SOURCE PREFERENCES OF FASHION OPINION LEADERS

AND NON-LEADERS: INVESTIGATION OF

COLLEGE STUDENTS IN

BANGKOK, THAILAND

BY

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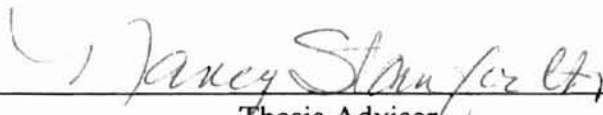Bachelor of Science

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Researchers have found that a variety of sources in the diffusion of information about new fashions are influential to consumers' level of acceptance of the new style (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). One way that marketers communicate with their target consumers is through the use of mass media. Mass media, such as magazines, television, and billboards, play an important part in transmitting information about new products and styles to consumers. As consumers become more time pressured and mass media is increasingly accessible, they have come to use mass media as the reporters on the distribution of acceptable opinion (Gunther, 1998; Katz, 1981) much more than in the past (Gunther, 1998). Therefore, mass media has become an important means of disseminating information about new and current products to consumers.

Another important vehicle for the communication of fashion information is interpersonal communication among consumers. Interpersonal communication is equally influential as mass media in influencing product choices (Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger, & Yale, 1998; Katona & Mueller, 1954; Keil & Layton, 1981; Price & Feick, 1984). Many studies have found that consumers often regard interpersonal sources as the most important information sources (Gilly, et al., 1998; Katona & Mueller, 1954; Katz &

Lazarsfeld, 1955; LeGrand & Udell, 1964; Price & Feick, 1984; Robertson, 1971; Thorelli, 1971).

Flynn, Goldsmith, and Eastman (1996) suggested that consumers are influenced by other consumers, and thus rely on this information even more when the decision has higher perceived risk (Gilly, et al., 1998; Cunningham, 1964, 1967; Lutz & Reilly, 1973; Perry & Hamm, 1969; Roseelius, 1971). Consumers imitate purchase and consumption behaviors they admire, gather information from other consumers through the process of social communication, and seek advice from others who have previous knowledge and experience. Consumers appear to trust the opinions of other consumers more than they trust formal marketer-dominated sources of information such as advertising. They use information from interpersonal sources to reduce risk, and to make both store and brand choices (Gilly, et al., 1998).

The fashion adoption process is the mental act of purchasing through the stages of 1) problem perception, 2) awareness, 3) comprehension, 4) attitude, 5) legitimization, 6) trial, and 7) adoption. Robertson (1971) defined each stage of the process as follows: *problem perception* is a stage in which a person perceives a need or desire for a product. *Awareness* is a stage in which a person becomes aware of the existence of new styles. *Comprehension* refers to the consciousness of the existence of a new fashion. *Attitude* is the development of favorable and unfavorable behavioral dispositions by a person concerning the style. *Legitimization* is the conviction that a new clothing style is appropriate. In this stage, a person is ready to move on to the trial stage. The *trial* stage is when the decision to test or try the style is made. Finally, *adoption* is the stage in

which a person actually tries the product or new style, and acts to incorporate the style into their wardrobe.

Fashion opinion leaders are important to the fashion system because of their unique role in the fashion process (Engel, Blackwell, & Mininard, 1990; Flynn, Goldsmith & Eastman, 1996; Roger, 1983) of influencing the choices other consumers make. Through their influence on others, fashion opinion leaders are important as a market segment beyond their individual purchase capacity.

The topic of opinion leadership has long been of interest to marketing managers and consumer researchers because opinion leaders play an important role in successful marketing strategies. The concept makes a key contribution to models of consumer decision-making (Engel, et al., 1990; Flynn, et al., 1996; Roger, 1983). Researchers are concerned with opinion leaders because they have strong influence on other consumers in several ways. They act as role models that inspire imitation among those who observe their purchase and consumption behavior. They spread information via word of mouth, as consumption is a major topic of social communication (Dawar, Parker, & Price, 1996). Finally, they influence others directly by giving advice and verbal direction for search, purchase, and use (Roger, 1983). According to King (1963), the fashion leader, a specific type of opinion leader, appears to define and endorse appropriate standards. In effect, the leader plays an important role as the instigator of mass acceptance of a new clothing style. It is the leaders' acceptance of a style that influences others to follow (Polegato & Wall, 1980).

Several studies have investigated the effective characteristics of opinion leaders (Goldsmith, et al., 1996; Goldsmith & Stith, 1993; Myers & Robertson, 1972). Some

have focused specifically on the relationship between opinion leaders and followers (Boyd & Taylor, 1998; Polegato & Wall, 1980), while other studies have focused on media effects on consumers (Day & Stafford, 1997; Finn, 1997). There are few studies, regardless of research context, which have specifically focused on the information sources preferred by opinion leaders. While there is a great deal of information about opinion leadership in the behavioral sciences as a whole, far too little is know about how opinion leaders use specific sources of information.

As the market for apparel becomes more global, it becomes increasingly important for marketers to define their target market and identify the best means to inform that target about new products. One of the most important target markets in the fashion apparel industry is the well-educated, cosmopolitan individual who is exposed to a variety of media. These people travel the world, read international media, shop in international stores, and often speak several languages (Anderson & Engledow, 1977; Dawar, et al., 1996). This is an important target market because this segment may influence other consumers as opinion leaders. Additionally, their sophisticated behaviors allow them to be reached with a global marketing strategy. While acquiring these individuals as customers may be a major objective of many global advertising campaigns, the larger objective may be to consequentially influence the decision making behavior of consumers who follow their styles (Anderson & Engledow, 1977; Dawar, et al., 1996).

The Asian market has several characteristics that make it particularly attractive to American firms. Asian consumers exhibit an ever-increasing demand for foreign products, ranging from general products to luxury products. Due to the superb reputation of American products in Asia, there is a great potential for Asian consumption of

American products, and one market segment which offers tremendous growth opportunity among Asians is young consumers (Quinn, 1997). Unfortunately, learning about the culture and characteristics of Asian consumers is problematic for American companies. A common hindrance to an American firm entering the Asian market is the scarcity of information about differences and similarities of Asian consumer characteristics as compared to American consumers.

While opinion leadership has been studied extensively, most academic research has focused on the United States with little consideration for international generalizability (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996; Feick & Price, 1987; Keil & Layton, 1981; Polegato & Wall, 1980; Myers & Robertson, 1972; Summers, 1970). International studies have investigated opinion leadership in India (Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988) and in Korea (Kim & Schrank, 1982). Both these studies showed that ten years ago those consumers started expecting American products in their daily lives, even though both are very conservative countries. However, little research has focused on Asian cultures in general, and no one has been identified as having studied opinion leadership in Thailand.

This study was designed to investigate sources of fashion information preferred by Thai opinion leaders as compared with those sources preferred by Thai non-opinion leaders to determine which sources are relevant for each group. Marketers for the apparel industry need opinion leaders to accept new products and pass the information to other consumers. Thus, the opinion leaders can play the role of an advertising agent after product adoption.

The Thai Apparel Market

Acceptance of Western culture and life style is increasing among the Thai population (Phupoksakul, 1998). A number of American apparel companies have started doing business in Thailand due to the high economic growth rate and the admiration for American brands among consumers in Thailand (Wongvarnrunguang, 1996). There are also many Thai students attending school overseas. They have adopted western fashions and prize American brands (Wongvarnrunguang, 1996). Western styles in apparel are widely accepted among Thai consumers and are seen in increasing numbers in the metropolitan centers. International brands and fashions are advertised in Thailand through Thai and internationally produced magazines, television programs, billboards, and fashion magazines. International fashions and brands appear to have been adopted primarily among young, educated Thai women and men.

While there has been extensive fashion research concerning both the fashion adoption process and opinion leaders conducted in the United States, there has been no empirical research on fashion in Thailand. Therefore, an important question to investigate is whether the fashion process operates in Thailand in a manner similar to Western societies. Thailand operates on entirely different cultural basis from the United States, leaning more towards conservatism. Therefore, the diffusion of fashion information may be quite different from that of the United States. As the fashion industry globalizes, it becomes more important for executives in the industry to understand the fashion process in these new markets.

Thailand has exerted considerable effort and resources to support technological developments. This effort has increased the use of media for communication and

education. As a result, as various social, economic, psychological, and technological forces interact, some traditional ways are changing. People are more exposed to global information. Mass media and interpersonal communication have been used to increase the amount of information available to consumers. All of these factors make Thailand ready to be a center for fashion in Southeast Asia and a burgeoning market for American styles.

A study of the fashion process in Thailand can help to identify consumer markets and their characteristics. Information concerning sources preferred by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders may be used by the apparel industry to better communicate with their potential customers. It will also add to our knowledge concerning the fashion process in a non-western society.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

Fashion opinion leaders are very important for the dissemination of information and validation of styles. Opinion leaders are generally the target market for marketers and advertisers of fashion due to their leadership characteristics. These consumers validate styles and make those styles acceptable to others. In addition, they are willing to spread information about these styles to others, such as family members and friends. The persuasiveness of opinion leadership is well documented (Dawar, et al., 1996; Gilly, et al., 1998; Kim & Schrank, 1982; Polegato & Wall, 1980; Reynolds & Darden, 1971). Many marketers have found that the opinions of friends and families are far more persuasive than advertisements (Gilly, et al., 1998; Katona & Mueller, 1954; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; LeGrand & Udell, 1964; Price & Feick, 1984; Robertson, 1971; Thorelli, 1971).

Apparel retailers and marketers are naturally interested in the fashion opinion leader segment because acceptance by these consumers may legitimize and facilitate the spread of new clothing fashions to later buyers. Incorporating knowledge of the preferred sources of information for the opinion leaders will help in designing strategies to reach and appeal to this key segment.

These findings should extend our knowledge of this specific category of market behavior. They should also contribute to this important concept in explaining consumer behavior. Finally, clothing marketers should find this additional knowledge about an important segment of their market helpful in designing marketing, promotional, and advertising strategies.

To achieve this overall purpose, the following objectives were established:

1. To distinguish fashion opinion leaders from non-opinion leaders among Thai college-age consumers.

2. To identify fashion information sources used by Thai fashion opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders.

3. To determine the demographic characteristics of Thai fashion opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders.

4. To investigate the relationship between fashion opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders.

5. To compare the outcome of the study with the studies in India, Korea, and the United States.

The purpose of the study was to observe the fashion process in operation in traditional society and examine opinion leadership among college students in Thailand by assessing the media exposure of fashion opinion leaders and fashion non-leaders. Based on the findings of previous research concerning adoption and diffusion of innovations in general, and fashion adoption and fashion diffusion in particular, four research questions were generated.

Research Questions of the Study

The researcher has established the questions for the study as follows:

1) Are there any differences in

    a. the number of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders during the awareness stage of the adoption process?

    b. the variety of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders during the awareness stage of the adoption process?

    c. the types of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders?

2) Are there any differences in

    a. the number of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders during the comprehension stage of the adoption process?

    b. the variety of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders during the comprehension stage of the adoption process?

    c. the types of fashion information sources used by opinion and non-opinion leaders during the comprehension stage of the adoption process?

3) Are there any differences in types of fashion information sources used by fashion opinion and non-opinion leaders during the legitimization stage of the fashion adoption process?

4) Are there any differences in the frequency of using fashion information sources by fashion opinion and non-opinion leaders?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms were established to clarify terms used in this study.

Fashion opinion leaders are individuals who give advice or information about fashion to fashion followers or people who convince the followers to try the fashion (Dawar, et al., 1996).

Fashion followers are people who seek fashion information and advice from the leaders (Polegato & Wall, 1980) and the last group of consumers who try the new fashion after the acceptance of majority (Stanforth, 1995). In this study, fashion followers will be all those consumers who are not fashion opinion leaders. We also refer to this group as non-opinion leaders.

Adoption process consists of eight stages in the adoption of the new product (Robertson, 1971). The eight steps are 1) problem perception, 2) awareness, 3) comprehension, 4) attitude, 5) legitimization, 6) trial, and 7) adoption. This study will focus only on three of the eight stages: awareness stage, comprehensive stage, and legitimization stage.

Awareness stage is the stage when a person is aware of new existing fashions (Sproles, 1979; Robertson, 1971).

Comprehensive stage is the stage that a person learns the product's characteristics and functions (Sproles, 1979; Robertson, 1971).

Legitimization stage is the stage when one decides to obtain more information about the product. It is in this stage that a person willing to adopt the product actually purchases the product (Sproles, 1979; Robertson, 1971).

Organization of Study

Chapter II consists of a review of literature. Methodological considerations related to the research are presented in Chapter III. Chapter IV is a manuscript for publication in a peer reviewed journal. Chapter V includes the summary and implications of the investigation, followed by the references and appendices.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is divided into several sections. The first section explains the fashion adoption process, and the steps in adoption process, followed by adopter categories. In the third section opinion leaders and definition of such are presented. Since the study investigates fashion opinion leaders in Thailand, ethnicity highly impacts consumer behavior and source preferences. Therefore, section four provides information about dimensions of the culture. The contextual overview (including general information about Thailand, the Thai people, the language, and the analysis of end users) in section five helps non-Thai readers to have a clearer picture of the country. It is anticipated that this section will help the reader interpret information presented concerning a setting unlike that in the West. The last section concerns the use of information sources in the fashion adoption process and in the study.

The Stages of Fashion Adoption Process

In deciding to adopt or reject an innovation, a person goes through a process of information seeking and learning known as the *fashion adoption process* (Robertson, 1971). The adoption process is defined as a mental sequence of stages through which the

consumer passes in arriving at the acceptance or rejection of decision (Robertson, 1971; Roger, 1983). Robertson (1971) suggested that there were seven stages of the adoption process. Each stage of Robertson's model can be described as follows:

1. **Problem perception stage** is initially a want or need, creating an inconsistency in the individual and probably stimulating the process of selective perception. Before any effective or systematic action can be taken to satisfy a need, a motive must be perceived and defined.

2. **Awareness stage** refers to the knowledge of the existence of a new clothing style, which may meet consumers' needs. Polegato and Wall (1980) found that respondents find it difficult to specify the precipitating sources of this awareness.

3. **Comprehensive stage** is a more relevant stage than awareness because it refers to consciousness of the existence of a new fashion; it is much easier to recall any sources of information used or consulted (Polegato & Wall, 1980). In this stage, consumers start gathering information from sources concerning the latest styles.

4. **Attitude stage** consists of the development of a favorable or unfavorable behavioral disposition by the individual toward the new style. Unless the outcome of this stage is favorable toward the innovation, the adoption process is likely to terminate. In this stage, the individual will either try the product or seek more information for legitimization.

5. **Legitimization stage** is the conviction that a new clothing style is either appropriate or inappropriate. The individual maybe convinced that the purchase is an appropriate course of action or the person is convinced not to try the product and the

adoption process discontinues. This stage is a necessary prerequisite to the trial of the new product.

6. Trial stage is the decision to test or try the innovation. The trial may simply be cognitive (symbolic adoption), in which case the individual projects him/herself vicariously into a hypothetical situation of using the innovation, or (s)he may actually, but temporarily, put the innovation to use (in part or in total depending upon the nature of the innovation). The reevaluation of the innovation on the basis of this new information (experience) may result in (a) rejection (incomplete acceptance process), (b) continued information gathering, or (c) adoption.

7. In the adoption stage, the individual decides and acts to implement the innovation on a full scale and on a more or less permanent basis. The idea or product ceases to be an innovation for the individual.

Categories of Consumer Adopters

Adopters can be defined as those consumers who have acquired (purchased, received as a gift, or made) at least one item of specific style, and who regularly wear the style for a certain time (Sproles, 1979). For any given style of dress, some consumers will be early adopters, some will adopt the style later, and others may never adopt the style. Consumers fall into groups of adopters depending on when they adopt a fashion. Sproles (1979) divided the adopters into five adopter categories, which focus on the specific time of adoption of the new products or fashion. The first two categories include

consumer change agents, specifically *fashion innovators* and *opinion leaders*. Consumer change agents influence the acceptance or rejection of new products.

Innovators adopt an innovation first. They are the first to display a new product, and play leading roles in the early stages of an innovation's acceptance. Equally important are *opinion leaders*, those who influence adoption and diffusion through interpersonal communications and contact with others (Sproles & Burns, 1989). Additionally, the opinion leader category may include a kind of consumer termed an early conformist, who may not necessarily qualify as a fashion leader but who is still an early adopter in the fashion trend.

The third adoption category is termed *mass-market consumers*. This group of consumers will adopt the new style when a style becomes a well-accepted fashion and becomes widely available in retail stores. Consumers adopting after this time can properly be categorized as *fashion followers*, since the fashion trend has been firmly established by mass-market consumers. Finally, as the fashion declines, certain laggards and isolates will still make their first decision to adopt the fashion. *Fashion laggards* may be viewed as people who almost grudgingly adopt the style, perhaps as a result of social pressure or because of its availability at low prices. The last group, *fashion isolates*, are those consumers who become late adopters because they are isolated from communications and social influences that would normally encourage them to be earlier adopters.

As a sixth adopter category we must also consider *non-adopters* as a separate category of consumers. These consumers, for whatever reason, never acquire the fashion. Non-adopters might include such groups as low-income consumers, the elderly,

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those who resist pressures to conform, geographically isolated consumers, or consumers living where the style is not available.

Fashion Opinion Leaders

Opinion leaders are an influential group of consumers (Myers & Robertson, 1972). Marketing research has found that personal sources perform a particularly influential role in affecting product choices (Katona & Mueller, 1954; Keil & Layton, 1981; Price & Feick, 1984) and have the potential for providing a greater magnitude for follower-consumer introduction than mass media (Chan & Misra, 1990; Homans, 1961). Therefore, opinion leaders are key players in the interpersonal channels of influence (Chan & Misra 1990) by promoting new fashions or leading resistance to new styles (Roger, 1983). For this reason, marketers may be interested in persuading a small audience to create a favorable attitude toward a new style or product, rather than simply informing a large audience about that product (Roger & Shoemaker, 1971).

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), in the first major investigation of personal communication in fashion, found that about two-thirds of the women in their study had made a recent fashion change, and personal influence had entered into most of these decisions. Their study also pointed to the importance of opinion leaders in verbally communicating with their friends about fashion and influencing their friends' choices. They found that fashion opinion leaders existed at all status levels of the consumer population, were concentrated in younger age groups, were high in fashion interest, and tended to be highly gregarious. It was also found that personal influence usually occurred between persons of equal social status and age—social peers. These findings

establish personal influence and opinion leadership as powerful and widespread influences on fashion diffusion.

Opinion leaders have been characterized as younger, with a higher education, earning higher incomes, showing greater social mobility (Chan & Misra, 1990; Gatignon & Robertson, 1985; Midgley & Dowling, 1978; Robertson, Zielinski, & Ward, 1984; Roger, 1983), and are more cosmopolitan (Dawar, et al., 1996) than average. Studies of consumers in Europe, North America (Dawar, et al., 1996) Korea (Kim & Schrank, 1982), and India (Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988) found that opinion leaders in various cultures have similar characteristics.

Goldsmith, Flynn, and Moore (1966) investigated the self-concept of fashion leaders. The respondents were college students majoring in home economic and business at two universities in the southeast United States. The convenience sample consisted of 100 men and 276 women, ranging in age from 18 to 64. Self-concept, fashion leadership, fashion opinion leadership, fashion involvement, perceived knowledge of specific product domain, and fashion-related behaviors were investigated. The results indicated that leaders were more likely to report that they acted as fashion opinion leaders, were more involved with new fashions, were more knowledgeable about fashions, shopped more, and spent more for clothing than later adopters and laggards. Fashion leaders also described themselves as more excitable, indulgent, colorful, and vain than the followers. They also found that fashion leaders see themselves as contemporary, perhaps an essential feature in keeping up with new fashions. Fashion leaders placed more emphasis on the social values of excitement and fun/enjoyment in life than followers. Being more

vain suggested that fashion leaders see new fashions as a means to enhance their sense of self-worth and promote self-presentation.

McDonald (1971) studied adolescent fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders and their communication channels. The participants were 509 students in high school in Connecticut. The questionnaires included a demographic and sociological section, a personality characteristics section, an opinion leadership measure, and communication media checklist. A self-designating opinion leadership measure was used to divide the group into fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders. A results showed that fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders were more alike than different with respect to demographic, sociological, or personality characteristics. The usage of fashion communication media and demonstrated fashion interest were the best indicators of adolescent fashion opinion leadership.

In terms of personality characteristics, opinion leaders have been reported to be less dogmatic (Chan & Misra, 1990; Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 1980; Jacoby, 1971), more innovative (Myers & Robertson, 1972; Summers, 1970), more venturesome (Taylors, 1977), likely to be confident in their appraisal of the product category, and more socially active (Summers, 1970). Other attributes of opinion leadership were open-mindedness and a favorable attitude toward risk (Gatignon & Robertson, 1985). Self-confidence in this arena is probably a function of greater knowledge of product features as a result of higher level of involvement in product category (Chan & Misra, 1990). Social activity is probably a function of a general tendency to be more gregarious and cosmopolitan (Baumgarten, 1975; Chan & Misra, 1990).

Chan and Misra (1990) studied personalities of opinion leaders and non-leaders to outline the distinctions in characteristics of opinion leaders. Respondents were 262 American undergraduate students, of which 30 percent were opinion leaders. They found that a subject who had a high degree of personal involvement and product familiarity, and who was also more willing to individuate him/herself publicly (public individuation) was more likely to be an opinion leader for that product class. They found that public individuation was a significant discriminating variable, along with personal involvement with the product and product familiarity, in the identification of opinion leaders. Opinion leaders must not only hold a favorable predisposition toward a product, but must also be willing to transmit that favorable information. Therefore, the findings suggested that opinion leaders hold great potential for as a target market for advertising due to their public individuation characteristic.

Summers (1970) analyzed the characteristics of women's clothing fashion opinion leaders. Respondents were 1,000 female homemakers. A personal interview questionnaire and four self-administered questionnaires were used in the study. The dimensions investigated focused on the identity of the opinion leader and were classified into three basic categories of characteristics 1) demographic, 2) social and attitudinal, and 3) topic-oriented. The results showed that opinion leaders were more highly concentrated among those respondents who were younger, had more education, had higher incomes, and had higher occupational status. Sociological characteristics provided an effective means of locating concentrations of women's clothing fashion opinion leaders. Physical mobility, higher levels of "cosmopolitan" characteristics of leaders in a numbers of topic areas, may allow the individual greater opportunity for exposure to new and different

fashion ideas, which may in turn provide fashion information for social conversation. Social communications and social interaction acted as strong determinants of opinion leadership in women's fashions. The results showed that opinion leaders tended to have more exposure to mass media in general and substantially more to media specializing in their area of influence.

Myers and Robertson's (1972) study concerned the dimensions of opinion leadership. The study used a self-designation method of measuring opinion leadership. Participants were 400 housewives, members of the Trend-Setters panel of Haug Associates, Inc., Los Angles. The respondents were asked to answer a 5-page questionnaire, which focused on opinion leadership dimensions. The first dimension concerned the degree of interest and knowledge of the product. Opinion leaders had higher levels of knowledge and interest in the product than non-leaders. The second dimension concerned communication. Opinion leaders were found to be two-way communicators, that is, people who influence others are themselves influenced by others in the same topic area. The third dimension was opinion leaders in a specific area were more likely to be innovators for new products or ideas in the area than are non-leaders. The fourth dimension showed that opinion leadership was positively related to overall social leadership and opinion leadership is positively related to the individual's overall level of social activities. The last dimension, opinion leadership was not a generalized trait: a leader in one topic area was not necessarily also a leader in others.

Contextual Overview

The Asian market is one on which American marketers are focusing more attention. Asia has increased in importance to American firms; Asia is one of the largest market areas for American exports (Quinn, 1997), and the fastest growing market for American goods (Verret, 1997). The characteristics that make the Thai market particularly attractive to American firms are that Thai consumers exhibit an ever-increasing demand for foreign products, ranging from general products to luxury products (Quinn, 1997), and also maintain a high level of admiration for American products (Wongvarnrunguang, 1996).

No research has focused on fashion in Thailand and the Thai apparel market. Empirical studies of opinion leadership and adoption processes in other countries were examined to identify a theoretical framework, the pertinent concepts, and possible relationships among variables. The next section provides basic information about Thailand and the common characteristics of the fashion apparel industry for the benefit of non-Thai readers.

Geography

Thailand is located in South East Asia, surrounded by Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Malaysia. It is divided into 76 provinces. There is a densely populated central plain; a northern plateau; a mountain range in the west; and a southern isthmus that joins the landmass with Malaysia to the south (USDOC, 1997).

Economy

Thailand is one of more advanced developing countries in Asia. Thailand depends on exports of manufactured goods—including high-technology goods—and the development of the service sector to fuel the country's rapid growth, averaging 9% since 1989. Imports of consumer goods have begun to rise in every segment including apparel products (Phupoksakul, 1998).

From 1988 to 1995, the economy increasingly turned to manufacturing, largely a low-wage, low-skill, export-oriented sector. Manufacturing became non-competitive with other industries as the boom years of 1988 and 1995 raised the Thai standard of living well above that of nearby countries, thus pricing its labor (and goods) out of the market. By mid-1995, income distribution was among the most skewed in the world (Phupoksakul, 1998), resulting in a middle class which was able to push the country toward democracy, but also in rural incomes which were, on average, one tenth of those in the cities.

Government

Thailand has constitutional monarchy with a King as its head. In Thailand, the King is a figurehead, a symbol of national identity and unity, with little direct power under the constitution. The present monarch, who has been on the throne for 50 years, commands enormous popular respect and moral authority, which he has used on occasion to resolve political crises that have threatened national stability (Phupoksakul, 1996).

People

The Thai population is comprised of 75 percent Thai, 14 percent Chinese, and 11 percent other ethnic groups, such as Laotians, Vietnamese, and Burmese (Tobias, 1998). Fourteen percent of the total Thai population lives in Bangkok. Bangkok is the heart of Thailand, where there are over 8 million residents (Phupoksakul, 1996).

Language

Thai is the official language. Thai has a number of ethnic and regional dialects, spoken in each part of Thailand. English is the most widely spoken second language in the country. Chinese is spoken among the Chinese population in Thailand.

Education

When Thailand started on the road to modern development in the 60s, a concerted effort was made to create a literate population. Education through the sixth grade was made compulsory. It took many years to implement that policy, but today Thailand has a literacy rate of 95 percent (Tobias, 1998).

Thailand still has a problem with higher education. There is intense competition to be accepted into public universities. Many students go to college, but only those who come from families with adequate incomes to afford school expenses. Students living in urban areas have a better chance of being accepted to study in universities. Study abroad is limited to students from upper-middle class families that can afford the higher school expenses.

Bangkok, Capital City of Thailand

This research concerned respondents in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. Bangkok is the largest population center in Thailand. Most of the clothing companies use Bangkok as their main base due to high technology and more convenient facilities of the city (Phupoksakul, 1996).

Bangkok has 2.7 million households, about 12 percent of the 23 million households in Thailand. In Bangkok, people age 25 and under account for 46 percent of the total population (Phupoksakul, 1996). Higher than average incomes in Bangkok makes it a major marketplace for the fashion and apparel business in Thailand. Bangkok families earn 1.26 times more than the average annual household income for the rest of the nation. Average annual income for a family in Bangkok is 306,240 Baht ($7,656), compared to 135,600 Baht ($3,390), the country's average.

Thai End-Used Consumer Analysis

Imports from the US had been steadily increasing over the past several years, but are expected to drop in the next several years as a consequence of the devaluation of Thai Baht in 1996. Although the importation of women's garments from the US are expected to drop due to the relatively strong US dollar, apparel and accessories imports are still high (Tobias, 1998).

Categories of End-Users of Woman's Apparel in Thailand

Women's apparel consumers in Thailand are divided into three groups, junior or young consumers, career women, and housewives, by their characteristics and the age ranges as follows (Wongvarnrunguang, 1996):

- The first group is junior or young consumers (ages 15-20). This group includes college and high school students. Western-made casual wear is most popular with this group. Their disposable income is dependent on their family. Teenagers of upper and upper/middle income families have a tendency to buy well-known imported brand name products. Brand names often influence their decisions more than personal tastes. They spend liberally on clothes despite (and often because of) the fact that prices of garments are moderately high, though they have no income of their own. Brand names are a strong influence on young Thai consumers. The most famous brands among this group are DKNY, Esprit, Bennetton, etc. Spending is almost solely for casual and weekend wear since all schools, public and private, through high school, require uniforms.

  Garment size is not important for this group. They prefer loose fitting, casual clothes. Brands that are popular in the U.S. are popular among Thai teens. Teens from high-income families tend to buy well-known imported brands from Western countries.

- The second group is career women (ages 20-35). These are the major buyers in Thailand in terms of apparel volume. They like handy, comfortable, multipurpose clothing that is appropriate for the work place as well as other occasions, but prefer

dressy rather than casual garments. Brand names carry slightly less weight with career women than with teens. People in this group prefer quality to the allure of a name. The leading brands in this group are DKNY, Maxmara, Penny Black, Anne Klein, Armani, Fly now, Jaspal, etc. Local designers that are popular among the upper income group, are Pichitra, Duangjai Breez, and Noriko. Imports from South Korea and Hong Kong are also doing well with middle income career woman. Classic styles with simple colors or natural tones are very popular.

- The third group is the housewife group (age 35 and up) from high-income families. They purchase the most expensive suits, dresses, skirts and sweaters. These women will buy prestigious and exclusive brand names such as Maxmara, Celine, Gucci, Dior, Armani, St. John, etc. Their favorite local designers are Noriko, Duangjai Breez, and Pichitra.

In general, Thai women from low-income families are less brand conscious and want the best value for their money. Middle-income women care about brand names, but still care about price and quality. High-income purchasers prefer prestigious and exclusive brand names and boutiques. Thais do not have any specific preferences for type of garments. However, since dry cleaning is rather expensive and time consuming, women with low and medium incomes will avoid textile materials that need dry cleaning. Sizing of imports is important, as Thai women are smaller than European and American women.

Fashion Information Sources

The preceding discussion suggests that consumers have many motivations to seek information on fashions (King & Summers, 1967). Empirical research (Bayus, Carroll, & Rao, 1966; Coleman, Katz, & Menzel, 1966; Gilly, et al., 1998) showed that opinion leaders appear to receive more information via non-personal sources of information and are more product involved on an enduring basis. Therefore, they maintain a higher continuous level of interest in the product area in which they are opinion leaders (Bloch & Richins, 1983; Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridway, 1986; Gilly, et al., 1998; Jacoby & Hoyer, 1981). As fashion clothing is generally a highly involving product, opinion leaders will maintain their search for information until they are satisfied.

In the fashion adoption process, several researchers have shown that consumers are exposed to, and use, a variety of informational sources in their decision to adopt fashions. For example, King and Summers (1967) reviewed findings of several studies in which adult women identified sources of information they saw as helpful in keeping informed concerning current fashions. Each of the studies used similar methods for identifying helpful sources. The studies were conducted in New York, Cleveland, and Boston. In each of the studies, specialized fashion sources like fashion magazines and fashion shows were most frequently cited as helpful sources. Also important was information seeking through personal communications, the more general rather than specialized fashion media, and shopping in retail stores.

In a similar investigation by King and Sproles (1973), 97 adult women in Indianapolis were asked to identify a single "most helpful" source of fashion information.

Again, a large number of differing informational sources were identified, with newspapers, fashion magazines, and retail store displays cited as "most helpful."

Gilkison (1973) examined teenagers' perceptions of the relative importance of different informational sources in influencing their clothing purchases. The study was first conducted in 1961, and then repeated in 1971, among teen males and females, age 16 to 19. In each of these studies, teenagers were asked to rank the importance of five informational sources: parents, friends, salespersons, magazines and newspapers, and television. The differences between the rankings for 1961 and 1971 are interesting. Among males in the 1961 study, parents were most frequently mentioned as the most important source, followed in order by friends, magazines and newspapers, salespersons, and television. In comparison, in the 1971 study, male respondents ranked friends as most important, followed by magazines and newspapers, salespersons, parents, and television. Females followed a similar pattern. In 1961, females ranked parents as the most important source followed by friends, salespersons, magazines, and television. In 1971, they ranked friends most important, followed by salespersons and television, then parents, and finally magazines and newspapers. These findings underscore the importance of personal sources—parents, friends, and salespersons—influencing teenagers'clothing purchases. Of interest is the decreasing importance of parents, and the increasing importance of friends observed in the 1971 study. This finding supports the notion that friendships exercise an important influence on the individual's decision making.

Sproles (1977) further explored consumer perceptions of helpful information sources. The study involved a survey of 989 randomly selected, adult women in Indiana.

They found that consumers used a wide range of information sources on a regular basis. However, certain kinds of communications through mass media, personal contact, and the retailing system clearly were seen as the most frequently used. Those mass media sources most commonly used included looking through women's magazines, reading newspaper and magazine ads on fashion, watching clothing advertisements on TV, and looking through fashion magazines. Personal sources were watching what other women are wearing, talking to family members, talking with friends about current fashions, and seeing what movie and TV celebrities wear. Respondents indicated that shopping at the local stores, observing clothing store displays, looking through mail order catalogs, and talking with store salespersons were important sources of fashion information.

Beal and Roger (1957) found that consumers use different sources of information at different stages of the adoption process. The adoption process used in this study consisted of five stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption or rejection. They focused on identifying sources of information used by rural homemakers in their decision to adopt fabrics containing nylon, Orlon, and Dacron. Sources used by consumers were divided into five categories: mass media, agencies (home economics class and Extension Service), personal communications, commercial communications (e.g. retail stores, garment labels, store salespersons), and self (personal experience with the product). They found that each of these categories of sources had different levels of use at each stage in the adoption process.

- *Awareness Stage*. Mass media were by far the most important sources for creating awareness. Magazines were most frequently mentioned as the most specific source.

Next in importance were personal communications, followed by the commercial sources.

- *Interest Stage (information stage).* Both mass media and personal communications were equally used at this stage, followed by commercial sources.

- *Evaluation Stage (application stage).* At this stage, when the consumer is evaluating information in contemplation of a decision, personal communication was the major source of information. Commercial sources were second and mass media were the third.

- *Trial Stage.* At this stage, the individual is about to make the purchase decision. Therefore, it should not be surprising that commercial sources were by far the most frequently mentioned. Second most mentioned was personal communication.

- *Adoption Stage.* Personal satisfaction with a product is important to the continued purchase and use of product, and all the respondents mentioned this source. However, the investigators did not attempt to determine if further use of other sources occurred in a decision to continue adoption.

Polegato and Wall (1980) studied the adoption processes as defined by Robertson (1971). They selected 187 young, single Canadian females from colleges in which a substantial number of fashion leaders were thought likely to be found. The number, frequency, type, and variety of fashion information sources used by fashion opinion leaders and followers in the awareness, comprehension, and legitimization stages of the fashion adoption process were studied. The instrument consisted of four parts: 1) a fashion opinion leader scale; 2) open-ended questions concerning fashion information

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sources used in the adoption process stages of awareness, comprehension, and legitimization; 3) multiple choice statements concerning the frequency, number, type, and variety of information sources used; and 4) the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Polegato and Walls' study focused on only three of the seven stages that deal with gathering information for further stages of adoption. Thus, the purpose of the study was to determine whether fashion leaders could be differentiated from followers with the respect to the use of fashion information sources in three stages of the fashion adoption process. They found that both opinion leaders and followers reported that they most frequently used market-dominated sources during the awareness stage of new clothing styles. In-store displays, window shopping, and magazines were recalled by both opinion leaders and followers as being used in the awareness stage. None of the opinion leaders recalled any consumer-dominated sources. Unlike the followers, observing what friends wear was used as a source of awareness. Thus, followers relied on other consumers to select new clothing styles first.

In the comprehension stage, opinion leaders and followers did not differ in the number of sources used. However, the type of source changed, with leaders using marketer-dominated sources and followers using consumer-dominated sources. During the third stage, the legitimization stage, leaders used a greater number of sources than followers; however, at this stage, many of the leaders and followers did not consult any source. Although the two groups differed in the variety of sources used, they did not differ in the type of sources used.

Chowdhary and Dickey (1988) used the same adoption process as Robertson (1971) to study the exposure to media of fashion opinion leaders as compared to non-leaders in India. The sample consisted of 509 Indian, female college students from four universities in northeastern India. The frequency and types of sources used to acquire fashion information in three different stages, awareness, comprehension, and legitimization, were investigated. Sources used for fashion information were separated into impersonal sources such as magazines, newspapers, window displays, fashion shows, pattern books, and observation of movie actresses, and personal sources such as asking a sales person, observing others, and asking tailors. Both leaders and non-leaders used impersonal sources more than personal sources of fashion information during the awareness stage. In the comprehension stage, leaders used impersonal sources more than non-leaders, and non-leaders used personal sources of fashion information more than leaders. Fashion magazines were used the most during the awareness and comprehension stages; "seeing what friends wear" and "discuss with friends" were less used during these two stages. During the legitimization stage, the family's opinions were ranked the most important source, followed by "seeing what friends wear" by both leaders and non-leaders.

Types of Fashion Information

This section consists of a discussion of research concerning types of fashion information. This study will use three categories, consumer-dominated, market-dominated, and neutral, to facilitate analysis, and to expedite comparisons with the research that had been done in the past (Polegato & Wall, 1980). The first category,

consumer-dominated, includes classmates and friends' use of the fashion, friends' discussion, observation of clothing at social gatherings, observation of popular use in public places, discussion with friends of the opposite sex, and solicitation of parents' opinions.

The second category, market-dominated, consists of window displays, fashion magazines, fashion shows, in-store displays, fashion counselors, newspaper articles on fashion, visits to boutiques, fashion ads in newspapers, movies, or posters, pattern books, and internet.

The third category is termed neutral. It consists of television performers, movie actresses, fashion models, fashion columns, and prominent women in the news (Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988; Polegato & Wall, 1980).

Consumer-dominated sources.

Consumer-dominated sources are generally personal communication. The trends in fashions begun by impersonal communications can further diffuse through personal communications. Personal communications occur when people interact directly with each other (Sproles, 1979). The most obvious case is two or more persons engaged in verbal discussion.

Personal communication has several features that enhance the impact on consumer decisions. Informal and relaxed discussion of information is possible, and the participants can share their opinions, evaluations, and accumulated knowledge with each other. The consumers may ask for and receive information whenever desired, whereas information from impersonal communications is not always readily available when it is

needed. Style can be observed and discussed in the actual setting of use; for instance, information on the appropriate styles for a social gathering might be obtained by noting and discussing actual behavior at a party, club meeting, or other social occasion. The consumers may seek personal information, such as what accessories to match with a particular product. Furthermore, the credibility of each person communicating information can be immediately assessed. These communications can legitimate a style as a candidate for adoption. For this reason, personal communications can be an informative and persuasive kind of communication (Sproles, 1979).

Flynn, Goldsmith, and Eastman (1996) found that consumers influence other consumers in several ways. They act as role models, imparting information to those who observe their purchase and consumption behavior. They spread information via word of mouth, as consumption is a major topic of social discussion. Additionally, they influence others directly by giving advice and verbal direction for search, purchase, and use. Consumers appear to trust the opinions of others more than they do formal marketer-dominated sources of information search such as advertising, and they use interpersonal sources to reduce risk (Flynn, et al., 1996).

King and Summers (1967) investigated the dynamics of personal communications in the diffusion of fashion information. The study focused on the identification of two-person dyads where an exchange of fashion information occurred between pairs of friends or family members. The participants in the investigation were 507 women in Boston. Data was collected on the sort of information people discussed, whether the interaction was with family or non-family members, and demographics of the participants. The total volume of communications was substantial, with 66 percent of the

sample indicating they had engaged in a fashion discussion either as a source, a receiver, or both. Topics of discussion were in three areas. First, 32 percent of the women had spoken about general fashion trends, such as popular styles, colors, and materials for the coming season. A total of 23 percent had discussed shopping information, such as availability and price of style at local stores. Finally, 45 percent of the respondents discussed individual fashion information, such as what would look good on the person, what friends were wearing, and styles for particular occasions. The topics discussed were quite similar in interactions among family and non-family members.

They also found that personal communications concerning fashion are very active, and a variety of potentially influential subjects are discussed. Personal communications are active both among family members and among friends, and that discussion frequently occurs as a two-way exchange among individuals. Finally, discussions most frequently occur between individuals similar in age and socioeconomic status, and who therefore could be expected to have much to say of relevance to each other.

Another type of personal communication is visual observation of other people. The observer receives visual but unspoken cues or bits of information simply by watching other people. A great deal of information on fashion is communicated when a person observes the dress of others. Personal appearance of the person observed is a significant part of that communication. In fact, visual observation of dress can be the most important kind of fashion communication. When people regularly engage in social interaction, or encounter strangers, conscious or unconscious observation of others becomes an active and ever-present channel of communication.

In Thailand, new styles of fashion are spread rapidly among teenagers wearing the same styles, as one looks to the others for information. The observation of what friends wear leads them to discuss current fashions with friends, and they want to dress like their friends to fit in their group. Therefore, peers are important sources of information for Thai teens.

Market-dominated sources.

While consumer-dominated sources are important influences in the diffusion of fashion and are perceived as trustworthy sources, market-dominated sources such as window displays, in-store displays, fashion magazines, fashion shows, and visits to boutiques also play an important role in providing information for wide groups of consumers. In Thailand, many fashion magazines are available which convey world fashion trends very quickly, and consumers are influenced not only by the magazines but also by other mass media and world fashion events. The leaders in world fashion that influence most Thai women are Gucci, Episode, and Dior (Wongvarnrunguang, 1996). Most consumers like to spend time in malls window-shopping. In-store displays are sources of information about new arrivals in the stores. In addition, the mall's promotions, such as fashion shows, are important sources of information for those consumers who spend their leisure time there. As tailor-made clothes are not expensive in Thailand, visiting boutiques, talking to fashion counselors, looking for fashions in the pattern books are important information sources for Thai consumers as well.

Kang and Kim (1998) investigated influences on Asian-American consumers' purchase decision making for social clothes in the United States. A random sample of

respondents was selected from a purchased list of consumers with Asian surnames. The respondents included 152 Chinese, 185 Japanese, and 144 Koreans. Respondents indicated the most influential media for decision-making for social-clothing purchasing. Television, newspapers, and radio were the most used sources among the three groups of consumers for information concerning social-clothing purchasing.

Neutral

The last group of information sources is termed neutral. This is neither consumer-dominated nor marketer-dominated. This group consists of television performers, movie actors and actresses, prominent women in the news, and the fashion columnists in fashion magazines or newspapers. People in this group are carriers of fashion information, perceived as neutral sources, with no particular allegiance to any specific brand or style. They are the style-setters for many. Consumers look to this group for advice and for the newest fashions to emulate. This group is often the opinion leaders for many consumers. As they appear often in public, with their adopted styles in evidence, it is easy for consumers to use them as their models. Thus, consumers are exposed to a variety of styles, which can have an effect on fashion choices.

In Thailand, many fashion consumers are looking for new styles through TV. Celebrities are important sources of information for Thai consumers. They appear in the society columns in fashion magazines, on television programs such as fund-raising or movie-award programs, and in the community news. Consumers pay attention to what they are wearing and frequently use them as a source of fashion information.

Summary

Several studies have reported that fashion opinion leaders are exposed to a greater variety of information sources than non-opinion leaders (Dawar, et al., 1996; King & Summers, 1967; Roger & Shoemaker, 1971). They are also categorized as younger, higher educated, earning higher incomes, showing greater social interaction with others (Chan & Misra, 1990; Gatignon & Robertson, 1985; Midgley & Dowling, 1978; Robertson, Zielinski, & Ward, 1984; Roger, 1983), more open-minded, and more innovative (Gatignon & Robertson, 1985). Other studies have found that the types of media used differ in the various stages of the adoption process (Beal & Roger, 1957; Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988; Polegato & Wall, 1980). Cultural differences may cause consumers to act upon stimulation differently (Dawar, et al., 1996). However, little is known about Thai opinion leaders and their preferred sources of information. Therefore, this study is designed to investigate information sources preferred by opinion leaders and non-leaders in different stages of the adoption process in Thailand.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework of the study was based on the diffusion process and the adoption process of innovation (Roger, 1962; Robertson, 1971) with particular emphasis on the fashion process. A survey method was employed to investigate the following research questions:

1) Are there any differences in

    a. the number of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders during the awareness stage of the adoption process?

    b. the variety of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders during the awareness stage of the adoption process?

    c. the types of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders?

2) Are there any differences in

    a. the number of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders during the comprehension stage of the adoption process?

    b. the variety of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders during the comprehension stage of the adoption process?

c. the types of fashion information sources used by opinion and non-opinion leaders during the comprehension stage of the adoption process?

3) Are there any differences in types of fashion information sources used by fashion opinion and non-opinion leaders during the legitimization stage of the fashion adoption process?

4) Are there any differences in the frequency of using fashion information sources by fashion opinion and non-opinion leaders?

Sampling Process

Previous research showed that fashion conscious consumers were usually younger in age and had a higher level of education (Dawar, et al., 1996; Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988; Kim & Schrank, 1982; Myers & Robertson, 1972; Summers, 1970). In addition, certain individuals, such as college students, are susceptible to personal influence, advertising, and other forms of influence because they were facing a "new life experience" and aspiring to membership in a certain group (Robertson, 1971). Therefore, college-aged students living in Bangkok were selected as respondents. They are more likely to have access to a variety of media as sources of fashion information and are more fashion conscious than other groups in Thailand. Thus, college age students were appropriate for this study.

Thai male and female students from a variety of majors in the universities in Bangkok were chosen as the respondents in this study. Respondents were students

enrolled in the universities during fall semester. They voluntarily participated in answering the questions concerning their use of fashion information sources.

Instrumentation

A self-completion, paper and pencil instrument was chosen to collect the data. The researcher adapted an instrument concerning the source preferences used by fashion consumers in the seven stages of the adoption process (Robertson, 1971). The final instrument included four sections: 1) fashion opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders scale, 2) list of potential sources of fashion information used in the three stages of fashion adoption, 3) the frequency of use of various sources of fashion information, and 4) demographic variables.

Fashion Opinion Leadership Scale

The first section of the instrument was an opinion leadership scale, with respondents self-identifying as opinion leaders (Roger, 1962). The self-designating method used by Roger (1962) was considered to be an appropriate method for measuring opinion leadership. The scale had been found to be a reliable, valid, and unidimensional instrument. Summers (1970), Chowdhary and Dickey (1988), and Kim and Schrank (1982) found the scale to be successful in identifying fashion leaders. The scale concerns the characteristics of opinion leaders and how the leaders interact with followers. The scale consists of yes-no and multiple-choice questions. The last question of the scale asked the respondents to self-identify as fashion opinion leaders or non-leaders.

Sources Used for Fashion Information

The second section was composed of information sources that may be used by opinion leaders in the awareness, comprehension, and legitimatization stages of the adoption process. This section was based on research by Polegato and Wall (1980) that categorized sources used by individuals to seek information about the latest styles into three groups: market-dominated, consumer-dominated, and neutral.

Polegato and Wall's instrument was modified for this study. Some of sources in Polegato and Wall's study were considered inappropriate and thus were eliminated. Items eliminated were "ads in campus newspaper," "radio program," and "mail-order catalog". Reasons for deleting items included the following: "ads in campus newspaper" were not available in the colleges in Thailand, as most of universities do not have campus newspapers, "radio programs" are not used to promote apparel merchandise in Thailand, "mail-order catalogs" were not readily available in Thailand yet.

Some of sources added to the list of market-dominated were "Asking tailors" and "visiting boutiques". "Asking tailors" is normal in Thailand, as it is relatively inexpensive for Thais to have their own tailors as compared with America. "Asking parents for ideas" and "observing clothing from a social gathering" were added to the consumer-dominated list. "Asking parents for ideas" was important because most of the students' were financially dependent on their parents. "Observing clothing from social gatherings" is also common in Thailand.

The respondents were asked to indicate which fashion information sources they used in each of the three stages of the fashion adoption process: awareness, comprehensive and legitimatization stages. In the fourth section, respondents indicated

how frequently they used each of these fashion information sources. The final section included demographic information concerning respondents.

Information sources used in the awareness stage

The first section listed sources of fashion information that might be used in the awareness stage. This stage is when people first become aware that a style exists. Respondents were asked to identify all the sources that make them aware of new styles.

Information sources used in the comprehension stage

This section of the instrument used the same list of sources as the previous section to identify which were used in the information processing stage. This section referred to those fashion information sources used in gathering information about the new fashion and understanding the functions it performed. Respondents were asked to identify the sources that they thought that would influence them to purchase the latest clothing style.

Information sources used in the legitimization stage

During the legitimization stage, there was conviction that a new clothing style was appropriate, a necessary prerequisite to the trial of new products (Roger & Shoemaker, 1971). In this stage, people were convinced that they were ready to buy the new clothing style. The section asked which were the most important sources of information that made the respondents feel that they were willing to buy the clothing style. The respondents were asked to list the most important sources that they relied on for making purchases.

The frequency of respondents and sources interaction

In this section, the instrument used the same list of sources of information to find the frequency of interaction by the respondent. The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of interaction with the various sources. Responses were measured on five-point scale (1=Never to 5=Always).

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic information was used to describe the respondents. The variables measured were age, gender, marital status, financial resources, and education level. Information was categorical for the characteristics of age, marital status, college, degree program, semester level, and university. The financial resources of each respondent were determined by the monthly clothing allowance of respondents and family income. All of the respondents were living in Bangkok.

The final instrument was translated into Thai so that the respondents would understand the questions. In addition, to verify the accuracy of the instrument translation, the instrument was back-translated into English. The instrument was developed and pre-tested to determine the reliability and validity of the measures selected for the identified variables, and to assess the clarity of the statements.

Data Collection

A convenience sample was drawn from six universities in Bangkok, Thailand, to represent a relatively homogeneous population of young, single people from a specific

social system in which a substantial number of fashion leaders were thought likely to be found. The instruments were distributed to college students at six different universities in Bangkok. The respondents were approached individually in a public area in the university during break time or the free time between classes. Three hundred and one students were chosen from all of the universities.

Pilot Tests

The researcher pilot tested the instrument with Thai college students living in the US in order to find the specific variables of interest and source preferences. Initially, the instrument was tested in English with Thai students in Oklahoma to verify that the list of sources was comprehensible. Revisions were made and the instrument was translated into Thai. The instrument was then back-translated to English to ensure that the items were translated correctly. A second pre-test of the instrument in Thai was conducted with a second group of Thai students in Oklahoma and final revisions were made.

Analysis of Data

The data were coded for computer analysis. Frequencies, means, percentages, and standard deviations were used for descriptive data. Descriptive statistics were utilized to identify fashion opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders on the basis of the criteria suggested by Roger (1962) and Summers (1970). ANOVA and t-tests were used to test the data and answer the questions. The research questions were tested at the $p \leq .05$ level of significance.

CHAPTER 4

MANUSCRIPT

Research has shown that a variety of sources in the diffusion of information

regarding new fashions are influential to the consumers' level of acceptance of a new

style (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). Consumers imitate purchase and consumption

behaviors they admire, gather information from other consumers through the process of

social communication, and seek advice from others who have previous knowledge and

experience.

Two main communication processes utilized by marketers to communicate to

consumers are mass media and interpersonal communication. Mass media, such as

magazines, television, and billboards, play an important role in transmitting information

about new products and styles to consumers. It is an important tool for informing

consumers about current market trends and disseminating information about new and

current products (Gunther, 1998; Katz, 1981). Consumers not only use this information to

make decisions, but also to make choices among a variety of alternatives. As consumers

become more time pressured and mass media becomes increasingly accessible, reliance

on mass media as a reporter on the distribution of acceptable opinion is greater than in the

past (Gunther, 1998; Katz, 1981). Therefore, mass media is an important means of disseminating information about new and current products to consumers.

Although mass media communication processes are very important, interpersonal communication among consumers is also important to the decision making process. Interpersonal communication is as important as mass media in influencing product choices (Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger, & Yale, 1998; Katona & Mueller, 1954; Keil & Layton, 1981; Price & Feick, 1984). Consumers often regard interpersonal communication as the most important source of information especially when the information seeker perceives higher risks, such as fashion purchases (Gilly, et al., 1998; Katona & Mueller, 1954; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; LeGrand & Udell, 1964; Price & Feick, 1984; Robertson, 1971; Thorelli, 1971). As fashion items are thought to be high risk purchases, interpersonal communication is often more effective than impersonal media sources in changing opinion and transmitting information (Gilly, et al., 1998).

Flynn, Goldsmith, and Eastman (1996) suggested that fashion consumers are influenced by other consumers, and thus rely on this information even more when the decision has higher perceived risk as does fashion clothing (Gilly, et al., 1998; Cunningham, 1964, 1967; Lutz & Reilly, 1973; Perry & Hamm, 1969; Roseelius, 1971). Consumers may trust the opinions of other consumers more than they trust formal marketer-dominated sources of information such as advertising. They use information from interpersonal sources to reduce risk, and to make both store and brand choices (Gilly, et al., 1998).

As the market for apparel becomes more global, it becomes increasingly important for marketers to define their target market and identify the best means to

inform their targets about new products. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the channels used to transmit fashion information to Thai fashion consumers. This study is designed to investigate sources of fashion information preferred by Thai opinion leaders as compared with those sources preferred by Thai non-opinion leaders to determine which sources are relevant for each group. Specifically, this study investigates the sources preferred by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders among college students in Thailand. With the increasing acceptance of Western ideologies and fashions among the Thai population (Phupoksakul, 1998), this market is a potentially profitable and interesting one for American firms. These firms need to have a better understanding of consumer behaviors and the specific characteristics of Thai consumers to be successful. While there has been extensive fashion research conducted in the United States, there has been no empirical research on fashion in Thailand. Information concerning the fashion process in Thailand can help to identify consumer markets and their characteristics, and sources preferred by opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders that may be used by the apparel industry to better communicate with their potential customers.

The Thai Apparel Market

Thailand is one of the more advanced developing countries in Asia. Thailand depends on exports of manufactured goods—including high technology goods—and the development of the service sector to fuel the country's rapid growth. Imports of consumer goods have begun to rise in every market segment, including apparel products (Phupoksakul, 1998).

Bangkok is the capital of Thailand and is the center of commerce and industry.

The people of Bangkok are wealthier, better educated, and more cosmopolitan than those

who live in rural Thailand. The average income for a family in Bangkok is 306,240 Baht

($7,656), compared to 135,600 Baht ($3,390), the country average (Phupoksakul, 1998).

The higher average income of the people in Bangkok makes it a major market for

business in Thailand, including the fashion and apparel business. Most of the clothing

companies are in Bangkok and use it as their base of operations due to the availability of

high technology and the more convenient facilities of the city (Phupoksakul, 1998).

Apparel consumers in Thailand are divided into three groups: junior or young

consumers, career women, and housewives. First, the junior or young consumer group

(ages 15-20) includes college and high school students. Western-made casual wear is

most popular among this group. Their disposable income is dependent on their families.

Teenagers of upper and upper/middle income families have a tendency to buy well-

known imported brand-name products. Brand names often influence their decision more

than personal tastes (Phupoksakul, 1998).

The second group is career women (ages 20-35). These are major buyers in

Thailand in terms of apparel volume. Brand names carry slightly less weight with career

women than with teens. Consumers in this group prefer quality to the allure of a brand

name (Phupoksakul, 1998).

The third group is the housewife group (age 35 and up). They purchase the most

expensive clothing. These women will buy prestigious and exclusive brands. In general,

Thai consumers from low-income families are less brand conscious and want the best

value for their money. Consumers from middle-income families care about brand names but price and quality are also important.

Theoretical Framework

The Fashion Adoption Process

The fashion adoption process is the mental act of the purchasing through the stages of 1) problem perception, 2) awareness, 3) comprehension, 4) attitude, 5) legitimization, 6) trial, and 7) adoption. Robertson (1971) defined each stage of the process as followed: *problem perception* is the stage in which a person perceives a need or desire for a product. *Awareness* is the stage in which a person becomes aware of the existence of new styles. *Comprehension* refers to the consciousness of the existence of a new fashion. *Attitude* is the development of favorable behavioral dispositions by a person concerning the style. *Legitimization* is the belief that a new clothing style is appropriate for the individual, and in this stage, a person is ready to move on to the trial stage. *Trial* stage is when the decision to test or try the style is made. Finally, *adoption* is the stage in which a person actually tries the product or new style, and acts to incorporate the style into his/her wardrobe.

Types of Fashion Information Sources

Fashion information sources can be categorized as consumer-dominated, market-dominated, or neutral (Polegato & Wall, 1980). The consumer-dominated sources include classmates and friends' use of the fashion, friends' discussion, observation of clothing at social gatherings, observation of popular use in public places, discussion with

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friends of the opposite gender, and solicitation of parents' opinions. Market-dominated sources include window displays, fashion magazines, fashion shows, in-store displays, fashion counselors, newspaper articles on fashion, visits to boutiques, fashion ads in newspapers, movies, or posters, pattern books, and internet. The third category is termed neutral and consists of television performers, movie actresses, fashion models, fashion columns, and prominent women in the news (Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988; Polegato & Wall, 1980).

Fashion Opinion Leaders

An important group in the interpersonal communication of fashion information is fashion opinion leaders. Fashion opinion leaders are those individuals who provide fashion advice, information, and/or may convince fashion followers to try new fashions (Dawar, Parket, & Price, 1996). They tend to be more fashion conscious, which may result in their increased motivation to seek information regarding fashion trends (Goldsmith, Flynn, & Moore, 1966).

Fashion followers are considered to be those people that seek fashion information and advice from those they consider to be well informed about fashion trends, usually the fashion opinion leaders (Polegato & Wall, 1980). Researchers are concerned with opinion leaders because they have a strong influence on other consumers in several ways, both serving as models for purchasing and consuming fashion products, and giving information to the others concerning new fashions. Marketing research has found that personal sources perform particularly influential roles in affecting product choices (Katona & Mueller, 1954; Keil, Layton, 1981; Price & Feick, 1984). Fashion consumers

appear to trust the opinions of other consumers more than they trust formal market-dominated sources of information such as advertising (Chan & Misra, 1990; Homans, 1961). Therefore, opinion leaders become important in fashion information diffusion by promoting new fashions or leading resistance to new styles (Roger, 1983). For this reason, marketers may be interested in persuading this small audience to create a favorable attitude toward a new style or product, rather than simply informing the larger audience of all consumers about that product (Roger & Shoemaker, 1971).

Opinion leaders are generally the target of marketers and advertisers of fashion due to their leadership characteristics, as they are a group of consumers who give advice or information about fashion to others (Dawar, et al., 1996). This group of consumers is important to marketers because they validate styles and make those styles acceptable to others. Apparel retailers and marketers are naturally interested in the fashion opinion leaders segment because acceptance by these consumers may legitimize and facilitate the spread of new fashion to later buyers. Opinion leaders have been characterized as younger, with higher education, earning higher incomes, showing greater social mobility (Chan & Misra, 1990; Gatignon & Robertson, 1985; Midgley & Dowling, 1978; Robertson, Zielinski, & Ward, 1984; Roger, 1983), and are more cosmopolitan (Dawar, et al., 1996) than average. The studies of consumers in Europe, North America (Dawar, et al., 1996), Korea (Kim & Schrank, 1982), and India (Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988) found that opinion leaders in these various cultures had similar characteristics.

Several studies have investigated the information sources used by opinion leaders. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) examined personal communication among American fashion consumers. They found that approximately two-thirds of the women in the study had

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made recent fashion changes and personal influence had entered into most of those decisions. The findings provide evidence that personal influence has a powerful and widespread influence on fashion diffusion. Fashion opinion leaders exist at all social class levels of the consumer population, are concentrated in younger age groups, are high in fashion interest, and tend to be highly gregarious. The study also showed that personal influence is between persons of equal social status and age, that is, social peers. These findings established personal influence and opinion leadership as having powerful and widespread impact on fashion diffusion.

Fashion information sources used by opinion leaders have also been investigated internationally. Polegato and Wall (1980) studied the adoption process and the use of fashion information sources by a group of Canadian female college students. The number, frequency, type, and variety of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and followers in the awareness, comprehension, and legitimization stage of the fashion adoption process were investigated. Their findings showed that Canadian opinion leaders used a greater number of sources and interacted with those sources more frequently than did followers. In the awareness stage, both groups used market-dominated sources. Non-leaders also used consumer-dominated sources during this stage, but none of the leaders recalled using consumer-dominated sources. In the comprehension stage, both leaders and non-leaders used market-dominated sources. However, leaders relied more on market-dominated sources while non-leaders relied more consumer-dominated sources for fashion information. In the last stage of gathering fashion information, the legitimization stage, the two groups differed in the variety of sources used but did not differ in the types of sources used.

Chowdhary and Dickey (1988) used the same adoption process to study the media exposure of fashion opinion leaders as compared with non-leaders in India. Sources of fashion information were divided into two groups, personal and impersonal sources. The results showed that both leaders and non-leaders used impersonal sources more than personal sources in the awareness stage. In the comprehension stage, leaders used impersonal sources more than non-leaders, and non-leaders used personal sources of fashion information sources more than leaders. During the legitimization stage, both groups recalled personal sources as the most important sources of fashion information, specifically family opinions and seeing what friends wear.

Although these studies have been conducted in very different geographic locations, findings have shown that fashion opinion leaders share common characteristics across cultures. Market-dominated sources or impersonal sources are important in developing awareness among consumers for new or current styles. Interpersonal sources play a role when consumers need confirmation information for product choices.

This study investigates Thai opinion leaders to determine if there are differences and similarities among fashion opinion leaders' and non-opinion leaders' characteristics and source preferences. Since Thailand is an important market for American apparel brands, American firms will benefit from information about this group of consumers.

Methodology

Respondents

College age students who live in Bangkok were identified as the population for this study as college age consumers are frequently the target market of fashion firms.

Generally, younger consumers are characterized as more fashion conscious than older

consumers (Chan & Misra, 1990; Gatignon & Robertson, 1985; Katz & Lazarsfeld,

1955). These fashion conscious individuals are frequently younger in age and higher in

education (Chan & Misra, 1990; Gatignon & Robertson, 1985; Midgley & Dowling,

1978; Robertson, Zielinski, & Ward, 1984; Roger, 1983). Bangkok was selected because

it is the center of fashion, business, high technology, and communication media for

Thailand (Wongvarnrunguang, 1996). People who live in Bangkok are more likely to be

exposed to the media and fashion information than those in other parts of the country.

The respondents were selected from eight colleges in Bangkok.

Fashion Opinion Leadership Measurement

The fashion opinion leadership scale (Roger, 1962) is a self-designating method

to assess the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as opinion leaders or as

being influential in personal communication. The scale is comprised of three yes or no

questions and four multiple-choice questions for a total of seven items (See Appendix A).

The measure has been used extensively in research to indicate fashion opinion leaders

among consumers (Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988; Polegato & Wall, 1980; Summers,

1970). For the purposes of this study, fashion opinion leaders are defined as those

individuals who give advice or information about fashion to fashion followers.

Additionally, the fashion opinion leader may be influential in convincing another

individual to try a fashion (Dawar, et al., 1996). The measurement utilized in this study

has been used frequently in research (Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988; Polegato & Wall,

1980; Summers, 1970) to identify opinion leaders. Roger and Cartano (1962) examined

the reliability of the scale and found the reliability coefficient (.70) indicated that the scale was reliable. Additionally, Polegato and Wall (1980) found the reliability coefficient (.69) to be similar, providing further support to the reliability of this scale in the area of clothing research.

Sources Used for Fashion Information

Using past studies, the researcher developed the portion of the instrument concerning the source preferences used by fashion consumers (Polegato & Wall, 1980). The instrument was pre-tested in both English and Thai to assure that respondents were able to understand and complete the instrument. The instrument was initially written in English, then translated into Thai, and finally back-translated to English.

The variety of media included is based on research by Polegato and Wall (1980) that categorized sources used by individuals to seek fashion information for the latest styles into three groups: market-dominated, consumer-dominated, and neutral. The same groupings were used for the first two stages, the awareness stage and the comprehension stage of the fashion adoption process (See Appendix A). Respondents were given a list of potential information sources and asked to indicate which sources they used when in each of the two stages. Some of the specific items in Polegato and Wall's (1980) study were inappropriate and were eliminated. Items eliminated were "ads in campus newspaper," "radio program," and "mail order catalog." Reasons for deleting items were that the sources are not generally available in Thailand. Sources added to the list were "asking tailors," "visiting boutique," "asking parents for ideas," "observing clothing from

social gathering," and "Internet". These sources were added because they are commonly available in Thailand and consumers rely on these sources for fashion information.

Information Sources Used at the Various Stages of the Fashion Adoption Process

In the awareness stage portion of the instrument, respondents were asked to check the information sources that they have used when they first became aware of fashion. In the comprehension stage portion of the instrument, respondents were asked to select all the sources of fashion information they have used when they wanted to buy clothes. The last stage of gathering information, the legitimization stage, respondents were asked to list what makes them think they have to have a specific clothing style.

The final instrument included 1) the self-designating measurement of opinion leadership, 2) preference sources used by opinion leaders and non-leaders in three stages of the fashion adoption process, 3) the frequency of use of sources by respondents, and 4) demographic characteristic of respondents. The instruments were distributed to the respondents by approaching them in public areas in the universities during break time or free time between classes.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic information shown in the Table 1 provides a general profile of the respondents. Respondents ranged in ages from 18 to more than 27 years of age, with the majority (about 77%) of the respondents being between 18 to 23. There were 165

female respondents (54%) and 136 male respondents (45%). Respondents were primarily undergraduate college students. College majors were varied, with the participants representing 37 different majors, from 9 different colleges. Respondents' family size ranged from 0 - 12 siblings with the majority of the participants (92%) having from one to four siblings.

It is often difficult to evaluate income and expenditure data in cross-cultural studies. Using the currency exchange rate may leave readers with a skewed impression of the value of incomes and expenditures. The Purchasing-Power Parity (PPP) scale was developed in order to assist in understanding global purchasing power ("Big Mac Currencies", 1998). The PPP was used in this study to understand the purchasing power of the respondents in US dollars. At the time that research was conducted, the PPP value of the US dollar was equal to 20.3 Baht ("Big Mac Currencies", 1998). This ratio will be used in clarifying the income and expenditure data.

Clothing expenditures ranged from 150 to 30,000 Baht/month ($7 – $1,477, using PPP) with the mean monthly expenditure of the participants being 1,614 Baht/month ($80). Family income ranged from less than 10,000 Baht/month ($493) to more than 40,000 Baht/month ($1, 970) with the median family income of the participants falling between 20,000 – 30,000 Baht/month ($985- $1,477). The average income for families living in the capital city of Bangkok is 22,330 Baht/month ($1,100), while the average family income throughout Thailand is just 9,887 Baht/month ($487) (Phupoksakul, 1996). The median family income suggests that in terms of income the participants are a representative sample of Thai students living in Bangkok.

Table 1   About here

Identification of Fashion Opinion Leaders

The use of standardized measures provides an effective base for comparing the findings of this project with those of other studies examining the influence and effect that opinion leaders may have. In this study, the criterion to identify fashion opinion leaders was based on methods utilized in previous studies. Generally, a portion of respondents is identified as opinion leaders, with those scoring lowest on the opinion leadership scale designated as fashion opinion leaders. King and Summers (1970) reported that 28% of the respondents in their study were classified as opinion leaders as compared with 23% of the respondents in Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) study. The findings from a study examining opinion leadership in Canada identified 19% of the respondents as fashion opinion leaders (Polegato & Wall, 1980). Chowdhary and Dickey's (1988) examination of opinion leaders in India indicated that 35% of the respondents represented fashion opinion leaders. For this study, respondents were classified as fashion opinion leaders if they scored a 10 or less (out of possible range of 7 to 16), which comprised 23% of the total respondents in this study. This is approximately the same percentage range as found in comparable studies. The scale was found to be reliable for this group. The reliability coefficient for the Thai respondents was 0.78.

A number of independent group t-tests were conducted to examine the difference in demographic variables between opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders. Opinion

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leaders had significantly higher $[F (215, 71) = 5.302, p < .05]$ clothing expenditures per month (M = 2,480 Baht/month, SD = 3,938) than did non-opinion leaders (M = 1,291 Baht/month, SD = 2,106). Opinion leaders tended to come from families that had higher monthly incomes (mode = 30,000-40,000) than did non-opinion leaders (mode = 20,000-30,000, $[F (299, 124) = 1.354, p = .24]$. They used a significantly higher percentage of their family's monthly income on clothing $[F (253, 89) = 6.887, p < .05]$ than did non-opinion leaders (M = 25.9% and M = 16.9%).

Research Questions

1) Are there any differences in the number, types, and variety of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-leaders during the awareness stage of the adoption process?

Both opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders used all the various sources, except the Internet, to some extent. However, there was a difference between the two groups in the *number* of sources used. Fashion opinion leaders used a greater number of sources (M = 9.84, SD = 4.06) to acquire fashion information as compared with non-opinion leaders (M = 7.46, SD = 3.85). The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that the group means, based on the cumulative scores of the number of the 23 fashion sources used, were significantly higher $[F (1, 299) = 19.7, p < .0001]$ for fashion opinion leaders than for non-opinion leaders (see Table 2).

Table 2 About Here

The *types* of sources used also varied. Opinion leaders used more market-dominated sources than non-opinion leaders [F (1, 299) = 13.126, p < .001, M = 4.45, SD = 2.18], followed by consumer-dominated sources (M = 3.75, SD = 1.93) and least used were neutral sources (M = 1.63, SD = 1.20). Non-opinion leaders used both market-dominated and consumer-dominated sources equally (M = 3.44, SD = 1.97 and M = 3.01, SD = 1.79) and neutral sources least (M = 1.00, SD = 1.15).

The *variety* of sources consulted by the opinion leaders was different than the variety of sources consulted by non-leaders. For each source listed, opinion leaders were more likely to indicate that they consulted the source than were non-opinion leaders. For example, 75 % of opinion leaders indicated that they looked at in-store displays to get information about new styles, while only 53 % of non-leaders indicated in-store displays as an information source. However, the result of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that fashion opinion leaders used five of the twelve market-dominated sources of fashion information significantly more than non-leaders, including use of window displays, fashion magazines, fashion shows, in-store displays, and newspaper articles. Opinion leaders used three of the seven consumer-dominated sources of fashion information significantly more than non-opinion leaders, including discussions with friends from the same sex, observing clothing from public places, and discussions with friends of the opposite sex. Opinion leaders also used three of the four neutral sources of fashion information significantly more than non-opinion leaders, including noticing

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television performers clothing, noticing costumes worn by movie actresses and actors, and reading fashion columns (See Table 3).

Table 3 About Here

The three most used fashion information sources during the awareness stage of the fashion adoption process by fashion opinion leaders were 1) window displays, 2) in-store displays, and 3) noticing clothing in public places. The most used sources of fashion information among non-leaders were 1) window displays, 2) discussion with friends from the same sex about fashion, and 3) seeing or observing from what friends wear (See Table 4).

Table 4 About Here

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2) Are there any differences in the number, types, and variety, of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-leaders during the comprehension stage of the adoption process?

Both opinion leaders and non-opinion leaders used all the various sources. However, there was a difference between the two groups in the *number* of sources used.

Fashion opinion leaders used a greater number of sources (M = 8.59, SD = 4.12) to acquire fashion information as compared with non-opinion leaders (M = 5.91, SD = 3.28). The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that the group means, based on the cumulative scores of the number of the 23 fashion sources used, were significantly higher for fashion opinion leaders than for non-opinion leaders (See Table 5)

Table 5 About Here

The *types* of sources used also varied. Opinion leaders used market-dominated sources [F (1, 299) = 11.402, p < .001, M = 4.05, SD = 2.26], followed by consumer-dominated sources (M = 3.17, SD = 1.99) and least used were neutral sources (M = 1.36, SD = 1.24). Non-opinion leaders used market-dominated sources most (M = 2.28, SD = 1.74) followed by consumer-dominated sources (M = 2.35, SD = 1.71) and neutral sources least (M = 0.71, SD = 1.01).

The *variety* of sources consulted by the opinion leaders was different from the variety of sources consulted by non-opinion leaders. The variety of fashion information sources used during comprehension stage showed that opinion leaders used every source more than non-leaders (See Table 10). However, results of the ANOVA indicated that fashion opinion leaders used six of the twelve market-dominated sources of fashion information significantly more than the non-opinion leaders, including used of fashion magazines, fashion shows, in-store displays, fashion counselors, newspaper articles, and

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pattern books. Opinion leaders used four of the seven consumer-dominated sources of fashion information significantly more than non-opinion leaders, including discussion with friends of the same sex, seeing what friends of the same sex wear, observing clothing in public places, and discussion with friends of the opposite sex. Opinion leaders also used three of the four neutral sources of fashion information significantly more than non-opinion leaders, including noticing clothing worn by television performers, noticing costumes worn by movie actresses and actors, and fashion columns (See Table 6).

Table 6 About Here

The most used sources of fashion information during the comprehension stage of fashion adoption process among fashion opinion leaders were window displays, in-store displays, fashion magazines, discussion with classmates, discussion with friends from the same sex. The most used sources of fashion information among non-leaders were window displays, discussion with classmates, and discussion with friends from the same sex (See Table 7).

Table 7 About Here

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3) Are there any differences in type of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-leaders during the legitimization stage of the adoption process?

During the legitimization stage, the last stage for gathering information before adopting the style/product, respondents were asked to list what source they most relied on to make a final choice to adopt a new style. The most frequently listed source for the opinion leader group was self (91%), followed by in-store displays and window displays (64%), and finally by magazines and television (34%). The most common answers among the non-opinion leader group showed that self (89%) was the most important source of fashion information followed by observing clothes from public places (78%), and influence from friends (75%). In conclusion, both fashion opinion and non-opinion leaders relied primarily on internal information stored in memory, gathered during the awareness and comprehension stages earlier in the fashion adoption process. Opinion leaders used market-dominated sources as supportive sources to help in decision making before purchasing clothes, while non-opinion leaders used more consumers-dominated sources as supportive information before adopting the specific style.

4) Are there any differences in the frequency of use of fashion information sources by opinion leaders and non-leaders?

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they interact with 23 fashion information sources on a 1 to 5 scale, with 5 indicating that they most often use the source. The cumulative score was computed for each individual based on frequency of

use of the items included in the list. Means scores of frequency of use were computed for opinion leaders and non-leaders.

ANOVA was used to determine whether the frequency of use of each of the 23 fashion information sources differed for the two groups. The findings revealed that fashion opinion leaders interacted with each source of fashion information more than non-opinion leaders as follows; seven of the twelve market-dominated sources (window displays, fashion magazines, in-store displays, newspaper articles, visiting boutiques pattern books, and fashion ads), five of the seven consumer-dominated sources (discussion with classmates, discussion with friends from the same sex, seeing what friends from the same sex wear, observing clothing from social gathering, and discussion with friends of the opposite sex) and three of the four neutral sources (noticing television performers, noticing costumes worn by movie actresses and actors, and fashion columns) more frequently than non-opinion leaders (See Table 8).

Table 8 About Here

Mean scores for each source of fashion information was computed to show the frequency of interaction. The top five showed that fashion opinion leaders interacted with classmates the most ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.29$), followed by looking at window displays ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.24$), discussion with same sex friends ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.25$), seeing what friends wear ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.25$), and in-store displays ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.31$).

Mean scores of non-opinion leaders showed the top five of sources used were: interaction with classmates ($\underline{M}$ = 3.47, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.33), followed by discussion with same sex friends ($\underline{M}$ = 3.26, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.37), window displays ($\underline{M}$ = 3.13, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.17), noticing clothing in public places ($\underline{M}$ = 3.02, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.42), and seeing what friends wear ($\underline{M}$ = 2.99, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.34) (See Table 9).

Table 9 About Here

Conclusions

Past studies have investigated the fashion process, characteristics of opinion leaders, and sources of information used by consumers in the United States, Canada, Korea, and India. This study extends this stream of research to include an emerging Asian nation, Thailand.

The study of fashion opinion leadership and media exposure among college women in India (Chowdhary & Dickey, 1988) found that both leaders and non-leaders used family members and parents' opinions as the most important sources of fashion information before adopting the product or new style. The study of information seeking by fashion opinion leaders and followers in Canada (Polegato & Wall, 1980) found that fashion magazines were the most used sources of fashion information among opinion leaders. The findings of this study give support to previous research generalizations that fashion opinion leaders use more fashion information sources than do non-opinion

leaders and fashion opinion leaders interact with each source of fashion information more than non-opinion leaders. This study of sources used by opinion leaders revealed that the Thai opinion leaders use somewhat different information sources than opinion leaders in other parts of the world. Window displays and in-store displays were the important sources of fashion information for Thai opinion leaders and non-leaders to acquire fashion information about new styles during the early fashion adoption process, the awareness and comprehension stages.

One explanation for the differences may be the time that students spend in shopping malls in Thailand. Traffic jams are common in Bangkok. Students often visit malls after they finish school to avoid the traffic during rush hours. Therefore, they are exposed to window displays and in-store displays, thus acquiring much of their fashion information. A second factor may be the cost of fashion magazines in Thailand, as they are quite expensive and may be priced too high for students to afford to buy regularly. Thai respondents used print-media such as fashion magazines, fashion column in the magazines as the supportive sources of fashion information after they aware of new styles. Third, the studies conducted in India and Canada are now nearly ten years old and there have been many changes in the past ten years. As Western cultural influence spreads, parents, who were once a very important source of information and approval for young people in Asian countries, may no longer be as important. Market-dominated sources produced by Western businesses may be taking on increased importance.

The findings from this study and others are useful for both apparel manufacturers and retailers to help them in identifying the sources used by their target market when considering new fashions. These findings provide new knowledge to marketers and

manufacturers of new clothing styles regarding the channels of fashion information used by fashion opinion leaders in Thailand. In addition, the study raises awareness of the importance of retailers in Thailand in promoting the acceptance of new clothing styles by opinion leaders.

The three most used fashion information sources during the awareness stage of the fashion adoption process by fashion opinion leaders were 1) window displays, 2) in-store displays, and 3) noticing clothing in public places. The most used sources of fashion information among non-leaders were 1) window displays, 2) discussion with friends from the same sex about fashion, and 3) seeing or observing from what friends wear.

The most used sources of fashion information during the comprehension stage among fashion opinion leaders were 1) window displays, 2) in-store displays, and 3) fashion magazines, discussion with classmates, discussion with friends of the same sex. The most used sources of fashion information among non-leaders were 1) window displays, 2) discussion with classmates, and 3) discussion with friends from the same sex.

In-store displays, magazines, and television are influential in the legitimization stage. The findings of the study suggest that local marketers should appeal to their market segment through specific channels.

This study has a number of limitations. The results of this study may not be generalized to all Thai consumers. The study used a convenience sample of Bangkok college students and results for other groups of Thai consumers might be different. The list of potential sources of information for Thai consumers may not have included all the important sources. Further investigation of the way in which electronic information

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sources may influence fashion in the future should be investigated. As the Internet becomes more easily accessible, the way consumers acquire information may also change.

Recommendations for Further Study

The following recommendations can be made for further research:

- Further study may need to include other groups of consumers as other variables for consideration such as career women and housewives who have more money to spend on clothes.

- The present study dealt with college age consumers; other variables that influence the operation of the fashion process may be considered in future research. The variables may include achievement motivation; knowledge ability; perceived risk; relative advantage, complexity, and compatibility of new products. The ability of such variables could be examined as to their explanation, prediction, and discrimination between other groups of consumers such as innovators and non-innovators, or opinion leaders and non-leaders.

- Further research investigation may be extended to include other adopter categories to further understand the fashion process and fashion channels for consumers. The categories may include innovators, innovative communicators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.

- Further research may focus more on each source of fashion information that have strong influence on consumers such as magazines. The study may investigate influence of ads, editor columns, or fashion by actresses or actors on consumers.

- Since window displays and in-store displays were the most used as sources of fashion information among Thai fashion opinion leaders, further research may need to include other point-of-sale variables such as the salesperson, store environment. and location.

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Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Opinion Leaders		Non-Opinion Leaders		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	**69**	**100%**	**232**	**100%**	**301**	**100%**
Gender						
Male	25	36%	111	48%	136	45%
Female	44	64%	121	52%	165	55%
Age						
18-20	34	49%	88	38%	122	41%
21-23	24	35%	88	38%	112	37%
24-26	7	10%	35	15%	42	14%
27 and up	4	6%	21	9%	25	8%
Siblings						
None	15	22%	17	7%	32	11%
1 – 2	39	57%	119	51%	158	51%
3 – 4	15	21%	74	32%	89	30%
5 – 6	0	0%	11	5%	11	4%
7 – 8	0	0%	9	4%	9	3%
9 – 12	0	0%	2	1%	2	1%
Classification						
Freshmen	19	28%	39	17%	58	19%
Sophomore	17	24%	62	28%	79	26%
Junior	21	30%	72	31%	93	31%
Senior	6	9%	29	13%	35	12%
Others	6	9%	30	13%	36	12%
College						
College of Business	31	45%	78	34%	109	36%
College of Art	4	6%	18	8%	22	7%
College of Science	5	7%	17	7%	22	7%
College of Engineer	4	6%	11	5%	15	5%
College of Agriculture	2	3%	3	1%	5	2%
College of Education	9	13%	39	16%	48	16%
College of Journalism	6	9%	32	14%	38	13%
College of Social Science	8	11%	32	14%	40	13%
Law School			2	1%	2	1%

Table 1 (Continued)

	Opinion Leaders		Non-Opinion Leaders		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Family Income						
< 10,000 (<$492)	2	3%	24	10%	26	9%
10,000-20,000 ($492-$985)	11	16%	56	24%	67	22%
20,000-30,000 ($985-$1,479)	12	17%	68	29%	80	27%
30,000-40,000 ($1,479-$1,970)	25	36%	36	16%	61	20%
more than 40,000 (>$1,970)	19	28%	48	21%	67	22%
Clothing Allowance						
100 - 1,000 ($5-$49)	25	43%	114	73%	139	65%
1,001 - 2,000 ($50-$99)	16	27%	26	17%	42	20%
2,001 - 3,000 ($100-$148)	9	15%	11	7%	20	9%
3,001 - 4,000 ($149-$197)	7	12%	4	3%	11	5%
more than 4,000 (>$197)	2	3%	1	1%	3	1%

Note. Implied Purchasing-Power Parity of the Dollar = 20.3 Baht
"Big Mac currencies." (1998, April 11). The Economist, p. 58.

Table 2

ANOVA Analysis of Number and Type of Fashion Information Sources Preferred by Fashion
Opinion Leaders and Non-leaders During the Awareness Stage

Awareness Stage	Source	$\underline{df}$	$\underline{SS}$	$\underline{MS}$	$\underline{F}$
Number of Fashion Information Sources					
	between groups	1	299.00	299.00	19.7**
	within groups	299	4556.97	15.24	
Types of Fashion Information Sources					
Market-Dominated Sources	between groups	1	53.75	53.75	13.1**
	within groups	299	1224.34	4.10	
Consumer-Dominated Sources	between groups	1	28.84	28.84	8.6*
	within groups	299	998.74	3.34	
Neutral Sources	between groups	1	21.33	21.34	15.8**
	within groups	299	404.27	1.35	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Table 3

ANOVA Analysis of Fashion Information Sources Used During the Awareness Stage by Fashion Opinion Leaders and Non-leaders for Each Source

Fashion Information Sources	Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Window Displays	between groups	1	0.50	0.50	4.4*
	within groups	299	34.18	0.14	
Fashion Magazines	between groups	1	2.09	2.09	8.6*
	within groups	299	72.92	0.24	
Fashion Shows	between groups	1	0.64	0.64	4.5*
	within groups	299	43.02	0.14	
In-Store Displays	between groups	1	2.55	2.55	10.8**
	within groups	299	70.54	0.23	
Fashion Counselors	between groups	1	7.67	7.67	1.9
	within groups	299	12.36	4.13	
Salesperson	between groups	1	6.28	6.28	0.3
	within groups	299	62.21	0.21	
Tailors	between groups	1	1.99	1.99	0.0
	within groups	299	16.04	5.36	
Newspapers Articles	between groups	1	1.70	1.70	7.0*
	within groups	299	72.53	0.24	
Visiting Boutiques	between groups	1	2.29	2.29	0.4
	within groups	299	16.02	5.36	
Pattern Books	between groups	1	5.46	5.46	0.3
	within groups	299	46.77	0.16	
Fashion Ads	between groups	1	0.19	0.19	0.8
	within groups	299	73.66	0.25	
Discuss with Classmates	between groups	1	9.40	9.40	0.4
	within groups	299	65.65	0.22	
Discuss with Same Sex Friends	between groups	1	1.31	1.31	5.4*
	within groups	299	72.26	0.24	
Seeing What Friends Wear	between groups	1	0.21	0.21	0.9
	within groups	299	70.85	0.24	

*$p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

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Table 3 (Continued)

Fashion Information Sources	Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Observing Clothing from Social Gathering	between groups	1	0.10	0.10	0.7
	within groups	299	42.26	0.14	
Public Places	between groups	1	1.00	1.00	4.2*
	within groups	299	70.96	0.24	
Discuss with Opposite Sex Friends	between groups	1	2.43	2.43	12.0**
	within groups	299	60.66	0.20	
Asking Parents for Ideas	between groups	1	0.34	0.34	2.0
	within groups	299	54.95	0.18	
Television Performers	between groups	1	3.55	3.55	15.0**
	within groups	299	70.56	0.24	
Movie Actress	between groups	1	2.24	2.24	10.9**
	within groups	299	61.64	0.21	
Fashion Columns	between groups	1	2.89	2.89	14.3**
	within groups	299	60.21	0.20	
Prominent Women in News	between groups	1	0.21	0.21	2.2
	within groups	299	28.39	9.50	
Internet	between groups	1	1.12	1.12	3.49
	within groups	299	0.99	3.30	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Table 4

Sources Used by Fashion Opinion Leaders and Non-leaders During Awareness Stage

Sources	Opinion leaders (n=69)		Non-Opinion Leaders (n=232)		Total (n=301)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Window Display	65	9.6%	196	11.3%	261	10.8%
Fashion Magazines	47	6.9%	112	6.5%	159	6.6%
Fashion Shows	18	2.7%	35	2.0%	53	2.2%
In-store Displays	52	7.7%	124	7.2%	176	7.3%
Fashion Counselors	5	0.7%	8	0.5%	13	0.5%
Salesperson	22	3.2%	66	3.8%	88	3.6%
Asking Tailors	4	0.6%	13	0.8%	17	0.7%
Newspaper Articles	40	5.9%	93	5.4%	133	5.5%
Visit Boutiques	5	0.7%	12	0.7%	17	0.7%
Pattern Books	15	2.2%	43	2.5%	58	2.4%
Fashion Ads	33	4.9%	97	5.6%	130	5.4%
Discuss with Classmates	49	7.2%	155	8.9%	204	8.5%
Discuss with Same Sex Friends	48	7.1%	125	7.2%	173	7.2%
Seeing What Friends Wear	46	6.8%	140	8.1%	186	7.7%
Observe Clothing from Social Gathering	14	2.1%	37	2.1%	51	2.1%
Public Places	49	7.2%	133	7.7%	182	7.5%
Discuss with Opposite Sex Friends	32	4.7%	58	3.3%	90	3.7%
Asking Parents for Ideas	21	3.1%	52	3.0%	73	3.0%
Television Performers	44	6.5%	88	5.1%	132	5.5%
Movie actress	32	4.7%	60	3.5%	92	3.8%
Fashion Columns	33	4.9%	57	3.3%	90	3.7%
Prominent Women in News	4	0.6%	28	1.6%	32	1.3%
Internet	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	679	100.0%	1732	100.0%	2411	100.0%

Table 5

ANOVA Analysis of Number and Type of Fashion Information Sources Preferred by
Fashion Opinion Leaders and Non-leaders During the Comprehension Stage

Comprehension Stage	Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Number of Fashion Information Sources					
	between groups	1	382.10	382.10	31.3**
	within groups	299	3654.91	12.22	
Types of Fashion Information Sources					
Market-Dominated Sources	between groups	1	76.61	76.61	21.8**
	within groups	299	1050.07	3.51	
Consumer-Dominated Sources	between groups	1	36.18	36.18	11.4**
	within groups	299	948.63	3.17	
Neutral Sources	between groups	1	22.85	22.85	20.0**
	within groups	299	342.01	1.14	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Table 6

ANOVA Analysis of Fashion Information Sources Used During the Comprehension Stage by Fashion Opinion Leaders and Non-leaders for Each Source

Fashion Information Sources	Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Window Displays	between groups	1	0.21	.21	1.6
	within groups	299	38.07	.13	
Fashion Magazines	between groups	1	3.05	3.05	12.8**
	within groups	299	71.1	.24	
Fashion Shows	between groups	1	1.36	1.36	13.1**
	within groups	299	31.09	.10	
In-Store Displays	between groups	1	1.47	1.47	6.0*
	within groups	299	73.77	.25	
Fashion Counselors	between groups	1	0.17	.17	4.2*
	within groups	299	12.27	4.10	
Salesperson	between groups	1	6.37	6.37	0.3
	within groups	299	68.00	.23	
Tailors	between groups	1	8.99	8.99	1.4
	within groups	299	19.45	6.50	
Newspapers Articles	between groups	1	2.73	2.73	13.8**
	within groups	299	59.12	.20	
Visiting Boutique	between groups	1	0.13	.13	2.2
	within groups	299	17.67	5.91	
Pattern Books	between groups	1	0.98	.98	7.6*
	within groups	299	38.68	.13	
Fashion Ads	between groups	1	0.49	.49	2.6
	within groups	299	57.30	.19	
Discuss with Classmates	between groups	1	7.27	7.27	0.3
	within groups	299	72.48	.24	
Discuss with Same Sex Friends	between groups	1	1.47	1.47	6.0*
	within groups	299	73.77	.25	
Seeing What Friends Wear	between groups	1	1.00	1.00	4.0*
	within groups	299	74.21	.25	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Table 6 (Continued)

Fashion Information Sources	Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Observing Clothing from Social Gathering	between groups	1	1.57	1.57	0.0
	within groups	299	33.20	.11	
Public Places	between groups	1	1.84	1.84	7.7*
	within groups	299	71.58	.24	
Discuss with Opposite Sex Friends	between groups	1	2.55	2.55	15.4**
	within groups	299	49.54	.17	
Asking Parents for Ideas	between groups	1	0.29	.29	1.9
	within groups	299	45.91	.15	
Television Performers	between groups	1	1.82	1.82	8.4*
	within groups	299	65.29	.22	
Movie Actresses	between groups	1	2.90	2.90	17.4**
	within groups	299	49.74	.17	
Fashion columns	between groups	1	2.86	2.86	18.0**
	within groups	299	47.53	.16	
Prominent Women in News	between groups	1	1.36	1.36	0.0
	within groups	299	22.92	7.67	
Internet	between groups	1	0.00	.00	
	within groups	299	0.00	.00	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Table 7
Sources Used by Fashion Opinion Leaders and Non-leaders
During Comprehension Stage

Sources	Opinion leaders (n=69)		Non-Opinion Leaders (n=232)		Total (n=301)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Window Displays	62	10.5%	194	14.1%	256	13.0%
Fashion Magazines	43	7.3%	89	6.5%	132	6.7%
Fashion Shows	17	2.9%	20	1.5%	37	1.9%
In-store Displays	43	7.3%	106	7.7%	149	7.6%
Fashion Counselors	6	1.0%	7	0.5%	13	0.7%
Salesperson	22	3.7%	82	6.0%	104	5.3%
Asking Tailors	7	1.2%	14	1.0%	21	1.1%
Newspaper Articles	32	5.4%	55	4.0%	87	4.4%
Visit Boutiques	7	1.2%	12	0.9%	19	1.0%
Pattern Books	18	3.0%	29	2.1%	47	2.4%
Fashion Ads	23	3.9%	55	4.0%	78	4.0%
Discuss with Classmates	43	7.3%	136	9.9%	179	9.1%
Discuss with Same Sex Friends	43	7.3%	106	7.7%	149	7.6%
Seeing What Friends Wear	41	6.9%	106	7.7%	147	7.5%
Observe Clothing from Social Gathering	9	1.5%	29	2.1%	38	1.9%
Public Places	39	6.6%	88	6.4%	127	6.5%
Discuss with Opposite Sex Friends	27	4.6%	40	2.9%	67	3.4%
Asking Parents for Ideas	17	2.9%	40	2.9%	57	2.9%
Television Performers	33	5.6%	68	5.0%	101	5.1%
Movie actress	28	4.7%	40	2.9%	68	3.5%
Fashion Columns	27	4.6%	37	2.7%	64	3.3%
Prominent Women in News	6	1.0%	19	1.4%	25	1.3%
Internet	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	593	100.0%	1372	100.0%	1965	100.0%

Table 8

ANOVA for Differences Frequency of Used of Fashion Information Sources
by Fashion Opinion Leaders and Non-leaders for Each Source

Fashion Information Sources	Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Window Displays	Between groups	1	22.28	22.28	15.8**
	Within groups	299	418.99	1.44	
Fashion Magazines	between groups	1	20.24	20.24	12.4**
	within groups	299	482.98	1.63	
Fashion Shows	between groups	1	4.16	4.16	3.3
	within groups	299	371.52	1.25	
In-Store Displays	between groups	1	24.93	24.93	16.0**
	within groups	299	461.82	1.56	
Fashion Counselors	between groups	1	0.50	0.50	0.4
	within groups	299	384.25	1.29	
Salesperson	between groups	1	0.38	0.38	0.2
	within groups	299	468.50	1.58	
Asking Tailors	between groups	1	0.16	0.16	0.1
	within groups	299	328.59	1.11	
Newspapers Articles	between groups	1	11.92	11.92	6.7*
	within groups	299	524.76	1.77	
Visiting Boutiques	between groups	1	6.05	6.05	4.5*
	within groups	299	403.64	1.36	
Pattern Books	between groups	1	17.33	17.33	9.9*
	within groups	299	519.66	1.75	
Fashion Ads	between groups	1	9.65	9.65	5.3*
	within groups	299	542.57	1.83	
Discuss with Classmates	between groups	1	10.86	10.86	6.20*
	within groups	299	520.20	1.75	
Discuss with Same Sex Friends	between groups	1	13.17	13.17	7.3*
	within groups	299	535.13	1.80	
Seeing What Friends Wear	between groups	1	16.89	16.89	9.7*
	within groups	299	512.75	1.74	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Table 8 (Continued)

Fashion Information Sources	Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Observing Clothing from Social Gathering	between groups	1	8.56	8.58	5.7*
	within groups	299	444.42	1.50	
Public Places	between groups	1	4.33	4.33	2.2
	within groups	299	585.41	1.97	
Discuss with opposite Sex Friends	between groups	1	13.58	13.58	7.4*
	within groups	299	544.99	1.84	
Asking Parents for Ideas	between groups	1	1.35	1.35	0.8
	within groups	299	522.12	1.76	
Television Performers	between groups	1	20.54	20.54	11.5**
	within groups	299	528.23	1.78	
Movie Actress	between groups	1	27.66	27.66	17.2**
	within groups	299	478.47	1.61	
Fashion Columns	between groups	1	21.63	21.63	12.1**
	within groups	299	532.94	1.79	
Prominent Women in News	between groups	1	0.94	.94	0.6
	within groups	299	439.94	1.48	
Internet	between groups	1	1.68	1.68	2.9
	within groups	299	173.97	.58	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviation of the Frequency of Use of Fashion Information Sources by Fashion Opinion Leaders and Non-leaders

Sources	Opinion Leaders (n=69)	Non-Opinion Leaders (n=232)	Total (n=301)
Window Display			
Group Means	3.8767	3.2165	3.3645
Group SD's	1.2447	1.1706	1.2169
Fashion Magazines			
Group Means	3.0882	2.4675	2.6087
Group SD's	1.3685	1.2467	1.2995
Fashion Shows			
Group Means	1.9265	1.6450	1.7090
Group SD's	1.2850	1.0650	1.1228
In-store Displays			
Group Means	3.3382	2.6494	2.8060
Group SD's	1.3314	1.2276	1.2780
Fashion Counselors			
Group Means	1.5735	1.4762	1.4983
Group SD's	1.2256	1.1105	1.1363
Salesperson			
Group Means	2.2500	2.1645	2.1839
Group SD's	1.2740	1.2507	1.2544
Asking Tailors			
Group Means	1.4559	1.5108	1.4983
Group SD's	1.0711	1.0462	1.0503
Newspaper Articles			
Group Means	2.8529	2.3766	2.4849
Group SD's	1.5575	1.2550	1.3420
Visit Boutiques			
Group Means	2.0147	1.6753	1.7525
Group SD's	1.3982	1.0888	1.1725
Pattern Books			
Group Means	2.5441	1.9697	2.1003
Group SD's	1.5203	1.2594	1.3424
Fashion Ads			
Group Means	3.0000	2.5714	2.6689
Group SD's	1.3494	1.3522	1.3613
Discuss with Classmates			
Group Means	3.9265	3.4719	3.5753
Group SD's	1.2850	1.3344	1.3349
Discuss with same sex Friends			
Group Means	3.7647	3.2641	3.3779
Group SD's	1.2473	1.3687	1.3564
Seeing What Friends Wear			
Group Means	3.5588	2.9913	3.1212
Group SD's	1.2505	1.3377	1.3377

*1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometime, 4=Often, 5=Most Often

Table 9 (Continued)

Sources	Opinion Leaders (n=69)	Non-Opinion Leaders (n=232)	Total (n=301)
Observing Clothing from Social Gathering			
Group Means	2.3008	1.9048	1.9967
Group SD's	1.3412	1.1867	1.2329
Public Places			
Group Means	3.3088	3.0216	3.0870
Group SD's	1.3300	1.4248	1.4068
Discuss with Opposite Sex Frie nds			
Group Means	2.8676	2.3593	2.4749
Group SD's	1.3919	1.3435	1.3691
Asking Parents for Idea			
Group Means	2.5588	2.3983	2.4348
Group SD's	1.3314	1.3243	1.3254
Television Performers			
Group Means	2.8676	2.2424	2.3846
Group SD's	1.3703	1.3228	1.3570
Movie actress			
Group Means	2.9118	2.1861	2.3512
Group SD's	1.3128	1.2563	1.3032
Fashion Columns			
Group Means	2.9706	2.3290	2.4749
Group SD's	1.4759	1.2971	1.3642
Prominent Women in News			
Group Means	1.5588	1.6926	1.6622
Group SD's	1.1510	1.2357	1.2163
Internet			
Group Means	1.5507	1.7284	1.6877
Group SD's	0.6310	0.7947	0.7630

*1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometime, 4=Often, 5=Most Often

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to investigate sources of fashion information preferred by Thai opinion leaders as compared with those preferred by Thai non-opinion leaders to determine which sources are relevant for each group. The study also investigated demographic characteristics of Thai college age consumers, to find differences and similarities in comparison with other consumers in other parts of the world. Three different stages in the fashion adoption process, the awareness stage, the comprehension stage, and the legitimization stage, were used in the study to investigate different sources used by both opinion leaders and non-leaders among Thai college age consumers when considering new fashions. The objectives of the study were: 1) to distinguish fashion opinion leaders from non-opinion leaders among Thai college age consumers, 2) to identify fashion information sources used by Thai fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders, 3) to determine the demographic characteristics of Thai fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders, and 4) to compare those groups to those from past research.

The conceptual framework of the study was based on the diffusion of fashion information and the fashion adoption process as reported by Roger (1962). The theoretical basis of diffusion process involves the spread of fashion information through

communication channels over a period of time in a social system (Roger, 1962). The adoption process model recognizes the steps an individual follows before accepting or rejecting an innovation. An individual seeks information from external sources such as the mass media or interpersonal communications to understand information and legitimize the acceptance or rejection of a newly introduced item (Robertson, 1971).

Thailand was chosen to be the area of study for many reasons: the fast growth rate of the economy, abundant and inexpensive labor and natural sources, fiscal conservatism, and an open foreign investment policy as a means of promoting economic development, employment and technology transfer. Bangkok was the specific area of the study. First, Bangkok is the central fashion market among Thai and Asian consumers. Second, specific residents' characteristics make this a desirable target market for fashion. Those characteristics include a higher educational level, higher incomes, more exposure to media, and more fashion consciousness. These characteristics make these consumers attractive to fashion marketers, retailers, and manufacturers. Finally, although this market is important, there is no empirical research on the fashion process and fashion consumers in Thailand. These factors combined make this an important area for research.

Research questions were established as a guideline for the study. 1) Are there any differences in the number, types, and variety of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-leaders during the awareness stage of the adoption process?, 2) Are there any differences in the number, types, and variety of fashion information sources used by opinion leaders and non-leaders during the comprehension stage of the adoption process?, 3) Are there any differences in type of fashion information sources

used by opinion leaders and non-leaders during the legitimization stage of the adoption process?, 4) Are there any differences in the frequency of using fashion information sources by opinion leaders and non-leaders?

Summary of Findings

Descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview of the background of the respondents and to identify the fashion opinion leaders. The four research questions were answered using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The level of significance was established at .05.

Descriptive statistics for the total sample indicated that the respondents represented an educated, urban, average income Thai. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to over 27 years of age. Of the sample ($\underline{n}$ = 301), 23% ($\underline{n}$ = 69) were classified as fashion opinion leaders and the remaining 69% ($\underline{n}$ = 232) as fashion non-opinion leaders.

Fashion opinion leadership in Thailand was found to be higher among women and younger consumers, similar to other research conducted in the US, Canada, and India. Fashion opinion leaders were found to be more fashion conscious, had higher clothing expenditures, spent a higher percent of allowance on clothing, and came from higher income families, with a smaller family size.

ANOVA analysis indicated that fashion opinion leaders used significantly greater numbers of sources of fashion information during both the awareness and comprehension stages of the fashion adoption process. The findings showed that fashion opinion leaders most used market-dominated sources to acquire fashion information during both the

awareness and comprehension stages, while non-opinion leaders used both market-dominated and consumer-dominated sources as sources of fashion information during both stages. Neutral sources were not popular among either group. The study also found that window displays and in-store displays were used the most during the awareness stage and comprehension stage. Self-information and fashion magazines played an important role during the legitimization stage of the fashion adoption process.

Mean scores of frequency of use of fashion information sources indicated that consumer-dominated sources were most frequency used by both fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders. Examples are discussion with classmates, discussion with friends of the same and opposite sex, followed by market-dominated sources, window displays, and in-store displays.

Conclusions

The research resulted in several general conclusions. Fashion opinion leaders and non-leaders within this group of respondents could not be differentiated by demographic characteristics. The use of fashion information sources in general and the use of the sources in the specific stages of the adoption process were similar, with the differences being that fashion opinion leaders used more different sources and used those sources more frequently to acquire fashion information than did non-leaders.

The findings of this research have implications for the manufacturers of new clothing styles and fashion retailers in Thailand. They may make use of these findings in their advertising strategy for introducing new clothing styles and for promotions.

Recommendation for Further Research

Several recommendations can be made to overcome the limitations of the study and to contribute to the further understanding of Thai consumers and their characteristics. These recommendations are as follows:

- Further study may include other groups of consumers as other variables for consideration, such as career women and housewives who have more money to spend on clothes.

- The present study dealt with college age consumers; other variables that influence the operation of fashion process may be considered in future research. The variables may include achievement motivation; knowledge ability; perceived risk; relative advantage, complexity, compatibility of new products. The ability of such variables could be examined as to their explanation, prediction, and discrimination between other groups of consumers such as innovator and non-innovators or opinion leaders and non-leaders.

- Further investigation may be extended to include other adopter categories to further understand the fashion process and fashion channels for consumers. The categories may include innovators, innovative communicators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.

- Further research may focus more on each source of fashion information that may have strong influence on consumers, such as magazines. The study may

investigate the influence of ads, editor columns, or fashion by actresses or actors on consumers.

- Since window displays and in-store displays were the most used as sources of fashion information among Thai fashion opinion leaders, further research may need to include other point-of-sale variables such as salesperson, store environment, and location in the investigations.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A:

**QUESTIONNAIRES FOR SOURCES OF FASHION INFORMATION
USED BY OPINION AND NON-OPINION LEADERS IN ENGLISH**

Questionnaire for measuring fashion opinion leader and non-opinion leaders and the sources used by consumers.

Part 1

Direction: Please, answer the following questions

1. In general do you like to talk about fashion/clothing with your friends?
   _____Yes   _____No

2. Would you say you give very little information, an average amount of information, or great deal about information about fashion/clothing to your friends?
   _____You give very little information.
   _____You give an average amount of information.
   _____You give a great amount of information.

3. During the past six months, have you told anyone about some fashion/clothing information?
   _____Yes   _____No

4. Compared with your cycle of friends, are you less likely, about as likely, or more likely to be asked for advice about fashion/clothing?
   _____Less likely to be asked
   _____About as likely to be asked
   _____More likely to be asked

5. If you and your friends were to discuss about fashion/clothing, what part would you be most likely to play?
   _____You mainly listen to your friends' ideas.
   _____You try to convince them of your ideas.

6. Which of these happens more often?
   _____You tell your friends about some fashion/clothing information.
   _____Your friends tell you about some fashion/clothing information.

7. Do you have the feeling that you are generally regarded by your friends and neighbors as a good source of advice about fashion/clothing?
   _____Yes   _____No

Part 2

Please, check as many as choices from all the choices below for the most important ways that you first become aware of a new clothing style.

- ❑ Window displays
- ❑ Fashion Magazines
- ❑ Fashion shows
- ❑ In-store displays
- ❑ Fashion counselors
- ❑ Salesperson
- ❑ Asking tailors
- ❑ Newspaper articles on fashion
- ❑ Visit boutiques
- ❑ Fashion ads in newspapers, movies, or poster
- ❑ Pattern book
- ❑ Internet

- ❑ Classmates
- ❑ Discussion with friends from the same sex
- ❑ Seeing what friends from the same sex wear
- ❑ Observe clothing Social gathering
- ❑ Public places
- ❑ Friends from the opposite sex
- ❑ Asking parents for the idea

- ❑ Television performers
- ❑ Notice of costumes of movie actresses
- ❑ Fashion columns
- ❑ Prominent women in news

Part 3

Direction: Please, check all of the sources that you have used when you want to buy clothes.

- ☐ Window displays
- ☐ Fashion Magazines
- ☐ Fashion shows
- ☐ In-store displays
- ☐ Fashion counselors
- ☐ Salesperson
- ☐ Asking tailors
- ☐ Newspaper articles on fashion
- ☐ Visit boutiques
- ☐ Fashion ads in newspapers, movies, or poster
- ☐ Pattern book
- ☐ Internet

- ☐ Classmates
- ☐ Discussion with friends from the same sex
- ☐ Seeing what friends from the same sex wear
- ☐ Observe clothing Social gathering
- ☐ Public places
- ☐ Friends from the opposite sex
- ☐ Asking parents for the idea

- ☐ Television performers
- ☐ Notice of costumes of movie actresses
- ☐ Fashion columns
- ☐ Prominent women in news

Part 4

Direction: Please, answer the question appropriately

Please list the most important source of fashion information for you to make you think that this clothing style is in fashion, make you want it, want to buy it ?

Part 5 How often do you interact with the each source

Direction: Please identify by circling the number which represent your answer of how often do you use these sources listed below for your fashion information sources. (1=never, 5=the most often)

❑	Window displays	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Fashion Magazines	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Fashion shows	5	4	3	2	1
❑	In-store displays	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Fashion counselors	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Salesperson	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Asking tailors	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Newspaper articles on fashion	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Visit boutiques	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Fashion ads in newspapers, movies, or poster	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Pattern book	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Internet	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Classmates	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Discussion with friends from the same sex	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Seeing what friends from the same sex wear	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Observe clothing Social gathering	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Public places	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Friends from the opposite sex	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Asking parents for idea	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Television performers	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Notice of costumes of movie actresses	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Fashion columns	5	4	3	2	1
❑	Prominent women in news	5	4	3	2	1

Part 6 Demographic
Direction: Please, answer the following questions

About yourself
1) SEX: _____female, or _____male
2) AGE:
   _____18-20 _____21-23 _____24-26 _____ 27 or more

3) CLASSIFICATION: _____Freshman _____Sophomore
   _____Junior _____Senior
   _____Others

4) MAJOR: _____
   UNIVERSITY: _____

5) Estimate how much allowance do you have for spending on clothes per month?
   _____Baht

6) How many percent from your allowance do you 3spend on clothing per month?
   _____%

About your family
7) How many brothers and sisters do you have (including you)? _____
8) Estimate how much income does your family make per household? _____Baht
9) Are there any members in your family members working in fashion business?
   Yes _____ No _____
   If yes, What?/Who?_____

Thank you for your participation !!

APPENDIX B:

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SOURCES OF FASHION INFORMATION
USED BY OPINION LEADERS AND NON-LEADERS IN THAI**

แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับการได้รับข้อมูลทางแฟชั่น

<u>ส่วนที่ 1</u>

1. โดยทั่วไปแล้วคุณชอบที่จะพูดคุยในเรื่องแฟชั่นหรือเสื้อผ้ากับเพื่อนๆหรือไม่

_____ ใช่   _____ ไม่ใช่

2. คุณชอบที่จะแนะนำข่าวสารในเรื่องแฟชั่นให้กับเพื่อนๆหรือไม่

_____ มีบ้างเล็กน้อย

_____ มีบ้างโดยทั่วไป

_____ มีเป็นประจำ

3. ใน 6 เดือนที่ผ่านมา คุณได้แนะนำเพื่อนๆเกี่ยวกับการแต่งตัวหรือแฟชั่นบ้างหรือไม่

_____ มี   _____ ไม่มี

4. เมื่ออยู่ในกลุ่มเพื่อน คุณจะถูกขอคำแนะนำในเรื่องการแต่งตัวของเพื่อน

_____ ไม่ค่อยถูกขอคำแนะนำ

_____ ถูกขอคำแนะนำบ้างบางครั้ง

_____ ถูกขอคำแนะนำอยู่บ่อยครั้ง

5. เมื่อคุณและเพื่อนมีข้อขัดแย้งเกี่ยวกับการแต่งตัว และแฟชั่น ส่วนใหญ่คุณจะเป็นฝ่าย

_____ ฟังคำแนะนำของเพื่อน

_____ เป็นฝ่ายโน้มน้าวเพื่อนให้ฟังความคิดเห็นของคุณ

6. ข้อใดต่อไปนี้ เกิดขึ้นกับคุณบ่อยครั้งกว่า

_____ แนะนำเพื่อนๆในเรื่องการแต่งตัว

_____ เพื่อนๆแนะนำคุณในเรื่องการแต่งตัว

7. คุณมีความรู้สึกว่าเพื่อนๆเชื่อถือในเรื่องรสนิยมการแต่งตัวของคุณ และเป็นแหล่งข้อมูลของเพื่อนๆ
ในเรื่องแฟชั่น

_____ ใช่   _____ ไม่ใช่

กรุณาเช็ค หน้าข้อที่คุณใช้เป็น<u>แหล่งข้อมูลทางแฟชั่น</u>

(สามารถตอบได้ มากเท่าที่เป็นความจริง)

- เดินเล่นเพื่อเยี่ยมชม ตามแหล่งที่ขายเสื้อผ้า ต่างๆ
- หนังสือแฟชั่น หรือแมกกาซีนโดยทั่วไป
- แฟชั่นโชว์
- เสื้อผ้าที่โชว์หน้าร้าน หรือการตกแต่งหน้าร้านของร้านขายเสื้อผ้า
- สอบถามคนในวงการแฟชั่น
- คนขายเสื้อผ้า หรือเจ้าของร้าน
- สอบถามกช่างตัดเสื้อประจำตัว
- คอลัมน์ในหนังสือ
- เยี่ยมชมห้องเสื้อ
- หนังสือแบบเสื้อ
- คอบลัมน์แฟชั่นในหนังสือพิมพ์, ภาพยนตร์, หรือโปสเตอร์
- เพื่อนๆในกลุ่ม
- พูดคุยกับเพื่อนๆเพศเดียวกัน
- สังเกตจากการแต่งตัวของเพื่อน
- สังเกตจากงานประเพณีระหว่างมหาวิทยาลัย
- สังเกตจากสถานที่สาธารณะ โดยทั่วไป
- จากการพูดคุย หรือความคิดของเพื่อนต่างเพศ
- สอบถามความคิดเห็นจาก พ่อ-แม่ หรือคนในครอบครัว
- สังเกตจากแฟชั่นดารา
- สังเกตจากแฟชั่นจากภาพยนตร์
- ดูจากคอลัมน์แวดวงสังคมจากแมกกาซีน
- จากการแต่งตัวของผู้ประกาศข่าว

<u>ส่วนที่ 3</u>

กรุณาเช็ค หน้าข้อที่คุณใช้เป็น<u>แหล่งข้อมูลเพื่อการซื้อเสื้อผ้า</u>

(สามารถตอบได้ มากเท่าที่เป็นความจริง)

- เดินเล่นเพื่อเยี่ยมชม ตามแหล่งที่ขายเสื้อผ้า ต่างๆ
- หนังสือแฟชั่น หรือแมกกาซีนโดยทั่วไป
- แฟชั่นโชว์
- เสื้อผ้าที่โชว์หน้าร้าน หรือการตกแต่งหน้าร้านของร้านขายเสื้อผ้า
- สอบถามคนในวงการแฟชั่น
- คนขายเสื้อผ้า หรือเจ้าของร้าน
- สอบถามช่างตัดเสื้อประจำตัว
- คอลัมน์ในหนังสือ
- เยี่ยมชมห้องเสื้อ
- หนังสือแบบเสื้อ
- คอลัมน์แฟชั่นในหนังสือพิมพ์, ภาพยนตร์, หรือโปสเตอร์
- เพื่อนๆในกลุ่ม
- พูดคุยกับเพื่อนๆเพศเดียวกัน
- สังเกตจากการแต่งตัวของเพื่อน
- สังเกตจากงานประเพณีระหว่างมหาวิทยาลัย
- สังเกตจากสถานที่สาธารณะ โดยทั่วไป
- จากการพูดคุย หรือความคิดของเพื่อนต่างเพศ
- สอบถามความคิดเห็นจาก พ่อ-แม่ หรือคนในครอบครัว
- สังเกตจากแฟชั่นดารา
- สังเกตจากแฟชั่นจากภาพยนตร์
- ดูจากคอลัมน์แวดวงสังคมจากแมกกาซีน
- จากการแต่งตัวของผู้ประกาศข่าว

<u>ส่วนที่ 4</u>

กรุณาระบุแหล่งข้อมูลที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกซื้อเสื้อผ้า(โปรดเรียงลำดับความสำคัญ)

....

<u>ส่วนที่ 5</u>

กรุณาวงกลมล้อมรอบคำตอบที่เป็นตัวคุณมากที่สุด

กรุณาระบุความถี่ ในการมีกิจกรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการใช้เหล่งข้อมูลต่อไปนี้

(1 = ไม่เคย , 5= บ่อยที่สุด)

เดินเล่นเพื่อเยี่ยมชม ตามแหล่งที่ขายเสื้อผ้า ต่างๆ	1 2 3 4 5
หนังสือแฟชั่น หรือแมกกาซีนโดยทั่วไป	1 2 3 4 5
แฟชั่นโชว์	1 2 3 4 5
เสื้อผ้าที่โชว์หน้าร้าน หรือการตกแต่งหน้าร้านของร้านขายเสื้อผ้า	1 2 3 4 5
สอบถามคนในวงการแฟชั่น	1 2 3 4 5
คนขายเสื้อผ้า หรือเจ้าของร้าน	1 2 3 4 5
สอบถามกช่างตัดเสื้อประจำตัว	1 2 3 4 5
คอลัมน์ในหนังสือ	1 2 3 4 5
เยี่ยมชมห้องเสื้อ	1 2 3 4 5
หนังสือแบบเสื้อ	1 2 3 4 5
คอบลัมน์แฟชั่นในหนังสือพิมพ์, ภาพยนตร์, หรือโปสเตอร์	1 2 3 4 5
เพื่อนๆในกลุ่ม	1 2 3 4 5
พูดคุยกับเพื่อนๆเพศเดียวกัน	1 2 3 4 5
สังเกตจากการแต่งตัวของเพื่อน	1 2 3 4 5
สังเกตจากงานประเพณีระหว่างมหาวิทยาลัย	1 2 3 4 5
สังเกตจากสถานที่สาธารณะ โดยทั่วไป	1 2 3 4 5
จากการพูดคุย หรือความคิดของเพื่อนต่างเพศ	1 2 3 4 5
สอบถามความคิดเห็นจาก พ่อ-แม่ หรือคนในครอบครัว	1 2 3 4 5
สังเกตจากแฟชั่นดารา	1 2 3 4 5
สังเกตจากแฟชั่นจากภาพยนตร์	1 2 3 4 5
ดูจากคอลัมน์แวดวงสังคมจากแมกกาซีน	1 2 3 4 5
จากการแต่งตัวของผู้ประกาศข่าว	1 2 3 4 5

<u>**ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคล**</u>

1) เพศ _____ ชาย _____ หญิง

2) อายุ _____ 18-20 _____ 21-23 _____ 24-26 _____ 27 หรือมากกว่า

3) ในปีที่ _____ 1 _____ 2

_____ 3 _____ 4

_____ อื่นๆ

4) ภาควิชา _____

มหาวิทยาลัย _____

5) งบประมาณรายจ่ายโดยประมาณที่ได้รับเพื่อเป็นรายจ่ายค่าเสื้อผ้า

_____ บาท

6) งบประมาณรายจ่ายโดยประมาณที่ใช้ในการซื้อเสื้อผ้าเป็นเปอร์เซ็นต์
เมื่อเปรียบเทียบกับรายได้ทั้งหมดที่ได้รับต่อเดือน _____

_____ %

<u>**ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับครอบครัว**</u>

7) จำนวนพี่น้องทั้งหมดในครอบครัว (รวมตัวคุณเองด้วย) _____ คน

8) ประมาณรายรับของครอบครัวต่อเดือน

_____ ต่ำกว่า 10,000 บาท _____ 10,000 – 20,000 บาท

_____ 20,000 – 30,000 บาท _____ 30,000 – 40,000 บาท

_____ 40,000 – 50,000 บาท _____ มากกว่า 50,000 บาท

9) คุณมีสมาชิกในครอบครัวที่ทำงานอยู่ในวงการแฟชั่น หรือไม่

_____ มี _____ ไม่มี

ถ้ามี ทำอาชีพอะไร _____

มีความเกี่ยวข้องกับคุณโดย _____

ขอขอบคุณเป็นอย่างยิ่งในการให้ความร่วมมือ

APPENDIX C:

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW**

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 11-19-98

IRB #: HE-99-041

Proposal Title: SOURCE PREFERENCE BY FASHION OPINION LEADERS: INVESTIGATE IN COLLEGE STUDENTS IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

Principal Investigator(s): Nancy Stanforth, Darin Sriphanya

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature: _____ Date: November 24, 1998

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance
cc: Darin Sriphanya

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

2

VITA

Darin Sriphanya

Candidate for the degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: SOURCE PREFERENCES OF FASHION OPINION LEADERS AND
NON-LEADERS: INVESTIGATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN
BANGKOK, THAILAND

Major Field: Design, Housing, and Merchandising

Biographical:

Education: Graduate from Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand, with
Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in October 1992. Complete the
requirements for Master of Science degree with a major in Apparel
Merchandising at Oklahoma State University in December 1999

Experience: Work as Manager at Kyoto Japanese Restaurant, Stillwater,
Oklahoma. Worked as Research Assistant at Department of Design,
Housing, and Merchandising from August 1998 to June 1999. Worked as
Marketing Coordinator at Soon Hua Sang Group, Bangkok, Thailand from
July 1993 – July 1995. Worked as Sales Representative Soon Hua Sang
Group, Bangkok, Thailand from November 1992 – July 1993.

Professional Memberships: President for Thai Student Association, Oklahoma
State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, from April 1998 – June 1999.
Treasurer for International Business Club, Oklahoma State University,
Oklahoma, from August 1996 – July 1997. Public Relation Chair for Thai
Art & Culture Club, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand, 1991-1992.