An Investigation of Self-Concept, Clothing Selection Motivation, and Life Satisfaction among Disabled Consumers

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Abstract:

This study examined the impact that aspects of self-concept (i.e., generalized self-efficacy, public self-consciousness, state hope, self-esteem) have on clothing selection motivation and life satisfaction among disabled consumers. A total of 318 questionnaires were completed by participants, the majority of whom had either a mobility impairment or a visual impairment. Structural equation modeling was employed to test the hypotheses. Results indicated that for disabled consumers, generalized self-efficacy, public self-consciousness, and state hope were related to self-esteem, and also self-esteem positively influenced the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation. Additionally, a significant relationship was found between life satisfaction and the individuality dimension of clothing selection motivation. Results shed light on the social/psychological factors influencing the clothing choices of disabled consumers and address a gap in the literature by considering clothing use among disabled consumers.

Keywords: disabled consumers | self-concept | clothing selection motivation | satisfaction

Article:

"Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible"

(Helen Adams Keller, 1880–1968).

Individuals with disabilities are often misunderstood by society because of their physical or mental limitations. In turn, people with disabilities often limit themselves socially. However, as the quote by Helen Keller illustrates, the disabled can overcome these limitations and seek a more fulfilling life as fully engaged members of society. By the same token, nondisabled individuals also must gain an understanding of disabled consumers because disabled consumers' behavior may be unlike that of others in their society due to their physical and mental disabilities (Ittyerah & Kumar, 2009).

Disabled consumers' involvement in society has increased since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1990 (Hardman, Drew, & Egan, 2002). However, there remains quite a bit of prejudice and ignorance about disabled people. Because consumer behavior research has typically focused on the population of "haves" and assumed consumers' normalcy (Miller, 1997), the population of "have nots" has been largely ignored. As a result, we have a limited understanding of disabled individuals as consumers. It is important to understand how disabled individuals think about themselves as they may or may not see themselves as "disabled" to the same extent that others do. In addition, understanding attitudes and beliefs with regards to clothing, in particular, provides a key to understanding their behavior in society, as dress behavior plays a significant role in expressing one's sense of self in our contemporary culture (Kwon & Parham, 1994). Furthermore, an increased knowledge of disabled consumers will contribute to society by providing guidance to practitioners wishing to satisfy the needs of disabled individuals. To address the research gap, this study aims to better understand disabled consumers and to investigate the influence of disabled individuals' multifaceted self-concept on their social/psychological motivations for selecting clothing to wear.

Several research questions guided the development of the study, including (i) In what way, if any, are disabled consumers' self-efficacy, public self-consciousness, and state hope related to their self-esteem? (ii) How, if at all, does disabled consumers' self-esteem affect their clothing selection motivation and life satisfaction? And (iii) What type of relationship, if any, exists between disabled consumers' life satisfaction and their selection of clothing to wear?

Disability and the Disabled

Disability can be explained as both a personal and a social issue (Lamb, 2001), meaning that disability affects the lives of those individuals who are disabled as well as the lives of nondisabled individuals living in the same community. Disability is defined as the lack of ability to perform an activity that is considered normal for human beings (Rudberg, Furner, Dunn, & Cassel, 1993). Disabled individuals experience limitations in terms of performing activities and behaviors that are generally accepted as essential to everyday life simply based on the ways in which these activities and behaviors are expected to be performed in a society. Because disability represents any restriction or prevention of the performance of an activity which results from an impairment, disease, or disorder, the disability is the outcome of the impairment, disease, or disorder (Rudberg, et al., 1993).

Attention to the clothing needs of consumers with disabilities has increased as disabled consumers have increased their participation in social and occupational activities (Newton, 1984). Some research has been conducted on both shopping behaviors and shopping restrictions to better understand disabled individuals as consumers (de Klerk & Ampousah, 2002) and their special clothing needs (Kidd, 2006). However, efforts to understand disabled consumers are recent and not yet fully developed (Burnett, 2006). Lamb (2001) pointed out that disabled consumers are

excluded or discriminated against in regards to the market, as the primary interest has been nondisabled consumers.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Self-concept

Self-concept is defined as self-perceptions related to attitudes, feelings, and knowledge about one's appearance or abilities (Byrne, 1984). Self-concept is complex, as it pertains to the beliefs a person has about his/her own characteristics and how he/she evaluates them (Solomon, 2006). In this study, self-concept is considered to be a multifaceted concept that is composed of several interconnected elements, including self-efficacy, public self-consciousness, state hope, and self-esteem.

Self-esteem is related to a person's beliefs about his/her own attributes and how he/she evaluates these qualities (Solomon, 2006). Self-esteem is explained as an overall feeling of self-worth which is relatively constant over time (Wilburn & Smith, 2009). It is the favorable self-evaluation which is often related to emotions or performance in an individual's life (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996).

The relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem. In addition to self-esteem, another key component of one's self-concept is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been defined as both a task-specific trait and a global trait. According to Bandura's (1977) trait-specific conceptualization, self-efficacy is an individual's beliefs about the possession of capabilities required to accomplish certain goals. On the other hand, Judge et al. (1998) definition of the term is more global in nature. Generalized self-efficacy is often viewed as a replication of one's perceptions of his or her fundamental ability to cope with life's demands (Judge et al., 1998). Of the two, generalized self-efficacy would most likely be more useful than trait-specific self-efficacy for understanding individuals' capabilities of handling their life situation in general.

Because disabled consumers face mental and/or physical challenges to a greater degree and on a more frequent basis than nondisabled consumers, it seems likely that the generalized self-efficacy component of their self-concept would play a significant role in the development of their self-esteem. In other words, the way in which they evaluate themselves may be based on their ability to overcome these challenges (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998; Oyedele & Simpson, 2007). Hence, generalized self-efficacy would likely be positively related to self-esteem. Thus, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1:   There will be a positive relationship between disabled consumers' generalized self-efficacy and their self-esteem.

The relationship between public self-consciousness and self-esteem. In addition to generalized self-efficacy, self-consciousness is another component of self-concept that may be an important antecedent of self-esteem among disabled consumers. Fenigstein (1979) defined self-consciousness as an individual's self-attention. An individual can experience different levels of self-attention depending on the time and situation (Fenigstein, 1979). Specifically, public self-consciousness is related to an individual's self-attention in the public environment. Because dress can be a public action, both in terms of purchasing as well as wearing, it is likely that public self-

consciousness has a greater impact on dress behavior than private self-consciousness. Thus, public self-consciousness is an appropriate concept for the context of this study.

A high degree of public self-consciousness can result in social anxiety and a heightened state of self-monitoring (Fromson, 2006). Additionally, Kwon and Shim (1999) found that individuals who have higher public self-consciousness have lower self-esteem. As this pattern is likely to be reflected among disabled individuals, the following hypothesis was developed:

H2: There will be a negative relationship between disabled consumers' public self-consciousness and their self-esteem.

The relationship between state hope and self-esteem. Hope is the emotional outlook that an individual has toward his or her life, a goal, or the fulfillment of something in particular (Snyder et al., 1996). State hope is defined as the desire for fulfillment in regards to certain activities or life in general (Osterhoudt, 1978). An individual's state hope can influence his or her emotions and behaviors. State hope is important to understanding goal-directed thinking and the big picture of self-concept among disabled individuals. State hope can also be used to understand the previous experiences of achieving goals among individuals with disabilities because individuals often perceive their potential by reflecting on prior experiences.

Using the Hope Scale, Snyder et al. (1996) found that degree of hope was positively related to self-esteem among nondisabled individuals. A similar relationship seems likely to exist for disabled individuals. Hence, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: There will be a positive relationship between disabled consumers' state hope and their self-esteem.

Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction is considered to be an important measurement to understand individuals' psychological perceptions about their lives. Scholars agree that life satisfaction can convey significant information about disabled individuals' underlying emotional states (Diener et al., 1985). Thus, disabled individuals' self-esteem and other aspects of their multifaceted self-concept can influence their life satisfaction.

The relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is considered an important measurement for understanding an individual's psychological perceptions about his or her life. According to the literature, emotional responses and life satisfaction can be predicted by self-esteem (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Diener et al., 1985). In this respect, nondisabled individuals are not expected to differ from disabled individuals. Thus, it is expected that disabled individuals' life satisfaction will be influenced by self-esteem (Schwartz & Strack, 1999). Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

H4: There will be a positive relationship between disabled consumers' self-esteem and their life satisfaction.

Clothing selection motivation

Clothing selection motivation is often determined by how a consumer perceives his or her self-concept and the desire to express it (Kwon & Parham, 1994). Clothing selection motivation can refer to either selecting clothing to buy (as in a store) or selecting clothing to wear (as from a wardrobe). Selection of clothing to wear can be measured by five dimensions (Kwon & Parham, 1994). These dimensions include individuality (e.g., clothing that makes a person distinctive), assurance (e.g., clothing that helps a person to have self-confidence), camouflage (e.g., clothing that hides the figure), fashionability (e.g., clothing that is stylish), and comfort (e.g., clothing that is comfortable). These clothing selection dimensions have not been investigated among disabled individuals. In this study, three of these clothing selection dimensions, individuality, assurance, and camouflage were selected for use, because they were identified in previous research (XXX, 2012) as being the most closely related to the self-concept and life satisfaction of disabled consumers.

The relationship between self-esteem and clothing selection motivation. According to Kwon and Parham (1994), individuals' clothing choices may be influenced by aspects of their self-concept, such as body image. Affective evaluations of the self, like self-esteem, are related to clothing selection motivations (Kinley, 2010). The individuality dimension suggests that an individual selects clothing to express a distinctive identity if he/she has positive self-esteem. Second, the assurance dimension suggests that an individual selects clothing to express self-confidence. Thus, it is expected that an individual with high self-esteem will be likely to select clothing for the assurance dimension. Third, the camouflage dimension suggests that an individual selects clothing to hide his or her self. Therefore, it is expected that an individual with low self-esteem will be likely to select clothing for its camouflage dimension. Based on this rationale and the literature, the following hypotheses were developed:

H5a: There will be a positive relationship between disabled consumers' self-esteem and the individuality dimension of clothing selection motivation.

H5b: There will be a positive relationship between disabled consumers' self-esteem and the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation.

H5c: There will be a negative relationship between disabled consumers' self-esteem and the camouflage dimension of clothing selection motivation.

The relationship between life satisfaction and clothing selection motivation. Life satisfaction is often related to esthetic satisfaction (Sontag & Schlater, 1995). Furthermore, life satisfaction has been shown to be related to clothing satisfaction for nondisabled individuals (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The impact of life satisfaction on the clothing consumption behavior of disabled individuals has not yet been thoroughly examined. But a logical argument can be established for the existence of a relationship between life satisfaction and clothing selection motivation. Life satisfaction will most likely be related to clothing to the extent that individuals with low life satisfaction may choose clothing to hide the self, while individuals who are satisfied with their lives may want to express their positive feelings, such as happiness, through their clothing. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was developed as follows (see Figure 1):
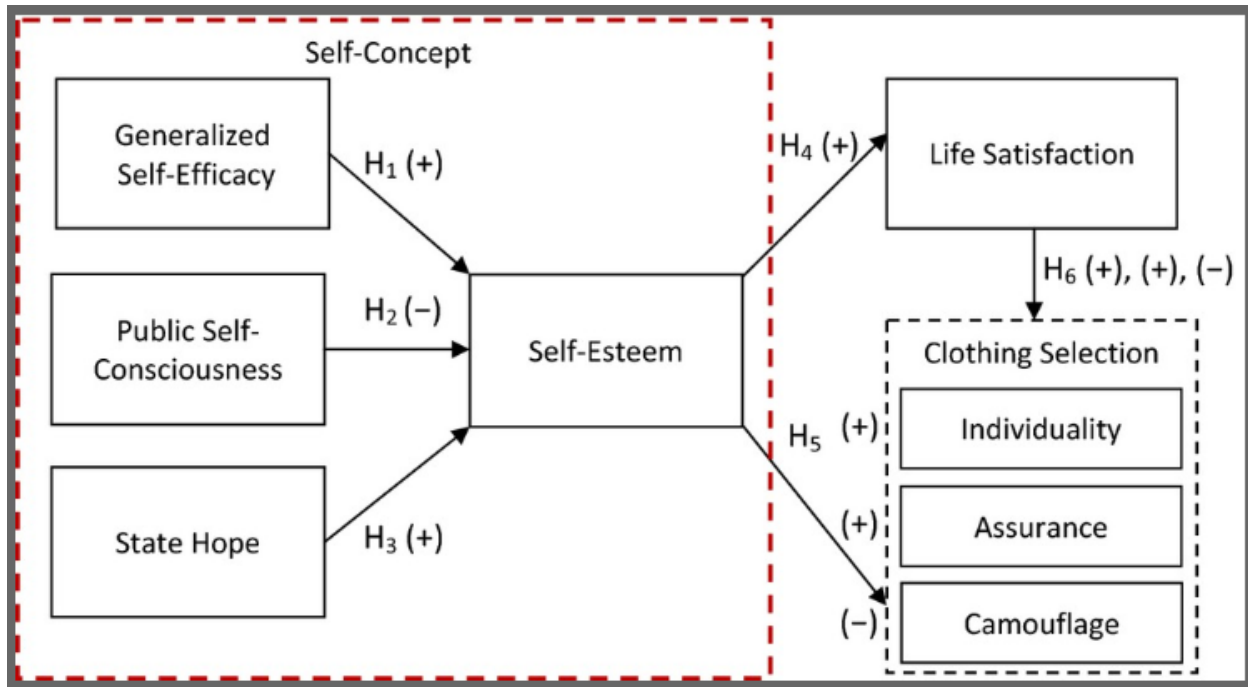
Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework for the Study.

Method

Instrument Development

This study employed a quantitative research design using the survey method. A structured questionnaire was developed based on a review of existing literature. All questions were pilot tested to ensure that they were clear and that the phrasing of all items was appropriate for the study population. A combination of self-efficacy theory (Oyedele & Simpson, 2007), the self-evaluation model developed by Judge et al. (1998), and the findings from previous literature were employed in developing the conceptual framework. Existing measurement scales with satisfactory reliabilities were selected from the literature for each construct. Self-efficacy (Judge et al., 1998), public self-consciousness (Kwon & Shim, 1999), state hope (Snyder et al., 1996), self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), life satisfaction (Diener, Horwitz, & Emmons, 1985), and clothing selection motivation (Kwon & Parham, 1994) were measured using items on a seven-point Likert-type scale.

Sample and Procedures

The respondents for this study were 350 adult disabled consumers in a variety of settings. First, students registered with disability offices at five Southeastern universities were emailed an online version of the questionnaire after IRB approval was granted. Second, a paper version of the questionnaire was completed by individuals with disabilities working at local companies in the Southeastern area of the U.S. Third, paper questionnaires were distributed at local communities for individuals with disabilities. Fourth, individuals who are members of various American associations of individuals with disabilities were emailed the online version of the survey.

Collecting data using both an online and offline version of a questionnaire in the same study is a generally accepted practice, given the convergent results typically obtained from both data collection techniques (Campos, Zucoloto, Bonafe, Jordani, & Maroco, 2011; Yu & Yu, 2007), however, as suggested by Xu et al. (2004), t-tests were also employed to minimize sampling source bias. Specifically, a series of independent t-tests between the two sample sources (paper version vs. online version) was conducted on the mean scores of the major constructs (Xu, Shim, Lotz, & Almeida, 2004). There were no significant differences on the mean scores of the major constructs between the two data sets: generalized self-efficacy (t = 0.94, p = .12); public self-consciousness (t = 0.76, p = .11); state hope (t = 1.20, p = .33); self-esteem (t = 2.84, p = .58); life satisfaction (t = 0.88, p = .13); clothing selection motivation dimension 1 – individuality function (t = 0.03, p = .48); clothing selection motivation dimension 2 – assurance function (t = −0.53, p = .07); clothing selection motivation dimension 3 – camouflage function (t = 1.06, p = .67). As the results did not indicate population variances between the two groups, they were combined for data analysis.

Results

Statistical Analysis

To analyze the data, PASW Statistics 18.0 was used to obtain descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, and LISREL 8.8 was employed for hypothesis testing using structural equation modeling (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993). Data analyses consisted of descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with Varimax rotation was used for the multi-item scales to refine the measures included in this study. Reliability of the factors retained was at least 0.60. One dimension of clothing selection motivation, camouflage, was not retained for further analysis after EFA because the factor had a reliability of less than 0.60 (α = 0.46).

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to test the hypotheses as well as to examine the fit of the measurement model and the structural model (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1993). First, confirmatory analysis was conducted to determine measurement model fit, composite reliability, and discriminant validity. Second, the model fit of the conceptual framework of this study was tested by SEM. Using SEM revealed how well the model fit the data and how well the data supported the model established by the constructs.

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Of the total, 32 responses were incomplete, resulting in 318 usable responses and yielding a response rate of 90.9%. The final sample was composed of 113 females (35.5%) and 199 males (62.6%). The mean age of respondents was 37.7 years, with ages ranging from 18 to 81. The majority of participants were Caucasian/White (n = 179, 56.3%), followed by African-American (n = 88, 27.7%). With respect to education, the majority of participants had finished high school (n = 138, 43.4%), followed by those having completed college (n = 69, 21.7%). More than 50% of participants were employed by others. Household income indicated by the majority of respondents was $19,999 or less (n = 124, 39.0%), followed by $20,000 to $34,999 (n = 49, 15.4%).

Measurement Model Analysis

Measurement model analysis was based on seven latent constructs: (i) Generalized Self-Efficacy; (ii) Public Self-Consciousness; (iii) State Hope; (iv) Self-Esteem; (v) Life Satisfaction; (vi) Clothing Selection Motivation Dimension 1 – Assurance Function; and (vii) Clothing Selection Motivation Dimension 2 – Individuality Function. The measurement model includes all of the original factors from the hypothesized model (i.e., four self-concept factors, life satisfaction factor, and two dimensions of clothing selection motivation factors), with the exception of the camouflage dimension of clothing selection motivation that, as previously mentioned, was dropped due to low reliability (as a result of the EFA).

The CFA model for the main effect had a significant χ^2 index ($\chi^2 = 2636.00$, df = 1013; p < .001; χ^2/df = 2.60). The model fit was evaluated via NFI, CFI, and TLI as recommended based on their relative stability and insensitivity to sample size (Gerbing & Anderson, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Regarding incremental fit measures, the NFI was 0.91 and CFI was 0.94, both of which are greater than 0.90, as recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999). Another key index of fit is TLI, which was 0.94, greater than 0.90 as recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999). Moreover, the normed chi-square (χ^2/df) was smaller than 3.0, as recommended by Brown (2006). The parsimonious fit index, the RMSEA, based on the concept of noncentrality, was 0.071, which is acceptable (Browne & Cudeck, 1992). The resulting overall fit of the measurement model was deemed to be good.

Structural Model Analysis

To analyze structural models of the main effects, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted via the maximum-likelihood estimation procedure. The modification indices (MI) for the main effects suggested the existence of a direct relationship between state hope and life satisfaction, as well as a direct relationship between public self-consciousness and the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation. This study was the first attempt to explore the interrelationships among self-concept, clothing selection motivation, and life satisfaction among disabled consumers (Kinley, 2010; Kwon & Parham, 1994). Thus, modifications to the base theory presented were welcomed. To test whether the original model needed to be modified, differences in chi-square and degrees of freedom between the original model and the modified model were examined for significance. The direct effect of state hope on life satisfaction indicated that disabled consumers who have high state hope were more likely to be satisfied with their lives than disabled consumers with low state hope. The direct effect of public self-consciousness on the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation suggested that disabled consumers who have high public self-consciousness were more likely to choose clothing for assurance, helping them have greater self-confidence.

Based on the inclusion of these two additional paths, the adjusted model had a χ^2 test statistic of 2285.51 (df = 932; p < .000). Fit indices, including the NFI (0.91) and the CFI (0.95), were greater than the cut-off value of 0.90. Also, the RMSEA index was 0.068, with a 90% confidence interval between 0.064 and 0.071, indicating that the model fit was acceptable. Furthermore, the normed chi-square was 2.45, thereby meeting the fit guideline criteria of the measure (p < 3.0). The TLI was 0.94, greater than 0.90 as recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999). Thus, most of the model indices indicate that the model fits the data well and the fit of this adjusted model was improved compared with that of the original model.

Hypothesis Testing

The model specifically describes each path relationship and the results of SEM (see Figure 2). Hypothesis 1 proposed a positive relationship between disabled consumers' generalized self-efficacy and their self-esteem. There was a significant relationship between these two variables ($\gamma11 = 0.18$, z-value = 2.34, p < .05). A negative relationship between disabled consumers' public self-consciousness and their self-esteem was predicted in Hypothesis 2. The results of the hypothesis test supported H2 ($\gamma12 = -0.22$, z-value = -3.83, p < .01). Hypothesis 3, stating the direct, positive effect of state hope on self-esteem, was also supported ($\gamma13 = 0.65$, z-value = 5.64, p < .001).
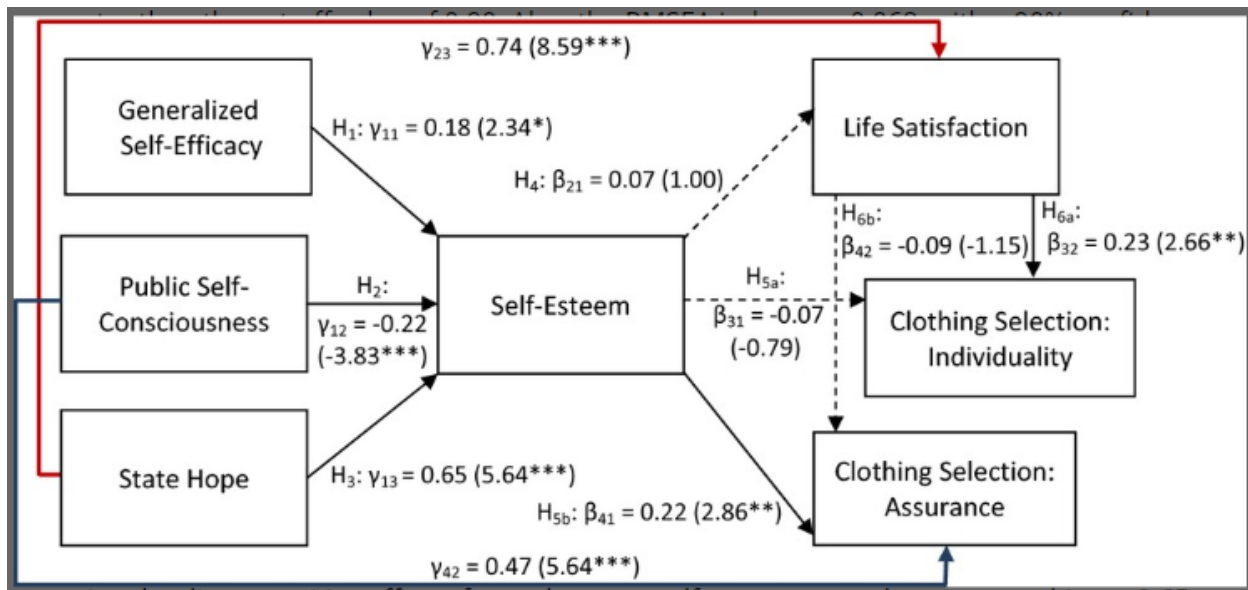

Figure 2. Structural Equation Model for the Main Effects. *z-value (two-tailed) = 1.96 (p ≤ .05), **z-value = 2.58 (p ≤ .01), ***z-value = 3.45 (p ≤ .001). Indicator variables, correlations among exogenous variables, and disturbances have been omitted for notational simplicity. aCoefficient: Completely standardized solution

A positive relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction was proposed in Hypothesis 4. Results indicated no significant, positive relationship between the variables ($\beta21 = 0.07$, z-value = 1.00, p > .05), thereby not supporting Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 5a proposed a positive effect of self-esteem on the individuality dimension of clothing selection motivation ($\beta31 = -0.07$, z- value = -0.79, p > .05) and was rejected. Hypothesis 5b, which proposed a positive effect of self-esteem on the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation, was supported ($\beta41 = 0.22$, z-value = 2.86, p < .05).

Hypothesis 6a proposed a positive relationship between life satisfaction and the individuality dimension of clothing selection motivation, which was supported by the data ($\beta32 = 0.23$, z-value = 2.66, p < .05). Hypothesis 6b proposed a positive relationship between life satisfaction and the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation, but the results did not support the hypothesis ($\beta42 = -0.09$, z-value = -1.15, p > .05). Hypothesis 5c and 6c could not been tested due to the low reliability of the camouflage dimension of clothing selection motivation (see Figure 2).

The comparison models were determined by calculating the difference in chi-square values (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bagozzi & Phillips, 1982). Anderson and Gerbing (1988) stated that the chi-square difference can be tested for statistical significance with the appropriate degrees of freedom. Thus, based on the significant chi-square difference and the modification indices, the modified model was used as a framework for this study ($\chi 2$ difference = 587.86, degrees of freedom difference = 91, p < .001). In addition, the fit indexes (i.e., NFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA) were better in the modified model than the original model, indicating that the modified model fit the data better than the original model. A negative relationship between disabled consumers' public self-consciousness and self-esteem was found in the adjusted model ($\gamma 12 = -0.22$, z-value = −3.83, p < .001). Disabled consumers' public self-consciousness also affected the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation directly ($\gamma 42 = 0.47$, z-value = 5.64, p < .001). A positive effect of state hope on self-esteem was also found ($\gamma 13 = 0.65$, z-value = 5.64, p < .001). Additionally, a direct effect of state hope on life satisfaction was suggested from modification indices and a significant relationship between the two was found ($\gamma 23 = 0.74$, z-value = 8.59, p < .001) (see Figure 2).

As suggested by Lotz, Eastlick, Mishra, and Shim (2010) and Shim, Eastlick, Lotz, and Warrington (2001), the direct and indirect effects on life satisfaction and clothing selection motivation were examined. An inspection of the direct and total effects on life satisfaction and clothing selection motivation reveals that respondents' state hope had the greatest direct impact on life satisfaction ($\gamma 23 = 0.74$) and public self-consciousness had the greatest direct impact on the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation ($\gamma 42 = 0.47$). State hope had the greatest indirect effect on the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation through self-esteem ($\gamma 13 \times \beta 41 = 0.14$). Generalized self-efficacy ($\gamma 11 \times \beta 41 = 0.14$) and public self-consciousness ($\gamma 12 \times \beta 41 = -0.05$) also had indirect effects on the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation through self-esteem. These results show the partial mediating effect of self-esteem on the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation. Furthermore, life satisfaction had the greatest direct impact on the individuality dimension of clothing selection motivation ($\beta 32 = 0.23$), whereas state hope had the greatest indirect effect on the individuality dimension of clothing selection motivation through life satisfaction ($\gamma 23 \times \beta 32 = 0.17$). This result shows the partial mediating effect of life satisfaction on the individuality dimension of clothing selection motivation.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study examined the relation of self-concept to life satisfaction and clothing selection motivation specifically with respect to individuals with disabilities. A critical need exists to consider the experiences of individuals with disabilities, as disabled individuals are becoming increasingly more active in society. The findings of this study point to how society might better understand and support the needs of consumers with disabilities.

According to the results, three aspects of disabled individuals' multifaceted self-concept (i.e., generalized self-efficacy, public self-consciousness, and state hope) influenced their holistic view of the self (i.e., self-esteem). Thus, as Solomon (2006) discussed, self-concept is complex. In this case, disabled individuals' self-concept was composed, in part, of the degree to which they were concerned about other people's opinions of them, as well as the degree to which they had positive, goal-directed thinking.

A positive relationship between generalized self-efficacy and self-esteem was found. This finding indicates that disabled individuals who strongly believe that they have the capability to

perform certain tasks are more likely to have positive attitudes toward themselves. This finding is consistent with that of Judge et al. (1998), who found a positive relationship between generalized self-efficacy and self-esteem for nondisabled individuals.

Disabled consumers' public self-consciousness is recognized as a significant aspect of self-concept related to their self-esteem. In other words, disabled consumers' self-esteem will be more positive if they are not concerned about what other people think of them. This finding is linked to that of Fromson (2006), who revealed that those with high public self-consciousness experienced social anxiety and lower self-confidence.

Disabled consumers' state hope is another important aspect of self-concept affecting their self-esteem, as revealed by this study. That is, disabled individuals will have higher self-esteem when they believe they are energetically pursuing their current goals. Snyder et al. (1996) found a similar relationship, wherein state hope affects a person's coping skills and positive self-evaluation.

A positive relationship between disabled individuals' self-esteem and life satisfaction was not found in this study. A widely tested relationship among nondisabled individuals (Kim & Lennon, 2007), life satisfaction as a consequence of self-esteem is not the case for disabled individuals, as shown by the present study. For disabled individuals, feelings of self-worth may not have a direct influence on their life satisfaction and some other factors mediate or moderate the relationship between these two factors.

Regarding the clothing selection dimensions examined, the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation was influenced by self-esteem. This finding indicates that disabled consumers will select clothing to help them feel confident about themselves when they have more positive self-esteem. Thus, this finding supports that of Watson, Blanco, Hunt-Hurst, and Medvedev (2010), suggesting that the positive relationship between disabled individuals' positive perceptions toward themselves and clothing selection motivation is an enhancement of individuality

The individuality dimension of clothing selection motivation emerged as an important element influenced by disabled consumers' life satisfaction. This finding indicates that these consumers choose clothing that makes them distinctive if they are satisfied with their lives. Similar to Watson, Blanco, Hunt-Hurst, and Medvedev's (2010) study, this finding suggests the important role of clothing in increasing disabled consumers' life satisfaction. Moreover, it is also related to Cosbey's (2001) finding, wherein clothing selection motivation can be related to an individual's positive feelings.

Disabled consumers' state hope was found to directly influence life satisfaction in the adjusted path model. That is, individuals with disabilities who believe that they can achieve their current goals tend to evaluate their quality of life more positively. This is similar to findings in one study on nondisabled individuals (Snyder et al., 1996). Moreover, the findings are also related to Adams and Jackson's (2000) study wherein hope enhances the quality of life of individuals. Also, disabled consumers' public self-consciousness directly influenced the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation. As linked to the findings from Cosbey's (2001) study, sociability is related to the meaning of clothing and, in turn, is linked to clothing selection motivation. This seems logical in that disabled individuals who have a need to impress others would most likely want to emphasize their positive qualities via their clothing.

Implications and Recommendations

In general, this study conceptualized a theoretical framework that tested the hypothesized relationships among disabled consumers' self-concept, life satisfaction, and clothing selection motivation. Data collected from disabled consumers further contributed to understanding the variables that influence disabled consumers' life satisfaction and clothing selection motivation.

This study explored the antecedents that drive disabled consumers' self-esteem. According to the findings, generalized self-efficacy, public self-consciousness, and state hope were significant precursors influencing the self-esteem of individuals with disabilities. This result suggests that disabled consumers could potentially increase their self-esteem by placing less emphasis on what other people thought of them and instead focusing on the accomplishment of their own goals.

In addition, as the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation is a consequence of self-esteem, disabled consumers tend to select clothing to have self-confidence when they experience positive self-worth. Self-esteem clearly plays a critical role in determining the clothing selection motivation of disabled consumers. Similarly, the relationship between public self-consciousness and the assurance dimension of clothing selection motivation highlights the usefulness of clothing as a tool to enhance positive feelings when disabled individuals are self-conscious about the way they look.

In a practical sense, the self-concept of disabled consumers plays a significant role in the positivity of their lives. To support disabled consumers, society needs to help them feel less public self-consciousness and to increase their state hope. Scholars and educators need to study and share the successes of individuals with disabilities, as well as provide more ways to express their accomplishments.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has some limitations that point to interesting opportunities for further research. First, clarification of the high correlation found between the generalized self-efficacy scale and the state hope scale is needed. Second, differences by disability type (e.g., individuals with visual disabilities or individuals with physical disabilities) were beyond the scope of the study. Thus, further investigation of the impact of different disabilities, as well as the duration of a disability, is needed.

Furthermore, clothing and textiles scholars should continue to examine disabled consumers' clothing shopping preferences (e.g., store formats) and shopping limitations (MacDonald, Majumder, & Bua-Iam, 1994) along with their special clothing design needs. Specifically, as social interactions of disabled people in society have increased, social factors (e.g., interaction with salespeople) and their influences on disabled consumers' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors should be considered in future research.

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