cooley dealt only with self within this social structure.

As we see our face, figure, and dress in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and pleased or otherwise with them according as they do or do not answer to what we should like them to be; so in imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it. (Cooley, 1964, p. 184)

G. H. Mead (1863-1931) developed the Symbolic Interaction Theory as a means of understanding and explaining human behavior. The self, according to Mead, is not present at birth, but develops and grows as a process through social interaction throughout life (Mead, 1934). Mead

breaks down self into two components which are in continual interaction.

The first component, "I," involves a conscious awareness of self that is subject to continuous change; the second component is "me." Together these two components constitute human personality. According to the symbolic interaction theory, man acts as a response to verbal and non-verbal cues as part of the physical environment. These cues are a product of the social interaction process (Rose, 1962).

From these early psychologists came the beginnings of behavioral research as we know it today. ". . .Symbolic Interaction and its offshoots might represent the most significant current perspectives describing and dealing with self-esteem (Wells and Marwell, 1976, p. 29, 30)." The basic concept of this theory, emphasizing the importance of social interaction as the key to understanding and interpreting human experiences, serves as the framework for more recent empirical research in the area of self-esteem.

Stanley Coopersmith (1959) researched the development of self-esteem with eighty-five white middle-class fifth-grade male students. Coopersmith (1967) defines self-esteem as a "personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in attitudes the individual holds toward himself (p. 5)." From this research, Coopersmith concluded that although there were no distinct family patterns that differentiated high or low self-esteem, there were three contributors which were found strongly influential in the development of higher self-esteem: 1) acceptance of children by the parents; 2) enforcement of clearly defined limits for the children by the parents; and 3) respect for individual initiative and latitude within these limits by the parents (Coopersmith, 1967).



The research findings made by Coopersmith were based largely on one study of adolescents. These findings are generally consistent with those of Rosenberg (1965), who concentrated his early research with the development of a positive self-image during adolescence. Rosenberg began his research with the assumption that "the self image is central to the subjective life of the individual, largely determining his thoughts, feelings, and behavior (p. vii)." The population for this study consisted of 5,024 high-school juniors and seniors from ten high schools in New York State (Rosenberg, 1965).

Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as ". . . a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self (p. 30)." High self-esteem as expressed in the research meant having a feeling that one is "good enough," or, more simply stated, that the individual respects himself. "Low self esteem, on the other hand, implies self rejection, self dissatisfaction, self contempt (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 31)."

Brownfain (1962) expresses agreement with Rosenberg's philosophy through the statement, self-esteem is the "degree to which the individual accepts and values himself (p. 598)." Brownfain developed the Self-Rating Inventory in which an individual rates himself/herself on four aspects of self: private self, positive self, negative self, and social self.

Rosenberg (1965) found that people with low self-esteem exhibit more neurotic tendencies, have greater difficulty in social interaction, and have lower personal aspirations than those individuals with high self-esteem. Rosenberg used a ten-item self-evaluation questionnaire to establish a level of self-esteem. This questionnaire was originally

designed for use with adolescents, but use of the questionnaire has been expanded to include a wide range of age groups.

William Fitts, a clinical psychologist, studied self-esteem in relation to the process of self-actualization. He based his research on concepts developed earlier by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Fitts tried to establish a relationship between self-concept and rehabilitation through the use of the Tennessee Self Concept Scales (Fitts, 1965). Fitts (1965) defined self-concept as "the means of understanding the individual from his own frame of reference and as a resource for the better planning and assistance by those who would help him toward rehabilitation and/or self actualization (p. 5)." The Tennessee Self Concept Scale consists of one hundred items on a self-evaluative questionnaire that has been used with adults of all ages.

Many instruments, in addition to those of Rosenberg and Fitts, have been developed in an attempt to measure self-esteem. Each one has been designed to measure a certain aspect of self-concept. Since researchers, at the present time, are not in agreement as to the definition of self-esteem, it is only natural that many instruments have resulted in an attempt to measure this concept.

#### Self-Esteem and the Elderly

The study of self-esteem for elderly individuals is a relatively recent phenomenon. Davis (1962) researched the aspect of self-concept and social preferability with a group of thirty-three healthy nursing home residents. The Happiness Adjustment and Leisure Scales of Chicago Attitude Inventory were used. The research findings indicated that:

1) Peers preferred a person with a self-concept that reflected happiness and satisfaction with life. 2) Adjustments of older people to new situations were dependent on favorable social relationships.

Responses to mirrored reflections of self were the instruments used by Pollack, Karp, Kahn, and Goldfarb (1962) with 568 institution residents and 128 nonresidents. Self-derogatory responses to these mirrored reflections were given by 19.8 percent of the institution residents and by only 8.6 percent of the noninstitutionalized participants. Women were more self-derogatory than men. Their findings suggested that self-derogation is related to place of residence and sex.

Grant (1967) administered the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) to 500 volunteers from church groups in order to compare the self-concepts of individuals of various ages. His participants ranged in age from twenty to sixty-nine. Grant found that self-concept changed with age and that more positive self-concepts were found in the older age groups. Grant suggested that the positive self-concept of the elderly, rather than being an increase in self-esteem, was more likely a result of a denial of personal faults.

Kahana and Coe (1969) used the descriptions made by staff members of nursing home residents to assess self-concept. These descriptions were then compared to self-concept ratings made by the residents. This research found a difference between self-ratings and those made by the staff members. Also, the self-evaluations were consistently more positive than those done by the staff members.

Rosel (1971) interviewed 107 nursing home residents in two large cities and found self-concept to be positively related to good health.

Findings also indicated participation in social activities related significantly to positive self-concept.

Gordon and Vinacke (1971) compared fifty-two nursing home residents to forty-four college students in an advanced psychology class. They found very little difference in self-concept between the two groups. Findings indicated that self-concept was altered more by increased dependency than by advanced age or institutionalized living.

Trimakas and Nicolay (1974) administered the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) to 162 females over the age of sixty-five. All were tenants of a low-income senior housing project. Their findings suggested that elderly women had higher self-concept scores for the general public than had been previously reported by Fitts, 1965. Also, there was a positive relationship between high self-concept scores and altruism.

#### Summary of Self-Esteem

The measurement of various aspects of self-concept for the elderly individual has received limited attention in the last two decades. A variety of instruments have been used to obtain these results. This research has indicated the following: 1) very little difference in self-concept scores between individuals ranging in age from twenty to sixty-nine; 2) self-evaluation produced more positive scores than evaluations made by staff personnel; 3) self-evaluation produced greater derogation in females than males and in those who were residents of nursing homes than in those who were living independently; 4) adjustment to nursing home living was more successful if favorable social interaction was possible; 5) self-concept was altered by increased dependency

rather than by age or place of residence.

### Clothing

Research has been done in a variety of areas related to clothing. Research reviewed in this section is not a review of all clothing literature, only that which is most relevant to the research topic.

The basic concept of symbolic interaction theory suggests that the self is established, maintained, and altered through the social interaction process. Jersild (1952) describes clothing as an extension of self: a part of the perceptual field that others react to.

Sometimes directly, sometimes more subtly, a person's clothing and grooming are a projection of himself, his real self or his idealized self which he is trying to live up to. . . that an article of clothing. . . may be an important projection of self, a means of self defiance, of self vindication, or it may be a means of communication with others. (Jersild, 1952, p. 75)

Research done in relation to perception of clothing usage suggests that clothing gives many cues to the observer. Jacobson (1945) studied the impressions 258 college women had on fellow classmates. Remarks were classified into five categories: psychological nature, grooming, physical characteristics, clothing, and intelligence. Responses showed that students varied greatly in standards of grooming, taste in dress, interpretation of traits and attitudes and in criteria for a good appearance.

Ryan (1954) studied perception of self in relation to clothing. Female college students rated themselves on these factors: physical appearance, individuality in dress, and self-confidence. They were then instructed to rate themselves the way they felt the rest of the group

would rate them. A significant relationship was found between self-ratings and group ratings.

Rosencranz (1962) developed and administered the Clothing Apperception Test to eighty-two married women from various socio-economic levels to assess the symbolic nature of clothing. Approximately 15 percent of the total comments made by the participants related to dress. Rosencranz found that clothing was used by these women as an indicator of age, occupation, sex, culture, economic status, and occasion.

Jones (1968) asked 227 female college students to record their perceptions of clothing. Findings suggested that clothing varies in communicative value dependent on the perceiver's frame of reference. Those figures wearing fashionable clothing received higher self-esteem ratings than those in out-of-fashion clothing.

Reed (1973) used clothing styles as symbolic indicators of self in a study done with female college students. Results suggested clothing was an indicator of identity, attitudes, values, and moods.

#### Self-Concept and Interest in Clothing

The image of one's body is thought to influence greatly self-concept. Clothing may be considered an extension of the physical body, an extension of the personality, or may be included in the body image (Richards and Hawthorne, 1971).

Zion (1965) reported a linear relationship between body concept and self-concept, using Bill's Index of Adjustment and Values. Zion made the statement, "It appears that the security one has in one's body is

related to the security with which one faces oneself and the world (p. 490)."

Dewey (1973) found a significant relationship between general self-concept and clothing self-concept in a study done with college students.

Ryan (1966) suggested the hypothesis that the individual with a less favorable self-concept would have a greater interest in clothing and a greater need for clothing than the individual with a more positive self-concept.

Matthews (1963) researched attitudes toward clothing and the relationship these attitudes had with personality traits for college students. Findings suggested that clothing importance was associated with submissiveness in females but was not significantly affected by personality traits in males.

Engel (1959) studied the stability of self-concept of high school students in relation to clothing. The students did self-ratings on seven aspects of clothing: aesthetics, modesty, management, interest, special attention, social approval, and comfort. The students then rated themselves using descriptive adjectives to obtain information on stability of self-concept. No significant relationships were found between stability of self-concept and social class. Engel did find that social class was a more important determinant of attitudes toward clothing than was stability of self-concept.

Russell (1969) used the Allport, Vernon, Lindzey Study of Values and Pasnak's Clothing Attitude Measure (1968) to measure six variables from each instrument. Russell reported a positive relationship between

attitudes toward clothing and general values using forty-seven females from two age groups, twenty-one to thirty-five and thirty-six to fifty.

Frost (1968) studied attitudes toward clothing for male college students using a Clothing Attitude Opinionaire. Economy, comfort, and self-expression were found to be the most important aspects for college males. Personal values and attitudes toward clothing were also found to be related.

The following research in relation to self-concept and clothing was done with handicapped and nonhandicapped students. Friend (1969) worked with visibly and nonvisibly handicapped students to determine if a relationship existed between clothing values and self-concept. Friend found age and sex to affect self-concept scores. Males and older persons had higher self-concept ratings. No significant relationship was found between clothing values and self-concept.

Settle (1974) used blind and visually handicapped students to study the relationship between body concept and importance of clothing. The Importance of Clothing Questionnaire designed by Creekmore was used. Significant relationships were shown between body concept and attitudes toward clothing for adolescents.

Feather (1976) used physically handicapped and able-bodied college students as the sample for her research. The Tennessee Self Concept (TSCS) was used to measure self-concept and a Clothing Attitude Scale developed by Zentner measured appearance, fashion, and management. Feather found a greater interest in clothing for females than for males. Self-concept scores did not differ between able-bodied and physically handicapped university students. A correlation between self-concept and



attitudes toward clothing was not found to be significant.

Klassen (1967) used a sample of 251 boys and 270 girls in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades to test the possible relationship between attitudes toward clothing and self-esteem. Scales were developed to measure attitudes toward clothing and Brownfain's Self Rating Inventory was used to measure self-esteem. Findings indicated a difference in clothing values for males and females of high school age.

Humphrey (1967) also studied self-concept and clothing for adolescents as part of a larger study. Humphrey found that those females with a high level of self-concept may have used clothing as an expression of self, while those with an unstable self-concept may have used clothing to cope with the social situation. These findings agreed with the hypothesis stated by Ryan (1966).

Gregory (1973) studied sixty pre-adolescent females to determine if a relationship existed between attitudes toward clothing and self-concept for individuals from varying socioeconomic levels. No significant differences were found to exist between students of high or low self-concept. No relationship was found to exist between self-concept and socioeconomic level.

Research related to self-concept and clothing has been done with individuals from varying ages using a variety of instruments. In the past two decades, this research has been expanded to include elderly individuals.

#### Clothing and the Elderly

Robert J. Havinghurst (1953) stated that "clothing, a need common to all people, can also be a rational defense against aging (p. 16)."

Numerous studies have been done related to clothing preferences and suggested styles for elderly women: Rosencranz (1972), Ryan (1965), Bartley and Warden (1962), Newton and Tweten (1975), Richardson (1975), Allen (1975), and Grey (1968). Extensive research has also been done with self-help clothing for handicapped elderly individuals. But, in the area of relationships between self-esteem and clothing, there has been only a limited amount of research reported.

Allen (1954) suggests that the elderly can increase self-esteem through clothing. "A favorable impression through personal appearance is just as important as through behavior (p. 802)."

Ebeling and Rosencranz (1961) initiated a study of 180 women over the age of sixty to measure interest in clothing. A questionnaire specifically designed by Ebeling for use with the elderly was used. A comparison of rural and urban women was made. Results of this study indicate that the majority of women in this age level are interested in fashion magazines, fashion shows, style changes, and window shopping. Design and fit in clothing were more important than either price or ease of care. The majority of women would like to have more money to spend on clothes. Interest in clothing tended to decline after age seventy-five. Rural women sewed and read fashion magazines more regularly than did their urban counterparts. Rural women showed a stronger interest in clothing than did the urban women.

Merritt (1978) researched interest in clothing and self-concept for women over the age of sixty. The Canadian Self Esteem Inventory and the Clothing Interest/Importance Measure developed by Sharpe (1963) were used. Merritt reported no significant relationship between scores on

interest in clothing and self-esteem for elderly women. Women sixty to seventy-nine years of age have a stronger interest in clothing than do women over the age of eighty. Women under the age of seventy have higher self-esteem than do those over the age of seventy. Women in excellent health have significantly higher self-esteem than women with good or fair health. For healthy, active, older women, self-esteem is not related to defensiveness.

#### Summary

The summary of related literature is pertinent to the research of self-esteem and interest in clothing for confined and nonconfined elderly females. Research was presented as it related to self-esteem, self-esteem and the elderly, clothing, and interest in clothing and the elderly.

Self-esteem is a product of the social interaction process. It can change as the experiences of the individual change. Research has shown that the self-esteem of the elderly is as high or higher than that of younger individuals and that it is not determined by age or place of residence.

Clothing can be considered an extension of self and can be used as a defense against aging. Research has shown that the psychological needs that can be met at least in part by clothing are basically the same for the elderly as for other age groups.

Relationships between self-esteem and clothing have been researched with individuals of varying age groups. Positive relationships have been reported in studies done with individuals under

the age of fifty. Limited research has been done to determine if a difference exists in self-concept or interest in clothing for elderly females due to age, place of residence, socioeconomic level, or general health. With more research, the factors that influence differences in self-esteem and interest in clothing for elderly females may be explained.

## CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter I presented the problem, purpose, objectives, hypotheses, assumptions, procedure, definition of terms, and limitations of the study. In Chapter II, the literature related to self-esteem and interest in clothing were reviewed. Chapter III will provide a description of the population and procedures used in collecting the data. A description of the instruments and the procedures used for statistical analysis of the data are also presented.

The purpose of this study was threefold: 1) to determine if a difference existed in self-esteem and interest in clothing between two groups of elderly females; 2) to determine if a relationship existed between self-esteem and interest in clothing for elderly females; 3) to determine if a relationship existed between the general variables age, educational level, income level, and self-rated health and self-esteem and interest in clothing for elderly females.

## Description of the Population

The population addressed by this study included confined and nonconfined elderly females in Bozeman, Montana, a city of approximately 30,000 people. To compare the responses between these two groups, a sample of each was obtained.















































































































