Second Edition

DOING RESEARCH IN FASHION AND DRESS

An Introduction to Qualitative Methods

Yuniya Kawamura

BLOOMSBURY

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To my late father, Yoya Kawamura

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Yuniya Kawamura
New York & Tokyo

INTRODUCTION

> ## OBJECTIVES
>
> - **To trace the history of fashion/dress studies**
> - **To distinguish fashion-/dress-related debates, theories, and empirical studies**
> - **To learn when and how scholars, social scientists in particular, became interested in fashion/dress studies**
> - **To recognize the importance of defining terminologies and using culturally neutral terms**
> - **To examine ways to make fashion/dress studies a legitimate academic discipline**
> - **To explore an interdisciplinary approach to fashion/dress studies**

Scholarly research and activities in fashion and dress studies continue to develop, and much has evolved since the first edition of this book published in 2011. The seeds that have been planted in the field are beginning to slowly grow roots thanks to institutional and individual contributions to this area of academic study. In this second revised edition, I attempt to update the literature and add more recent cases studies in each chapter while keeping the ones that are significant in the field. A new chapter on online research is also added.

I wrote the first edition of this book in the hope of making fashion/dress studies an established academic discipline as many fashion/dress scholars, including myself, have always insisted. It is common knowledge among scholars and research professionals (Kawamura 2005; Lipovetsky 1994; McRobbie 1998; Niessen and Brydon 1998; Palmer 1997; Ribeiro 1998; Taylor 2004) that fashion/dress[1] as a research topic in academia is often considered not serious enough and is treated as a marginal area of research, and it does not deserve any intellectual considerations. One of the reasons why fashion/dress is not taken as seriously as the scholars would like it to be is that there are no clearly articulated theoretical framework and methodological strategies to study fashion/dress. Nor do we recognize various methodological tools and options to investigate fashion/dress, especially when it is treated as an abstract concept rather than raw materials of clothing. We must try to make fashion/dress studies an established discipline that can stand on its own right and make it into an area of study that is similar to gender studies, cultural studies, or the media studies that transcends all disciplinary boundaries and includes interdisciplinary approaches that are appropriate for one's research goal.

Different writers had been interested in fashion and dress as early as the thirteenth century ever since the emergence of a fashion phenomenon in Europe, but the study of fashion/dress as an intellectual theme and a social scientific study that demands empiricism and objectivity are of recent origin. Before it became a legitimate research topic for scholars, social scientists in particular, it was the topic frequently discussed among philosophers and moralists who did not provide any empirical data or factual evidence. Still today, methods of research in fashion/dress studies have not yet been thoroughly explored in social science disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, and cultural anthropology, among others.

At the time of the publication of the first edition in 2011, there was hardly any literature specifically devoted to qualitative research methods in fashion/dress, except Lou Taylor's two informative books, *Establishing Dress History* (2004) and *The Study of Dress History* (2002), focusing on object-based research in the history of fashion and dress. More recently, Flynn and Foster's book entitled *Research Methods for the Fashion Industry* (2009) was published primarily for fashion industry professionals and practitioners. Many scholars as well as students have been reluctant to pick fashion/dress as their research topic because of the lack of information or literature on methodological strategies, and this book was published to fill that void; by doing so, I hope to give fashion/dress studies the value and respect it deserves in the world of academia in addition to providing practical procedures and processes of research. We see a growing number of textbooks and literature on qualitative research methods in social sciences in general, but few are written particularly for academic fashion/dress studies.

Recently, we see significant additions to research methods specifically in fashion and dress studies. Jenss edited a collection of essays on various methods in *Fashion Studies: Research Methods, Sites, and Practices* (2016), and Gaimster wrote about *Visual Research Methods in Fashion* (2015) and examines the use of visual materials which is useful for design practitioners and students.

For us to conduct research, we need to do it empirically, scholarly, and scientifically. This book is not meant for practitioners in fashion business, but it could be used by anyone who wants to study fashion/dress empirically and objectively using qualitative research methods. The methods I elaborate in this book are by no means exhaustive but can be treated as the primary qualitative methodological tools frequently found in fashion/dress studies. Some researchers believe that research is considered a research only when the methodology is quantitative and not qualitative, but as indicated in subsequent chapters in this book, there are descriptive data that can be retrieved only by qualitative strategies.

Therefore, this book provides students with a guided introduction to qualitative research methods, and the aim is to do this through a mix of theoretical and practical perspectives, offering contextual material on fashion-/dress-related studies and also how-to accounts of best practice. It offers step-by-step instructions on how to go about applying particular methods in practice and suggestions on what can be neglected or not neglected in the research process as well as the strengths and the weaknesses of each method. In order for students to understand what it takes to research fashion/dress, we need to refer to significant fashion- and dress-related studies in which the authors indicate their methods. I have intentionally selected the studies as examples in which the researchers' methodologies are explained clearly and in detail as well as the ones that focus on fashion and dress from global perspectives.

The history of fashion and dress studies

Individuals, rich or poor, young or old, men or women, have always been interested in fashion or how people dressed at one point in time. Even before the emergence of social sciences, writers picked fashion/dress as a topic in various publications, such as books, newspapers, journals, and so forth. I trace the historical development of interests in fashion and fashion/dress studies to address the contributions of diverse areas of knowledge and to examine how the questions that it has addressed have shifted from simple commentaries, descriptive essays, and anecdotes on fashion/dress to empirical scientific research.

The history of fashion/dress studies can be classified into three stages and time periods: (1) interests in and debates about fashion/dress as discussion topics, (2) scholarly writings on fashion/dress discourse and theories, and (3) empirical fashion/dress studies in social sciences with the indication of specific methodological approaches.

Interests in and debates about fashion/dress as discussion topics

While many fashion researchers believe that fashion as a topic is rather new, it has been of long interest to many classical writers and novelists. According to Johnson, Torntore, and Eicher (2003: 1), the study of fashion and dress has been and still is widely conducted by individuals reflecting many disciplines, and they argue that interest in fashion is not a recent one.[2] They take us back to 1575 when Michel de Montaigne, one of the earliest writers of dress, questions why human begins to wear clothes in the first place. Interest in fashion/dress obviously parallels with the fashion phenomenon that first began in Italy and then moved to France (Laver 1995 [1969]; Lipovetsky 1994; Perrot 1994; Steele 1985). Numerous accounts on fashion/dress are found in the historical archives and literature.

For example, Charles de Secondat Montesquieu (1689–1755), a French social critic and a political thinker, in *Persian Letters* (1973 [1721]), writes about the rapid changes in fashion in Paris (Letter No. 99): “A woman who leaves Paris to spend six months in the country comes back looking antiquated as if she had been away for thirty years. A son will fail to recognize a portrait of his mother because the dress in which she had been painted seems so alien.” In 1831, Thomas Carlyle, an English philosopher, explains the functions of clothing/fashion and says that the first purpose of clothes was not for warmth or modesty but adornment, which is believed to be a universal practice.

While some writers did not appreciate fashion and condemned it, many French novelists and philosophers discussed fashion in their writings. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–80), an advocate of simple living and an opponent of luxury and fashion, in his *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1997 [1750]), writes that fashion destroyed virtue and masked vice, and fashion has a negative impact on people’s morals. On the other hand, French writers and poets, such as Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) and Charles Baudelaire (1821–67), were in support of fashion and wrote about it favorably. Whether the writers thought fashion was moral or immoral, frivolous or not frivolous, it is important to note that they still paid much attention to the phenomenon of fashion. However, these writings do not offer any theoretical framework or implications, and we only see that there were fashion phenomena and interests in as well as a commotion over fashion.

Academic interests in fashion/dress discourse and theories

Scholars’ interests in fashion/dress as a legitimate research topic began to emerge as fashion changes were taking place more and more rapidly during and after the Industrial Revolution in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The social structure of the Western world underwent a great transformation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The population increased, productivity soared, and a money economy developed that resulted in the expansion of commerce, improved technology, and the possibility of social mobility. The invention of the sewing machine made it possible to manufacture, in large quantities at cheaper prices, fashionable clothes that used to be handmade and were, therefore, time-consuming and expensive. As fashion became increasingly democratized and widespread throughout Europe, it attracted a great deal of attention from the masses and, at the same time, it changed people's views as well as scholars' perspectives on fashion/dress. Dress history publications, such as those by Quicherat (1877) and Racinet (1888), began to appear in France.

When social and behavioral sciences were becoming established as a discipline at the turn of the twentieth century, one of the first questions that interested anthropologists and psychologists was "Why do people wear clothes?" Many theoretical explanations were developed to address this basic question. For instance, Hiler (1930: 1–12) raised the following theories: the economic theory, the theory of possession, the theory of sexual attraction, totemistic theories, and the theory of amulets to explain the origin of clothing. Others may have used different terms, such as the modesty/immodesty theory, adornment/decoration theory, and protection theory, but they overlap with Hiler's in their contents in explaining the origin of fashion, not clothing.

Some of the scholars toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century laid the solid foundation of classical theories of fashion.[3] For Simmel (1957 [1904]) and Veblen (1957 [1899]), fashion is used to differentiate oneself from others; it includes a group that wears a similar style and excludes others who do not dress like the group. Class inclusion and exclusion are the opposite sides of the same coin. Sumner (1940 [1906]) and Toennies (1961 [1909]) looked at a fashion phenomenon as the decline in social customs. Social customs dictate and determine how we are supposed to dress in which there is little room for fashion creativity and aesthetic expression. By contrast, as social customs begin to weaken, fashion begins to prosper, and people begin to desire social distinction. That is the beginning of fashion. Tarde (1903) looks at a cycle of fashion as innovation, imitation, and opposition. When something is innovated, it is imitated in order for it to be disseminated, and then once it is imitated, a new thing is again innovated. It is in a constant cycle. Several classical scholars' take on fashion is primarily based on the trickle-down theory of fashion, that is, imitation (Simmel 1957 [1904]; Sumner 1940 [1906]; Tarde 1903; Toennies 1961 [1909]; Veblen 1957 [1899]). One thing that is clearly stated is that their focus is not dress or clothing but "fashion." They treat fashion synonymously with the concept of imitation. It takes two to imitate or for imitation to occur: the imitator and the imitated. There is a social relationship between the two. The emphasis among the scholars may differ, but they all agree that fashion is a social process of imitation.

Furthermore, these studies are not empirical, but the classical theorists made an important contribution to the studies of fashion/dress, which is always used as a departing point of discussion.[4] Fashion/dress researchers began to slowly move away from object-based research in which the focus was solely on tangible clothing items (Taylor 2004). These classical scholars theorized and conceptualized the notion of fashion, and they explored the sociological significance and meaning of fashion in their unique perspectives. It helps us understand what fashion meant toward the end of the nineteenth century. Then we can begin to compare the contemporary understanding of fashion with the classical interpretation of fashion. Based on their theories, we can examine how fashion changes and evolves, and that may help us conduct various empirical studies and construct a new theory or theories of fashion to explicate today's fashion.

Empirical fashion/dress studies in social sciences

While the classical studies of fashion were often theoretical and discourse-oriented, fashion/dress studies in the twentieth century became increasingly empirical. There is a shift from theoretical assumptions to empirical studies with various methodological inquiries. Many scholars agree that Western societies went through a transition in the past several decades, and people's patterns of consumption changed visibly. Consumers' tastes and preferences were becoming increasingly diverse, and so was the fashion. It used to be rather easy to find fashion's source and define it. But as the new structure of society began to form and with the advent of technology, fashion information spread from various locations through multiple media sources at an amazingly fast pace not only vertically but also horizontally. Fashion can no longer be explained merely by the concept of imitation or the trickle-down theory as indicated earlier.

According to Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1973: 26–27), social scientists have begun to take interest in dress and fashion only recently. In the late 1920s and the 1930s, there was an upsurge of interest in publications on the psychological, social, and cultural implications of dress, and this interest no doubt was associated with general sharp breaks with tradition at that time, symbolized so well in the dress of women (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1973: 29–30). Therefore, since the majority of social science research is empirical, fashion research also became empirical requiring the researchers to have solid, scientific methodological strategies. Without methods, there is no empiricism, and without empiricism, there is no social scientific research on fashion/dress.

In 1919, Kroeber measured the illustrations of women's dress in fashion plates that were idealized depictions of women's clothing styles. This is one of the rare and earlier studies of fashion/dress using a quantitative method. In 1922, Radcliffe-Brown conducted a fieldwork study of the Andaman Islanders near the Bay of Bengal in India and explored the relationship between people and ornament/amulets that are used to dress and decorate human bodies. Personal ornament serves two functions: desire for protection and desire for display. In 1924, Bogardus examined the meaning of a fad and published an article in the

Journal of Applied Sociology; his study was based on a ten-year research. In 1930, Hiler published his work, which was based on one thousand collected references to clothing and ornament from numerous disciplines.

In the late 1930s, Young conducted a statistical analysis of fashion trends (1937), and she found that there are fixed and predictable patterns. She reviewed historical evidence in fashion plates and magazines. According to Young (1937), there are three defined recurring cycles in skirt silhouettes every thirty-eight to forty years. Thus, fashion trends are repeated. Harni takes a case-study approach in his empirical research and explores fetishism, transvestism, and tattooing (1932).

Fashion/dress scholars in the 1940s and 1950s began to look at the social and psychological aspects of clothing. In the 1960s, studies in fashion/dress became more sophisticated and deeply empirical (Horn 1968; Ryan 1966). About fifty years after the first psychological interest in clothing emerged, in 1965, Rosencranz studied complex human motives related to clothing choices (1965).

Blumer is one of the earliest scholars who rejected the imitation theory or the class differentiation model of fashion proposed by the classical theorists of fashion, such as Simmel, Veblen, Spencer, and Tarde among others. Blumer conducted an ethnographical study in Paris (1969a), and he came to the conclusion that the imitation theory may be valid in explaining fashion in the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth century but not contemporary fashion. He interviewed designers, buyers, and other fashion professionals working in Paris fashion and argued that fashion no longer comes from the top and trickles down to the masses. Fashion is a collective activity and is a collective taste. The job of a designer is to accurately predict what the collective taste is going to be in the next season. Many contemporary writers who followed Blumer, such as Davis (1992) and Crane (2000), also negate the imitation theory of fashion.

Contemporary fashion/dress studies needs to be extremely empirical while articulating clearly which methodologies are used and how the research is conducted. Furthermore, they should not be distracted by fashion magazines or fashion-related information on the internet, which often lack objectivity, unless these materials are used as the object of research. Fashion and fashion information have become easily accessible to almost anyone, and therefore, data that can be used in fashion/dress research must be collected carefully and with much caution.

The use of terminologies

As we review and analyze various empirical studies on fashion/dress, each with specific research methodologies, we need to be aware of the definitions of these terms, such as fashion, dress, clothes, costume, and so forth. Different writers use different definitions of the variables relating to the topic being reviewed. The differences may need to be taken into consideration in a research process of the literature review, which is described in Chapter 2, "Research Process." In studying fashion/dress, many researchers often use "fashion," "dress," and "clothes/clothing" interchangeably, while others make an attempt to separate these concepts clearly. It is important to clarify the definitions and how they are used because writers and researchers have different meanings of words.

We need to offer a clear definition of a term in the beginning of our research since each discipline with its own approach and perspective to fashion and dress because some may be culturally specific or gender-specific. While it is difficult to maintain the neutral standpoint in creating a definition, having the awareness is the key to conducting an objective, bias-free research.

First, we need to examine whether the writer is talking about fashion as a distinct concept that stands out from other relevant concepts, such as dress, apparel, costume, or garb, or he is treating it as a synonym of these words loosely tied to fashion. Some scholars may even choose not to use the term "fashion," realizing that it is the term that has specific meanings. Second, it must be made clear to the readers that the term "dress" does not mean a dress worn only by women as used in our everyday language. For those who study dress from an academic point of view, dress can include body modifications, such as scarification and tattooing as well as sartorial covering (Johnson, Torntore, and Eicher 2003: 1).

According to Baudrillard (1972), "fashion" is one of the most inexplicable phenomena. Edward Sapir (1931: 139) also explains that the meaning of the term "fashion" may be clarified by pointing out how it differs in connotation from a number of other terms whose meaning it approaches.

When a word appears in a dictionary, it is plausible evidence that the word is used widely in the society. Etymologists and historical linguists say that it was probably in the year 1300 that a sense of style, fashion, or manner of dress was first recorded. *The Dictionnaire de la mode au XXe siècle* (Remaury 1996) indicates more specifically that the French word for fashion "mode," which meant the collective manner of dressing, first appeared in 1482. Clearly, there was a fashion phenomenon at that time. The word "mode" originally comes from the Latin word *modus,* which means manner in English or *manière* in French. By the end of the fifteenth century, fashion had the meaning of a current usage, or a conventional usage in dress or lifestyle especially as observed in upper circles of society. The English word "fashion" comes originally from the Latin word *facio* or *factio,* which means making or doing (Barnard 1996; Brenninkmeyer 1963: 2). According to Brenninkmeyer (1963: 2), the predominant social notion of fashion arose early in the sixteenth century via the sense of a special manner of making clothes. There are conflicting views as to when fashion was born. Heller explains:

> Scholars, particularly in art and costume history, have argued and accepted that fashion was not really born before 1350. Those who are familiar with the Old French literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries may find that astonishing, since very concise descriptions of fashionable clothing abound in that corpus. (Heller 2007: 1)

The examples of fashion in noble male characters in thirteenth-century literature are numerous, and men were at the forefront of consumption and display through the Middle Ages (Heller 2007: 4).

Fashion exists in many areas of life, not only in the way we dress but also in many other areas such as food, home furnishings, and even our ways of thinking. Most often, however, dress becomes the focus when fashion arises as a topic of discussion. Fashion often represents clothing-fashion, that is, the most trendy, up-to-date clothing that the majority of the people in society adopts and follows. Fashion does encompass more than clothing, but the studies that I refer to in this book mostly talk about clothing-fashion and other items related to clothing such as accessories and adornment.

Culturally neutral terms: Avoiding Eurocentrism and ethnocentrism

Words carry implications and connotations that may already be imbued with ethnocentrism and biases, and in order to avoid ethnocentrism and prejudices, scholars suggest using terms such as body supplements and body modifications, instead of terms such as veils, which have culturally specific implications, according to Eicher and Roach-Higgins (1992: 1–28), and they go further to find the most appropriate term to describe non-Western clothes. The term "non-Western" already has biases implying that it is not Western while using the West as the standard. Terms such as "peasant dress" or "folk dress" also do not sound appropriate. The most neutral term that is used is "ethnic dress," which implies that one belongs to an ethnic group in which values, norms, traditions, and beliefs among many other characteristics are shared.

Eicher, Evenson, and Lutz propose a specific classification system of dress and come up with their own definition of dress. They explain (Eicher et al. 2014: 4): "Our definition of dress as body modifications and body supplements includes more than clothing, or even clothing and accessories. Our definition encompasses many ways of dressing ourselves. In addition to covering our bodies, we apply color to our skins by use of cosmetics, whether paints or powders, and also apply color and pattern through tattoos." They also include adding scent, modifying taste, and making sound as part of "dress." Wearers and observers perceive characteristics of any individual's total dress through all five senses, such as sight, touch, smell, sound, and taste. They explain that body modifications are the alterations of the body itself that relate to all of these five senses while body supplements are the items that are placed upon the body, most often thought of as garments by Euro-Americans (Eicher et al. 2014: 6). There are advantages of such classification system (see Eicher et al. 2014: 25–28).

Making fashion/dress studies a legitimate academic discipline

In the nineteenth century, social sciences were still in their infancy. The academic world was not yet divided into specialized departments. For instance, we now know Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) as an American sociologist, but he wrote about biology, philosophy, economics, and sociology while Karl Marx (1818–83), a German political scientist, wrote about philosophy, economics, law, and politics, among many other topics. Academic disciplines began to differentiate over the course of the nineteenth century, and different academic disciplines in the field of social sciences were born that led to different departments in colleges and universities, and thus the boundaries among disciplines became clearer.

Studies of fashion/dress in social sciences include anthropology, economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology, communication studies, cultural studies, media studies, and feminist studies, among others. Up until the 1990s, scholars often mentioned the academic devaluation of fashion/dress as a topic. Niessen and Brydon (1998: ix–x) wrote: "Fashion and clothing have for a long while remained scholarly unmentionables." According to Niessen and Brydon (1998: x–xi), in the 1950s and 1960s, diverse writers were slowly able to give theoretical weight to those people who understand their own thoughts and actions in relation to body decoration. Similarly, Taylor (2002: 1) writes: "Four hundred years of development of dress history in Europe and the United States have taken place outside the boundaries of 'academic respectability' and the residues of this prejudice remain a debated issue." McRobbie (1998: 15) makes an attempt to argue against the lower academic status of fashion/dress studies and writes: "[This] is based upon the assumption that fashion, despite its trivialized status, is a subject worthy of study." Lipovetsky also argues:

> The question of fashion is not a fashionable one among intellectuals. . . . Fashion is celebrated in museums, but among serious intellectual preoccupations it has marginal status. It turns up everywhere on the street, in industry, and in the media, but it has virtually no place in the theoretical inquiries of our thinkers.

> Seen as an ontologically and socially inferior domain, it is unproblematic and undeserving of investigation; seen as a superficial issue, it discourages conceptual approaches. (Lipovetsky 1994: 3–4)

In order for us to create fashion/dress studies as a discipline, we need to define the studies and explain what the studies encompass.

I proposed a new discipline called "fashion-ology" in my *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies* (2005), which is another name for a sociology of fashion. Fashion studies may include studies on dress, apparel, clothes, accessories, shoes, and cosmetics. I introduce a specific theoretical framework, which is exactly the study of the concept, the idea, or the phenomenon of "fashion." I clearly state that "it is neither the study of dress nor the study of clothing, which means that the two, fashion and dress/clothing, are different concepts and entities which can be or should be studied separately" (Kawamura 2005: 1). I define fashion-ology as a sociological investigation of fashion, and it treats fashion as a system of institutions that produces the concept as well as the phenomenon/practice of fashion. Not all sociological investigations of fashion look at institutional factors like mine does, but my primary focus is the social nature of fashion in its production, distribution, diffusion, reception, adoption, and consumption. My theory of fashion-ology is backed by my fieldwork study on famous Japanese designers who became successful in Paris fashion in the 1970s and 1980s (Kawamura 2004), which is discussed further in Chapter 4, "Survey Methods." While not all fashion scholars make it that explicit, there are those who imply that it is fashion that they are focusing on and not clothing or dress.

Fashion or dress as a research topic is still definitely not in the mainstream academic arena even in the twenty-first century. Fashion/dress scholars need to think of strategies and ways to elevate the academic status of fashion. One of the reasons why it is often taken lightly is, as indicated earlier, the lack of the methodological inquiry in fashion/dress studies. Thus in this book, I explore several methodological strategies so that fashion/dress can be brought into the same terrain as other scholarly fields, particularly in social sciences.

Interdisciplinary contributions to fashion/ dress studies

Disciplines are often territorial, and scholars tend to exclude those in other disciplines, which creates a serious and an unpleasant rift among different fields of research, and this must be avoided. For example, O'Connor explains:

> Cultural studies and sociology have sought to exclude anthropologists from the study of fashion through the use of a simplistic modernity paradigm that

> goes as follows: Western fashion changes and is modern. Non-Western clothing is fixed, traditional and does not change. Therefore, it is asserted, anthropologists can have nothing to say about modern Western fashion. (O'Connor 2005: 41)

However, such ways of thinking are now replaced with a new idea that supports interdisciplinary endeavors. A number of academic disciplines in the social sciences and humanities have contributed to our understanding and analysis of clothing and human behavior. Therefore, we can regard fashion/dress studies as an interdisciplinary area of knowledge that has emerged because of theories and research findings that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries, and it becomes possible to integrate and incorporate multiple, different methodological strategies.

Academic journals in fashion/dress studies began to emerge after the late 1960s, such as *Costume: Journal of the Costume Society of Great Britain* in 1967, *Dress: The Journal of the Costume Society of America* in 1975, and *Clothing and Textile Research Journal* (CTRJ) in 1982. A groundbreaking interdisciplinary journal called *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture*, a peer-reviewed quarterly academic journal, was established in 1997. New fashion-related scholarly journals continue to be published: *Film, Fashion, and Consumption* (2012–), *Clothing Cultures* (2014–), *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* (2014–), and *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion* (2014–).

Furthermore, the Centre for Fashion Studies was established at Stockholm University in 2006 through a donation from the Erling Persson Family[5] Foundation, and the program offers a BA, an MA, and a PhD in fashion studies. The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY) has an interdisciplinary concentration in fashion studies in conjunction with a PhD program. Parsons The New School for Design in New York introduced a two-year master's program in fashion studies, and Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York now has two fashion-related Liberal Arts minors: (1) Fashion History, Theory, and Culture and (2) Ethnic Dress in a Global context. Both New York University and FIT have an MA program in Costume Studies and Fashion and Textile Studies, respectively. More recently in 2017 in Paris, École Nationale de Mode et Matière, known as Paris Fashion School, established a multidisciplinary two-year master's program, and Institute Français de la Mode (IFM) added a PhD program in Fashion Theories and Practice.

Fashion/dress scholars have much to learn from cultural studies, feminist studies, and media studies, all of which may be described as an interdisciplinary area of study, incorporating concepts and methods from cultural anthropology, literature, semiotics, social history, and sociology, among others, as they are interested in how cultural artifacts, including dress and clothing, are produced and reproduced. However, while scholars often strongly propose and support the interdisciplinary nature of fashion and dress studies, a new book *The Anthropology of Dress and Fashion* (Luvaas and Eicher 2019) was published with a compilation of the articles written solely by anthropologists. This may shed new light and provoke further interesting discussions.

The current state of fashion/dress studies around the world

Peters and Pecorari edited a special edition on “State of Fashion Studies” (2018) in *The International Journal of Fashion Studies* investigating the future of fashion studies with respect to theory, methodology, and teaching. The chapters in the volume examine new approaches to theory and method from a global perspective and also explore the current state of research on fashion from various approaches, such as production, consumption, dissemination, distribution, and representation of clothing and fashion. They also discuss the interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity in fashion studies, and the establishment of a methodological and theoretical canon in the field (Peters and Pecorari 2018: 7–11). Fashion scholars should feel optimistic that important scholarships are coming out of different countries, such as Japan (Fujishima and Sakura 2018), Brazil (Rainho and Volpi 2018), and Sweden (Wallenberg 2018) examining the state of the field. While finding and reaching solutions as to how the field should proceed are never easy, continuing discussions, debates, and dialogues make the field active and lively, and fashion and dress scholars are on the right track and moving in the right direction. As Granata rightly points out (2012: 75), “whether fashion studies constitutes a discipline or an interdisciplinary area of study, and whether the institutionalization of fashion as a discipline is to be desired or not, are ongoing questions that we need to continue to address.”

Outline of the book

This book is intended as an introduction to qualitative research methods in fashion/dress studies for students in any discipline but especially those in the social science discipline who are conducting academic research on fashion/dress using qualitative methods. In addition, those who study fashion design and the business side of fashion, such as merchandising and marketing, could also benefit from this book as it describes the significance of conducting research and also understanding the research processes. Once you know how research in fashion/dress is conducted, you will be able to understand and evaluate the validity and reliability of the studies you read in newspapers, magazines, and/or academic journals, since it is believed that fashion can be studied and analyzed by any layperson because the topic is shallow and nonacademic. The ability to assess a piece as a well-written, research-based article with much depth and substance is intellectually meaningful.

Chapter 1 explains the link between theory and practice and emphasizes the role that theory plays in every step of the research process. Chapter 2 undertakes a representation of the whole research process and discusses social scientific investigation from initial stages of topic selection and problem formulation through the last phases of analysis. Chapters 3 to 6 provide major qualitative methods in social sciences and humanities, such as ethnography, survey, semiology, and object-based research, that can be used in the investigation of fashion/dress. Chapter 7, “Online Research,” is a new chapter added in the second revised edition. Chapter 8 covers other methodologies that were not covered or elaborated in other chapters. Based on various fashion/dress studies literature and empirical case studies included in each methodological explication outlining the major issues and methodological strategies, it becomes evident that fashion can be treated as a material object, an abstract idea, a phenomenon, a system, a cultural value/norm, or an attitude, among many others. In the concluding chapter, future opportunities and directions for fashion/dress studies are explored.

The book includes pedagogical material, such as bullet-point chapter summaries in the beginning of each chapter and suggestions for further reading at the end of the chapter.

Conclusion

The writers’ personal interests in fashion and dress have evolved into social scientific, empirical research with solid methodological strategies. Fashion/dress scholars continue to make an effort to make it a legitimate field of study in academia by publishing books and academic journals, and at the same time colleges and universities around the world are building fashion studies programs in undergraduate and graduate divisions. This book attempts to raise the awareness of fashion/dress studies by introducing different research methodologies that are also tied to various theoretical approaches.

Guide to further reading

Carter, Michael (2003), *Fashion Classics from Carlyle to Barthes*, Oxford, UK: Berg.
Craik, Jennifer (2018), "Exotic Narratives in Fashion," in *Modern Fashion Traditions*, pp. 97–119, London: Bloomsbury.
Femke, De Vries (2016), *Dictionary Dressings: Re-reading Clothing Definitions towards Alternative Fashion Perspectives*, Eindhoven, Onomatopee.
Lynch, Annette, and Mitchell D. Strauss (2014), *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia*, London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
Nicklas, Charlotte, and Annebella Pollen (2015), *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, London: Bloomsbury.
Niessen, Sandra (2018), "Afterword: Fashion's Fallacy," in *Modern Fashion Traditions*, pp. 209–27, London: Bloomsbury.

1
THEORY AND PRACTICE

OBJECTIVES

- To understand what a theory is
- To recognize the purpose of conducting social scientific research
- To identify the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods
- To learn how quantitative and qualitative methods are used
- To distinguish deductive versus inductive research and objective versus subjective approaches
- To understand how theory and practice are interdependent with each other
- To learn to apply a symbolic interactionist approach to fashion/dress studies

Before investigating and understanding different research methods in fashion/dress studies, it is essential that we understand what a theory means and the link between theory and practice. When we say "practice," we mean the practice of research that involves methodological inquiry. This chapter explores the connection between theory and practice/method, which are inextricably linked. Theoretical frameworks, intentions, or purposes with which researchers approach their research determine not only the questions that are important but also the methods that are used for social scientific investigation of fashion.

There are different and competing methodologies that are linked to specific theoretical approaches, and they exist side by side in academic discourse. We need to be explicit about the theoretical agendas to which particular methods and practices are attached. I examine predominant theoretical perspectives in social scientific research and discuss how they shape the research done under their theoretical paradigm.

Ideas and thoughts we have can be considered simply guesswork and not scientific knowledge unless they are backed up by research-based facts and evidence (Babbie 2015). The need for facts is one important reason social scientists conduct research. However, the purpose of social research is to check the validity of existing theories about people and society and also to produce information that describes our lives and to develop new theories that explain how our lives are influenced by various social and external forces.

What is social scientific research?

Students who research fashion/dress for the first time may think that it has nothing to do with social sciences. However, fashion/dress needs to be studied social scientifically, that is, empirically, in order to earn enough respect in academia because we come across abundant nonacademic information about fashion in our everyday life. They are in magazines, newspapers, catalogs, TV programs, and internet sites, among many other media sources. Some are subjective opinions and essays on fashion without any reliable sources.

Much of human beings' behaviors, such as the way we dress or the clothing choices we make, are based on assumptions and untested hypotheses. Such untested hypotheses are usually accepted on faith or some common belief and no attempt is made to verify them. In research, we need the objective verification of hypotheses. As Taylor (2010) explain, the scientific method is designed to discover valid methods of research finding reasons and explanations for controlling natural phenomena which can be replicated. This is what we need to apply to fashion/dress studies.

The fact that we cannot study humans in exactly the same way that we study natural sciences, such as chemistry or physics, can be both a merit and a detriment. One advantage to the social scientists is the ability to pose questions directly to the object of their studies, that is, other humans, and at the same time, this interaction often produces a conscious or unconscious deviation from usual behavior (Babbie 2015). For example, as subjects provide answers to questionnaires or interviews, they know they are being studied and will sometimes try to assist the research effort by supplying answers they believe the researcher is looking for. The subject may treat responses to a questionnaire in a very superficial way. According to Giddens:

> Science is the use of systematic methods of investigation, theoretical thinking, and the logical assessment of arguments to develop a body of knowledge about a particular subject matter. Scientific work depends upon a mixture of boldly innovative thought and the careful marshaling of evidence to support or

disconfirm ideas and theories. Information and insights accumulated through scientific study and debate are always to some degree *tentative*—open to being revised, or even completely discarded, in the light of new evidence or arguments. (Giddens 2018: 20)

Science is a logical system that bases knowledge on direct, systematic observation, and its knowledge is based on empirical evidence that is information we can verify with our senses. Empiricism, further discussed in Chapter 2, "Research Process," being concerned with that which can be observed, has always been an ingredient of social sciences. Reliable knowledge comes from that which can be observed and experimented with. The opposite is knowledge based on philosophic speculations that have no scientific grounding, and some believe that fashion/dress studies tend to be in that category.

Concepts and variables

Social research makes assumptions about the nature of the world as well as people's actions, both of which are predictable, and there are causal relationships. Every event has a constant antecedent, such as why we wear a tank top or a wool sweater. There are external reasons for why we choose to dress in a certain way.

A basic element of science is the *concept,* a mental construct that represents some part of the world in a simplified form. Social scientists use concepts to label various aspects of social life, including "fashion" or "pink" and to classify human begins into different categories, such as gender, social class, or race/ethnicity, and social scientists use them in their theories. A concept can be described as a word or symbol that represents a phenomenon that is a label we use to name and classify our perceptions and experiences, or it can be an abstract idea generalized from particular instances (Turner 2013).

In research, a concept becomes a variable whose value changes from case to case, and it becomes measurable. The use of variables depends on *measurement,* which is a procedure for determining the value of a variable in a specific case. Some variables are easy to measure, such as counting the number of outfits in your wardrobe. However, measuring abstract concepts, such as the level of awareness in the latest fashion trends, as variables can be more difficult.

Researchers, quantitative ones in particular, seek to find how two or more variables are related and find their correlation, which is the relationship between cause and effect. Correlation means a relationship in which two or more variables change together. Social scientists seek to investigate not just how variables change but why they change (Bordens and Abbott 2017). Scientists refer to the causal factor as the independent variable and call the effect the dependent variable.

Cause (independent variable) → Effect (dependent variable)

Understanding cause and effect is essential because it allows researchers to predict how one pattern of behavior produces and reproduces another. These linkages explain time order, causality, correlation, description, or explanation, and they can represent any action occurring between the concepts. The connections are generalizations, which are called *theories.*

What is a theory?

The word "theory" is a grand term that is intimidating and frightening to many students and even scholars. It is difficult to grasp and is difficult to comprehend in its entirety in concrete terms since they are not concrete. Theories are found in the social science disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology, education, and economics, as well as within many subfields. To locate and read about these theories requires searching literature databases or reviewing guides to the literature about the research topics.

A theory is a generalization about a phenomenon, an explanation of how and why something happens. Therefore, theoretical perspectives are interrelated sets of assumptions, concepts, and propositions that constitute a view of the world (Turner 2013). Theories can be broken into two parts: the things to be connected and the connection itself. They may be concrete and tangible objects, such as a hat, a pair of jeans or shoes, or they can be abstract ideas, such as style, beauty, ugliness, or industries. Frequently, these concepts become linked to even more general theories. Such simple behavior as shopping at a particular store or wearing certain brands can be placed in a larger theoretical framework. Any human social action can be analyzed theoretically.

A theory does not seem to be connected to the real world and our everyday life because of its abstractions. But in fact, our whole way of looking at the world and society depends on our theoretical perspective. Theory and real life, such as a fashion phenomenon and practice, are very much tied together. To read and understand theory is to understand a great deal more about what/who we are and what our world is like. Practical issues actually embody certain theoretical assumptions, and by becoming more aware of them, we become more observant, analytical, and critical.

Theories are embedded in human thought and vary in size, density, abstractedness, completeness, and quality. Many theories are complex and difficult to understand. All scientific theories are speculative to some extent because they are held tentatively as generalizations.[1] But some theories do contribute to the practice they are supposed to inform. Theories can be defined as statements about how things are connected, and their purpose is to explain to and inform us how things are connected, why things happen as they do, including why people dress the way they do. The purpose of a theory is to explain why things happen as they do (Neuman 2019).

Theories help us organize our otherwise disorganized world, make sense of it, guide us how we behave in it or we should behave in it, and also helps us predict what might happen in the future. They are created by developing a set of propositions or generalizations that establish relationships between things in some systematic way and are derived from information that people collect by seeing, hearing, touching, sensing, smelling, and feeling, which is the process of data collection.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), theories develop when researchers test a prediction many times. Researchers combine independent, mediating, and dependent variables based on different forms of measure into hypotheses or research questions. These hypotheses or questions provide information about the type of relationship. When researchers test hypotheses over and over in different settings with different populations, a theory emerges and someone gives it a name. Thus, theory develops as explanation to advance knowledge in particular fields.

Deduction versus induction and subjectivity versus objectivity

The deductive-inductive dimension refers to the place of theory in a research study (Flick 2018a; Bordens and Abbott 2017). Deductive research begins when a theoretical system develops operational definitions of the propositions and concepts of the theory and matches them empirically to some data. Deductive researchers hope to find data to match a theory while inductive researchers hope to find a theory that explains their data. Inductive research begins with collection of data, such as empirical observations or measurements of some kind, and builds theoretical categories and propositions from relationships discovered among the data. That is, inductive research starts with an examination of a phenomenon and then from successive examinations of similar and dissimilar phenomena develops a theory to explain what was studied.

Research designs may also be characterized along a subjective and objective continuum. Ethnography, discussed in Chapter 3, "Ethnography," builds the subjective experiences of both participants and researcher into the research frame, thus providing a depth of understanding often lacking in other approaches to research. By contrast, objective approaches use conceptual categories and explanatory relationships created by the researcher to structure the analysis of particular populations.

The use and placement of theory in qualitative research

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), in quantitative research, the hypotheses and research questions are often based on theories that the researcher seeks to test. In qualitative research, the use of theory is more variable. Theory provides an explanation for the variables in questions and hypotheses in quantitative research. In a quantitative dissertation, an entire section of a research proposal might be devoted to explicating the theory for the study. Alternatively, in a qualitative study, the inquirer may generate a theory during a study and place it at the end of a project. But it can come at the beginning and provide a lens that shapes what is looked at and the questions asked (Flick 2018a). In mixed methods research, researchers may both test theories and generate them (Neuman 2019). Moreover, mixed methods research may contain a theoretical lens, such as a focus on feminist, racial, or class issues, that guides the entire study.

In qualitative theory, theory becomes the end point for a study. It is an inductive process of building from the data to broad themes to a generalized model or theory. The researcher begins by gathering detailed information from participants and forms this information into categories or themes. These themes or categories are developed into broad patterns, theories, or generalizations that are then compared with personal experiences or with existing literature on the topic (Flick 2018a).

Some place theory at the center of the qualitative research process and suggest a process that revolves around and draws from theory during the various stages of research. In ethnography, for instance, fieldworkers do not necessarily need the prior indication of a theory because it may introduce premature closure on the issues to be investigated and also lead researchers away from the views of participants in a social setting. Such qualitative researchers may prefer not to be committed in advance to developing the theoretical implications of their work in any particular direction, and they believe that this should flow from the emerging data.

Understanding the meaning of a fashion theory

There is no one fashion theory per se that is universally accepted, and since fashion/dress studies requires various perspectives, approaches, and interpretations, there are multiple fashion theories that rely on major social theories. Fashion theory draws a wide range of theoretical orientations such as structural functionalism, conflict theory, or symbolic interactionism, among many others, just like feminist theory or cultural studies theory.

According to Lillethun (2011: 77), academic disciplines engaged in theorizing fashion include, but are not limited to, humanities (art and design history), social sciences (anthropology, area and ethnic studies, cultural studies, economics, geography, history, psychology, and sociology), business (marketing, merchandising, and retailing), and fashion programs, which are interdisciplinary by nature. Pedersen, Buckland, and Bates (2008–2009) discuss and define the concept of "theory," making an attempt to integrate developed theories into fashion/dress studies and explore the intricate relationship between theory and dress scholarship. Barnard also points out:

> Fashion/dress scholars come up with different theories of fashion based on their academic training. Each discipline has its own set or sets of ideas and conceptual frameworks in terms of which it defines, analyses and explains fashion. Each discipline, then, comes with its own theory, or theories, in terms of which it goes about the task of studying fashion. (Barnard 2007a: 7)

Fashion theory should be no different from any other theory in any field of academic research. It attempts to generalize human behavior that is related to fashion/dress. The awareness of the importance in establishing a theoretical framework in addition to the deep understanding of methodological strategies must be emphasized in fashion/dress studies, as Lipovetsky insists that fashion has "provoked no serious theoretical dissension" (1994: 4). Tseëlon (2001: 436) explains: "Research in fashion appears to be, for the most part, data-driven and theory-free. Having failed to form an integrated body of knowledge, it rarely uses theory as a springboard to formulate research questions. Rather, theory seems to be an add-on, not an integral part of the research question generation." Tseëlon also finds problems in methods:

> Method use in fashion studies is contradictory and comprises a mixture of unempirical and overtly technical applications. On the one hand, most work on fashion as a social and cultural phenomenon is theoretical. It abounds with folkwisdom but lacks an empirical backing for its theoretical and common-sense views. It relies, instead, on anecdotal evidence for illustration purposes. On the other hand, method is not seen as a means of generating insight. (Tseëlon 2001: 436)

Coming up with an intriguing and worthwhile research question or hypothesis is one thing and deciding the most appropriate research method/s is another. As explained earlier, the method adopted in your research is linked to a certain theoretical underpinning.

Lillethun explains:

> A theory consists of a conceptual network of propositions that explain an observable phenomenon. While fashion is an "observable phenomenon," at this time no comprehensive theory of fashion has been universally accepted. Instead, concepts and propositions concerning fashion have been suggested from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. . . . We understand fashion theory as inquiry into fundamental questions about fashion with the objectives of understanding, explaining and predicting fashion change. (Lillethun 20011: 77)

Two major theoretical perspectives: Micro and macro

Before confusing your mind with multiple, abstract theories, the most fundamental way to look at different theoretical perspectives is at the macro and the micro levels (Turner 2013; Giddens 2018). Students who take Introductory Sociology are introduced to major social theories in the beginning of the semester. It is important that students in fashion/dress studies also learn major theoretical perspectives before they embark on their own research in fashion/dress studies. Broadly speaking, social theories have two camps: macro, which is a deductive approach, and micro, which is an inductive approach.

As indicated earlier, theory influences our choice of research method. Functionalists and conflict theorists with a macro perspective tend to use quantitative methods while symbolic interactionists with a micro perspective tend to use qualitative methods. In deductive, quantitative research, theory plays a big role at the beginning of research and the theory may be revised at the end based on the findings while in inductive, qualitative research, it plays a role after the data is collected and the research makes an attempt to make sense of the data collected.

Theoretical Perspective	Methods	Approach
Macro-structuralism	Quantitative	Deductive
Micro-interactionism	Qualitative	Inductive

Theoretical perspectives are clearly divided between those perspectives that are concerned with the large-scale characteristics of social structure known as macro-structuralism and those concerned with person-to-person encounters and the details of human interaction and communication known as micro-interactionism.

There is also the combination of micro and macro known as meso that incorporates both levels of analysis and methodological strategies, which is explained in Chapter 8, “Other Methodologies.” Neuman (2019) reviews theories at three levels: micro level, meso level, and macro level. Micro-level theories provide explanations limited to small slices of time, space, or numbers of people, such as the types of gifts teenagers buy for their parents during Christmas or designers’ interaction with publicists during the fashion week. Meso-level theories link the micro and macro levels. There are theories of organizations, social movements, or communities; for example, a broad social network among well-known designers can be studied from a meso perspective by analyzing how the network is structured, which is a macro perspective, and how each individual designer is connected with others personally or professionally, which is a micro perspective. Macro-level theories explain larger aggregates, for instance, American consumers’ shopping/spending behavior during recession, or the impact of what a celebrity wears in the media in retail sales.

In quantitative studies, one uses theory deductively and places it toward the beginning of the plan for a study. With the objective of testing or verifying a theory rather than developing it, the researcher advances a theory, collects data to test it, and reflects on the confirmation and disconfirmation of the theory by the results. The theory becomes a framework for the entire study, an organizing model for the research questions or hypotheses and for the data-collection procedure.

The three theoretical lenses can be combined to incorporate mixed methods. Mixed methods studies may include theory deductively in theory testing and verification, or inductively as in an emerging theory or pattern. In either situation, the use of theory may be directed by the emphasis on either quantitative or qualitative approaches in the mixed methods research (Creswell and Creswell 2018), and therefore researchers who use the combined methods use theory either deductively (as in quantitative research) or inductively (as in qualitative research).

Theory and methods

There are various theories and research methods that can be used. Different theories demand different research methods and vice versa. A research method is a systematic plan for doing research. In this book, I am discussing ethnography, survey methods, semiology, and object-based research. The first two are obtrusive and the last two are unobtrusive measures. There is the link between methodological orientations and theory. In general, each of the two ways is related to one of the theoretical approaches. The scientific orientation corresponds to the structural-functional approach, the interpretive orientation to the symbolic interaction approach. For a macro-structural perspective, the researcher gathers empirical, ideally quantitative data while for a micro-interactionist perspective, the researcher develops a qualitative account of the subjective sense people make of their world.

Empirical findings are always theory-laden if they are necessarily produced by or only make sense in the context of a particular theory; they are usually not theory-neutral. Theories can stand by themselves although they are broadly general and abstract. Practice or empiricism, if left alone by itself, will simply be a story, and this is what happens with fashion-/dress-related information. Therefore, it needs to be described analytically and put into theoretical perspective. Thus these two are indispensable to each other and are tightly linked to each other and cannot be separated in conducting a research study. Some start with setting out a theoretical framework while others do it the other way around. Building empirically grounded theory requires a reciprocal relationship between data and theory (Bordens and Abbott 2017). Data-collecting sources in qualitative research such as interviews and observations cannot be validated as easily as traditional quantitative data sources that yield numerical measurements, but the reliability in the qualitative research can be controlled by keeping careful records of interviews and observations.

Qualitative and quantitative methods

The field of social sciences is split between advocates of quantitative methods and those who favor qualitative or purely verbal theory. Members of the former camp tend to dismiss the latter as "nonscientific" or merely "philosophical," while those on the other side attack their opponents as "positivists" following an outmoded vision of science and as practitioners of methods without substance since what they have is only the numbers on paper (Taylor 2010: Turner 2013).

Before about 1965, the scientific side was the mainstream in American sociology, although its methods were not yet much put into practice but were regarded as the path toward progress in the future. Technical sophistication in mathematics and statistics has increased a great deal at a fast pace since then, but the weight of intellectual opinion, especially among theorists, has swung the other way. There used to be considerable hostility between what is seen as the methodological-quantitative side of the field and the theoretical-qualitative side. Many social scientists have been attracted to French structuralism, social phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and other positions that are openly against traditional science. Interpretive approaches, such as historical sociology, which is nonquantitative, became popular.

Since fashion/dress studies as an intellectual field is new compared to other disciplines that had existed for centuries, qualitative and verbal formulations are better suited to getting ahold of the main outlines of what we are dealing with. Instead of setting out a theory and finding data that suits the theory, we can observe fashion/dress as a phenomenon/practice or study clothes as objects and find a theory that emerges out of it. If you are new to fashion/dress studies as a researcher, taking a symbolic interactionist theoretical framework with an interpretive approach is the best start.

Fashion and dress studies from a symbolic interactionist perspective

This is one of several theoretical schools of thought in the social sciences, and it involves a set of related propositions that describes and explains certain aspects of human behavior. What humans say and do are the results of how they interpret their social world. Human behavior depends on learning rather than on biological instinct. The theory, therefore, emphasizes the importance of social and external forces imposed on human behavior. Human beings communicate what they learn through symbols, the most common system of symbols being language, which is verbal symbol. The job of a symbolic interactionist is to capture the essence of this process of interpreting or attaching meaning to various symbols, verbal or nonverbal. Fashion/dress studies scholars are primarily interested in the nonverbal dimension of this theory since clothing is a nonverbal mode of communication.

The basis of symbolic interactionism is rooted in John Dewey's (1859–1952) work on social behavior, along with Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929), W. I. Thomas (1863–1947), and Robert Ezra Park (1864–1944).[2] It was George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) in particular who studied social interaction as a dynamic process. Mead's student Herbert Blumer (1900–87) is considered the founder of symbolic interactionism, and he coined the term, referring to many of Mead's concepts and theories that consist of the idea of interaction as a process of people sharing meanings and fitting their lines of action together. According to Blumer (1969b), meanings derive from the social process of people or groups of people interacting. People create their realities through different interpretations and meanings. Blumer applied this to fashion processes as well (1969a). Erving Goffman, a student of Blumer's at the University of Chicago, was influenced by symbolic interactionism and wrote *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), which examines the social significance of one's physical appearance, and his study is often applied in fashion/dress studies. Similarly, Gregory Stone (1962) applies the symbolic interactionist perspective to analyze appearance, which is important in developing and maintaining the self. Fred Davis (1992) is another scholar who discusses the symbolic significance of fashion in communication and interactive process and explains the ambivalent nature of fashion. Symbolic interactionists work within the interpretive sociological tradition following Max Weber's interpretive sociology that emphasizes the importance of subjective meaning in the social organization of everyday life.

Weber's theory of *verstehen* (interpretative) sociology in fashion and dress studies

Humans do not simply move about. We engage in meaningful action. A second type of research is interpretive sociology, the study of society that focuses on the meanings people attach to their social world. Max Weber, the pioneer of this framework, argues that the proper focus of sociology is interpretation, that is, *verstehen* or understanding the meaning people create in their everyday lives. *Verstehen* means "understanding" in German. It is the interpretive sociologist's job not just to observe what people do but also to share in their world of meaning, coming to appreciate why they act as they do. Subjective thoughts and feelings, all of which science tends to dismiss as a personal bias, should/can move to the center of the researcher's attention.

Weber argued that human social life is, in some ways, different from other features of the natural world. Human beings are frequently rational and organize their efforts to reach intended goals. The observer must consider the behavior from the viewpoint of the actor. Weber writes:

> Sociology . . . is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences. We shall speak of "action" insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior—be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is "social" insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course. (Weber 1978 [1909]: 4)

Weber says "all explanations must establish adequacy on the level of meaning" (Weber 1968: 12), and Muggleton is one of the fashion scholars who applies Weberian interpretation of meaning to his study of a subcultural phenomenon while stressing the significance of subjectivity and also the social factors that influence the meanings that each individual creates. Muggleton writes:

> A Weberian study of subcultures must be based upon an interpretation of the subjectively held meanings, values and beliefs of the subculturalists themselves. This is the premise upon which Weber's *verstehen* methodology is founded, the literal translation of the term *verstehen* being "human understanding.". . . We must therefore take seriously the subjective meanings of subculturalists, for these provide the motivation for their conduct. This makes the subjective dimension a central component in any explanation of social phenomena. . . . A Weberian explanation of subcultures must therefore be adequate on the levels of both meaning and causality: it should begin with

> an empirical investigation of the subjective values of individual subculturalists, but go beyond the level of actors' meanings "to the collective forces that impel the actor" (Ritzer 1981: 80), to identify the belief systems that have played a part in the emergence of subcultural phenomena. (Muggleton 2000: 10)

While Muggleton is in support of Weber's *verstehen* methodology, he is also looking at a subcultural phenomenon from a macro-structural point of view. Social structure is never empty, and there are always individuals that belong within the structure. There is an underlying implication of the meso analysis in his study, which is the interaction between the macro and the micro levels.

Conclusion

Fashion/dress studies needs to be studied theoretically and empirically. Theoretical perspectives vary depending on the researcher's choice of methods, disciplinary affiliation, and background training. Different research questions demand different theories and different methodological inquiries, quantitative or qualitative. The fundamental perspective to understanding a theory is the micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis, and qualitative methods often take a micro-interactionist approach that can be applied to fashion/dress studies. Theory appears as an end point of a qualitative study, a pattern, or a generalization that emerges inductively from data collection and analysis.

Guide to further reading

Berger, Arthur Asa (2017), *Reading Matter: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Material Culture*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Buzzi, Stella, and Gibson, Pamela Church (eds.) (2013), *Fashion Cultures Revisited: Theories, Explorations, Analysis*, London: Routledge.

Jackson, Alecia Youngblood (2012), *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research*, London: Routledge.

Leavy, Patricia, and Anne Harris (2018), *Contemporary Feminist Research from Theory to Practice*, London: The Guilford Press.

Ritchie, Jane (2013), *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, 2nd edition, London: Sage.

2
RESEARCH PROCESS

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the entire research process in fashion/dress studies
- To learn the meaning of objectivity and empiricism in social sciences
- To recognize where and when subjectivity comes in
- To explain every step of the research process from the topic selection, problem formulation, data collection to data analysis, and conclusion
- To recognize ethical issues and the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The term "research" is often used very loosely in everyday life just like the term "fashion" or "dress." But in conducting research on fashion/dress, we must understand what processes it has to go through and what conditions are required. What exactly is research? How are we supposed to research fashion/dress? In order for us to conduct solid, in-depth research, it is essential that we know the entire research process in detail and step-by-step and go over each step carefully.

In this chapter, a representation of the whole research process is examined, and social scientific investigation from the initial stage of topic selection and research question formulation through the last phases of analysis, such as analytical interpretation and drawing conclusions, are discussed in detail. Some practical suggestions for conducting research are also explained. Who, what, where, when, why, and how are the basic questions that need to be posed. What kinds of data are needed and from whom can we get them? Where can the data be found? When is it accessible or conveniently obtained? How should it be recorded, collected, or stored? Why is it needed anyway? What does it add to a study and do we have the resources to collect it? Some of the ethical issues that may appear in research, the establishment of the IRB, and concerns for plagiarism are also explored in this chapter.

Some of the answers to research questions are often taken for granted, but as Lazarsfeld and Rosenberg (1957) explain, after the fact, common sense is capable of explaining or providing a rationale for almost anything, but before the facts are known, common sense supports all manner of contradictory conjecture. Common sense can often be vague and even wrong.

Specific qualitative research methods are discussed more in detail in subsequent chapters. Most qualitative data are text, and thus narrative data from interviews, questionnaires, protocols, field notes, diaries, minutes of meetings, and other records should be maintained as accurately as possible. I also examine to what extent an individual researcher affects research design, findings, and interpretations. The role and experience of the researcher must be taken into consideration. The premise is that if procedures are applied precisely and documented exactly, then anyone with similar training can replicate a study, and therefore, social science can be conducted with no concern for individual variation in researchers. It emphasizes the goal of objectivity in social sciences.

Awareness of objectivity and empiricism

Before beginning research and collecting data, it is extremely important to keep in mind the two most important features of social scientific research. Whatever the research topic may be, whether it is fashion/dress or something else, if you are conducting serious research, objectivity and empiricism need to be taken into consideration (Giddens 2018). While it is occasionally difficult to maintain them faithfully, the researcher's awareness is crucial in attempting to come up with unbiased results at the end.

Objectivity/value-neutrality

Both quantitative and qualitative researchers know that social science research should maintain an unbiased neutral position. Social scientists are expected to study the world around them as external researchers while putting their own personal values aside.

Objectivity means the ability of a researcher to articulate what the procedures are so that others can repeat the research if they so choose. You do your research, explain your methods and articulate the results, and basically inform others that they can repeat the study. If the researcher's findings and analysis were correct, subsequent research will corroborate this. And if they were false or inaccurate, that will be shown in subsequent research. However, we all know that no research is completely absolute or accurate without any flaws, and there is always some room for doubts or skepticism that can be challenged, but every researcher is making a contribution to the research community within his or her particular field, such as fashion/dress studies.

Therefore, a guiding principle of scientific study is objectivity or personal neutrality in conducting research. The idea of objective research is to allow the facts to speak for themselves and not become colored by the personal values and biases of the researcher. In reality, of course, achieving total neutrality is impossible for anyone. But carefully observing the rules of scientific research can maximize objectivity.

Max Weber (1864–1920), a German scholar, notes that people choose value-relevant research topics that they care about personally, but he cautioned that once their work is underway, researchers should try their best to be value-free. We must be dedicated to finding truth as it is rather than as we think it should be. Researchers should stay open-minded and be willing to accept whatever results come from their work, whether they like them or not. Weber's argument still carries much weight in social sciences, although most researchers admit that we can never be completely value-free or get rid of all our biases. Whether we are professionally trained in research or not, we are influenced by our social backgrounds and personal experiences, and this is something that is difficult to deny (Weber 1949).

Therefore, although the goal of social scientific investigation is often said to be objective knowledge, emotional detachment, free of bias or prejudice, we question to what extent this is possible since the researchers are human beings with feelings. Can human beings become completely objective once they are trained in social sciences? While some scholars believe that objectivity in social sciences is absolutely necessary and possible, there are those who argue that it is not possible, especially in qualitative methods. Some argue that one may have to compromise objectivity in qualitative research.

From a phenomenological perspective,[1] any judgments are subjective, being influenced by the actor's own experiences. All empirical observations are necessarily theory-laden, and the choice of a theory is a subjective one. All members of society have different values, and any researcher unconsciously but necessarily has his or her own argument affected by his or her personal values. But this does not mean that quantitative methods that deal with statistical data can maintain absolute objectivity since that is also based on the subjective decision in terms of the variables and the raw data selected.

Empiricism

Empiricism is the second important feature in social scientific research, and it asserts that knowledge comes from experience in the formation of ideas while rejecting the notion of innate ideas. Only the information gathered applying your senses is used to make decisions. Empiricism became popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the emergence of science, and researchers who denounce qualitative methods often equate empiricism with science. This is known as an epistemological view,[2] based on the assumption that the only source of knowledge is experience. In social sciences, it is used positively to describe that style of research that tries to avoid untested theoretical speculation and to aim always at the provision of quantitative, empirical evidence. Some of the criticisms are that empiricism tends to reduce the importance of theory on the one hand and on the other underestimates the technical and theoretical difficulties of gathering reliable data.

However, qualitative experience can also be called empirical since empiricism is something we experience and feel using our physical senses, such as hearing, watching, observing, touching, smelling, and maybe even tasting (Flick 2018a). For any empirical research, there are methodological strategies. As explained in Chapter 1, “Theory and Practice,” theory and practice are therefore discussed side by side as they complement each other, and there is an inseparable link between the two. Theories explain a set of empirical observations, and they function as analytical tools; they are abstract and make generalizations while searching for patterns in human behavior. Practice or empiricism is atheoretical and is more specific with concrete research methods involved.

Research process

A researcher cannot suddenly jump into the data-collection process. There is a planning stage; the whole process of research needs to be considered and reconsidered before you begin your research and organize and structure your study (Marshall and Rossman 2015; Neuman 2019).

Selecting a topic

The very first step of research is a topic selection. You know you want to research and write about fashion/dress, but that is an extremely broad topic. Your research focus needs to be more specific than simply “fashion/dress.” You know that you want to research something related to or relevant to fashion, but what about fashion? Fashion/dress can be analyzed from numerous perspectives, and you should know exactly what area of fashion you want to study and what exactly you are trying to investigate in your research.

Furthermore, you must be able to clearly state the topic you are interested in and raise the problem you want to investigate. Many students flounder in developing a researchable topic because they fail to develop a clear research problem/question statement. Raising a clear research statement or a problem statement allows you to concentrate on the topic and exclude everything else that is irrelevant.

It is desirable to consider and describe any theories that have implications for understanding the topic. Consider brainstorming a list of possible topics. The purpose of brainstorming is to produce ideas uncritically. After brainstorming, you then need to critically evaluate the ideas generated in order to select an appropriate topic for review. Occasionally, combining various ideas and thoughts during brainstorming can produce a useful topic.

Subjective interests in fashion and dress

While many researchers explain why the topic has any research meaning and significance in the research community, there are usually other personal reasons why they are studying fashion/dress. It may even be simply "because I like shopping for clothes," which few fashion/dress researchers would publicly admit. If you are in the position to decide a research topic, the selected topic must have some value and importance to you. Then it is entirely a subjective decision since it is based on your own subjective feelings of importance and possibly on your personal experience. Can a subjective process be objective? Most probably not. Our own cultural background, academic training, life experiences, and individual personal traits could have a profound effect not only on the topic selection but also on the research process and even on the findings. Sex, age, ethnicity, religion, country of origin, economic status, and social or occupational roles can shape the questions researchers ask. An inquiry process is affected not only by personal characteristics but also by a researcher's personal history and family background, and thus the researcher needs to make assumptions accordingly. While consideration of personal interests is important, we need to make sure that the topic selected is well within the boundaries expected by the research community.

Muggleton in his research explains why and how he was involved in the study of subculture by referring to Weber's idea of value-relevance:

> According to Max Weber (1864–1920), all sociology is necessarily "value-relevant" (Weber 1949) in that the selection of a research topic, the decision to investigate particular aspects over others, and the logic and method of enquiry employed are all inevitably grounded in the subjective values of the researcher. A useful way of introducing this book might therefore be to "come clean" about my own personal reasons for writing it. From 1976 onwards, I became increasingly involved in the emerging provincial punk rock scene. I took on certain aspects of the subculture's dress codes, jettisoning my flares

> for "straights," platforms for trainers, and my bright orange, wing-collared shirt and fat knot tie for a white button-down brinylon museum piece worn with a stripy school tie left hanging at half mast. (Muggleton 2000: 1)

Therefore, Muggleton calls his approach "neo-Weberian" since it is located within the tradition of conventional qualitative sociology that derives from Weber's insistence upon the need of sociological explanations to recognize the subjective goals, values, and motivations of social actors (Muggleton 2000: 5).

Similarly, when I look back and ask how I got involved in this area of research as a fashion scholar, it is very personal. First of all, my grandmother sewed her own kimono, and my mother studied at a fashion school and is a very creative person. As I grew up watching my mother making clothes and knitting as a hobby, it was very natural for me to do the same. I have loved designing clothes since I was a child. I loved sewing and making clothes. I decided to enroll myself in a fashion school at the age of twenty-one as I was graduating from a university while my classmates were all looking for jobs. I am professionally trained as a fashion designer. A career transition from a fashion designer to a fashion scholar may be quite a change, but I am still involved in fashion nonetheless. Although I was mostly educated in the West (elementary school in Australia and high school in Austria), I am Japanese by heritage, and thus I have always been aware of the famous Japanese designers in Paris, such as Kenzo, Issey Miyake, Rei Kawakubo, and Yohji Yamamoto. As a result, I conducted my research and wrote my doctoral dissertation on the Japanese designers in Paris. There is nothing objective about the selection process of my topic while I was very aware of the importance of objectivity, putting aside my personal interests and values, during my research in Paris.[3]

Therefore, whichever topic is selected, it often comes from the researcher's personal interests and experiences that are far from objectivity. Those of us who are fashion scholars often like fashion in various ways, whether it is because they understand the technical aspects of design, or they simply love buying new clothes every season. However, the researchers must be aware that the subjective interests and biases must stop at the first level of topic selection. From there, you need an objective perspective to analyze and interpret fashion/dress.

You begin with an idea for a research study. You know you want to study something about fashion/dress or something in relation to that. You begin reading the related and relevant literature on the topic/idea. During this process, you should begin to formulate a research question or a hypothesis. It is acceptable if your research question changes during the research process when your methodological tools are qualitative. This is one of the major differences between quantitative and qualitative methods.

Mill's sociological imagination

Your personal interests in fashion and dress are all part of the larger social picture if you apply "sociological imagination," which is a phrase coined by C. Wright Mills (2000 [1959]). Using the sociological imagination means recognizing the connection between individual, private experience and the wider society. Mills calls the personal level an individual's "biography," and he uses the term "history" to refer to patterns and relationships on the larger scale of society. You have individual feelings and attitudes about fashion, current trends, and the way you or others dress. These make your personal, biographical experience of your life as an individual. Applying sociological imagination to your life expands your perspective, and it allows you to see yourself as well as others in a larger, more complex picture. You can begin to see where your experience as a person who likes fashion fits into the social world in which you live, the history of which your biography is a part. It could be that you are part of the wider fashion system in a particular fashion city or you may represent yourself in a new occupational category of fashion. Therefore, according to Mills (2000 [1959]), to use sociological imagination is to identify the intersection of biography and history, the ways in which people are affected by social forces and social groups are affected by their members.

The literature review

Once you know your research topic, questions, or hypothesis, the next step is the literature review. This step is required for any scholarly research paper and cannot be avoided. There are two purposes to the literature review (Hempel 2019):

(1) You do not want to needlessly duplicate another researcher's ideas or research, although sometimes researchers conduct the same or similar studies to check the reliability of results. A thorough literature review helps you learn from previous research, give recognition where credit is due, become more knowledgeable about the problem or the question you are studying and thus avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

(2) You refer to other studies and research so that you know what has been done in the field, what other research questions were raised and answered. It shows to the readers that you have done your homework before embarking on your own study. It is considered preliminary research. It is not sufficient to simply focus on your own research. Your own research should not even begin without the literature review. It is important to understand that every researcher is making a contribution to the research community or the community of fashion/dress studies.

The literature review is a combination of the literature on a topic you select. In order to create an original work, you need to review various ideas and findings in the literature. You may locate and read literature in academic journals, books, and even on the internet. It is best to consult a librarian for appropriate databases that you can use for your topic. Your literature review must be listed alphabetically in the bibliography pages at the very end of the book or paper, and many scholars use them as references. They also look to see whether you have covered the basic literature for the topic you have selected. It is used to support the legitimacy of one's research questions, appropriateness of design, the theoretical underpinnings of the study, and the validity of conclusions.

Choosing appropriate research methods

Broadly speaking, there are quantitative and qualitative methods as indicated earlier. The differences and commonalities are discussed in Chapter 1, "Theory and Practice." Many fashion/dress studies use primarily qualitative methods as they often refer to material objects and visual materials as evidence and also observe how people are dressed. From Chapters 3 to 8 in this book, various qualitative research methods, such as ethnography and questionnaires among others, are introduced and explained in depth. We need to remember that no method is perfect or absolute so the researchers need to be aware of the limitations of their studies and their research methodologies and also to assess the weaknesses and strengths of each method. Methods you incorporate do not have to be just one. Multiple methods can be combined to try to answer your research question; different studies integrating two or more methods are discussed throughout this book.

Purpose of using qualitative research methods

It was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that research in the social sciences began. The social sciences were modeled after the physical sciences and attempts were made to make the social sciences as objective as the physical sciences. Around the middle of the twentieth century, qualitative research methods were being explored for use in the social sciences (Denzin 2017).

Many researchers and scholars do not clearly indicate what their methodological strategies are, and thus a reader must assume and read between the lines that certain methods were utilized in executing their research. Interestingly, graduate students' doctoral dissertations and the books based on them often have explanations on methods.

We know that, broadly speaking, there are quantitative and qualitative research methods in the world of academic research (Turner 2013). Qualitative and quantitative data inform each other and produce insight and understanding in a way that cannot be duplicated by either approach. Some research problems simply cannot be addressed adequately by any other methods except ethnography or interviews, for example. While many quantitative researchers tend to dismiss qualitative methods, such as observation or participant observation, as a legitimate method, they have begun to reconsider their standpoint.

The qualitative methods that qualitatively oriented researchers who often employ and administer in studying and analyzing fashion-related practices and events are discussed in this book. I do not intend to dismiss quantitative methods entirely. We should be aware of what quantitative methods are and the differences between the two methods used in studying fashion and dress.

Qualitative analysis refers to analysis that is not based on precise measurement and mathematical claims. Fashion-/dress-related analysis is frequently qualitative because research goals often involve the understanding of phenomena in ways that do not require quantification, or because the phenomena do not lend themselves to precise measurements. You cannot give any numbers to fashion phenomena. For instance, in participant observation, the researcher may simply aim to observe people's behavior without counting instances of particular behavior while in other cases, such as historical research, the records may be inadequate for precise quantitative measurements even if that was the research goal.

Research setting and appropriate research population/subject

As in any other research situation, you must determine how broad an area of social world is covered. In most research studies, this decision is largely dictated by the research question and the nature of the research problem under investigation. It has to be clear in the mind of a researcher who is included in the study. During the research design phase of a project, the researcher needs to consider a rationale for identifying and using a particular setting as a site for data collection. A decision must be made regarding who serves as the researcher and the research study population. The research site or setting should be a location where entry is possible and the target population is available. You must carefully identify an appropriate population, not merely an easily accessible one.

The research question is generally regarded as the primary guide to the appropriate research site selection. If the researcher's question has to do with French Haute Couture and couturières, the data-collection site has to be some place related to that and you must find individuals related to that. It is less likely that you can conduct such a research in Asia. Typically, the decision to use a particular research site is tied closely to obtaining access to an appropriate population of potential subjects. Poor study site selection and poor sample decisions may weaken or ruin eventual findings.

Sampling strategies

In the case of administering a questionnaire, which is discussed in Chapter 4, "Survey Methods," rarely do you have the luxury of studying an entire population. It is difficult to know if your classroom of 100 students is representative of other classes on your campus or in your state or elsewhere. Constraints of time and economic cost demand a technique to reduce a population to a manageable size. If you randomly sample 500 students out of a student body of 20,000, it means that each student has an equal chance of being selected as 1 of the 500. If all of the potential respondents do not have the same probability of being included, the result is a biased sample.

The logic of using a sample of subjects is to make inferences about some larger population from a smaller one, the sample. In quantitative research, the researcher is keenly concerned with probability sampling (Fowler 2013; Thompson 2012). The concept of probability sampling is based on the notion that a sample can be selected that will mathematically represent subgroups of some larger population. In probability sampling strategies, there are simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, and stratified random sampling.[4]

Various types of samplings and many related issues are involved with the statistical analysis of population samples. Different statistical techniques for making comparisons require assumptions that you learn to evaluate when you consider the appropriateness of different statistical techniques available for the problem you are studying (Thompson 2012). Understanding sampling, issues of size, and statistical techniques are important to enable anyone to make informed judgments about the claims other people make about research they have conducted on various issues. Although qualitative researchers are not directly involved in the statistical analysis, they can choose their research sampling in survey methods.

Snowball sampling

This is a nonprobability sampling strategy known as snowball sampling, and it is occasionally the way to locate subjects with certain attributes or characteristics necessary in a study. Snowball samples are particularly popular among researchers interested in studying various classes of deviance, sensitive topics, or difficult-to-reach populations (Thompson 2012). The basic strategy of snowballing involves first identifying several people with relevant characteristics and interviewing them or having them answer a questionnaire. These subjects are then asked for the names of other people who possess the same attributes as they do. Similar people flock together. If you are a designer, your friends are usually designers. If you work as a buyer, you do have a connection with other buyers. In my study on Japanese designers in Paris (2004), I used the method of snowballing to locate Japanese designers in Paris who were otherwise difficult to locate. I first contacted a couple of Japanese designers in Paris who were taking part in the Paris Fashion Collection and interviewed them. Then I asked each of them to refer me to one or two Japanese designers or individuals who live and work in the fashion industry in Paris. By asking these first subjects for referrals of additional people, I found that the sample eventually "snowballs" from a few subjects to many subjects.

Collecting data and making analysis of data

Once you decide which method/s to employ, you start collecting your data. The word "data" is not necessarily quantitative. Anything and everything that is collected throughout your research, such as the field notes, answers to your questionnaire, and photographs, among others, is considered your data. Whichever method/s you choose, you now actually put that into practice. Make sure you keep good records of your research as you will use them for the next stage in analyzing the results of your collected data. Specific data-collection methods in qualitative research are discussed in subsequent chapters of this book.

Any data analysis begins with a review of the research proposal or plans with which the work began. It can take a month or two to organize and sort the data collected. Filing papers, making neat stack of tapes, putting interviews in order, and organizing documents and artifacts are necessary before starting your constructive data analysis. This is a must component of the research project. Many researchers wander and deviate from the original question set in the beginning, so you need to revisit and relocate the question/s. In qualitative research, you do not code or elicit meaning from statistical data.

Drawing conclusions

You discuss what can be concluded from your research on fashion/dress. Were you able to prove or disprove the hypothesis you set up in the beginning of your research? Did you find anything that you did not know before this research? Is there a theoretical or empirical contribution of your research in fashion/dress studies? At this stage, you are probably writing a report, an article, or a book, and as you draw conclusions of your study, you are raising further questions in the future for fashion/dress scholars.

Source evaluation, plagiarism, and ethical issues

Since the 1990s, the advent of the internet has brought enormous changes in our lives. Today practically no one can avoid the impact of the internet that has permeated throughout the world. The community of academics and researchers has also changed dramatically, and therefore, the researchers should be able to evaluate information found on various web sites since some are presented as factual evidence but offer inaccurate and unreliable sources. This section will be further explored and elaborated in Chapter 7, "Online Research and Ethnography," a new chapter added in the second edition of this book. The advent of the internet made plagiarism extremely easy. Students must understand the importance of citations and references. Some do not understand the gravity of plagiarism. When you use an idea, a sentence, or a passage from someone's writing without citing the sources, it is called plagiarism. According to *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary* (www.merriam-webster.com), "to plagiarize" is "to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own; use another's production without crediting the source." Failure to cite a source for an original idea constitutes plagiarism even if the idea or point of view is logical and makes common sense.

All social research should be carried out in ways designed to avoid any physical or psychological risks to those involved, such as participants, respondents, and interviewers. Procedures need to be ethically managed since social scientific research deals with human subjects. In 1974 the National Research Act was passed by Congress, and the National Commission on Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research was created by Title II of this law (Blokdyk 2018; Lane 2009). The National Research Act directed all institutions that sponsored research to establish institutional review committees, today more commonly called IRBs. Locally based in-house IRBs were now charged with the responsibility of carefully reviewing any proposed research that involved human subjects (Blokdyk 2018; Lane 2009). IRBs were expected to ensure that researchers had considered potential risks and benefits to subjects, that important scientific knowledge could be derived from the project, that legally informed consent would be obtained from each subject, and that the rights and interests of subjects were protected. IRB review is designed to protect subjects, researchers, and institutions (Fowler 2013). Almost all universities and most other organizations in the United States that conduct federally funded research have an IRB that is responsible for overseeing, evaluating, and reviewing research projects.

Conclusion

Once a researcher understands the whole research process, it makes the process easier and more efficient during the preparation stage. Each step of the process needs to be carefully examined, from the formulation of a research question, the selection of research methods to the final data collection and conclusion. None of the steps can be excluded or eliminated from the process. Human begins have subjective viewpoints in their everyday life, but we must learn to have an objective standpoint when we are conducting social scientific research although we know that there is a subjective interest in fashion/dress based on our personal values and experiences.

Guide to further reading

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3
ETHNOGRAPHY

OBJECTIVES

- To understand what ethnography means and its brief history
- To explore the process of ethnography
- To learn how to conduct observation/participant observation/listening
- To make an analysis of ethnographical data
- To recognize the strengths and weaknesses of ethnography
- To review specific ethnographical studies

Ethnography is a qualitative, descriptive, nonmathematical, naturalistic way to study human beings, their life and their behavior, including the way they dress, in their own natural settings. Ethnography tells a story about a group of people, but it is also a process, that is, the method of inquiry. It is an investigation process that social scientists, mainly qualitative sociologists and cultural anthropologists, employ in different ways to study how human beings act and why they act in the way they do.

Ethnography includes participant and nonparticipant observation in addition to listening and interviewing. These methods are used to acquire firsthand experience as well as accounts of phenomena as they occur in natural real-life situations, and there are no prior manipulations or control of variables in the study as we find in experiments. A researcher has or imposes no control over what he or she sees or hears. The only choice he or she has is where/which location and who to study. The task of ethnographers is to reconstruct the characteristics of the phenomenon they observe. This method reveals research subjects' own perspectives, which may be useful for developing new theories. But findings are usually relevant to one particular case and are not generalizable to other cases or useful for testing theories.

In addition to Malinowski's pioneering ethnographical study (2008 [1922]), we have much to learn from Geertz's seminal work on *The Interpretations of Cultures* (1973), in which he makes it clear that the concept of culture is inseparable from ethnography, particularly for anthropologists. According to Geertz (1973: 5–6), in anthropology, what the practitioners do is ethnography, and it is in understanding what ethnography is, or more exactly what doing ethnography is, that a start can be made toward grasping what anthropological analysis amounts to as a form of knowledge. Ethnography is "thick description" (Geertz 1973: 9–10).

Many social scientists, anthropologists, and in particular qualitative sociologists (Dalby 1983, 1998; Eicher 1998; Hamilton and Hamilton 2008 [1989]; Hodkinson 2002; Tarlo 1996, 2010, 2016) use the method to study how people dress in a particular culture and to explore the cultural meaning and symbolism of their dress. It is a useful method in studying fashion/dress because every cultural object or artifact situates itself within a particular domain. You cannot simply study dress because dress is situated within a cultural context, and the two are inseparable.

Some researchers have found that very long-term participant observation, done in a series of studies over several decades, can yield understanding of social change that is simply not possible in any other way. However, most basic ethnographical research is done over a period of about a year or two.

Ethnographic and qualitative research is often equated with hermeneutic[1] or interpretive research, though not all hermeneutic or interpretive studies are ethnographies. A concern with hermeneutics involves a concern with meaning, and it is concerned with ways to explain, translate, and interpret perceived reality. In contemporary research, a concern with hermeneutics is a concern for interpreting and recounting accurately the meanings that research participants give to the reality around them.

A brief history of ethnography

Franz Boas (1858–1942) was not the first to systematically study culture nor was he America's first ethnographer. But he is considered the father of fieldwork in American cultural anthropology. He was the first to professionalize the discipline, introduce an inductive analysis of culture, and instill ethnographic fieldwork as its principal research method. He trained the first generation of American anthropologists at Columbia University such as Alfred Kroeber, Margaret Mead, Edward Sapir, and Ruth Benedict,[2] among others, some of whom have written about fashion and dress. What they had done can be applicable to any research using the ethnographical method.

Boas was not particularly clear about the practice and process of fieldwork. It was the Polish expatriate Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) who advanced the methodology of ethnographic investigation through his research among the Trobrianders of Melanesia. Malinowski influenced the twentieth-century ethnographical research methods and was the first anthropologist to describe what intensive fieldwork was like and what it entailed. He gathered data by living with the Trobriand people and observed their everyday activities. His book *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* published in 1922 is widely read and is most influential to those who use ethnography as a research method. According to Malinowski (1922: 3), all ethnographic studies should include an account of the research methods and conditions so that at a glance the reader could estimate with precision the degree of the writer's personal acquaintance with the facts that he or she describes and form an idea under what conditions information had been obtained from the natives.

During the 1920s and 1930s, sociologists at the University of Chicago, influenced by the work of social psychologist George Herbert Mead, exerted an influence on the development of qualitative sociology and anthropology. As indicated in Chapter 1, "Theory and Practice," they came to be known as the Chicago School and were led by Herbert Blumer,[3] William Thomas, Robert Park, and Charles Horton Cooley. They represented the first major attempt to conduct systematic ethnographic fieldwork in sociology in particular. They encouraged their students to conduct fieldwork and reconceptualized their methodology around "participant observation," which was originally developed by Malinowski.

In order to conduct a successful ethnographical study, there needs to be physical proximity of the fieldworker to the people studied, knowledge of their language, and a high degree of psychological and emotional involvement while maintaining the objective standpoint of a researcher as discussed in Chapter 2, "Research Process." You need to be totally involved and yet observe with complete detachment, continuously to step in and out of other cultures. Much ethnographic research involves entering the setting of some group and simply watching and listening attentively. Since it would be impossible to observe everything or hear all that is going on at one time, ethnographers must watch and listen only to certain portions of what happens. Therefore, you need to determine exactly what you as a researcher want to learn about at various points in the research.

Preparing for ethnography

Once you decide where your ethnography is going to take place, you must gain access to the place. Gaining entry into a site/community is the very first step of ethnography. But in ethnography, there is always a problem of getting entry into a group that you are studying. This involves consideration of who the subjects are and the nature of the setting.

Prior knowledge and acquiring information about a culture that you are getting into obviously is a major advantage since you can be ready for incidents that are familiar to you. Knowing the people's customs, traditions, norms, and beliefs facilitates you to the entry. The first step begins in the library, and you need to locate as much information as possible about the culture before you actually go to the field. A referral is also important in some cultures and communities. Formal and informal social networks are useful in reaching research subjects. Occasionally, there are gatekeepers that you may first need to introduce yourself to. You also need to take advantage of certain relationships while conducting considerable background work; making the right contacts can also allow you to get access to restricted groups.

In studying the global fashion industry through the labor of its cultural workers, Moon writes candidly about the difficulty that she had faced in trying to get into the "field" (Moon 2016: 70–71):

> I spent days in field research, not knowing whom I would talk to next. In an industry full of people who constantly told me that "time is money," it was impossible to expect anyone to have the time to call me, a random person, back. . . . It became immediately clear . . . how difficult it would be to get anyone in fashion to talk to me at all—I was trying to get in on the "inside" of an exclusive world full of overworked people, too busy to talk. Though I made lists of potential contacts before arriving in the field, making "cold calls" to strangers who did not know me, to trace a commodity chain was just not a practical way to maneuver within this industry. (Moon 2016: 70–71)

Moon later uses her personal connections through family and friends who happen to be involved in the relevant industries, and from there, her research network begins to evolve.

Manlow, who conducted an ethnographical study at a fashion house in New York, writes: "I wrote to about one hundred firms—many well-known and others less so. I heard from two firms: Leslie Faye and Tommy Hilfiger" (2007: vii). Manlow performed a participant observation at Tommy Hilfiger with full access. She was set up as an intern with an employee identification card, an email account, a desk, and a computer. She was given insider privilege. Like many other sociologists who study fashion (Aspers 2001; Entwistle 2009; Kawamura 2004, 2012, 2016), she is not concerned about the actual raw materials of clothes but is interested in how the fashion design process is organized, what kind of organization culture exists, and how Hilfiger and others manage the firm. The names of those interviewed are often changed to protect their privacy. In conducting an ethnographical study on male fashion modeling and fashion buying, Entwistle writes that she failed to gain access to photo shoots that are notoriously difficult to get inside (Entwistle 2009: 4). Access must be negotiated and renegotiated throughout the research process, and it is based on sets of relationship between the researcher and the researched throughout the project.

How ethnographers gain entry into their research settings varies from individual to individual, from place to place, and from culture to culture. Some people are more accepting than others, and some communities are more welcoming and easier to enter than others. By contrast, there are those who are more suspicious of outsiders and are reluctant to accept strangers. Unless you as the ethnographer are accepted to a certain extent, you would not be able to conduct any ethnographical research.

Researcher as an insider or an outsider

Depending on the research topic and site, you as the ethnographer may be partially an insider to the community you are involved in or you may have started as an outsider and then later become almost an insider. There are advantages and disadvantages in both.

Tarlo (1996) conducted an ethnographical study in a Gujarati village in India to research the culture and its dress. The members of one family that she met were friendly since it was through their youngest son who studied in the city that Tarlo and her colleagues made their initial contact. Tarlo as an Indian who lives and works in the UK and without being associated with any particular caste (1996: 133) struggles to find out how she should be dressed or what is the most appropriate way of dress among them.

Similarly, Hodkinson (2002) conducted in-depth qualitative research on the Goth scene in Britain for a number of years, and he himself is part of the Goth subculture. Being a complete insider, he knows how he should dress, which music to listen to, which magazines and novels to read, to be part of the subculture. Hodkinson (2002: 4) writes: “I had been an enthusiastic participant in the goth scene since the beginning of that decade (1990s), but in 1996, my personal involvement became just one part of an extensive research project.” He is in “an unambiguous position as a long-term genuine participant of the goth scene” (2002: 4). But the role of a researcher should take a different viewpoint from that of an insider.

Subjective experience and meanings required critical interpretation of research aims and theory and were complemented by more distanced forms of observation and analysis (Hodkinson 2002: 6), and thus it requires a researcher to take a few steps back so that he can critically and objectively evaluate and assess the outcome of the research.

The difficulty of objectivity in ethnography

Although the importance of objectivity is stressed repeatedly in social sciences, ethnography as a research method requires a researcher to immerse oneself into the field with the awareness of objectivity. In ethnography, there is always the danger of "going native," which is considered to be one of the few taboos in the area. It means that you are completely immersed into their culture. It used to be a criticism to go native, but in the postmodern era, those who take on the postmodern[4] critique of empiricism and objectivity advocate the breakdown of the traditional barrier between the observer and the observed. Some researchers describe the ethnographic process as subjective and not objective, and the researcher may have to compromise objectivity slightly. In ethnography, you are not simply looking at mathematical data and making a statistical analysis. You are interacting on a daily basis with human beings who have emotions and feelings.

Therefore, in participant observation, objectivity is often said to be difficult to maintain, although researchers are well aware of its importance and meaning. Dalby conducted ethnographical research on Japanese culture, geisha, and kimono. She went to Japan, lived with geisha, and interviewed geisha, ex-geisha, the owners of geisha houses, and registry office officials in fourteen geisha communities during the fourteen months of her study (1983: xiv). Dalby managed to get access to a secret world of geisha which is traditionally closed to outsiders. She used participant observation, took a name *Ichiguku* as all the other geisha girls do, and attended parties and events with professional geisha girls. Dalby writes:

> I tried to be a perceptive observer of all that went on; yet I soon found that I had plunged my whole heart into the endeavor and could not maintain the conventional researcher's separation from the object of study. I was absorbed in learning to be a geisha. The objectivity, the sorting of my experience, and the analysis came much later. (Dalby 1983: xv)

Thus, she makes an attempt to integrate the two viewpoints, that of an outsider and an insider, as a geisha. She explains that her study is not simply an ethnography but an interpretive ethnography that explains the cultural meaning of persons, objects, and situations in the geisha world. She intentionally writes her book in the first person, which is unique in a research-based publication.

Geertz is one of the scholars who insists on the importance of a researcher being a complete insider. To look at the symbolic dimensions of social action—art, religion, ideology, science, law, morality, common sense—is not to turn away from the existential dilemmas of life for some empyrean realm of de-emotionalized forms; it is to plunge into the midst of them (Geertz 1973: 30).

The researcher must be aware that he is part of the social world that he or she is investigating. It requires the researcher to avoid simply accepting everything at face value. Ethnography is a process of gathering systematic observations, partly through participation and partly through various types of conversational interviews, along with photography, archival searches, and assorted documents. The long-term immersion in foreign societies and cultures or unfamiliar communities and the status as a foreigner and an outsider using interactive research methods have far-reaching effects on the self as well as the perspectives on others. The researcher's identity has a decisive influence on the data gathered, which may compromise objectivity, one of the key factors in social sciences.

Hawthorne/observer effect

One of the obstacles in conducting ethnographic research is the very presence of the ethnographer in the field. When the research subject becomes aware of the presence of an ethnographer, he or she may change his or her behavior, and it may no longer be his or her everyday routine behavior or comments. This is called the Hawthorne effect.[5] Ethnography should occur within a natural setting with a natural behavior from those you are studying. This effect is usually short lived, but the presence of ethnographers in a social setting might certainly reactivate the Hawthorne effect in various degrees every time someone new is introduced to the researchers. Ethnographers must be invisible and must try to be invisible. The status as an invisible researcher is the ability to be present in the setting, to see what is going on without being observed, and consequently to capture the essence of the setting and participants without influencing them. For instance, if a person who usually wears a T-shirt and a pair of jeans suddenly dresses up after finding out that she is being studied, ethnography can no longer be conducted in that situation.

However, participant observation is believed to reduce the problem of reactivity, that is, people changing their behavior when they know that they are being studied. Lower reactivity means higher validity of data. It also gives you an intuitive understanding of what is going on in a culture and allows you to speak with confidence about the meaning of data. It also allows you to make strong statements about cultural facts you collect. There are things that you cannot obtain from a survey or a questionnaire. Participant observation makes it possible to collect both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data from a representative sample of a population.

Doing ethnography

Geertz says that doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things, techniques, and received procedures that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, "thick description" (Geertz 1973: 6) in contrast to "thin description."

Fieldwork involves both observation and participant observation. This may appear to be such a simplistic way to research, but observation as a method is not as easy as one may think it is. It requires a deep insight into what you are studying. You become a human wall with your eyes and ears wide open. In participant observation, you are not simply observing but you are also participating and getting involved with those you are studying.

> What the ethnographer is in fact faced with is complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render. . . . Those who employ ethnography as a method of inquiry untangle the knotted web to understand what a culture consists of. Doing ethnography is like trying to read a foreign, faded, incoherent manuscript. (Geertz 1973: 10)

For instance, Eicher (1998) examines the significance of textiles and beads in Kalabari life through her fieldwork in Nigeria. She observes a final funeral dance in 1983 and studies what dancers wear. Field observations, photographs, and field notes from eight fieldtrips were made between 1980 and 1996, and she explains that hats and girdles decorated with glass beads are an exclusive possession of the Fubara family worn primarily by women at funeral celebrations. Eicher (1998) also examines the labor conditions of the women who make, thread, or work with beads and analyzes their activities as traders, entrepreneurs, and employers of other women. From the making process to the exchange, she explores the uses and the symbolic meanings of beads in the study.

Adler and Adler explain what an ethnographer should and should not do:

> Observers neither stimulate nor manipulate their subjects. They do not ask the subjects research questions, pose tasks for them, or deliberately create new provocations. This stands in marked contrast to researchers using interview questionnaires, who direct the interaction and introduce potentially new ideas into the arena, and to experimental researchers, who often set up structured situations where they can alter certain conditions to measure the covariance of others. (Adler and Adler 1998: 80)

An ethnographer is an objective observer while placing himself or herself among the insiders. Physically, he or she is in, but emotionally, he or she is detached, but that separation in one's mind is sometimes difficult to maintain because mind and body are connected as one (Adler and Adler 1998; Bratich 2017).

Getting used to surroundings and developing relationships

When ethnographers arrive at a new place, they usually wander around the location they plan to use as the research setting. Then they begin to map the setting carefully. You decide where to cover and how to cover in the most efficient and effective way, such as the number of hours required each day for the study, which days or which hours during the day or night are the best. By wandering around, you also get acquainted with inhabitants and they get used to having you around also. You may get first impressions that may not be accurate in the beginning but can be used as points of reference later on in the research process.

This process is part of gaining entry into your research area and community. Participant observation is the foundation of ethnographical research, and it involves establishing rapport in a new culture and a community, learning to act so that people go about their business as usual when you are there, and removing yourself every day from cultural immersion so you can objectively observe what you are seeing and hearing. Smiling and greeting in the beginning may help you get acquainted with the locals and finding guides and informants. It is not a good idea to elaborate on technical details of the study. It is not necessary nor are they interested in knowing all the details of your research. Who you are and what you are doing should be enough information to give them. A brief response is enough. The most important thing is to gain their trust and minimize their anxiety when you approach them. You can also tell them that all information collected during the research study will be kept confidential. Once you build a rapport with a guide or informant, you can begin snowballing additional relationships with other inhabitants.

Tracking, observing, listening, asking questions, interviewing, and taking notes

After you establish relationships with several guides and inhabitants, you are free to begin learning what goes on among the inhabitants of the study domain. Tracking literally means following the guides around during their usual daily routines and watching their activities and the other people they interact with. As you follow and observe, you can also eavesdrop on conversations. You can ask questions but must take a passive role during informal questioning. Jotting down some points to ask at a later time would serve better than interrupting the ongoing action with a question.

Interviewing can also be used in ethnographical study to supplement observation and participant observation. While structured and semi-structured interviews are used in surveys as discussed in Chapter 4, “Survey Methods,” unstructured interviews are used in ethnography. They are completely unstructured, no fixed order or wording to any questions. Any type of language can be used. The interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications, and the interviewer may add or delete questions between interviews. This is used during the course of fieldwork to expand field observations. Unstructured interviews allow researchers to acquire additional information about various phenomena they may observe by asking questions. It can provide important information for these investigators along with the data gathered from various published and unpublished articles and documents.

The central component of ethnographic research is the ethnographic account. Providing such narrative accounts of what goes on in the lives of research subjects derives from having maintained complete, accurate, and detailed field notes. Field notes should be completed immediately following every excursion into the field, as well as following any chance meeting with inhabitants outside the boundaries of the study setting, because human memories can fade away rather quickly. There are variations about how to take field notes. Some researchers wait until they have left the field and then immediately write complete records. Others take abbreviated notes covertly while in the field and later translate them into complete field notes. Field notes usually include the date, time, and place of the observations; specific facts, numbers, and details of what happened at the site; sensory impressions such as sights, sounds, textures, smells, and tastes. Personal responses are also recorded in the field notes. Specific words, phrases, summaries of conversations, and questions about people or behaviors at the site for future consideration are also noted.

There are various ways to take field notes. For example, some ethnographers carry tape recorders and periodically enter their own notes or record various conversations they witness. Others carry a notepad or index cards and simply jot down notes or verbatim quotes periodically throughout the field excursion. Once out of the field, the researchers can use these notes and jotted points to write full accounts.

The role of an informant/research collaborator

Informants (some prefer to call them research collaborators) play a crucial role in ethnography. They are the insiders or the locals of the group being studied and are involved in everyday activities. Through the informant, your network could begin to snowball as he or she would introduce you to others in the community. The informant must be convinced that the ethnographers are who they claim to be and that the study is meaningful. The larger the ethnographers' network of reliable informants, the greater their access and ability to gain further cooperation. The informant can introduce the ethnographers to people in the group that they may have less access to.

Aspers in his study explained the importance of an informant in studying the fashion photography market in Sweden as follows:

> As I began the project I knew relatively little about the market for fashion photography, my research agenda was diffuse, and the study did not have a clear focus. At this stage informants proved to be especially important. They gave me information I might not have asked for otherwise, and ideas on what to study and how to do so. Simply by talking to them I got a lot of ideas, and further questions arose. (Aspers 2001: 39)

Aspers had three photographers, three of their assistants, and one stylist as his informants who provided him with valuable information. He learned things that he could not have imagined simply from reading, such as the enormous amount of unpaid work done by the actors.

Informants are often the insiders to the community or the group the researcher wants to study so they obviously have more inside information than the researcher who is considered an outsider and, therefore, has limited or no access whatsoever to unreleased or confidential information.

Making analysis of ethnographical data

The basic goal of ethnography is to create a vivid reconstruction of the culture or the community being studied. This requires researchers first to separate, for analytics purposes, any empirical, unbiased meanings they have assigned to behavior and belief from meanings assigned to the same behaviors and beliefs by their participants. Researcher-constructed descriptions of reality may be quite different from the meanings that participants use to construct their reality. Realities are socially constructed and are different for everyone (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Ethnographers are concerned with interpreting events and people's behavior accurately, but because they can only see some portions of a cultural and social reality, they struggle with the issue of portrayal. Many ethnographers believe that the reality of a cultural or a social scene is the product of multiple perceptions, including that of the researcher and that produced by the interaction between researchers and the people they study. The problem becomes one of determining how much of whose reality is depicted, how it can be portrayed, and with what degree of adequacy (Geertz and Marcus 1986).

At this stage, it is time to reread the data you collected. Check the data for completeness and reacquaint the research with territory previously covered. Researchers who postpone analysis until data collection is complete should scan their records before leaving the field so that critical gaps left accidentally in the collecting or recording of data may be remedied. You may become too familiar with certain events and neglect to document them thoroughly. You tend to omit the subtleties that you take for granted. Then you later find out that you have left out some valuable information and evidence. Data collection and data analysis must occur almost at the same time (Hamilton and Hamilton 2008 [1989]).

Next you create an outline from your notes. The outline begins with a search for regularities, that is, things that happen frequently with groups of people. Patterns and regularities are transformed into categories into which subsequent items are sorted. These categories or patterns are discovered from the data. They emerge in a rather systematic, if not totally conscious, application of the processes, and this could potentially lead to building a new theory.

Shukla's study on costume and identity with case studies

Shukla explores the connection between identity and costume worn on special occasions, showing how costume functions to help individuals elect, embrace, and display identities that are not expressed through daily dress. We all have multiple identities, and some of these are expressed only by means of a costume (2015a: 5). Her research includes in-depth ethnographic data taken from particular case studies including Brazil where race, politics, and resistance are communicated through carnival costumes, Sweden where folk costume is used as an expression of heritage, and the amateur garb of the Society for Creative Anachronism, the recreated military uniforms of civil War reenactors, and the professional costumes of interpreters at Colonial Williamsburg.

The purpose of focusing on specific case studies and featuring many individual voices allows the researcher to consider the meanings and functions of costume for its makers, wearers, and beholders, exploring the spectrum of identities represented through costume use (Shukla 2015a: 15). For instance, Shukla documented and photographed Halloween costumes in Bloomington, Indiana, in 2007 and again in 2009–12, observing the children's costumes worn for an afternoon of trick-or-treating in suburban neighborhoods and in the shopping mall, and adult costumes at evening college parties (Shukla 2015a: 6–7). The author further explains:

> I observed and documented the summer festivals and the carnivals of Salvador in 1996, 1997, 1998, talking to many members of the carnival groups (*bloco*) Filhos de Gandhy. In 2007 and 2009 I returned during the off-season for in-depth interviews with the leaders of the *bloco*. To deepen my understanding of the philosophy, aesthetics, and costumes of Filhos de Gandhy, I spoke with three principal members of the directorate . . . and the elected President of the

> group. . . . Having grown up in Brazil, my first language is Portuguese, and I spoke comfortably with the three men during the informative conversations. (Shukla 2015a: 20)

In-depth ethnography is a lengthy process which requires time, patience, and cost. Visiting the same location repeatedly allows a researcher to confirm and reconfirm their findings and data, and for every visit, one may find further evidence to be added to the research, and therefore, ethnography is never ending.

Hamilton and Hamilton's seminal work on the Thai Karen dress

Ethnography is the most popular method in researching non-Western, ethnic dress. Hamilton and Hamilton's seminal work, first published in the *Clothing and Textile Research Journal* in 1989, was about the dress that a group of hill tribe people known as the Karen wears. The authors clearly indicate the methods that they used and how their research was executed. Through observation and participant observation, their collected data includes original field notes, slides and photographs, and material artifacts. They explain their data-collection method as follows:

> The techniques of data collection can include, but are not necessarily limited to, structured and unstructured interviews, life histories, solicited and unsolicited conversations, involvement and experience with the daily and seasonal round of activity, unobtrusive observation of ongoing behavior and interaction, and observation on the production and use of material culture. (Hamilton and Hamilton 2008 [1989]: 142)

If you are only looking at a dress that the Karen women wore without any prior knowledge, you have no idea what the dress symbolizes and represents. By observing those who are wearing the dress, the way they interact, communicate, and socialize with other men, women, and children do we understand what the dress means to them and what they represent in their culture. Ethnography plays a crucial role in such a study.

Hamilton and Hamilton's ethnographic data was collected by one of the authors during nearly two years of fieldwork on-site in a Karen tribal village in northwest Thailand. Nearly two years of fieldwork was broken into two periods: (1) seventeen months and (2) six months ten years after the first study.

The author explains the initial preparation in and the techniques for getting access to the community he wishes to study as follows. Prior to the onset of fieldwork, the researcher spent five months in Bangkok in intensive study of the Thai language, cultivation of governmental sanctions for the study, and the evaluation of potential community sites for the study. Once the research was in the field, he lived for ten months in a Thai village 2 miles from the Karen village and commuted every day by bicycle. A Karen-Thai translator was hired until the Karen language was sufficiently mastered and the translator was no longer needed. Knowing their native language was a big advantage in conducting ethnography in a foreign culture where people do not speak English.

> At the end of the ten-month period, he had earned enough trust in the Karen village and propitiated the village spirits sufficiently that he was allowed to move into the Karen village and build a house there. Eventually he was ceremonially adopted as the son of the village head elder. (Hamilton and Hamilton 2008 [1989]: 143)

Ethnography is a time-consuming method, but research on ethnic dress requires such a methodological strategy. In order for us to study unknown and unfamiliar cultural objects, such as the Thai Karen dress, we must understand that this is about the only way to study it since there is hardly any existing written documents or literature on the topic in English.

Conclusion

Ethnography involves extensive fieldwork of various types including observation, participant observation, formal and informal interviewing, document collecting, filming and recording, among others. It is a process that attempts to describe and interpret social expressions between people and groups. We examine the context and nature of the interactions between them. The purpose of the descriptive research is to document exactly what happened. A collection of empirical data that generates complete descriptions of events, interactions, and activities leads logically and immediately into the development or application of categories and relationships that allow interpretation of that data. Why and how people dress in what situations can only be accurately explained through ethnographical research.

Guide to further reading

Craciun, Magdalena (2014), *Material Culture and Authenticity: Fake Branded Fashion in Europe*, London: Bloomsbury.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly, and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (1981), *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Krause, Elizabeth L. (2018), *Tight Knit: Global Families and the Social Life of Fashion*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McCracken, Angela B. (2014), *The Beauty Trade: Youth, Gender, and Fashion Globalization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moore, Madison (2018), *Fabulous: the Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Tarlo, Emma, and Annelies Moors (eds.) (2013), *Islamic Fashion and Anti-Fashion*, London: Bloomsbury.

4
SURVEY METHODS

OBJECTIVES

- To understand what a survey method is and what it consists of
- To learn how to create a questionnaire
- To learn how to conduct an interview
- To examine how to choose a research sampling, to create a focus group and case studies
- To recognize the importance of preparing graphs and tables using graphics software
- To distinguish structured interviews from semi-structured interviews

Almost everyone at least a couple of times in his or her lifetime must have answered surveys. Similar to ethnography discussed in Chapter 3, it is an obtrusive measure. Some of the answers in the survey method are converted into numbers and become quantitative, and therefore, the method has both quantitative and qualitative components. But in this chapter, I discuss the process before the statistical manipulation and after the statistical results are generated by professional statisticians, and I also cover some aspects of a survey method, such as how to formulate open-ended questions and closed-ended questions, to specify research population, to come up with a sampling population, and to create a focus group, among others. While surveys are often used by marketers and industry practitioners, academics also adopt the method.

What is a survey method?

A survey is a research method in which subjects respond to a series of statements or questions in a questionnaire or an interview. The survey is well suited to studying what cannot be studied directly by observation or participant observation discussed in Chapter 3, "Ethnography." The survey involves asking questions about opinions, beliefs, or behaviors, and this method is most frequently used by quantitative sociologists, economists, and marketers, although their research goals may differ.

For example, if we want to investigate whether there is a gender difference in terms of where men and women are more likely to buy clothes, we can take a survey and find that out. If a theory suggests that a person's social class determines one's taste in clothing/fashion, survey data can be collected to determine whether this might be true.

There are many data collection and measurement processes that are called surveys. They basically have the following characteristics (Fowler 2013):

(1) The purpose of the survey is to produce statistics, that is, quantitative or numerical description about some aspects of the study population.

(2) The primary way of collecting information is by asking people questions, and their answers constitute the data to be analyzed.

(3) Generally, information is collected about only a fraction of the population, that is, a sample, rather than from every member of the population.

A survey targets a population, such as single women with high income living in big cities. Sometimes every adult in the country is the survey population, but obviously, contacting a vast number of people is impossible so researchers usually study a sample, a much smaller number of subjects selected to represent the entire population, that is, people who are included in your research, so that they can give answers to your research questions (Fowler 2013; Rea and Parker 2014).

Survey results are eventually converted into quantitative data, which can be considered a separate area of expertise and can be handled by professional statisticians. This chapter does not go into the statistical manipulation of the survey data and is not about statistical methods. Therefore, those without a background in statistics should be able to follow everything covered in this chapter. By understanding the whole survey research process, a researcher can prepare basic reports that analyze simple trends, supervise survey data collection, or become a sophisticated user of the survey data collected by others, known as secondary data analysis, which is discussed in Chapter 7, "Other Methodologies."

Survey method is a very practical tool that can be used not only by researchers in academia and students but also by fashion industry professionals, such as marketers or merchandisers. For instance, consumer attitudes toward the latest styles in fashion, the reasons why they prefer some styles over others, or the extent of celebrities' impact on popular fashion can be measured and analyzed.

Both interviews and questionnaires have their own weaknesses and strengths. Some of the advantages of this method are that self-administered questionnaires are inexpensive and useful and may receive greater responses from subjects in personal interviews. But there are possibilities that questionnaires may not be returned, and personal interviews are costly in time and money (Rea and Parker 2014). Although not all surveys involve interviewing, it is common to hire an interviewer to ask questions and record answers. When interviewers are used, it is important to avoid having them influence the answers respondents give and at the same time to maximize the accuracy with which questions are answered. The interviewer's role and the role of the interviewee, rapport, and accessing difficult/sensitive materials and issues need to be taken into consideration in addition to various skills and techniques necessary for effective interviewing.

Recent studies using a survey method include Barry's work "(Re)Fashioning Masculinity: Social Identity and Context in Men's Hybrid Masculinities through Dress" (2018), which uses interviews to investigate their choice of wardrobe in expressing and performing their masculine identities. He studies three ways men enact "hybrid masculinities" by selecting, styling, and wearing clothes in their everyday lives. Similarly, Olajide (2018) conducted a large-scale quantitative study, "Social Influence and Consumer Preference for Fashion Clothing among Female Undergraduate in Nigeria," in which the author used a random sampling technique to select 1,175 female students among selected universities in Southwest, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was adopted for data collection while analyses of data were done through descriptive and inferential statistics.

Sampling

As discussed briefly in Chapter 2, "Research Process," before you begin your survey, you must specify your research population. You first select a population, the entire group of people to be studied. If a population is relatively small, all of its members can be approached and interviewed. If a population is very large, it would cost too much time and money to contact all of its members. In such a case, we need a sample, a relatively small number of people selected from a larger population. The sample must accurately represent the entire population from which it is drawn. Otherwise, the information obtained from the sample cannot be generated to the population. Failing to remember this may produce misleading conclusions.

If a sample is to be representative, all members of the population must have the same chance of being selected for the sample. Selection, in effect, must be random, which is why a representative sample is often called a random sample. A crude way to select a random sample is to throw the names of all members of a population into a hat, mix them up, and then pull out as many names as needed for a sample. This method may be too cumbersome to use if the population is very large. There are more sophisticated and convenient techniques for drawing random samples from large populations. The methods most commonly used are systematic sampling and stratified sampling. Systematic sampling is the process of drawing a random sample systematically rather than haphazardly. It involves using a system, such as selecting every tenth or hundredth person in the population. In contrast, stratified sampling is used when the population can be divided into various strata or categories, such as males and females. To draw a stratified sample, we have to know what percentage of the population falls into each of the categories used and then select a random sample in which each category is represented in exactly the same proportion as it is in the population. Thus it is the process of drawing a random sample in which various categories of people are represented in proportions equal to their presence in the population (Thompson 2012).

Case studies

Case-study methods involve systematically gathering information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to allow the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg 2016). The case study is not actually a data-gathering technique but a methodological approach that incorporates a number of data-gathering measures. The approach of case studies ranges significantly from general field studies to the interview of a single individual or group. They may focus on an individual, a group, or an entire community and may also utilize a number of data-gathering technologies such as life histories, documents, oral histories, in-depth interviews, and participant observation.

The qualitative researcher uses the case-study approach as a guide to his or her research. Rich, detailed, and in-depth information characterizes the type of information gathered in a case study.

A case study is a many-sided investigation of a single social phenomenon, and it is usually seen as an instance of a broader phenomenon, as part of a larger set of parallel instances (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg 2016). It also allows the research to include the natural setting of the subject. Your case study might be a new emerging designer in London or a new Haute Couture house in Paris. You may also wish to study or analyze a series of case studies of related social phenomena.

By concentrating on a single phenomenon, individual, community, or institution, the research aims to uncover the manifest interaction of significant factors characteristic of this phenomenon, individual, community, or institution. But in addition, the researcher is able to capture various nuances, patterns, and more hidden elements that other research approaches might overlook. The case-study method tends to focus on holistic description and explanation, and any phenomenon can be studied by these methods.

Focus groups

Focus group refers to a research technique that explores group reaction to a particular topic. The members of a focus group need have no previous acquaintance with each other. It is defined as an interview style designed for small groups. Using this approach, researchers strive to learn through discussion about conscious, semi conscious, and unconscious psychological and sociocultural characteristics and processes among various groups. Focus group interviews are either guided or unguided discussions addressing a particular topic of interest or relevance to the group and the researcher (Barbour 2018). A typical focus group consists of a small number of participants. The informal group discussion atmosphere of the focus group interview structure is intended to encourage subjects to speak freely and completely about behaviors, attitudes, and opinions that they may have.

You may sometimes wish to conduct a group interview, for example, an interview with several members of a youth subculture at one time. As one member of a group responds, other members may be reminded of similar experiences or they may wish to add details that they consider important.

For example, you want to investigate why some people are obsessed about or even worship one particular designer brand. Then you want to select a focus group who only wears specific brands. You will probably find a great deal of commonalities and similarities in their shopping behavior, beliefs, and attitudes toward a particular brand.

When focus groups are administered properly and successfully, they are extremely dynamic. Interactions among and between focus group members stimulate discussions in which one participant reacts to comments made by another. It is important to have a facilitator or a moderator who is experienced in interviewing focus groups. The moderator may use a single standard set of questions, asking each one in turn, which may lead into active discussions. In that way, you may be able to obtain difficult-to-gather information. This method has become an integral part of data-collection technology among qualitative researchers.

Questionnaires

Survey questionnaires are widely used in social sciences, such as sociology and economics and also by diverse interest groups. The choice of language can influence the outcome of the questionnaire survey.

Beyond selecting subjects, the survey must have a specific plan for asking questions and recording answers. The most common way to do this is to give subjects a self-administered questionnaire with a series of written statements or questions. The researchers let subjects choose possible responses to each item, as in multiple-choice questions or closed-ended questions in which answers are either yes/no or one word/phrase. By creating a survey instrument, the social science researcher may not be creating new knowledge that will become part of ordinary usage. By requiring a respondent to answer the survey instrument with its limited choices, the respondent may have to select a choice that is not precisely his or her opinion. Your research question needs to be very clear prior to making a questionnaire. Each item/question in a questionnaire should relate to a specific objective of your research. Unless your items/questions are well crafted and formulated, you will not be able to achieve your research objectives (Thompson 2012).

A researcher may occasionally want subjects to respond freely, to permit all opinions to be included. In that case, open-ended questions are created. Many researchers prefer open-ended questionnaires. The researcher asks additional questions depending upon the subject's responses to an initial question. Such data are more difficult to organize and analyze but this technique is often a rich source of additional qualitative insight into the matter being studied.

Open-ended questions may be appropriate when exploring a topic that is new to the researcher. If there was no literature or very little literature on the topic, you can conduct a pilot study in which people are asked open-ended questions. Their responses in the pilot study[1] can be used as the basis for writing items with choices in the main study. When considering the use of open-ended questions, keep in mind that many respondents are often turned off if they think that they have to write a well-crafted essay. It becomes too much like a test and can even be time-consuming. You may want to ask them to jot down some ideas or points. If you need to ask many open-ended questions that require extensive responses, you should consider using face-to-face interviews instead of a questionnaire so that your respondents do not need to write anything.

Writing items to collect demographic information and to measure attitudes

Demographic items/questions are often included in questionnaires. These request information on background characteristics, such as sex, age, race, ethnicity, level of education, income, religion, and so on. Sometimes the information is needed in order to fulfill a research objective. These questions should be asked sparingly. You do not need to ask anything that is unrelated to your research objective. Asking a large number of demographic questions will make your questionnaire longer, and long questionnaires often get a lower response rate than short ones. Also, the more demographic questions you ask, the more likely it is that respondents may view the questionnaire as being intrusive into their privacy. Therefore, try to keep the demographic questions as short as possible. You may be able to reduce the need to collect demographic information by using information that is already available to you. For example, if you are distributing questionnaires only to high school seniors, most likely they are seventeen or eighteen years old so it is unnecessary to ask their age.

Questionnaires can be used to measure attitudes. An attitude is a general predisposition toward groups of people, organizations, and institutions, among others. When you measure attitudes, you ask questions about feelings, actions, and potential actions in the future (Fowler 2013). For example, we can measure people's attitude toward the latest trends, such as boys wearing pink or other traditionally female colors. To measure this, we can write items that ask respondents how they feel about shopping pink clothes or what they think about their fathers, husbands, boyfriends, or male partners wearing pink. Is it appropriate or inappropriate? Is it socially acceptable or unacceptable?

In the 1930s, Rensis Likert[2] advocated the use of items that ask respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements. This is an attitudinal scale. To write a Likert-type item, write a simple declarative statement and follow it with choices that ask for the respondents' level of agreement, such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Use "Don't know" in Likert-type items sparingly since you would rather avoid answers that provide no specific answers, and it does not give you any information to analyze.

Preparing statistical tables and graphs

The process of making questionnaires is qualitative, but the results of the questionnaires, that is, closed-ended questions, are converted into numbers and made into statistical data. Those data can be presented as tables and graphs so that an analysis can be made (answers to open-ended questions remain qualitative). If the questionnaire is not complex, you can probably do the calculations yourself. Assuming that the results are done by statisticians, you have the results in your hand, and you can create statistical tables and figures. If you are reporting separately on each questionnaire item, the first step in the analysis is to determine how many respondents marked each choice. The letter "f" for frequency of response or "N" or "n" is used.

Example:

Age	Number of respondents	%
20–25	90	45
26–29	50	25
30–35	40	20
36 and above	20	10
	N = 200	100

For attitude scales, you score each item and sum the scores on the items to get a total score for each respondent. The total score indicates the degree to which a respondent has a positive attitude toward the object of the scale. When analyzing the results using such a scale, the first step in the analysis is to determine how many respondents earned each total score and to organize the data into a table.

Calculate percentages and arrange them in a table with the frequencies: a percentage is calculated by dividing the part by the whole and multiplying by 100. A major advantage of percentages over frequencies is that they make the results comparable across two or more groups of unequal size. A common misconception among beginning researchers is that all groups of respondents must be equal in order to make legitimate comparisons of the groups.

Example:
Q: How do salespeople in upscale department stores in New York treat you? (*N* = 200)

Rating	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
N	14	35	98	32	21
%	7	17.5	49	16	10.5

For nominal data, consider constructing a bar graph. Nominal data are measures of identity, and this separates results into two or more distinctive features; nominal scales label or name individual or groups of things into categories (Few 2012; Flynn and Foster 2009). If you ask respondents to name, for example, their gender, religion, college major, these become nominal data. For example, values can be given to race/ethnicity, such as 1 = white, 2 = Hispanic, 3 = American Indian, 4 = black, 5 = Asian, and 6 = Other. However, nominal data does not lend itself to being translated into a set of sequenced numerical scores, and the usual method of analysis for nominal data is to compute percentage. These may be presented in a table, bar graph (vertical or horizontal), or pie chart. Each table and figure should be given a number and a title called a caption. A polygon consists of connected dots if distributions of scores are to be compared. Dashed lines are used at both ends to make it look like it is resting on the base (Figures 4.1, 4.2, & 4.3).

Which types of tables and figures you use to present a single set of scores is a matter of personal preference.[3] When presenting sets of scores for two or three groups, polygons are superior because they permit a drawing using different kinds of lines for each group on the same set of axes.

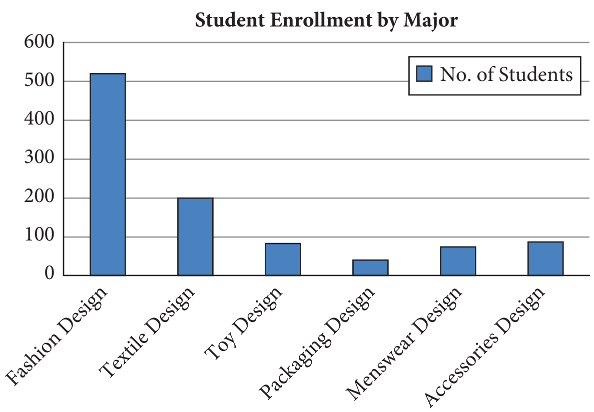

Figure 4.1 Vertical Bar Graph.

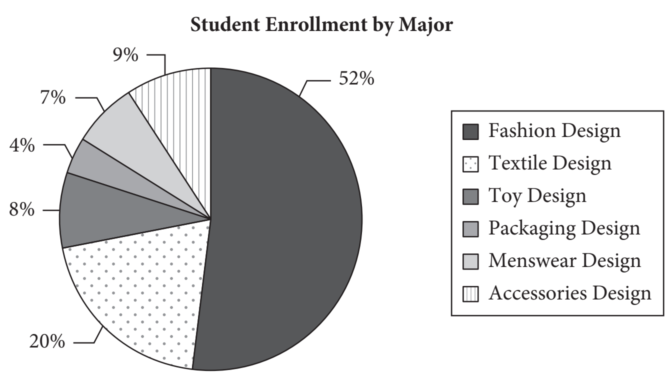

Figure 4.2 Pie Chart.

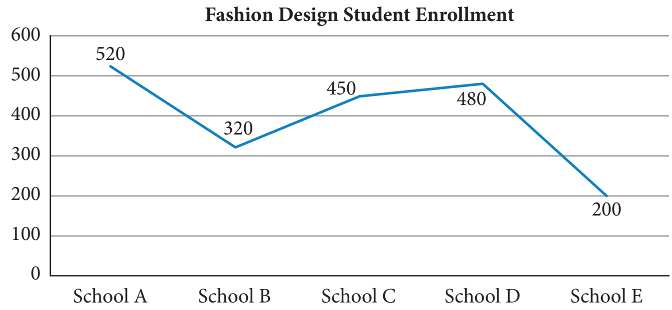

Figure 4.3 Polygon.

Secondary analysis

The term "secondary analysis" is often associated with survey data, and is defined as any further analysis of an existing dataset that presents interpretations, conclusions, or knowledge additional to, or different from, those presented in the first report on the inquiry as a whole and its main results (Hakim 1982; Largan and Morris 2019). Sometimes, it is not necessary to gather new information because of the availability of data collected previously by someone else. Sometimes, it is simply impossible to conduct an interview, observation, or experiment because the people we want to study are no longer alive. Thus, researchers often turn to analysis of existing data, which may be in the form of secondary analysis or content analysis.

In secondary analysis, which is an unobtrusive method, the researcher searches for new knowledge in the data collected earlier by another researcher; the original researcher had gathered the data for a specific purpose, and the secondary analyst uses them for other purposes with their own unique research questions (Largan and Morris 2019). The data for secondary analysis are usually quantitative, presented in the form of numbers, percentages, and other statistics. But some of the existing information can be qualitative, in the form of words or ideas. Such information can be found in virtually all kinds of human communication, such as books, magazines, newspapers, movies, speeches, and letters, among others. To study human behavior from these materials, researchers often do content analysis, searching for specific words or ideas and then turning them into numbers. Analysis of existing data saves much time and money since the researcher is not collecting data but using existing data.

Interviews

Researchers must determine the nature of their investigation and the objectives of their research (Bordens and Abbott 2017). It provides a starting point and helps the researcher develop a schedule of questions for interviews. Unlike a questionnaire, an interviewee is not required to write anything. He or she simply responds to your questions. In an interview, a researcher personally asks subjects a series of questions, thereby solving one problem common to the questionnaire method, that is, the failure of some subjects to return the questionnaire to the researcher. Another difference is that interviews give participants freedom to respond as they wish. Researchers often ask follow-up questions to clarify an answer or to probe a bit more deeply.

Interviewing may be defined as a conversation with the purpose of gathering specific information about a topic one is studying. While it may seem to be a very simple method, it is not as easy as one may think. The purpose should be clearly spelled out, and the questions need to be formulated in such a way that you get the information and answers you are looking for. Interviewing usually involves a face-to-face interaction. This type of interview is more formal rather than informal. It takes place in a structured setting rather than a natural setting. There are some differences between interviews as part of the survey and interviews in an ethnographical study.

The interview is an effective method of collecting information for certain types of research questions and for addressing certain types of assumptions. There are two types of interviews, the choice depends on what the research topic is and how large the sample size is (Brinkmann and Kvale 2014):

(1) Structured Interviews

More formally structured

No deviations from question order

Wording of each question asked exactly as written

No adjusting of level of language

No clarifications or answering of questions about the interview

No additional questions may be added

Similar in format to a pencil-and-paper survey

Researchers using this technique have fairly solid ideas about the things they want to find out during the interview. They assume that the questions scheduled in their interview instrument are sufficiently comprehensive to elicit from subjects all information relevant to the study. All respondents are asked the same questions. Even if the subjects mention something that may interest you and be beneficial to your research, you cannot alter the questions you have provided them. The first step in increasing interviewer consistency is to give them standardized questions. Interviewers need to be trained in how to administer a survey so as to avoid introducing important biases in the answers obtained.

(2) Semi-structured Interviews

More or less structured

Questions may be reordered during the interview

Wording of questions flexible

Level of language may be adjusted

Interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications

Interviewer may add or delete questions for each interviewee

In semi-structured interviews, some questions are fixed while others are not fixed and may be followed up with additional questions. In an unstructured interview, open-ended questions are asked and respondents are allowed to answer freely, in their own words, and there are hardly any questions that are prepared beforehand.

Crane's focus group study on fashion magazine readers

Crane introduces feminist and postmodern feminist views on fashion. Fashion has been viewed as hegemonic by encouraging women to be dissatisfied with their appearance and to make regular changes in their clothing in order to conform to changing definitions of style. Crane uses women's responses in focus groups to representations of gender in fashion photographs and clothing advertisements to explore whether their perceptions of themselves correspond to the ways women are represented in these images (2000: 204). Before conducting her study, she raises a number of research questions as follows:

(1) Do these women see themselves as being able to project identities offered by the fashion press, or do they seek clothing that corresponds to their own conception of their identities?

(2) How do they interpret complex visual messages that represent a highly conflicted dominant culture in which female identity is subject to continual negotiations?

The goal of her study is to examine responses to representations of gender in fashion photographs and clothing advertisements among young and middle-aged women, representing diverse ethnicities and nationalities. Photographs that exemplify different aspects of hegemony as it has been conceptualized in fashion magazines were selected in the study:

(a) Hegemonic femininity: sexuality/pornography

(b) Hegemonic poses as interpreted by Goffman (1959): ritualization of subordination and licensed withdrawal

(c) Violations of traditional norms of feminine demeanor (traditional hegemonic femininity): frontal gaze and eye contact, nudity and androgyny and gender ambiguity, as well as subjects who conformed to these norms

Eighteen of these photographs were chosen from the February, March, and September 1997 issues of *Vogue*, of which a subset of six to nine photographs was shown to members of each focus group. The photographs included fashion editorial photos and clothing advertisements. First, before showing members of focus groups any of these photographs, they were asked to complete a short questionnaire that indicates their background, their level of interest in fashion, and the ways they follow fashion. They were asked several questions designed to elicit their perceptions of these photographs and the extent to which they were able to identify with the models in the photographs (see Crane 2000: 256–57)

Their responses were analyzed according to the following questions: Did these women accept the “authority” of fashion as exemplified by the fashion press? How did they respond to the different social agendas that were represented in the photographs? Did age, race, and ethnicity affect women’s responses to the photographs? Were participants able to detect the presence of gender and racial stereotypes?[4]

The next step was the focus group interview. During the interview, they were asked to respond to clothing advertisements and editorial photos taken from recent issues of *Vogue* magazine. Participants in the focus groups were shown a series of six to nine photographs. The following questions were asked about each photograph:

- What aspects of this photograph do you like?
- What aspects of this photograph do you not like?
- What adjectives would you use to describe the image of the woman (women) in this photograph?
- Whose point of view is this photograph intended to represent?
  - ___ A man’s point of view
  - ___ A woman’s point of view
- Does it represent your point of view?

- Whose point of view does this photograph actually represent?
  - ___ The fashion editor's point of view
  - ___ The fashion designer's point of view
  - ___ The advertising account executive's point of view
  - ___ The photographer's point of view
- Would you like to look like this woman (women) on certain occasions? Why? Or Why not?
- What meanings does the clothing in the photograph convey?
  - ___ Masculinity
  - ___ Femininity
  - ___ Androgyny
  - ___ Sexuality
  - ___ Professionalism
  - ___ Other
- Would the clothes in the photograph influence in some way how you dress? If Yes: How? If No: Why not? (Crane 2000: 255).

Ting, Goh, and Mohd's study on Malaysian consumers' luxury purchase using Likert scale

Ting, Goh, and Mohd (2018) investigated the factors that influence Malaysian consumers' decision to purchase luxury fashion good using a structured questionnaire which was divided into several attitudinal questions, such as the social-adjustive function of attitude, the hedonic function of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (2018: 316–18). In creating a questionnaire, it is imperative that researchers know exactly what they are trying to find out in the research. Otherwise, questions may result in irrelevant answers that are not useful in the research. Using a face-to-face survey interview method that took place from May 2018 until June 2018, a total of 318 questionnaires were collected from local universities in Malaysia using a structured questionnaire but only 279 completed questionnaires were valid and usable. Five-points Likert scale, from 1 = strong disagree to 5 = strongly agree, were used for the measurement. Table 1 shows the gender, age, and average monthly household income combinations for a selected sample of respondents. The results of the data were analyzed using specialized mathematical methods, such as structural equation modeling with partial least squares technique. As the authors point out that the research population was limited to students above the age of twenty-one who live in Penang, Malaysia,

Table 1 Profile Respondents

Criteria	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	103	36.9
	Female	176	63.1
Age	21–30	205	73.5
	31–40	49	17.6
	41–50	17	6.1
	51–60	6	2.2
	Above 61	2	0.7
Average Monthly Household Income	Below *RM 2,000	78	26.5
	RM 2,001–3,000	48	17.2
	RM 3,001–4,000	50	17.9
	RM 4,001–5,000	50	17.9
	RM 5,001–6,000	18	6.5
	Above RM 6,001	39	14.0

*RM=Malaysian Ringgit
Ting, Goh, and Mohd (2018: 319–20)

the research does not reflect the whole population of Malaysia, and the findings cannot be generalized for all consumers in the country. But it is a sampling population of a similar study in the future. This study shows how a survey method that is initially qualitative becomes quantitative since the answers are converted into numeric.

The questions in the structured questionnaire are as follows.

Social-Adjustive Function of Attitude

It is important for my friends to know the subtle luxury fashion goods I possess.

Subtle luxury fashion goods are a symbol of gaining social acceptance.

Subtle luxury fashion goods help me in fitting into important social situations.

I like friends and family members to be seen with my subtle luxury fashion goods.

My subtle luxury fashion goods indicate to others the kind of person I am.

Value-Expressive Function of Attitude

Subtle luxury fashion goods reflect the kind of person I see myself to be.

Subtle luxury fashion goods ascertain my self-identity.

Subtle luxury fashion goods make me feel good about myself.

Subtle luxury fashion goods are an instrument of my self-expression.

Subtle luxury fashion goods play a critical role in defining my self-concept.

Subtle luxury fashion goods help me to establish the kind of person I see myself to be.

Hedonic Function of Attitude

Subtle luxury fashion goods offer the characteristic of fun to me.

Subtle luxury fashion goods offer the characteristic of exciting to me.

Subtle luxury fashion goods offer the characteristic of delightful to me.

Subtle luxury fashion goods offer the characteristic of thrilling to me.

Subtle luxury fashion goods offer the characteristic of enjoyable to me.

Utilitarian Function of Attitude

Subtle luxury fashion goods are easy to match with other products.

Subtle luxury fashion goods are easy to exchange.

Subtle luxury fashion goods are easy to maintain.

Subtle luxury fashion goods are easy to clean.

Subjective Norm

When buying luxury clothes, I usually buy a subtle luxury fashion brand, since others will approve.

If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same subtle luxury fashion goods that they buy.

I often identify with other people by purchasing the same subtle luxury fashion goods they purchase.

I would love to shop for subtle luxury fashion goods because others think I should do it.

Perceived Behavioral Control

> I feel confident about choosing subtle luxury fashion goods when I do search for luxury products

> (Ting, Goh, and Mohd 2018: 321).

It is important for researchers to come up with appropriate questions to measure people's complex attitudes since they are not easy to quantify.

Conclusion

There are data that can only be gathered through administering questionnaires and conducting formal or informal interviews. We must understand how to plan questionnaire research and how to write questionnaire items, assemble and administer them, analyze them, and write up reports and findings. Researchers also must be aware of choosing the right research population and a representative of that population. The results that are generated quantitatively can be represented as figures and graphs.

Guide to further reading

Brinkmann, Svend, and Steinar Kvale (2014), *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, London, UK: Sage.

Gokariksel, Banu, and Anna Secor (2012), "Even I was tempted: The Moral Ambivalence and Ethical Practice of Veiling-Fashion in Turkey," in *the Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 102 (4), pp. 847–62.

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5
SEMIOTICS/SEMIOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

- To trace the development of semiotics/semiology
- To explore Ferdinand de Saussure's semiology and later development
- To understand Roland Barthes's contribution to fashion/dress studies
- To learn Lehmann's semiotic study of Alfred Hitchcock's movie
- To recognize Barnard's interpretation of semiotic analysis of fashion/dress
- To examine the relationship between semiology and post-structuralism

Many scholars shy away from Roland Barthes's semiotics or semiology[1] because of its complex application of fashion in his famous book *The Fashion System* (1990). In this chapter, I first explain how the discipline of semiology started, developed, and spread and introduce some contemporary studies on fashion/dress that use a semiotic analysis in their empirical research.

Semiotics, or semiology, is the science of signs and is any system of signification. Semiotics derives from the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), a Swiss linguist, who stresses that signs are arbitrary and derive their meanings only from oppositions to other arbitrary signs used in a system. His approach was extended by the French literary theorist Roland Barthes, who argues that any item of culture, including clothing and fashion, can become signs and communicate meanings. Semiotics is used in fashion/dress studies as an analytical tool in treating fashion/dress as a text and in decoding the meaning of every clothing item. It does not have to be tangible clothes but written texts.

There are scholars who apply a semiotic analysis to fashion and dress. In order for us to understand it, we need to trace the development of the discipline and refer to Saussure who is known as the father of semiology. Barthes's work on fashion/dress, which emerged primarily out of Saussure's work, is explored so that we understand how material objects, such as clothing items, create meanings and how these meanings are reproduced. Lehmann (2000), Lurie (2000 [1981]), and Barnard (1996) refer to a semiotic study in less complex ways to discuss fashion and dress. Semiotics are also used to decode and analyze fashion advertisements and photographs.

Saussure's theory of signs

We must understand Saussure's theory of signs before we begin to talk about a semiotic analysis of clothing and fashion made by various scholars. Saussure is an early twentieth-century linguist. Before Saussure, linguistics concentrated on the way languages have developed, the search for the common ancestor, the emergence of modern languages, the pronunciation of words, and the etymology of words, among other things. However, Saussure had a very different perspective. Influenced by Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist and structuralist, he pointed out that language is not an individual but a collective representation with its own system of rules and regulations.

Language as a formal system is a set of relationships among different words and parts of speech. It has a force imposed by society, and there are correct and incorrect ways of speaking, which are not determined by the individual. The language as a system has a structure with its own rules, such as the order of words in a sentence, grammar, and how words are uttered, among other things. The underlying structure imposed by society should be the topic of linguistic analysis, according to Saussure (1966 [1916]).

Geertz argued that his analysis of the concept of culture is a semiotic one and the whole semiotic approach to culture is to aid researchers in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can converse with them (Geertz 1973: 24), and he insisted that the analysis of culture is not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (Geertz 1973: 5). This is in opposition to Saussure's attempt to make semiotics an autonomous science (Saussure 1966 [1916]). Saussure proposed semiology, the general science of signs, although it remained just an idea until the 1960s. Then other scholars such as anthropologists and literary critics sought to profit from its methodological insights and found themselves developing the semiological science that Saussure had postulated at the turn of the century.

Langue and Parole, and the two levels of the sign system

Saussure made an important distinction between *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* is the linguistic system, that is, what one learns when one learns a language, and *parole* is speech that consists of the countless spoken and written utterances of a language, that is, an organized structure of signs whose meaning depended on their differences from one another. Semiology attempts to describe the underlying system of rules and distinctions that makes possible signifying events, and this discipline is based on the premise that as long as human actions and objects have meaning, there must be a system of distinctions and conventions that generate the meaning consciously or unconsciously. Saussure's theoretical contribution lies in his systematic elaboration of a general science of signs. He emphasizes that the signs are essentially arbitrary since the meanings are socially constructed, and therefore, it enables signs to be combined in so many ways to convey so many different meanings since they are flexible.

Furthermore, according to Saussure, there are two levels to the sign, the signifier and the signified, and both of them together create the sign. But the relationship between the signifier and the signified is also arbitrary, according to Saussure (1966 [1916]). The signifier can be a word, a sound, or an image, but in case of fashion/dress studies, we often apply the sign system to objects and images. The signified is not a real tangible object, but it is something that the signifier refers to. The signified can vary between individuals or context while the signifier is more stable. The signified is the concept, the meaning of the thing indicated by the signifier. The signifier without the signified has no meaning whatsoever, and it simply exists. The signified cannot exist without the signifier either. Therefore, the sign needs two levels. Our social life is filled with the signs that have these two levels.

Barthes's contribution to fashion and dress studies

Barthes, following Saussure and other modern linguists, focused on how the language structure works, and he applies Saussure's semiology[2] to mundane objects of everyday life, such as wrestling, wine, or film, and argues that these objects could become signs and communicate meanings. Fashion can convey a message about the social status or the occupation of its owner or about their worldviews and beliefs, among other things. So can any item of culture, ranging from styles of dress or food to popular entertainment. Like Saussure, he also explains the arbitrary nature of the signs.

For example, Barthes explains that food can be studied as a sign system as well. There is the food system of culture, that is, *parole*, that consists of all the events of eating while *langue* is the system of rules underlying these events. These rules determine what is edible, which dish goes with what or contrasts with other dishes, and each dish is combined to form a course meal. A restaurant menu represents a sample of a society's food grammar in which there are conventions to the ordering of items, starting with a soup or an appetizer, then a main dish, and lastly a dessert. If the dessert comes before the soup, that would be against the conventions and also considered "ungrammatical" in linguistic terms. Similarly, the contrasts between dishes within a class, such as the main course and the dessert, carry meaning. Therefore, the job of a semiologist like Barthes is to reconstruct the system of distinctions and conventions that enable a group of phenomena to have the meaning they do for members of a culture.

Barthes's *Mythologies* (1972) is a compilation of a series of articles he wrote monthly in a magazine called *Les Lettres Nouvelles* between 1953 and 1956, and it is one of his most influential writings. He discovered that various linguistic terms could give insight to a new perspective on cultural phenomena, and he embraced the possibility of studying all human activity as a series of languages. Saussure's ideas of the signifiers and the signifieds display the ideological contents of various activities. He discussed different aspects of mass culture and made an attempt to analyze the social stereotypes that often are passed off as natural and taken-for-granted things that no one ever questions. His attempt was "to track down, in the decorative display of what-goes-without-saying, the ideological abuse which, in my view, is hidden there" (1972: 11).

What does he mean by "myth"? Myth for Barthes means a delusion to be exposed. There is always the second order, which is the mythical meaning that Barthes wants to investigate and expose. Any objects and practices, even the most utilitarian, function in the same way and are endowed with second-order meaning by social usage. He is concerned with the image of fashion and dress. His focus is not the raw materials of garments or how they are made. He explores the second-order meanings attached to it by social convention. Beginning with myth as delusion, Barthes then later emphasizes that myth is a form of communication, a "language," a system of second-order meaning. Myth is a product of the interplay between direct and indirect meanings. *Mythologies* was a study of how meaning and value occur and are created in everyday life. The signs of everyday life were the mark of ideology and cultural formation, according to Barthes (1972). Language is not a natural phenomenon but is a set of conventional signs.

In *The Fashion System* (1990), Barthes conducted a large, semiological study on fashion/dress. Instead of giving an account of the clothes advertised in the French publications *Le Jardin des Modes*, *Elle*, *l'Echo de la Mode*, and *Vogue* during a six-month period in the late 1950s, he concentrated exclusively on the captions and the language used by the editors and fashion writers. Language is a system of signs, and a sign unites an image that may be the sound of a spoken word or the way it is written. Fashion is a system that creates meaning by having different shapes and silhouettes of garments with various details and by connecting different pieces of garments together. But he is not looking at the actual clothes but at the descriptions about the clothes. Barthes (1990: 10) writes: “It’s meaning that sells clothes.” To describe this system, Barthes reads descriptions and captions on the assumption that the captions represent the aspects of the clothes that make them fashionable and thus enable him to identify the distinctions at work in their sign system. Barthes insisted that it is not the objects that are the subject of analysis but rather the discourse or text that are about the objects. He explains that clothes are not themselves immediately signs but, rather, they become subject to the signs of the world of fashion; that is to say that the cultural world of talking and writing about clothes gives the clothes themselves a social meaning (Barthes 1990). How the clothes are described/written in words determines whether they are going to be treated as fashion or not.

Jobling (2016) applies Barthes’s theory of semiotics as follows:

> We accept a white cotton T-shirt as a cultural sign whose general meaning is understated cool or coolness. And yet this somewhat straightforward meaning is altered as soon as something about the material is changed, say a cotton T-shirt that is blue rather than white. While in the hands of Katehrine Hamnett the sign “cool garment” is transformed into an ideological sign of political rebellion when the cotton is emblazoned with slogans in uppercase type like “58% DON’T WANT PERSHING” and “VOTE TACTICALLY.” Or, as worn by James Dean and Marlon Brando, the cool T-shirt may also signify the sexual rebelliousness of youth. (Jobling 2016: 135; emphasis in original)

A white cotton T-shirt is a white cotton T-shirt from anyone’s viewpoint, and we all picture more or less the same image of that object. But once we see “blue” instead of “white” in the captions, or put on a specific person/celebrity, the T-shirt begins to carry different social and ideological meanings. Semiology is based on the principle that everything, every object or every item of clothing, is a text. And the text does not have a universal or fixed meaning and cannot be decoded in the same way. Interpretations are fluid.

Many scholars may not explicitly refer to Saussure or Barthes; they conduct a semiotic analysis of a particular type dress and explore how the meaning may or may not have changed over time. According to Rose (2005), one of the most commonly applied models for linking the interpretation of modern clothing and texts is semiotics, drawn from linguistics theory. As explained earlier, this theory relies on a separation between the meaning of “signified” and its physical embodiment, the “signifier.” However, the problem of semiotic analysis has been summarized by Miller as “subordinating the object qualities of things to their world-like qualities” (1997: 95) and also “ignoring the ways that textiles create meaning through their embodiment of financial, aesthetic and haptic values” (Miller 1997: 95).

Miller instead sees objects as "type-tokens . . . both an individual form and an example of a larger category to which it must be related" (1997: 127).

Hardy and Corone's study on the changing semiotics of the surgical dress

Hardy and Corones (2016) trace the social history of and shed light on clothing worn by male surgeons while performing operations. Surgeons used to wear "gentlemanly" dark-colored frock coats and later on began to wear the surgical garb of white coats, and this transformation occurred gradually over the period from 1860 to 1910. The authors question how and why such a change occurs, and to answer these questions, the semiotics of dress is taken into consideration (2016: 28). Clothing is always an indicator of significant changes in society, and the appearance of the white coats parallels with the scientific discovery of bacteriology.

Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, surgeons were treated like artisans and wore dark-colored frock coats often made out of heavy cloth, and this was a symbol of respectability and reliability since the darker colors reflected the somber nature of their work and also associated with the probability of death. The uncleanliness of their black frock coats could even be a badge of honor since it was a visible proof that he had done a difficult surgery.

The last twenty years of the nineteenth century is the period of the changeover in the medical dress. Surgeons were shifting from artisans to qualified positions with a standardized medical degree. In addition, this was when "germs" were newly discovered, and surgeons were responsible in maintaining absolute cleanliness on the surgical tables to reduce the risk of post-operative infection on patients. White coats literally and figuratively symbolized hygiene and cleanliness which were essential to aseptic surgery.

By 1889, the white coat was prominent in the medical field as scientific bacteriological research was being carried out in the labs. The authors conclude that "modern surgery was clean because it was aseptic. Modern surgery was white. More broadly still, white became emblematic of modernity in general. The clean white coat, and the clean environment, became a pure modernity" (2016: 47).

This study is based on various pictures and photographs of the 1880s and 1890s, such as famous paintings by two portraits of American surgeons by Thomas Eakins, an American painter: *The Gross Clinic* is a portrait of Dr. Samuel D. Gross in a black frock coat standing by the surgical table painted in 1875, and *The Agnew Clinic* depicts Dr. David H. Agnew performing surgery in a medical amphitheater in a white coat in 1889. Hardy and Corones also refer to earlier medical articles in scholarly journals, surgical manuals, and historical writings in 1867 and 1909 on medicine and antiseptic surgery by Joseph Lister, a British surgeon.

Lehmann's semiotic study on Alfred Hitchcock's movie

Lehmann (2000) makes a semiotic analysis of a movie by Alfred Hitchcock. His methodological approach is the combination of cinema and semiotics and analyzes an espionage thriller film called *North by Northwest* directed by Hitchcock for release in July 1959. He argues that the film and the role played by Cary Grant are explained best by looking at appearances. Lehmann selects the dozen scenes in which the suit explicitly works as a signifier on screen or is topical for the dialogue, thus carrying a significance that considerably exceeds its function within the storyline (2000: 468).

He insists (2000: 468): "The sartorial details observed in the following are not to be taken as metaphors for behavioral patterns, nor are they meant to be symbolic for the character's psyche. They should be read first as visual signifiers within a semiotic analysis." He explains that the suit as the sartorial surface functions as a signifier in an old-fashioned narrative that tells of the hero's trials and tribulations, and it shows him being pursued, ridiculed, and assaulted until he liberates himself from normative constraints to gain first freedom of action, and then love and respect as an individual (2000: 469–70). He reviews scene by scene explaining the characters in the movie wearing suits and makes a semiotic analysis of the visual interpretations of the suits as follows in one of the scenes in the movie:

> In the ensuing struggle, Thornhill is forced on the sofa and plied with Bourbon; the suit is seriously assaulted and soiled for the first time. Indeed, here one begins to read "suit" exclusively as a signifier and the character as the signified: the hero is defined through his surface and the suit in the course of the film's narrative concentrates on the garment, whose light gray wool absurdly distinguishes the fugitive in his quest. . . . The fact that the cloth and shape of the suit show remarkable endurance and make a complete recovery from the pursuits and assaults in the preceding scenes, must be read as Hitchcock's effort to present the hero as a stable and identifiable commodity to the audience. (Lehmann 2000: 472–73)

The suit is the parole, using Saussure's and Barthes's term, and it has a visual cinematic narrative. A simple object such as a male suit speaks volumes. In films, that is where traditional and stereotypical images and roles are produced and reproduced unless the producers and directors intentionally make an attempt to create new meanings to objects.

Barnard's focus on semiotics in social interaction

Semiotics or semiology is known as esoteric and complex, but some fashion/dress scholars dissect it to a level that is understandable to students. As Saussure explained, the fundamental idea in semiology is that there are the two levels, the signifier and the signified, which are two separate concepts.

Barnard explains (1996: 29) that the reading of semiotics occurs within social interactions, and we are communicating via signs and symbols that constitute the two levels mentioned above. However, unlike the language, the structured system of meanings is not that fixed, absolute, or definite. As Saussure and Barthes insist, they are arbitrary. Barnard explains: "Communication makes an individual into a member of a community; communication as 'social interaction through messages' constitutes an individual as a member of a group" (1996: 29).

Barnard further explores the sender and the received of the sign and says that

> the semiotic model also seems more plausible on the matter of how meanings are generated. . . . It is no longer the case that either the designer or the wearer or the spectator of the garment is the source of the intentions that provide the meanings; on the semiotic model, meanings are the result of negotiation between these roles. (Barnard 1996: 30–31)

Meanings are constantly produced, exchanged, negotiated, renegotiated, and reproduced, and the meanings of the original garment are given numerous interpretations by numerous cultural producers, and the garment ends up with a set of meanings different from those with which it began (Barnard 1996: 31).

Like Barnard (1996), Eco also looks at social life as a sign system and writes:

> I am speaking through my clothes. If I am wearing a Mao suit, if I were without a tie, the ideological connotations of my speech would be changed. Obviously fashion codes are less articulate, more subject to historical fluctuations than linguistic codes are. But a code is no less a code for the fact that it is weaker than other stronger ones. Gentlemen button their jackets, shirts, and coats from left to right, ladies from right to left. Suppose I were speaking of semiotics, standing in front of you, buttoned from right to left: it would be very difficult for you to eliminate a subtle connotation of effeminacy, in spite of my beard. (Eco 2007: 144)

Such arbitrariness leads scholars to believe fashion/dress is ambivalent in nature since the signs are ambivalent. We need to explore further to what extent a semiotic analysis of fashion and clothes gives accurate meanings of these objects.

Semiotic analysis of advertising and photograph images

A semiotic analysis is used in commercial advertising and photographs as well so that they are able to convey their intended accurate and appropriate messages to the targeted consumers. Williamson (2010) conducted a semiotic analysis of advertisements in magazines. Advertisements give added values to commercial products by making them meaningful to potential consumers. The fashion industry where visual materials are crucial can make a good use of this methodological strategy.

Similarly, Stokes gives clear step-by-step explanations of a semiotic analysis of texts (2012):

- Select object of your analysis: If you are studying fashion magazines, your research subject included in your research question or hypothesis must correspond to the target readers of the magazine you select. If your research population is fashionable women in their forties, do not choose *Teen Vogue* as an analytical tool.
- Collect texts/visual materials for your analysis: How many or how much materials you need to collect depends on the depth of your research and on your research question. But if you are conducting a social scientific study, it is desirable to look at several visual materials and not just one so that you begin to see similarities and commonalities from the data you gather.
- Explain and analyze the materials: Examine the materials carefully and explain everything you see in the image, such as objects, colors, people's poses, and their outfits, among many other elements. Then you can begin to decode the meaning of each item in the image treating them as a sign. You can see the relationship between the visual image and the linguistic signs. Furthermore, explain the cultural knowledge and background and experience required to understand the implications of the image.
- Make generalizations and draw conclusions: As the decoded implications become a code, you can see whether this code is found in other materials. If it is found, it means that you are able to make generalizations

> about the meanings of the code and can even bring out a theory. In conclusion, you must explain if your analysis and interpretation support or negate your hypothesis (Stokes 2012: 73–75).

In addition, there are other studies on fashion advertising which adopts a semiotic analysis. Jobling (2014) examines the idea of the "peacock male" used in fashion promotion in UK. He uses archival materials, previous advertisement and looks at the production, dissemination and consumption of print, television and cinema publicity for menswear, such as Austin Reed suits and Levi-jeans, during the second half of the twentieth century after 1945. Menswear advertising reproduced and at times contradicted stereotypes but also produced ambiguities and uncertainties of masculinities. Similarly, Annamari Vänskä (2017) investigates children's portrayal in the advertisement and the images of innocence, class, and gender that are generated from the media since the 1970s. With case studies of advertising campaigns from international fashion brands such as Calvin Klein, Dior, Ralph Lauren and in-depth research into Italy's special edition of *Vogue* dedicated to childrenswear, Vogue Bambini, she examines the ways children's fashion is presented globally.

Semiotics, structuralism, and post-structuralism

Structuralism that appeared in the latter half of the twentieth century is one of the most popular approaches in investigating culture, society, and language. Both Saussure and Barthes are known as structuralists who study a specific area as a complex system of interrelated parts.

Barthes, who was an advocate of Saussure and structuralism, moves on from Saussure's views, and this is why he is often referred to as a poststructuralist since he went beyond Saussure's theory of signs. While Saussure explained that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, Barthes now says that it is better to describe this relationship as not arbitrary but "motivated," which implies that the relationship is not a natural one but is still inseparable from "arbitrary." Placing linguistic or nonlinguistic signs in their social contexts explains how and why they work (Barthes 1972).

In this way Barthes's thinking links him with other poststructuralists, especially Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), a French philosopher known as the father of post-modernism and deconstructionism. Barthes also suggests "the death of the author," which creates the freedom of the reader. In this respect, he recognizes that there is no final authority for deciding the meaning of a text, just as there is no final meaning attached to a sign because it is constantly changing according to its context. Therefore, post-structuralism is known as the theoretical formulation of postmodern conditions that reject boundaries between different categories.

Rocamora and Smelik edited a theoretically stimulating book titled *Thinking Through Fashion* (2016) which consists of essays that "grasp the relevance of social and cultural theory to the field of fashion, dress, and material culture" (Rocamora and Smelik 2016: 2). The writers introduce key theorists in structuralism and post-structuralism in the context of fashion, such as Karl Marx (Sullivan 2018: 28–45), Roland Barthes (Jobling 2016: 132–48), Gilles Deleuze (Smelik 2018: 165–83), Jean Baudrillard (Tseëlon 2018: 215–32), and Jacques Derrida (Gill 2018: 251–68). This book raises fashion and dress studies to another intellectual level and definitely provides scholars and advanced graduate students the opportunity to "think through fashion more deeply and critically" (2016: 3).

Conclusion

Saussure was the first to suggest an idea and a new discipline called "semiology," a study of signs that has no actual content. There is no natural connection between the signifier and the signified that make up the sign, but once established, that very system or configuration of signs exists as a distinctive entity that can be studied within a specific context. The Saussurean model is founded on a premise of the linguistic sign's arbitrary nature that bears directly on the development of Barthes's own semiology. Contemporary scholars in fashion/dress studies also adopt the method to investigate the second order or the signified of an object, such as clothes, or to understand how clothes become fashion through written texts.

Guide to further reading

Berger, Arthur Asa (2014), *Signs in Contemporary Culture: An Introduction to Semiotics*, Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing.

Fiore, Pamela (2013), "Fashion and Otherness: The Passionate Journey of Coppola's Marie Antoinette from a Semiotic Perspective," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body, and Culture*, November, Volume 17, Issue 5, pp. 605–22.

Martineau, Paul (2018), *Icons of Style: A Century of Fashion Photography*, Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum.

Shinkle, Eugenie (2017), "The Feminine Awkward: Graceless Bodies and the Performance of Femininity in Fashion Photographs," in *The Journal of Fashion Theory*, March, Volume 21, Issue 2, pp. 201–17.

Thibaul, Paul J. (2013), *Re-reading Saussure: The Dynamics of Signs in Social Life*, London: Routledge.

6
OBJECT-BASED RESEARCH

OBJECTIVES

- **To learn what object-based research is, who the method is used by, and how it is used**
- **To examine the historical development of object-based research and understand why it was devalued**
- **To explore the connection between object-based research and material culture studies**
- **To explore some specific studies using the object-based research method**
- **To understand the importance of making object-based research interdisciplinary by incorporating other methods, such as oral history and archival materials**

This chapter discusses an object-based research method often used by costume historians, museum curators, historians, and art historians rather than by sociologists, psychologists, or economists in the field of social sciences, since their focus is the object or the artifact itself, such as dress and clothing in addition to shoes, accessories, and jewelry. While researchers almost always use clothes stored in museum collection, collecting dress artifacts to illustrate the history of Western dress is a relatively new aspect of museology, and although many museums initially presented garments within their textile collections, or collected artifacts from aboriginal or indigenous peoples as an anthropological exercise, the formation of separate departments collecting objects of Western dress did not occur until well into the twentieth century (Mida and Kim 2015:18).

As far as the method of inquiry in fashion/dress studies is concerned, it is no surprise that those who closely study dress as a tangible object adopt object-based research since fashion is represented through dress and clothing, which is a tangible, material object. But we must also point out that the object itself does not speak about its symbolic social or cultural meanings, so it requires other methodologies unless you are analyzing the physical features of the clothing, such as fabric texture, sewing techniques, or the silhouette of the dress which is an invaluable and significant method in research. Today, fashion/dress scholars combine this method with other methods and take an interdisciplinary approach in their research. In this chapter, the development of the object-based research method is discussed, and it explores how this method was used and by whom. Studies that combine other methodologies, such as oral history and archival records, are also examined.

What is object-based research?

As Wilson (1985: 48) explains, traditionally, the study of fashion and/or clothing has been a brand of art history and has followed its methods of attention to detail, and comparable to the study of furniture, painting, and ceramics, a major part of its project has been accurate dating of costume, assignment in some cases of "authorship," and an understanding of the actual process of the making of the garment, all of which are valid activities. Historians and art historians (Boucher 1987 [1967]; Breward 1995; Davenport 1952; Edwards 2017; Hollander 1994; Koda 2004a, 2004b; Koda and Bolton 2005; Mida and Kim 2015; Palmer 2001, 2018, 2019; Steele 1985, 2003, 2017; Tortora and Eubank 2009) look at clothing and dress items over extended periods, and they explain repeated regularities and fluctuations and decode the cultural meanings of dress and clothing. Museum curators and costume historians also conduct object-based research in the museum's historical costume collections, and the objects are the primary source of information. Nothing is more accurate than looking at real garments, especially the historic ones. While art historians use paintings as evidence, they can cause some confusion when it comes to using them as reliable historical indicators, and readers should be aware of their limitations as well as great benefits (Edwards 2017: 8). Furthermore, Mida and Kim explain that object-based researchers are similar to detectives who look for and interpret the clues, including the details of cut, construction and embellishment, evidence of how the garment and its materials relative to the body, and the period from which it came (Mida and Kim 2015: 11). Similarly, Edwards provides readers the skill to analyze and identify "the most easily recognizable styles worn by women from 1550 to 1970" (2017: 9), and such knowledge is useful for us to understand historically themed films, TV, and stage adaptations.

Researchers explore the history of the artifacts and of the contexts within which they have meanings. We can learn about the object in relation to other objects, peoples, ideas, and specific historical time periods. It allows the researchers to look directly at objects and investigate their colors, shapes, silhouettes, construction, and sewing techniques involved, and describe the observations of their physical characteristics. The examination of the objects can lead to other social, cultural, historical, political, artistic, or technological research questions. As Druesdow points out,

> With bespoke examples of Western fashion the decisions of the client and dressmaker or tailor together determine the garment. Was the client conservative or avant-garde? Was the maker attuned to the fashion of the time? What were the political, social, and economic considerations? In the case of apparel created outside the tradition of Western fashion, the necessary explorations of time and place expand profoundly. Very often there are no absolute answers, and the researcher finds it necessary to hypothesize. (Druesedow in Mida and Kim 2015: 7)

Object-based research examines minute details and channels through a series of acquired skills and interpretative methods. You first need to find the clothing object, then identify it, conserve it, display it, and interpret it. This method can be incorporated into a variety of theoretical interpretations, but it has the basic theory in common, and that is the exploration of material culture in relation to immaterial culture, which is explained later in this chapter. The downside of object-centered methodologies is that they may be restricted by too close a focus on aesthetic or physical considerations.

The historical development of object-based research

Just as a social hierarchy among social classes and individuals exists, there was and still is a hierarchy among different disciplines; some disciplines have a higher status with more prestige than others in academia, and thus they have more research-funding opportunities. There is also a hierarchy among different research methodologies. When the method is mostly adopted by female researchers, the method itself begins to lose its value, and object-based approaches were often taken by female historians such as Elizabeth McClellan, Betty Kirke, Doris Langley Moore, and Anne Buck. The feminization of fashion that made fashion a female affair with the Industrial Revolution had lowered the value of fashion practice itself, but the method also followed a similar trend in its devaluation.

Working in a male-dominant occupation, curators treated fashionable European dress as marginal cultural objects that were never considered valuable. Therefore, there was a masculine bias in the museum collections, such as the robes of the orders of chivalry and the uniforms. Nothing that alluded to female or femininity was included in the collections. There was nothing objective about the selection of museum objects. Its function as a central cultural force was quite simply neither understood nor accepted (Taylor 2004: 105). However, Taylor explains a gradual shift in their views:

> A fundamental shift in Britain away from these male-oriented approaches to analyzing fashion was set in place from the late 1940s through the work of two women curators: Doris Langley and Anne Buck. Building on the work of Talbot Hughes and Thalassa Cruso, they both made major contributions from 1949. These have in many ways proved more influential than those of C. W. Cunnington and James Laver, perhaps because, as curators, both worked from the closest object-based analysis. Neither shared the Laver/Cunnington view that the world of women's fashions centred on attracting the opposite sex. (Taylor 2004: 58–59)

Therefore, a collection of fashionable dress worn by wealthy women in Europe did not exist in the museum collections for a long time since they were considered insignificant and of no value; at the same time, the object-centered research was often dismissed or completely neglected, and the study of dress in general was marginalized or looked down upon in academia as nonacademic. Taylor writes that the history of the development of museum collections of dress has remained a neglected research field (2004). Then at the turn of the century, new theories of fashion were proposed by scholars, such as Thorstein Veblen and Georg Simmel:

> Methodologies were radically altered between 1899 and 1904 when sociologists Thorstein Veblen and Georg Simmel turned their attentions to assessing the role of Western dress within patterns of class behaviour and gendered consumption. This opened up serious theoretical approaches to analysis of the form and function of fashionable dress though response from within the field of dress history was extremely slow. (Taylor 2004: 44)

However, many museum curators and costume historians continued to follow the traditional approach, that is, object-centered studies which is an indispensable field of research in analyzing well-known designers' works and understanding how both elites and non-elites dressed in a particular time period.

Some of the earlier prominent studies include McCellan (1969) and Arnold (1977) which are representative of object-based research. McClellan's work on the history of American costume 1607–1800 (1969) uses a different approach to dress studies that was still new at the time. In her book, McClellan studies clothing worn in Spanish, French, English, Dutch, Swedish, and German settlements in early North America. She was a female researcher, and she worked from a strongly object-based approach. She borrowed clothing directly from their owners and used photographs and drawing of surviving garments. She focused on everyday working-class clothes, which no other scholar had done before 1969.

Furthermore, Kirke's research on Madeleine Vionnet's work is one of the most informative object-based studies (2012[1998]). Vionnet was a master dressmaker who invented new patternmaking techniques. In the book, there are thirty-eight garments (2012[1998]: 46–207), and Kirke painstakingly studied and explained each piece with photographs and/or illustrations, drafted flat patterns and sewing instructions along with descriptions of fabric, the year the dress was created, and the museum source. Taking patterns of Vionnet's dresses was incredibly important to understand the unique structure and the techniques of asymmetrical cuts, slashes, and gussets. "All factors of making an original pattern were considered important. The shape of pattern parts, the cut, the stitching, and the finishing were done with precision. . . . She could hang the fabric from any angle she wished and cut freely. There was no improvisation: every choice was made for a purpose" (Kirke 2012[1998]: 42).

In Epilogue (233), Kirke writes about the difficulty of her research:

> To probe the mystery of Vionnet's cut, I took patterns from her dresses because I knew that, by taking patterns, I would find the reasons that Vionnet's dresses appeared complex and difficult. The easiest way to make a pattern is to undo the seams and separate and trade each part. If one cannot disassemble the garment, another method is to lay muslin over the dress, pin each part matching the grain, and chalk the seams and darts carefully. But these methods were not appropriate or permitted with pieces in museum archives. The base of fabric is rectangle formed by the interlacing warp and weft yarns. By taking length measurements from the point of the warp yarns and the weft yarns, and continuing the procedure with parallel yarns, one can build the shape of each part of the pattern. (Kirke 2012[1998]: 233)

This is a kind of study that can only be achieved by object-based research. Kirke's study also is an indication why such a method is necessary to understand the uniqueness and the greatness of a designer.

Arnold (1977), a textile and dress historian, explored dress history through meticulous analysis of the cut and patterns of English male and female dress, using the surviving garments. As Arnold writes:

> Objects act as reminders and confirmers of our identities, and probably our idea of our identity relies more in such objects than it does in any idea of ourselves as individuals [then collections] have the capacity to take on a male and

> female identity: collecting, collectors, and collectible objects are all potentially gendered . . . through the gender associations of the objects collected; and through the gendered use of collections. (Arnold quoted in Pearce 1992: 55)

The interdisciplinary, object-based approach was one that was very familiar to Arnold, and her research was predicated on a detailed understanding of dress gained by the close examination of surviving garments, and she recorded this process with sketches, photographs, and copious notes.

Making object-based research interdisciplinary

In the late 1990s, Javis (1998) discusses a split between object-based researchers and fashion/dress scholars who do not adopt such methods. She explains:

> There is a current divergence between object-based study, carried out by museum curators and makers of reproduction dress, and university studies of dress and fashion, usually based on written sources, images and statistics, but rarely on the real thing . . . the gulf between academics and curators has not been fully closed but bridges have been built, and communication prospers. (Javis 1998: 300)

But we have made some progress since then, and many scholars enhance their archival and object-based research by considering additional sources and employing innovative approaches to the material objects at hand. There is a growing interest in fashion and dress by various disciplines. Kramer (2005: xi) writes: “Because of the prevalence of textiles and dress in every aspect of human life, a multiplicity of disciplines has taken notice of these objects, including art and design history, history, media and cultural studies, gender studies, material culture studies, studies in consumption, museology, sociology, and anthropology, to name a few.” While dress or textiles themselves are a key source, they cannot be read and analyzed in isolation, and they need to be situated in a contextual model built up from all the available different sources. This is how the researchers begin to tell a story about the objects. Palmer also shared the same view in the late 1990s and argued that it is imperative for traditional fashion historians to apply a more critical, theoretical, and analytical methodology in their research (1997:304–05).

Object-based research and material culture studies

Instead of leaving object-based research by itself, many scholars transcend the investigation of the objects and put it in a larger perspective within the context of material culture studies in order to avoid being narrow in research focus. Thus, material objects, such as clothing and dress, can be placed in the material culture studies that demands not only an object-based approach but also a combination of different methods. As Taylor (1998) suggests, those who research clothing and dress need to go beyond the traditional form of object-based research.

Scholars from various disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, photographic studies, and media studies, all share common interests in material culture, practices of representation, the interpretation of cultural texts, and comprehending social relations and individual experience, and each area of study has its particular theoretical and methodological heritage. Material culture studies shows us that we all live within, act through, and are shaped by the material world. There is no human being who is not surrounded by material goods. Culture and material goods are inseparable, and thus they must be studied simultaneously.

Miller (2005) explained a past conflict between two perspectives to material culture studies. There are two factions: (1) those trained in textile conservations, design, or museum collections, experts in the analysis of cloth and textiles and (2) social scientists in cultural studies, sociology, or social anthropology with training in semiotic and symbolic analysis and an interest in the “social life” of clothing. Miller explains:

> Specialists in textiles may have very little respect for those disciplines they lump together as “cultural studies.” They see this social analysis as merely mapping differences in clothing and fashion onto social categories such as class, ethnicity and gender. . . . In turn, social scientists may denigrate scholars of textile, pattern, form and technology as “positivists” who study such things merely because they have collections. (2005: 1)

Material culture studies should incorporate multiple perspectives and must transcend them so that, as Miller proposes, there must be the integration and reintegration of materiality with sociality because there is no simple boundary or distinction between persons and their social environment. Eicher was one of the fashion/dress scholars who emphasized the social context of material objects. Clothing and dress are one of the most important and richest aspects of material cultures. Once viewed simply as mere artifacts, cloth and clothing are now recognized as culturally constructed commodities with complex symbolic properties, transmitting purity and pollution, linking past and present, transforming through belief, carrying fundamental values (O’Connor 2005: 41). Kroeber (1919) and Kroeber and Richardson (1940) were the first to study Western dress in a detailed and systematic manner exploring the relationship between social and political influences on clothing-fashion.

The following case studies show the importance and the meaning of going beyond objects to make a further analysis of a dress.

Mida and Kim's case study of a Kimono-style jacket by Kenzo

Mida and Kim introduce the essential skill to "look" in object-based research and offer three steps to object-based analysis: (1) observation, (2) reflection, and (3) interpretation, which go beyond simply looking at cultural artifacts. A jacket from Kenzo's Fall/Winter 2004 Collection, donated to a university study collection in 2009, is used as one of their case studies (2015: 198–215). They closely look at the construction of the jacket, measure the width, length, and depth of the garment, and give detailed descriptions of the garment as follows:

> The front and back pieces (the latter with a center back seam) are made from a brown and white tweed-type fabric, and are cut with a straight lower edge that ends at thigh level. The wide sleeves of a figured brown synthetic silk are cut with deeply set armholes, and are trimmed with a wide band of a lime green and black velvet fabric. The collar of printed velvet is pierced at the shoulder seam, but constructed to look like a full band that runs down both sides of the front opening, and stops just short of the lower edge. The two front pieces have a false pocket flap at hip level. (Mida and Kim 2015: 200)

They turn the jacket inside out and check whether the inside is partially or fully lined and with what types of lining fabrics. The loose fitting nature of the garment means that it is unnecessary to take traditional measurements for the jacket. Then they look at the textiles, and the labels.

Then the second step of object-based analysis is "reflection" in which the researchers consider how their background, preferences, and biases can both affect and enrich the process, and also contemplate what other contextual materials may be available, such as photographs, illustrations, paintings, and textual sources (2015: 63). In the case of Kenzo's jacket, it is made up of the diverse mix of fabrics and a patchwork like pattern, and many of its elements reference the simple and loose construction of the traditional, iconic, Japanese garment, the kimono (2015: 208–09). The third step of the process is "interpretation" which attempts to analyze the evidence at hand in using theory and to create a well-reasoned argument (2015: 79). Kenzo's jacket combined both the Eastern and the Western aesthetics and demonstrates the trend for blending influences from both cultures in contemporary fashion (2015: 81, 210), and this can be found in other Western designers' collections as well.

Edwards' study on the Barège Day Dress (1836–41) from the McCord Museum Collection in Montreal

In her book *How to Read a Dress* (2017), Edwards traces the history of Western dress from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century and classifies them chronologically into eleven time periods, each of which has a distinct garment construction and silhouette. Edwards examines a day dress found in the McCord Museum Collection and describes its shape, fabric, and silhouette. It has a slim waist and low-set armholes which indicate the restrictiveness of 1940s women's wear (2017: 84). Edwards goes beyond the physical explanation of the dress and provides a fascinating account on how the shape of the bodice influences a body posture. For instance, "In the stiff bodices, it was far more comfortable for a woman to hold her arms up and away from the body" (2015: 16), or in images from the early 1840s, dresses and their narrowly cut shoulders necessitated a wearer's arms to be held much closer to the body, whereas gown from 1900 to 1905 had sleeves set at the "natural" armhole, just before the shoulder meets the top of the arm, and consequently allowed, in some respects, a more natural posture (Edwards 2017: 16). Furthermore, her analysis is further associated with a speculation about a social class of a wearer at the time. She writes:

> The lower classes (who do not generally appear in such portraits except occasionally as favored servants) would, of course, have needed to wear clothes that enable ease of movement and that took up as little time and energy as possible. Nonetheless, the upper classes still held the yardstick for fashion and the "correct" mode of appearance and, as stated, in the Author's Note, the lower and middle classes would have attempted to emulate this where they could. (2017: 16)

It shows how an object-based analysis can be a foundation for further plausible assumptions and speculations for continuous intellectual discussions and investigations. A material object or a cultural artifact does not exist in isolation, and it is always situated in a social and cultural context.

Turney's object-based research with a floral frock dress and oral history

Oral history accounts are recognized as important sources for the study of textiles and dress (Biddle-Perry 2005; Eastop 2005; Lomas 2000). It is essential to employ an interdisciplinary methodology, including design history, fashion and textiles history and theory, oral history and discourses arising from anthropology and cultural theory. Turney writes:

> Interdisciplinarity was intended to widen the sphere of reference, bridging gaps of knowledge marginalised or trivialised by single methodologies. . . . The emphasis on first-hand experience, particularly in relation to tactile and emotive objects such as clothing, adds an extra dimension to the study of fashion and textiles that goes beyond designer intent and notions of the avant-garde. (Turney 2005: 59)

Meanings and interpretations based on subjective information, such as oral history, are not without problems since self-reports and their validity may put into question, but oral history as a method can be used to investigate dress and textiles produced by cultures that are not predominantly text-based. Turney's (2005) article focuses on oral testimony and the ways in which responses to artifacts offer the potential for reappraising established notions of what it is to be fashionable, as well as highlighting the disparities inherent in the dissemination of styles, motifs, techniques, and fabrics. Furthermore, she wanted to investigate the experience of what it might be like to actually wear these garments (Turney 2005: 58). She writes:

> Clothing is what people wear, and derives from "cloth" or fabric that is suitable for wearing. Fashion, however, is culturally constructed and refers to process and changes in styles—it is dynamic, about change, movement and aesthetics. . . . With this in mind, the experience of wearing specific items of clothing is central to the formation of an understanding of the self within the wider world, yet this more subjective appraisal of fashion is rarely evidenced in exhibitions. (Turney 2005: 58)

Turney's investigation draws from oral history testimonies that have been central to collaborative research projects between Bath Spa University and the Museum of Costume Bath, which aimed to address the significance of the floral printed dress in the twentieth century, culminating in an exhibition called *Pick of the Bunch*, a website, and publication. Turney explains the significance of oral history as a method in her research:

> Oral testimony regarding the consumption of such garments, including purchase and the actual experience of wearing, became a fundamental aspect of uncovering why certain garments were deemed fashionable, or were valorized outside of a traditional design history methodology. (2005: 59)

Turney's oral history respondents were selected from replies to an advertisement placed in the local daily newspaper called *The Bath Chronicle.* The Bath respondents were all more than fifty years old and offered a valuable insight into growing up in the 1950s and 1960s. But it was necessary to look for younger respondents with whom to compare experiences and to demonstrate if concepts of fashionability and floral dresses differed in terms of time and location, so a group of ladies between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five, working in professional occupations in London, formed a contrasting focus group. It is important to note that these were merely sample groups, and responses may well have differed should other groups have been sought or the sample widened. Therefore, the potential for interpretation and reinterpretation of responses to floral printed dresses can be varied. Different groups can provide alternative fashion histories.

A lady who is quoted in Turney's study remembers shopping with her mother in the 1950s: "I would shop with my mother in department stores in London. She was a fashionable woman who had impeccable taste. She always chose my clothes, which were watered-down versions of her own; not quite so grown up, girlish and floral." Turney explains:

> Oral history enabled an assessment and appreciation of garments outside of design and fashion history methodologies. Personal recollection about what was worn by whom and when, as well as evocative experiences of the actual wearing of garments informed the selection of objects for display. In this respect, oral history proved to be a tool which allowed visitors to the exhibition with no prior knowledge of fashion and its histories to engage with the display on a personal level. (Turney 2005: 63)

Object-based research and written archival documents/literary sources

While fashion/dress studies rarely relies solely on written documents/literary sources, it can be combined with object-based research. There are many object-centered historians and curators working in museums who use dress and textiles as a primary source of evidence. They integrate evidence from material objects and written documents to investigate historical practices, such as trade and consumption, in depth.

More recently, in the interpretation of historic items, various researchers have looked at the details.

Handley (2005) compares textiles discovered in the archaeological excavation on Egypt's Red Sea Coast from the Roman (between the first and the third centuries) and Islamic (between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries) periods, rare material culture, with documentary sources. She refers to written regional documents, such as the first-century merchant's guide that helps the interpretation of the textiles. Documents can provide more information than a straightforward list of items that can be “checked off” against archaeological finds (Handley 2005: 10). Textual/written records can help archaeological interpretation to understand how the textiles were used and understood in the past.

Furthermore, Rose (2005) focuses her research on the sale and consumption of women’s quilted petticoats, which were universally worn and widely sold as one of the first ready-to-wear garments traded throughout Britain. She refers to the literature on eighteenth-century consumption, texts, and textiles. People use wills, invoices, probate inventories, and other textual sources. Trade cards, commercial documents, can also be the subject of the study.

Mikhaila and Malcolm-Davies (2005) study the dress of ordinary Tudor men in the sixteenth century. The research offers insights into the wardrobes of ordinary Elizabethan men based on the Essex wills left by laborers, sailors, servants, and the lower-status craftsmen and tradesmen, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers, and butchers. The Essex Record Office has published a series of volumes compiled and edited by F. G. Emmison between 1983 and 2000. “Each of the ten published volumes of Essex wills was examined for references to clothing and textiles. These were categorized by garment or accessory type and by color and fabric where specified by the testator” (Mikhaila and Malcolm-Davies 2005: 18). This study systematically examined a vast number of documents, enabling conclusions to be drawn on the conventional use of certain garments, fabrics, and colors by Tudor men of relatively modest means.

Palmer’s interdisciplinary research on Christian Dior’s dresses

Palmer (2018) investigates Christian Dior’s historical and innovative dressmaking techniques based on solid construction and long-forgotten techniques, such as boning and layers of petticoats (2018: 26). The author examines forty garments in the Royal Ontario Museum collection, mostly donated by Toronto socialites, to explore why Dior’s fashions shaped aspirations of femininity during the 1950s. The research is drawn from archival information in the company archive Dior Hèritage, such as photographs, newspapers, magazines, oral histories, and studies of the garments. Palmer explains:

> Studying the construction and materials of the designs in the museum helps us to understand what it was about the actual clothes that made Christian Dior so influential and emblematic of the 1950s. Close examinations reveal house signatures in the creative pattern making, which required difficult and expert sewing techniques. (Palmer 2018: 26)

She divides Dior's design characteristics into four elements: (1) corsets, bones, and petticoats; (2) interior construction, such as linings, facings, and selvages; (3) the design details, such as pockets, darts, and pleats; and (4) textiles, embroiders, ribbons, and lace.

Palmer's work is not simply object-based but transcends into other fields so that the research allows her to explore the phenomenal success of the designer and the label.

> Money alone did not make the House the success that it has remained to this day. From its inception, Christian Dior was positioned for the future postwar economy. A dedicated staff systematically tracked the creation, the fabrication, and sales of the designs, as well as the numerous business licenses and operations. The employees gathered information on buyers, clients, and international tastes in order to understand and cater to their rapidly expanding and varied markets, allowing Dior complete independence by balancing production and sales. (2018: 4–6)

The author had access to the Dior Hèritage, which preserved the diverse business records as well as fashion show programs, press sketches, and photographs. As she writes, "It is unparalled resource, documenting the inner workings of the House and comprising the most extensive historical record pertaining to an haute couture business from this period" (Palmer 2018: 7).

Palmer also found large charts that tracked each design in order to work out who would make it, who would model it, and its order of presentation in the seasonal show; they illustrate the enormous effort that went into producing around 200 designs each season (2018: 7). In addition to the documents in the company archive, she investigated additional photographic, archival, and oral history records to trace the history of partnerships from Paris to Toronto. She interviewed many of these who donated their garments to the museum to learn how and where they shopped and wore their Dior dresses, which function not only as documents of design and dressmaking but also as testimonies of makers', merchants', and consumers' lives (2018: 8).

The collected data is incorporated in the chapter "Christian Dior Anatomies" (2018: 94–259) of the book in which Palmer provides biographies of the 1947–57 Christian Dior garments in the ROM collection. A name of each dress, a title to his collection in which the dress was shown, a name of atelier with a name of the head dressmaker or tailor, the name of an in-house model called a mannequin, the occasion in which the dress was worn (morning, evening, etc.), and the name of an embroidery maker were indicated for each dress (2018: 96–259). The designs were also accompanied by drafted patterns of selected designs to show precise details of the innovative cuts.

Archaeological “dress” objects and material culture

Martin and Weetch edited a volume titled *Dress and Society: Contributions from Archaeology* (2017) with a compilation of essays discussing the significance of understanding the social context of old historic dress items in the field of archaeology. The authors explain that there are three popular topics in the field, such as identity, bodies, and material culture while placing dress in a wilder sociocultural context. The book provides a variety of archaeological approaches to dress with case studies taken from prehistoric to post-medieval Europe. It is a subdiscipline within the discipline of archaeology.

There are hardly any historical dress artifacts left as evidence before the fifteenth century, and only fragments remain between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Edwards 2017) so archaeologists take a very broad definition of the term “dress” and include all forms of body ornamentation, such as hairstyles, tattoos, or body modifications. They focus on dress objects that are non-perishable, metallic remains, such as ornament hoards (Wilkin 2017), military belts (Hoss 2017), and brooches (Adams 2017) since textiles do not survive. Archaeological understanding of dress gives attention to the fundamental aspects of society, and Martin and Weetch explain a significant relationship between excavated material objects and identities:

> Dress has long been thought to specifically relate to the identity of the wearer. . . . The objects people chose to adorn themselves with in the past were considered indicators of ethnicity, age, gender and so on. And while modern archaeologists now view the relationship between objects and identities as far more nuanced than the straight-forward passive relationship expounded by these early practitioners, there is a persistent notion that dress, over all other forms of material culture, is especially well placed for the construction and expression of identities. (Martin and Weetch 2017: 7–8)

For example, Adams examines the Early and Middle Iron Age brooches in Britain from *c.* 450–150 BC particularly from burials as well as non-burial contexts to investigate what they were attached to, in what position and where on the body they were found, and how they might have been worn and viewed (2017: 48–68). Such contextual evidence and information allow the research to explore the meaning of the brooches and its relationship to the wearer’s identity and appearance. It will demonstrate the value of Early and Middle Iron Age brooches in the study of dress and identity in Iron Age Britain (Adams 2017: 49). Objects, whether historic or contemporary, are pieced together to tell stories about people and society.

Conclusion

Object-based research used by historians, art/costume historians, and museum curators has gone through a transition, and there has been an attempt among the dress/fashion scholars in general to put it within the context of material culture studies so that a split between object-based research and the research focused on social and cultural symbols and meanings can be filled. Many object-based researchers combine the method with other methodological strategies while taking interdisciplinary approaches by incorporating other methods, such as oral narratives and archival materials.

Guide to further reading

Brandenburgh, Chrystel Richarda (2016), *Clothes Make the Man: Early Medieval Textiles from the Netherlands*, Leiden, NL: Leiden University Press.

Johnson, Lucy, Marion Kite, and Helen Persson (2016), *19th-Century Fashion in Detail*, London: Thames and Hudson.

Loren, Diana Diapaolo (2011), *The Archaeology of Clothing and Bodily Adornment in Colonial America*, Miami, FL: University Press of Florida.

North, Susan (2018), *18th-Century Fashion in Detail*, London: Thames and Hudson.

Schafer, Dagmar, Giorgio Riello, and Luca Mola (2018), *Threads of Global Desire: Silk in the Pre-modern World*, Woodbridge, NJ: Boydell Press.

Vincent, Susan (ed.) (2017), *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion*, London: Bloomsbury.

Welch, Evelyn (ed.) (2017), *Fashioning the Early Modern: Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe 1500–1800*, London: Oxford University Press.

7

ONLINE RESEARCH AND ETHNOGRAPHY

OBJECTIVES

- To learn the differences between offline and online research
- To examine the validity and reliability of online information
- To understand the importance of digital literacy skills
- To explore how to use blogs and social media as a research tool and an object of research

In this day and age, it has become almost impossible to avoid the use of internet sources. The internet is used not only to find out where your grade school best friends are but also in school assignments and professional research. If anything is unclear or unknown, many of us first go on to Google and get some basic information about whatever we are trying to find out. Prior to the invention of the internet, information was not free; we had to buy information. Today, there is a tremendous amount of free resources posted for anyone to see. Internet is a democratic tool since everyone can post and receive information for free. In addition, researchers use the internet to access scholarly articles and books written and published online by professional fellow researchers, and they also use online materials not only as a research tool but as a research subject and focus.

Most of the qualitative methods discussed in the previous chapters can be conducted both offline and online, such as conducting an analysis of material objects, distributing questionnaires and interviewing people. For example, an offline semiotic analysis of a dress can be conducted online although there may be some parts or angles that cannot be observed online since many museums around the world, such as The Metropolitan Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, and The Museum at FIT, are digitizing their historical artifacts, including their dress collections, and making them available online and accessible to anyone who is interested. Similarly ethnography can be conducted online which is called digital ethnography or netnography, observing what people do, communicate, interact, write, or behave in virtual worlds. Synchronous/real-time online discussions can be treated exactly like face-to-face discussions (Poynter 2010: 108).

One of the advantages of online research is that it allows us to go worldwide and reach the international communities if necessary, and it saves costs and time since we do not need to physically fly to other cities or countries. It expands our research horizons with few limitations and restrictions. Social media is challenging the conventional world of fashion in every way (Luvaas 2016; Luvaas and Eicher 2019; Mora and Rocamora 2015; Rocamora 2017), and its tools have been used in academic research to find the information that a researcher is looking for or used as a research focus. Here is a list of major social media tools that we are familiar with:

Inception	SNS	Number of Monthly Active Users (as of May 2019)
2015	Periscope	10 million
2011	Snapchat	301 million
2010	Instagram	1 billion
2010	Pinterest	250 million
2009	WhatsApp	1.6 billion
2007	Tumblr	459 million
2006	Twitter	330 million
2005	Reddit	330 million
2005	YouTube	1.9 billion
2004	Facebook	232 billion
2003	LinkedIn	303 million
1998	Blog	463 million

(Source: Compiled from www.ominicoreagency.com and www.stastia.com)

This chapter is divided into two parts:

Part I—Using online sources for research: This part discusses the importance of developing and raising our digital literacy skills and of assessing the validity and reliability of information and sources you find online, and

Part II—Using social media and online posts as object of research: This part explores how fashion and dress scholars investigate active producers and consumers of social media and study the content and online activities.

Part I: Using online sources for research

There is an astronomical amount of resources posted online. In research, we should use them wisely, professionally, and critically. Students, scholars, and practitioners all rely on the internet when conducting research, and it is different from going through printed publications and catalogues in the libraries. The danger of internet content is that anyone can create a site and post almost anything, whether the information is false, inaccurate, imaginary, or factual. While some professional research institutions and agencies sell their exclusive information for a fee, we can acquire a bulk of the online information for free. For now, there are few regulations to control the content of the sites since they are self-generated and self-submitted, and therefore, the assessment and the evaluation of the useful and valuable information you find online become crucial. Learning to use the internet for research is a skill that we all need to acquire.

Developing digital literacy skills

Like many other research tools discussed in the previous chapters, there are advantages and disadvantages to online information. Online researching is more than mere casual net surfing or googling out of curiosity. Doing it correctly and professionally gives you and your paper more credibility. When we are given a lot of choices, we can get lost in the process, not being able to select one. We want factual and objective evidence and not personal opinion pieces. Some of the strengths of the online materials are their currency and constantly revised and updated information which do not exist in conventional printed publications. The content can be changed or revised every hour or every day. If there are any mistakes found in the content that can be amended immediately without having to wait for the next issue to announce the corrections or revisions. Therefore, developing our digital literacy skills become a necessity since it allows us to see the difference between real facts and made-up stories, just as we need to know the difference between “real news” and “fake news” which is false, fabricated news that is deliberately disseminated just to confuse the public. The validity and the reliability of the information become the key in deciding whether to use or not to use these materials as evidence.

Assessing reliability and validity

Below are the basic questions you need to ask to assess the reliability and the validity of the data you are collecting online (Harnack et al. 2001):

(1) Affiliation: Whose website is it? Who/which organization or community is making this site?

(2) Authority: Is it a reputable individual's or organization's site? How much authority does this person or organization have in a particular field? Are they experts?

(3) Currency: Is the material dated? When was it last updated?

(4) Reliability: Does the site present primary source materials or secondary source materials? Can the information be corroborated? Are graphs and tables reliable? Are complete references to cited materials given?

(5) Audience: Who is the audience for this site? Who is it written for? Who are the readers?

Some of the reliable data include scholarly journals (e.g., *Fashion Theory*, *Fashion Practice, the International Journal of Fashion Studies*), government documents, trade publications (e.g., *Women's Wear Daily, Footwear News*), newspapers (e.g., *The NY Times, The Washington Post*), news magazines (e.g., *Businessweek, Times, Newsweek*), and public company websites and press releases. Some recommended databases include Jstor (http://jstor.org), Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com), and Bloomsbury Fashion Central (http://bloomsburyfashioncentral.com). Librarian at universities and educational institutions around the world provide students and researchers information and advice as to how online sources can be and should be utilized.

By contrast, self-generated website and blogs, comments on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media are often questionable as seen in the study below.

Detterbeck et al.'s study on how fashion bloggers find and use information

The study by Detterbeck, LaMoreaux, and Sciangula (2014) examines how fashion bloggers find their information sources for their blogs. This article can be used to understand the validity and reliability of the social media content that are often questioned and also to examine the methodologies used in the social media exploration.

The authors conducted an online survey to investigate the information-seeking behavior and research methods of fashion bloggers raising questions, such as how they find and use information and how they communicate with information professionals.

A Google survey form was distributed with questions asking bloggers what information they need to write posts, where they find that information, and how they use the expertise of information professionals. The survey with twenty questions included demographic questions and requests for content details of their blogs. At the end of the survey, it also asked if the respondents would be willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview. The survey was distributed through the social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, LinkedIn, and the fashion blogging online community discussion boards. In addition, they were sent by email to prominent fashion bloggers featured in a popular international blog directory. The survey remained active between early March and late April of 2012, during which time they received thirty-one responses, and nineteen of them agreed to be contacted with a follow-up interview with eight additional questions. The authors explain that through these questions, they wanted to gain detailed insight into how the information gathered was used and how fashion blog posts are created (2014). Qualitative data is an important part of this study; therefore the majority of the survey questions were in-depth, open-ended questions about process and methods.

The following are the three factors and commonalities that they found:

(1) The importance of appearing authentic and knowledgeable discourages bloggers from consulting information professionals for research assistance.

(2) Blogging's inherently fast-paced nature stymies in-depth research.

(3) Fashion blogging hinges on information sharing among bloggers and other online sources, but a fair and consistent standard of citation has not been established.

(Detterbeck et al. 2014: 353)

While the authors explain that their research has a small sample size with thirty-one respondents within a two-month time frame, and the conclusions drawn may not be representative of all fashion bloggers, this is an important study that lays the foundation for future discussions and research on the reliability of the fashion-related information found in blogs.

The use of Wikipedia

Wikipedia was launched in 2001 as a free online encyclopedia which can be written, posted and edited by anyone. According to Wikipedia.com, as of April 2019, Wikipedia is available in more than 280 languages and its English edition has almost six million articles. Many of us find Wikipedia as a starting point to find out the basic information about a topic that we know nothing about. But how reliable is it? How valid is its content for research? There have been conflicting reports and studies on the validity and credibility of the website.

In 2009, the company announced that it began to impose editorial review on articles on living people (Cohen 2009), but Luyt and Tan (2014) examined the references and citations of a subset of country histories in Wikipedia and found that many claims cannot be verified through their citations since many of them come from unreliable sources when they should be from academic journals or official government sites. According to Mothe and Shut's survey on the level of trust in Wikipedia shown by young people in France between the ages of eleven and twenty-five, it depends on the type of information-seeking tasks and on the educational level (2018). For nonacademic tasks, the use of Wikipedia may be acceptable, but if students are writing an academic paper, they may be discouraged to refer to it as a source by their instructors, and that creates a negative perception of Wikipedia in general.

Whether or not Wikipedia has the same level of credibility as the Encyclopedia Britannica, one of the most reputable encyclopedias in the world is yet to be seen since the studies on Wikipedia are all inconclusive. Thus, we need to be aware of its precarious nature and status and double check and reconfirm whatever is written on Wikipedia before its content is cited in academic writing assignments.

Part II: Using social media as object of research

As indicated earlier, researchers question the validity of self-produced social media content as a source of factual evidence, but another way to utilize online content is to treat it as one's research subject or focus. In recent years, fashion and dress scholars have been investigating the content of social media as well as its users, such as bloggers, vloggers, twitters, instagrammers, YouTubers, and so on, to explore virtual, online communities that have the similar kind of social interactions and communications as their face-to-face ones. Such studies are becoming increasingly meaningful and important since the online communities have become a culture by itself with its own values and norms.

In the special edition of the *Journal of Fashion Theory* (Mora and Rocamora 2015), the issue was dedicated to "Analyzing Fashion Blogs-Further Avenues for Research" because of the increasing importance and relevance between fashion and the blogsphere, and the editors point out the need for "more comparative studies of national fashion systems and traditions, and, within this, of their respective fields of fashion media and of fashion blogging" (2015: 151). Some of the questions they posed are the following: How do bloggers from different countries see their role? How do they negotiate their relation to the fashion industry? More generally in what ways do fashion blogs relate to particular national—or indeed transnational—traditions of fashion reporting and of fashion? (Mora and Rocamora 2015: 151).

Blogs as well as social media are used in many different ways in research, and here are some of the important examples of research:

Rocamora's research on the mediatization of fashion

The author explores the use of digital media by fashion producers as well as consumers, which is prevalent in all fields of fashion. Such media is found in the production of fashion shows and garments, the retailing of clothes, and the fashioning of the self. Everything is mediatized and digitized in the world of fashion. For instance, fashion shows that used to be shown only to the industry professions are now proliferated to the masses through the digital platform for everyone to see, and they have become a public spectacle and an entertaining event (2017: 509–12). There is a presence of fashion bloggers and social media influencers in the front row seats that used to be reserved only for famous celebrities and powerful industry professionals. The photos are uploaded on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter immediately after the shows or simultaneously as the shows go on. All fashion shows make a good use of social media to promote their latest collections worldwide. Rocamora argues that digital platforms have become legitimate spaces for diffusion of the collections, and even designers are designing with social media in mind thinking what clothes are going to look like on social media rather than how they feel when worn. In the same manner, retailers are also displaying clothes with online shopping in mind, and bloggers and vloggers construct an image for online presence. Rocamora convincingly shows that mediatization constitutes a useful analytical tool for thinking through some of the changes that are currently taking place in the field of fashion in relation to digital media (2017: 518).

Luvaas's work on street photography blogging and auto-ethnography

Luvaas has been actively focusing on the use of blogs for his research. He investigated Indonesia fashion bloggers in the context of an expansive global fashion industry (2013) and explains that they are trying to make Indonesia a site for creative production rather than for manufacturing other countries' fashion goods, but they do so at a significant personal cost as they further incorporate Indonesia into the global neoliberal economy (Luvaas 2013: 55–76).

In addition, Luvaas comes up with a unique method of combining auto-ethnography and blogging to investigate a community of street photographers in different cities, such as New York and Philadelphia. He explains that auto-ethnography is a self-reflexive method which takes explicit account of one's thoughts, feelings, and experiences as form of data in its own right (Luvaas 2016). Instead of objectively investigating street style bloggers, he himself becomes one using himself as a vehicle of research. Luvaas explains his method as follows:

> My process of carrying out fieldwork has gone through moments of conscious self-interrogation and other moments of unconscious acting from the position of simply doing what a street style blogger does without thinking through what this is or means. In fact, I would argue, gaining firsthand insight into the experience of bloggers has required this sort of unconscious acting. To become a blogger is to internalize and normalize the practice of blogging to such an extent that it is no longer available to conscious thought. . . . I could not simply choose to be a street style blogger and then carry out my research as one. I had to engage in a slow and deliberate process of *becoming* (see Deleuze and Guattari 1987), of internalizing, embodying, and enacting, one with many starts and stops, ups and downs, all of which have ultimately contributed to my theoretical understanding of street style blogging (Luvaas 2016: 5).

In this way, Luvaas lives, experiences, and breathes the life of a street photographer and a blogger while becoming "one of them" and an authentic insider to the community. He is not shy to admit that his views are subjective. "Having a blog would teach me the 'howness' and 'whatness' of blogging, the everyday practical constraints, the ethical concerns, the cultural norms in formation. And of course it would teach me what it takes to produce the kinds of images bloggers produce, both in terms of equipment and embodied practical knowledge" (Luvaas 2016: 1–20).

Duffy's study on bloggers' unpaid aspirational labor in the creative economy

Duffy analyzes active social media users in relation to women's labor and economy and critically looks at those who are trying to make fashion blogging their professional career (2017). She investigates women who believe that social media platforms are the place where they can materialize their dreams and be financially successful. Anyone who has a good fashion taste is able to create a fashion blog, post new fashion-related information on a daily basis, but can all of them make it in the fashion world? Duffy conducts interviews with bloggers, vloggers and designers who engage in this unpaid or underpaid work hoping to find lucrative partnership with major fashion brands, but until then, they are unpaid while sacrificing their time and money. It is only a very limited number of social media users that earn enough money to earn a living doing this. The job which appears to be democratic and open to everyone for the guaranteed future financial success is a myth. This is "aspirational labor" which Duffy defines as "the productive, purposeful, task-oriented, and value-generating function of these activities" (2017: 8). The digitized world has transformed the structure of work and occupations and also the seemingly burring divide between professionals and amateurs.

Other significant studies about social media and fashion

There are many other studies that explore social media content and its users as a way to construct identity and performance or investigate a specific online community through online ethnography. Choi and Kim (2019) examined the online sneaker community "Niketalk.com" to see how the members communicate and interact online and ultimately decide which pairs to buy. Kretz (2010) studies the process through which consumers self-digitalize on personal webs in order to generate their authenticity, caricature, or fiction. Sur's work was (2017) on beauty and fashion blogs used by teenage girls between the ages of fifteen and nineteen living in Kolkata, India (2017), and to explore how the girls use these blogs and how they are influencing their appearance. In reference to India's beauty culture saying that the beauty blogs are "feminized spaces" where they teach the girls how to perform femininity (Sur 2017). Findlay looks at (2017) popular bloggers, such as Susie Lau, Rumi Neely, and Tavi Gevinson, and explores notions of individuality, aesthetics, and performance on producers and consumers, explores both sides of the digital platform, and explores what drives and motivates these bloggers to carve a space for themselves online.

Conclusion

Since the invention of the internet and social media, every sphere of life has completely and dramatically transformed. We rely on and are very much dependent on the information we find online, and in order for us to be able to assess the quality of such information, we need to develop our digital literacy skills, and that will be useful for our daily living as well as writing academic papers. In addition, conducting research about fashion in relation to digitized and mediatized processes and practices informs us of the changing structure and the mechanism of the fashion system and industry and what skills and expertise are required for future fashion professionals.

Guide to further reading

Boellstorff Tom, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce, and T.L. Taylor (eds.) (2012), *Ethnography in Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

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8
OTHER METHODOLOGIES

OBJECTIVES

- To learn other qualitative research methodologies, such as oral history, ethnomethodology, and cross-national research, among others
- To understand the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods
- To explore different fashion-/dress-related studies that use methodologies not discussed in previous chapters
- To identify how different methodologies can be mixed in one research

In this chapter, I briefly explore some other methodological tools that can be used in research, and some of them may have already been briefly discussed and found in the case studies that were examined in the previous chapters. Ideally, any research, not just fashion or dress, should adopt multiple methods so that information can be collected from different sources to get more accurate and convincing findings. It is the job of a researcher to come up with the best and the most appropriate methodologies in acquiring the best possible answers to the research questions. By combining and applying different methodologies, fashion/dress studies can include interdisciplinary perspectives. Other possible qualitative methodologies in fashion/dress studies, such as archival records, historiography, and ethnomethodology, among others, are examined, some of which have already been discussed in the previous chapters.

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, often involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Flick 2018b; Trumbull 2005). It means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, the phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves a variety of empirical materials, such as case study, personal experiences, life story, interview, and observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts, that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual's lives. The qualitative approach is inductive with the purpose of describing multiple realities, developing deep understanding and capturing everyday life and human perspectives. It is a process of discovery of the phenomena being studied; consequently, it tends to be guided by broad research questions based upon some theoretical framework.

Archival records and historical research

Archival records may be in any format, including text on paper or in electronic formats, photographs, motion pictures, videos, and sound recordings. Unlike ethnography or interviews, this is an unobtrusive research strategy. Archival material is virtually nonreactive to the presence of the researcher. All the unobtrusive strategies amount to examining and assessing human traces. What people do, how they behave and structure their daily lives, and even how humans are affected by certain ideological viewpoints can all be observed in traces people either intentionally or unintentionally leave behind.

Archival records can be divided into public archival records and private archival records. If they are public, records are viewed as prepared for the expressed purpose of examination by others. Public records are written in more or less standardized form and arranged in the archive systematically, for instance, alphabetically, chronologically, and numerically indexed and catalogued. The term "archive" brings to mind some form of library, but any records that are registered are archive. On the other hand, personal documents involve any written record created by the subject that concerned his or her experiences. The common types of documents classified under this label include autobiographies, diaries/journals, letters, and memos written by a subject in a research investigation. Photographic and video records may also serve as categories of personal documents.

For instance, in Ko's study of Chinese women's foot-binding practices, she acquires written sources from travel accounts and general descriptions of China published in Europe and the United States from the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries (1997, 2007). Ko found these sources held in original form in the James Duncan and Stephen Phillips Libraries of the Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts (1997: 5). In a similar study of Chinese women's foot-binding, Shephard explains (2019) that there has been an outpouring of literature on the culture of foot-binding in the Chinese historical archives since the 1990s, and they include literary and historical writings, studies of the material culture of foot-binding represented in footwear, relevant paintings and photographs, and works based on ethnographic accounts, surveys, and demographic materials. Shephard investigated census evidence on foot-binding which had been conducted for whole populations and also found in early-twentieth-century censuses of Taiwan in 1905 and 1915 and the less detailed surveys of North China, including Hebei and Liaoning in 1928. And he argues that the practice of foot-binding was a symbol of hegemonic status in a culture where local status hierarchies were in competition and there was fear of ridicule for not binding girls' feet.

Historiography or historical research is an examination of elements from history. The term "history" is used synonymously with the word "past" and in turn, refers conceptually to past events of long ago. From a social science perspective, history is an account of some past event or a series of events. Historiography in fashion/dress studies is a method for discovering from records and accounts what people wore and what happened during some past period, and it involves far more than the mere retelling of facts from the past. It is more than linking together tired old pieces of information found in diaries, letters, or other documents, important as such an activity might be. Historical research is at once descriptive, factual, and fluid. It has nothing to do with one's nostalgic or sentimental feelings. It is social scientific research that values objectivity. Thus, it attempts to systematically recapture the complex nuances, the people, meanings, events, and even ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present.

The sources of data used by historiographers are the same as those of many other social scientists, such as confidential reports, public records, government documents, newspapers editorials and stories, essays, songs, poetry, folklore, films, photographs, artifacts, and even interviews or questionnaires. They classify these various data into primary sources or secondary sources. Primary sources involve the oral or written testimony of eyewitnesses. They are original artifacts, documents, and items related to the direct outcome of an event or an experience. They may include documents, photographs, recordings, diaries, journals, life histories, drawings, mementos, or other relics. On the other hand, secondary sources include the oral or written testimony of people not immediately present at the time of a given event. They are documents written or objects created by others that relate to a specific research question or area of research interest. These elements represent secondhand accounts. Secondary sources may include textbooks, encyclopedias, oral histories of individuals or a group, journal articles, newspaper stories, and even obituary notices.

Oral history/narrative and sartorial biography

Oral history or oral narrative can be used by historians, sociologists, or cultural anthropologists. As indicated earlier in Chapter 6, "Object-based Research," you can refer to oral or written testimony of individuals or interview individuals who are still alive and ask them to reflect back and remember their past experiences that are relevant to the research questions. Those narratives are valuable since the people had actually lived through that experience or events.

A documentary video called *The Theatre de la Mode* (1991) shows the revival of the French Haute Couture industry after the Second World War when France was liberated from the German Nazis. In the video, Robert Ricci, a son of famous French couturière Nina Ricci, talks about the social and economic situations and workers' labor conditions of the French fashion industry at the time. Also another lady who used to wear Haute Couture talks about her love for French fashion and remembers that she changes dresses a couple of times a day. Narrative research is a form of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives (Clandinin 2013; Clandinin and Connelly 2000). This information is then restored and retold by the researcher into a narrative chronology. In the end, the narrative combines views from the participant's life with those of the researcher's life in a collaborative narrative.

Shukla uses oral narratives in her research (2015b), and she calls it "sartorial autobiographies" in which a respondent talks about his/her life stories, clothing choices in particular, and she suggests that we shift from an object-centered to a person-centered research (2015b). "A person-centered study of dress acknowledges not only the person getting dressed but also the numerous people involved in the creation and performance of clothing, and it pays close attention to the contexts in which these creative acts occur."

According to Shukla, "sartorial autobiographies" takes one of two forms:

> It is often a story, told in the first person, from beginning to end, recounting the episodes of a person's life. Or, it can be a narrative told to someone else, who then pieces together information about the person and structures it into a coherent order. Sartorial autobiographies normally fall into our second category of autobiography, the one that involves a writer, or in our case, a scholar or curator. Through ethnographic fieldwork—by direct observation, data gathering, and in-depth interviews—through a dialogic engagement with someone else, we can construct an "as told to" biography. (2015b: 56)

In Shukla's in-depth fieldwork research (2007, 2008, 2015a), she allows her respondents to tell their autobiographical stories about their selection of dress and how they feel about them. While scholars often talk about the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods, Shukla points out the rift in the research focus between the past and the present. Some scholars of dress study historical artifacts, seeing dress as an entry into the past while others focus on the present through ethnographic studies of contemporary dress, and these two separate temporal approaches can be combined into a single methodology that can unify the past and the present, allowing us to use the present to understand material culture practices of the past (Shukla 2015b: 63).

Written documents and literary sources

Although it is difficult to rely solely on written documents, historical or contemporary, they could be used as a supplementary material in the studies of fashion and dress. Since artists and designers may deviate from exact, visual representations, the accuracy of their pictures needs to be determined by other available data. One way to check is to refer to written descriptions and commentaries on dress of the same period in history, such as personal diaries, accounts of travel and exploration, catalogues, biographies, novels, memoirs, essays, satires, books of history and philosophy, and manuals on etiquette and personal conduct (Taylor 2002). Religious writings can also be rich sources of information on dress, although they may be written for other purposes and have nothing to do with fashion per se. These written forms of evidence can provide information to help validate the authenticity of visual representations and to elucidate the meanings of dress within its contemporary setting, although they too may be subject to bias (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1973: 15).

Scholars in literary studies use both fiction and nonfiction as their sources, and some of them make an analysis of characters' outward appearance and how they are dressed through the written documents. While using the literary materials as a method is rare for social scientists, it is a viable qualitative method. These materials may be rich in costume descriptions and put the costumes in a particular social and cultural context. Buck (1983: 89) explains: "Where dress is used to express character and illuminate social attitudes and relationships, the novel can give more. It then shows dress in action within the novelist's world."

Some fashion/dress historians and researchers rely on novels, poetry, plays, newspapers, journals, autobiographies, and diaries as descriptive evidence. But the accuracy needs to be called into question. These materials need to be used with surviving garments. Spooner (2004: 1) explains that both Gothic literature and the history and the theory of fashion have achieved increasing prominence within academic discourse in the beginning of the twenty-first century, and costumes and disguises, and veils and masks are ubiquitous features of Gothic fiction.

Similarly, Koppen places Virginia Woolf's works within the context of contemporary European fashions, sartorial practices, and projects of dress reform from the Victorian period to the 1930s. The purpose of this book is to explore Woolf's writing through its depiction of clothes based on the assumption that clothes matter to the construction as well as the reconstruction of a historical moment and its literary representations (Koppen 2009: 1). Other literary scholars who refer to specific classical writers in the investigation of fashion include Weber (2018) who explores the historical figures that Proust were fascinated by and later uses them in his book, and Davidson (2019) who argues that clothing between 1795 and 1825 reflected Britain's turbulent times and examines how the clothing and fashion were depicted in Jane Austen's fictional writings and her letters.

Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is the method people use on a daily basis to accomplish their everyday lives. It was founded by UCLA professor of sociology Harold Garfinkel in the 1940s. In his *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967), Garfinkel explained that so-called social order is internalized by actors who then act out those socially prescribed norms and values as Parson did, and how order is produced as the local achievement of those same actors.

Garfinkel coined the term "ethnomethodology" to refer to the study of folk (*ethno*) methods for making sense of the social environment. Ethnomethodologists draw a parallel between the methods that people use to reach an understanding of events and the methods used by scientists. For them, the crucial problem in understanding social conduct is not simply about the values, ideas, perceptions that are expressed through behavior but rather determining how they are assembled, communicated, manipulated, and used in social interaction.

Ethnomethodology is a study of how people convince themselves and one another that there is a stable order in society and of the nature of that order during and as a basis for social interaction. While some researchers dismiss the method as a nonscientific method and even trivial, it can be used in fashion/dress studies in challenging or testing supposedly stable dress codes. We have common ideas about how a dress should be made, how different items of clothing should look, how to wear them, and when to wear them. I have not come across any fashion/dress studies that employ this methodology, but it can result in many convincing findings; for instance, wearing a dirty pair of torn jeans to a wedding, or a man wearing a pink sweater in public. You would find out that they are against society's dress codes through other people's responses and reactions. These are the things that many of us take for granted because these ideas are so deeply embedded in our minds.

Cross-national or cross-cultural research

This method allows us to make comparisons between different countries and cultures on a particular topic. Researchers can look for similarities and differences to see why something happens in some countries while it does not happen in others. For instance, in some countries, a particular trend is popular while in other countries, it may not be so.

The following studies are examples of not only written documents but also cross-national or cross-cultural research, and both examine fashion reporting and journalism. Their attentions are more on the written texts and not on visual materials. Rocamora (2001) investigates newspaper reports on high fashion shows of the British newspaper *The Guardian* and the French newspaper

Le Monde during the year 1996. She argues that in both newspapers a field of fashion is constructed that is articulated around different beliefs: the belief in fashion as popular culture in *The Guardian* and the belief in fashion as high culture in *Le Monde.* She reviews all the articles, essays, and commentaries written about fashion shows in Paris and London. In this case, visual materials are simply treated as supplementary sources.

Similarly, Janssen (2006) examines changes and cross-national differences in journalistic attention to fashion in three countries, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, across time, in 1955, 1975, 1995, and 2005. She closely investigates opinion-leading prestigious newspapers in these countries for content analysis and examines how the volume and the content of the papers' fashion coverage have evolved since 1955 (2006: 2).

Her study has nothing to do with the design aspect of fashion or designers' collections. Her interest is how fashion is reported, covered, and described in elite newspapers in different cultures and make comparisons among them.

Visual and audio materials

Different types of visual records have been used to research dress and fashion. As part of visual culture, fashion is frequently being studied through illustrations, engravings, paintings, and photographs. Fashion/art/costume historians (Hollander 1994; Steele 1985) use historical visual materials, such as paintings, fashion plates, engravings, store catalogues, advertisements, and pamphlets, among others, as evidence to investigate how people dressed at a particular time period in history. Roach-Higgins and Eicher explain various methods that were used historically to record the way people dressed:

> Sculpture, paintings and ceramics . . . provided visual representations from very ancient times. Pictorial textiles and printed plates showing dress, as well as actual costume artifacts, are available from about the sixteenth century. . . . Costume histories summarize data from many of these sources. Modern costume histories are made more exact through the use of photographs of actual objects, often in color. . . . While contemporary items of dress are readily available, artifacts are limited, and many are destroyed and have deteriorated. Costume plates and fashion plates were also used. (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1973: 11–17)

Stella Blum's works were based on fashion catalogues, plates, and illustrations. In 1973, she published a book which consisted of fashion illustrations taken from the issues of the magazine *Harper's Bazaar* between 1867 and 1898, and in 1976, she took 310 line drawings and 8 full-color illustrations by Erté, from the same magazine between 1915 and 1936. In addition, she explored the influence of war and technological developments on fashion in her *Everyday Fashions of the Twenties* (1981) using images taken from the Sears, Roebuck and other mail-order catalogs of the twenties. In 1986, she published a similar book on *Everyday Fashion of the Thirties* and selected 133 pages and 750 illustrations with original captions from the Sears Catalog. Her studies remain as invaluable source of information to understand the history of American fashion.

Mackrell (2005) studies the close relationship between the paintings of Pisanello, who worked for several courts in Italy, and the clothes in his paintings during the Renaissance. His paintings depict the sartorial life of the Italian Renaissance courts. They were not simply paintings but were creating costume models and designing textile patterns and embroidery. Clark (1999) uses contemporary photographs, advertisements, calendar posters, and fashion magazines as evidence to show the development of the *cheongsam,* the Chinese ethnic dress, and how it represented modernity in the 1920s and 1930s.

Fashion scholars who study contemporary fashion/dress also use a great deal of visual and audio materials, such as photographs, illustrations, movies, and videos. Chen's study examines the sociopolitical meanings of official uniformity and differences and focuses on idealized dress as presented by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from 1949 to 1966 in sources such as photographs, posters, and film costumes (Chen 2005: 145), in addition to written sources, such as newspaper articles.

Some use recorded video or audio material produced for general and mass consumption. This may include television programs, transcripts, video tapes, DVDs, and films, among others. Baddeley (2002) referred to a number of Goth-related movies in his study. For those who study the relationship between fashion and photography (Antick 2002: Martineau 2018; Tulloch 2002), visual materials are the indispensable, key sources of evidence in their studies.

Recently, a number of film scholars are paying attention to the body, costume, and fashion in relation to films and cinema. Some are specific to a film genre while others are specific to a time period. Germana argues that Bond Girls emerged from masculine anxieties about the rise of female liberation after the Second World War and analyzes Bond Girls' dress as a symbol of exoticism, power and fetishism (2019). Gilligan looks at films in a more general way and explores how costume and fashion construct and shape narratives and identities in films, advertising and digital media. Her case studies include *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Save the Last Dance*, *The Matrix* trilogy and *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (2019). Paulicelli traces the sociocultural history of Italian cinema from the silent film to the present and argues that the Italian cinema was launched and developed side by side with Italian fashion. Italian fashion was a produce of the post–Second World War years (2016).

Triangulation

One method is never sufficient to provide enough information on a subject one is studying. Harvey says that multidisciplinary approaches and methods allow one to appreciate dress as “the complication of social life made visible” (Flick 2018b; Harvey 1995). Most researchers have at least one methodological technique they feel most comfortable with, which often becomes their favorite or only approach to research. This might be why many previous qualitative research texts often tend to lean toward a single research method, such as participant observation, interviewing, or one of the unobtrusive measures. Furthermore, they perceive their method as a non-theoretical tool, and they fail to recognize that different methods impose certain perspectives on reality. When researchers begin their research, a theoretical assumption has already been made.

Some researchers have combined the two research methods: quantitative and qualitative. For instance, narrative descriptions and statistics can be used since narrative data are able to support numerical data and vice versa. This process is called triangulation. Each method reveals slightly different facts of the same symbolic reality. Thus, by introducing or using different methods, you obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality, a richer and more complete array of symbols and concepts.

The term “triangulation” is common in surveying activities, map making, navigation, and military practices. It was first used in the social sciences as a metaphor describing a form of multiple operationalism or convergent validation (Campbell 1956), and it was used to describe multiple data-collection technologies designed to measure a single concept or construct. Denzin introduced an additional metaphor, lines of action, which characterizes the use of multiple data-collection technologies, theories, researchers, methodologies, or combinations of these four categories of research activities (2017). Triangulation as a method is restricted to the use of multiple data-gathering techniques to investigate the same phenomenon. This is what is required in future fashion/dress studies.

Buckridge’s study on lacebark production and consumption in the Caribbean

In his research on the African custom of lacebark production and consumption in the Caribbean, Buckridge combines various research methods (2018) in order to substantiate his argument. He analyzes how the skill of producing lacebark was nurtured and retained in the Caribbean by African enslaved and freed women and focuses on women’s engagement with lacebark and how its subsequent use helped shape their identities.

Since one method is insufficient and may not answer all the questions that the researcher may have, other methodologies are investigated to fill the void. While lacebark artifacts and specimens from Jamaica have survived and stored in museum collections around the world, finding surviving lacebark clothing is no easy task since they are difficult to preserve. Buckridge explored written descriptions and the analysis of artifacts, and that provided the opportunity to piece together how lacebark was used (2018: 7). Furthermore, measuring enslaved women's contributions to the local economy when in fact they worked in an informal and unregulated cottage industry that left no written or official records was challenging. Buckridge explains that sometimes he had to make certain generalizations based on limited resources:

> The scarcity of evidence and the absence of slave testimonies required new methods of enquiry to uncover enslaved women's use of lace-bark. Incorporating an interdisciplinary approach with various methods and previously neglected sources proved useful in this regard, but at times I have had to generalize from specific examples due to the lapse of evidence and the absence of slave testimony. (Buckridge 2018: 7)

He read scientific studies and articles from botanical journals, dictionaries, and agricultural digests all of which provided valuable information on the state of lacebark trees conservation efforts. In addition to formal interviews and informal conversations with scientists, conservationists, government officials, scholars, and spiritual leaders, he referred to illustrations and paintings of colonized subjects from the early period. Such visual materials reveal dress styles and lace accessories among enslaved and freed people in the Caribbean. He conducted oral history during field research in Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, and in the Dominican Republic whenever possible (Buckridge 2018: 8–9).

A study with mixed methods makes the research outcome richer and deeper since it allows the researcher to see it from multiple angles and occasionally find things that the researcher never dreamt of finding.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods

While many qualitative researchers do not believe that one can analyze human experiences quantitatively, the most ideal methodology would be the integration of the qualitative and the quantitative methods. Certain types of social research problems call for specific approaches (Creswell and Creswell 2018). A research problem is an issue or concern that needs to be addressed. For example, if the problem is identifying factors that influence an outcome, then a quantitative approach is best. It is the best approach to use to test a theory or explanation. On the other hand, if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach, which is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine. This type of approach may be needed because the topic is new, the topic has never been addressed with a certain sample or group, or existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group under study.

A mixed methods design is useful to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For example, you may want to both generalize the findings to a population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon or concept for individuals (Thompson 2012).

As explained earlier in the previous chapters, quantitative research can easily be distinguished from qualitative research in terms of their results. In quantitative research, the results are presented as quantities or statistical numbers. Researchers often use large, representative samples from which generalizations can be made regarding population parameters (Neuman 2019). Their research methods are questionnaires that have questions with multiple choice or yes/no answers that are converted into numeric, and they can be easily administered to large samples. An unbiased sample, which is the best way to obtain data that can be generalized to a population, is used. By contrast, in qualitative research, there are trends and themes that are described in words. The researchers emphasize the collection of in-depth information obtained from small samples without regard to generalizability to a population. Such information is frequently collected through extensive one-on-one interviews with participants. The intention is not to make generalizations to a population and therefore the researchers strive for purposive samples. Individuals are purposively selected because they are likely to be good sources of information. Qualitative-oriented researchers take an in-depth look at their participants through the methods discussed in the previous chapters, such as intensive interviews, open-ended questionnaires, observations, and so on. Self-reports can be difficult to interpret while attempting to identify causal variables. Participants may not tell the truth about certain aspects of their behavior; also, they may not have the self-insights to understand why they do what they do. It is the job of a researcher to elicit information on possible causation and make the participants aware of their behavior and enable them to verbalize their feelings and their actions (Flick 2018a).

There are some universals that should apply to all qualitative research methods, which should be evaluated on the same overall basis as other research, that is, according to whether it makes a substantive contribution to empirical knowledge and/or advances theory (Collins 1988; Marshall and Rossman 2015). Qualitative research can achieve this in multiple ways: it can provide new data or replicate previous studies within a different time and/or space frame; it gives voices to those not heard before, such as the youths in deviant fashion subcultures; it studies groups that are difficult to access and new fashion phenomena that are emerging; it can advance new theories of fashion or amend previously accepted ones. Consequently, qualitative research is vastly different from purely quantitative methods, but it can provide data and raise questions that no quantitative methods can generate partly because it allows for the emergence of unexpected phenomena.

Godart et al.'s investigation on factors that attribute to designers' success

In the study on "Factors that Attribute to Designers' Worldwide Success" (2015), Godart and his fellow researchers integrate both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to answer why and how designers become highly successful and globally acknowledged as the most talented designers. They use both statistical and verbal data to answer these questions.

The authors collected industry-wide data on the global high-end fashion industry over twenty-one fashion seasons between 2000 and 2010. The first step of the data collection was to identify the fashion houses/companies competing in the market. They collected the names of all the houses that organized a major fashion show in one of the four fashion centers, Paris, New York, Milan, and London, which constitute main fashion industry capitals. It means that the companies that do not take part in shows in these cities were automatically excluded from the study. The total number of fashion houses studied was 270. Most of the data were collected from publicly available sources. For instance, they collected life and career histories of designers and creative directors who worked for high-end houses from industry and from leading industry publications (such as *Women's Wear Daily*, *Journal du Textile*, and *Vogue*), as well as referred to a number of relevant websites such as www.fashionmodeldirectory.com (*Fashion Model Directory*), www.nymag.com (*New York Magazine*), and www.factiva.com (Dow Jones & Company) to supplement other sources. Data on designers span from the 1930s to 2010. In addition, the authors conducted more than thirty interviews with industry insiders between 2007 and 2011.

The researchers know what sort of answers can be retrieved from which methodological inquiries, and thus something that cannot be answered in numeric data is supplemented with verbal, descriptive data, and vice versa.

Conclusion

The choice of one's research method depends on the researcher's own personal training and experiences. An individual who is trained in technical, scientific writing, statistics, and computerized statistical programs and also familiar with quantitative journals in the library would most likely choose the quantitative design. The qualitative approach incorporates more of a literary form of writing and experience in conducting open-ended interviews and observations. The mixed methods researcher needs to be familiar with both quantitative and qualitative research, and he or she also needs an understanding of the rationales for combining both forms of data so that they can be articulated in a proposal.

Guide to further reading

Almila, Anna-Mari (2018), *Veiling in Fashion: Space and the Hijab in Minority Communities*, London: I.B. Tauris.

Clifford, Ruth (2018), "Learning to Weave for the Luxury Indian and Global Fashion Industries: the Handloom School in Maheshwar," in *Clothing Cultures*, March, Volume 5, Issue 1, pp. 111–31.

Finamore, M. Tolini (2013), *Hollywood Before Glamour: Fashion in American Silent Film*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ganeva, Mila (2018), *Film and Fashion amidst the Ruins of Berlin: From Nazism to the Cold War*, NY: Camden House.

Kortsch, Christine Bayles (2016), *Dress Culture in Late Victorian Women's Fiction*, London: Routledge.

Rees-Roberts, Nick (2019), *Fashion Film: Art and Advertising in the Digital Age*, London, UK: Bloomsbury.

Sheehan, Elizabeth M. (2018), *Modernism a la Mode: Fashion and the Ends of Literature*, Cornell University Press.

9
WRITING UP

OBJECTIVES

- To understand each step of the final writing process
- To understand that each research method has different ways to write
- To identify the necessary and required components in a research paper
- To recognize the importance of references

After completing the process of data collection in your research, you will probably write a paper or a report about your research project. Writing is a skilled craft, and that craft can be improved by writing, editing, and rewriting several times. This chapter introduces students who are not experienced in writing a research paper to the process of writing and what needs to be included in the paper and in what sequence. While a style of writing depends on your readers, clear and concise writing and avoiding all unnecessary jargon from any particular social scientific discipline are the best tactics. It is not necessary to use difficult vocabularies. Your paper has to be readable and comprehensible. Some basic guidelines for writing formal academic papers or reports are covered in this chapter.

The choice of your research method determines the style of your paper. For instance, for an ethnographic paper, you write what you observed, noting how people behaved and what they said. Your findings are often illustrated by specific observations, which can be summarized in your field notes. Sometimes, your field notes and interview notes are quoted directly and sometimes they are incorporated into the text of your paper. People you talk to and places and cities you visit usually remain anonymous, and you should use fictitious names to avoid any presumptions in the minds of readers. In a quantitative research, graphs, charts, and tables are often included in findings.

After completing your paper, you can disseminate it to appropriate audiences so that you can get feedback, which may be useful for your future research.

The structure of a research paper

Major sections and components of standard social scientific reports are described. Your paper needs a structure with major headings and subheadings. A basic paper includes a title, abstract of the paper, introduction, literature review, methods used in research, findings, and conclusion. Your goal is to answer in writing, in a logical and coherent way, the same questions you have been asking about the text as you read. Refer back to the questions you are answering as you write. They can serve as a guide in determining which information you need to make your point and which is extraneous. Keeping your key questions in mind as you write and revise will keep you from wandering.

Title

The title usually appears on a title page with author information, such as the name and the affiliation. You should come up with a good title. Some come up with a title before starting a paper while others think of the title after or during the process of writing the paper. You need a good descriptive title that would attract readers. Good titles are self-explanatory and tell much about your research. The title gives readers an idea about your work so it should have the key words of your research. There is often the broad main title and a subheading describing the main title that is more specific and narrow than the main title. For example, *Fashioning Identity: Status Ambivalence in Contemporary Fashion* (Mackinney-Valentin 2018), *Fashion Film: Art and Advertising in the Digital Age* (Rees-Roberts 2019), or *Footbinding as Fashion: Ethnicity, Labor, and Status in Traditional China.*

Abstract

An abstract is a brief description or a summary of the paper/report. It describes the research problem/question/hypothesis, methods, sample, results, and conclusions of your study, and it should contain only ideas or information discussed in the body of the paper. Abstracts are found in the beginning of a paper immediately below the title. An abstract is always included in a journal article rather than in a book. Writing a concise and precise abstract is important since readers decide whether or not to continue reading the paper based on the abstract. If you are writing a paper for your class, you probably do not have to include an abstract.

Introduction

An introduction consists of basic research questions, key terms, and research focus. Scholarly papers and reports must begin with a formal introduction that cites literature. The introduction should state why the research problem/hypothesis is important and worth studying. It provides an overview of what has been said about the topic in the literature. You need to explain how your study differs from others that have already been reported. It is important to indicate the type of writing that will follow after the introduction, such as a descriptive/ethnographical report or a statistical survey analysis. The introduction should end with a statement describing your specific research objectives or hypothesis. The first opening sentence in the introduction is crucial and, therefore, needs to be interesting since it can either entice or lose readers.

Literature review

As indicated in Chapter 2, "Research Process," a detailed examination of the past research literature relevant to your research topic is called a literature review. This is a process that every researcher goes through before conducting his or her own research. The literature review gives a comprehensive review of previous works on the general and specific topics considered in your paper. It should include references to classic works related to the investigation and should also include recent studies to show that you are up to date. The more thorough the literature review, the more solid the research paper's foundation becomes. It is like having a dialogue with other researchers, and you may want to challenge previously accepted ideas or findings. Without the literature review, your paper is not considered academic or scholarly. Keep in mind that writing only about your research is not sufficient in an academic paper.

Research design and methodology

After the literature review comes the methodology section. This is a comprehensive description of how the researchers gathered data and analyzed these data. You need to inform the readers how your research was accomplished, through which process. What do the data consist of and how were the data collected and analyzed? This section of the paper should describe the research methods for social science research. For a historical approach, library research is obvious with citations and sources. If it was a questionnaire, you explain how the respondents were selected, how many responded, and how many failed to respond. If demographic information has been collected, it should also be described here. It is essential to give an overview of how the questionnaire was developed, including a brief description of tryouts and item analysis, if any. If the actual questionnaire will be included in the paper/report, either as a figure or an appendix, the writer is obliged to describe it only briefly. If it is not included, the writer should describe the questionnaire in more detail and, at an absolute minimum, should indicate how many items there were in each section of the questionnaire and their form, such as open-ended or closed-ended questions. It is a good idea to provide sample items if the whole questionnaire is not included in the report. Describe when and how the questionnaires were distributed and collected or returned. If informed consent was obtained, it is important to mention this fact (see Chapter 2, “Research Process,” about the Institutional Review Board).

While many researchers either omit or make this section very brief, it is very important to clearly state your research methods and the processes you used to conduct your research. These need to be specific and clear. The purpose is to allow anyone who is interested in repeating your research using the same methods to do so. Explain who your research subjects were, how they are selected, how many were in your study, how many turned down your request, and how they were informed about your research. Then you need to identify the nature of the data and explain how they were collected. The purpose of explaining your data-collection process is to allow your readers to replicate a research study if they wish to. If it was an ethnographical study, the description of the research setting is important. For a quantitative study, you must indicate clearly where you got your raw data from.

Findings, results, and analysis

In this section, information uncovered during the research process is presented. Findings are the data, and results are the interpretation/analysis of the data. There are different ways to present results from quantitative and qualitative research. In a quantitative paper, findings and results are the same, and the findings present percentages and proportions of the data in the form of charts, tables, and graphs as discussed in Chapter 4, “Survey Methods.” But in the case of qualitative research, there are several options that are available for writing about the findings and results of the data, which are often treated separately. The findings or results section is not as easily explained. For example, in qualitative research, the analysis section often follows the methods section, or data are presented throughout their analysis in order to demonstrate and document various patterns and observations. Sections of qualitative writings are often organized according to conceptual subheadings that were found during research.

Discussions, implications, and conclusion

The discussion section amounts to reiteration and elaboration of key points and suggestions about how the findings fit into the existing literature on the topical study area. You must remember that no research is perfect, absolute, or definitive so you can discuss some of the weaknesses found or the limitations of your research methodology. Everyone is making a contribution in the research community or in the fashion/dress studies community as a scholar or a researcher. Therefore, other researchers may find your research worthwhile and meaningful, and they will refer to your study in their research. After completing a research project, the researchers realize that they have gained greater knowledge and insight into the phenomenon investigated. At the same time, you realize what needs to be studied further.

References, bibliography, and notes

When writing a research paper, you must follow a special set of formal conventions for documentation. For textual analysis, it is usually sufficient to indicate in the first reference only the publication date of the text you are using. Thereafter, you may document quotations with the author's last name and appropriate page number. When referring to an idea or argument found more generally throughout the text, you should include the author's name alone in one of your own sentences.

There are two ways to reference materials you used in your research: notes and source references. In the social sciences, source references are more often used for documenting statements made in the text, and notes generally give further explanation to the text rather than cite source references. Source references are identified by the last name of a reference author, the date of publication, and in the case of a direct quotation, the page from which the quote has been taken. All of the works cited in your paper must be in the bibliography pages. A bibliography at the very end of your paper or book allows the readers to see whether you are aware of recent as well as classic seminal works in your area of expertise. By looking at your list, readers can see the direction of your research.

There are various writing style guides for different disciplines, such as *American Psychological Association* (APA), *Modern Language Association* (MLA), *The Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS), *Harvard*, *Columbia Guide to Online Style* (CGOS), and *Council of Biology Editors* (CBE). The styles that are used in social science publications and historical journals are CMS and APA, which are also applicable to fashion and dress studies. Each style has a way to cite online sources as well. Refer to the handbooks and references, such as *MLA Handbook* (2016), *APA Style Guide to Electronic References* (2012), and *The Chicago Manual Style* (2017).

Disseminating a research paper

Just as clothes designed by designers are manufactured, transformed into fashion, and then disseminated as fashion, your research once completed can also be disseminated at professional conferences and possibly as publications. If you are a student, you spend a considerable number of weeks and sometimes even months writing your paper, so you would want to expose your research results to the public and to those who may be interested in your research questions as well as your findings. Similarly, research is often done for an MA/MS thesis or a PhD dissertation.

Conclusion

After you complete your data collection, you will sit down and write your paper or book so that others can read about your research project. There are basic components that any research paper should have, so make sure you cover them in your paper. Your paper needs to be readable and contain reference materials.

Guide to further reading

Coyle, William, and Joe Law (2012), *Research Papers*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Longman.
Goldenberg, Phyllis (2010), *Writing a Research Paper: A Step-by-Step Approach*, New York: William H. Sadlier.
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CONCLUSION: FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND DIRECTIONS IN FASHION/DRESS STUDIES

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the future opportunities of fashion/dress studies research
- To recognize the role and the placement of fashion in postmodern times
- To reexamine the idea of fashion as a Western/non-Western concept
- To understand the importance of diversity in research topics

Fashion as a business is an enormous industry, and consumers in general, especially women, like clothes, and they enjoy shopping for clothes. Cyclical changes in the selection of clothes in department stores and boutiques never cease to fascinate us. New styles and designs are introduced every season so that we can refresh our wardrobe. While fashion surrounds us, fashion/dress studies require us to look at it from a scholarly perspective. However, academics are fashion consumers as well, and it does not mean we need to keep academics and industry practitioners as separate groups of people as if there were no overlaps between the two. The gap between the two needs to be filled as both can learn from the other.

As explained earlier in this book, fashion as a research topic is still considered very marginal, on the periphery of any intellectual discussions. We need the legitimation of the research community and their recognition so that more financial support becomes available to the scholars who wish to study fashion/dress. Therefore, it is the responsibility of fashion/dress scholars to elevate the importance as well as the interests of the topic in academia. We need to make sure that fashion/dress studies continues to prosper with more research funding opportunities.

Furthermore, we live in a new historical phase called a postmodern society, with every idea and every phenomenon taking a postmodern turn. Fashion is known as a modern phenomenon, but fashion can also be analyzed from a postmodern perspective. Fashion is often considered to be a Western concept, but that idea can be revisited in today's postmodern times.

Fashion in postmodern times

There are signs of cultural turmoil everywhere. A broad social and cultural shift is taking place, and the concept of the "postmodern" captures at least certain aspects of this transformation. The transition from modernity to postmodernity is a consequence of social, political, and cultural changes in the relationships between different social groups. Modernity presumes the existence of clear distinctions between different types and genres of aesthetic and stylistic endeavors while postmodernity no longer recognizes these categories as legitimate or even necessary. Fashion emphasizes images and incessant change, and this constitutes the epitome of a postmodernist cultural form. Postmodernity is difficult to characterize because of its preoccupation with ambiguity and contradiction. It has no fixed meanings and often has multiple meanings, and these meanings are unstable, contradictory, and incessantly changing. One of the major characteristics of a postmodern phenomenon is the breakdown of boundaries and categories. Whatever used to be classified as a group becomes gradually meaningless.

Therefore, fashion/dress scholars need to shift their focus slightly to make the postmodern interpretation of fashion, which is different from the modern interpretation that many have made since the clothing distinctions, such as menswear/womenswear, high fashion/popular fashion, outerwear/innerwear, are already beginning to collapse. The rules of the clothing system are also flexible. Today's youths in the industrialized countries no longer follow the traditional sartorial conventions as to how clothes should look, what they need to be made out of, or how they should be worn. Postmodern consumers are extremely creative, and thus the lines that used to be clearly drawn between fashion professionals, such as designers and stylists, and consumers are also blurry. We as researchers need to be aware of these changes in the world of fashion.

No one explains the meaning of fashion in a postmodern society better than Crane who argues that we see a shift from class fashion to consumer fashion (2000), especially in the West. In postmodern cultures, consumption is conceptualized as a form of role playing, as consumers seek to project conceptions of identity that are continually evolving. In contemporary Western society, social class is less evident and important in one's self-image and identity in society than before. Style differentiation no longer distinguishes social classes. There is a great deal of interclass and intraclass mobility.

Social identity that used to be based on the economic and political sphere is now based on something outside. According to Crane (2000: 11), “The consumption of cultural goods, such as fashionable clothing, performs an increasingly important role in the construction of personal identity, while the satisfaction of material needs and the emulation of superior classes are secondary.” One’s style of dress conveys an initial and continuing impression-making image. The variety of lifestyles available in contemporary society liberates the individual from tradition and enables him or her to make choices that create a meaningful self-identity (Giddens 2018).

Contexts in which fashion/dress is placed, rather than the contents, that is, the clothing itself, are what we need to focus on. Therefore, material clothing itself is less important than the frames that are used to sell it, which can be used in turn to sell licensed products (Crane 2000: 15). Consumers are no longer perceived as “cultural dopes” or “fashion victims” who imitate fashion leaders but as people selecting styles on the basis of their perceptions of their own identities and lifestyles. Postmodern consumers are active producers of fashion. A style is a reflection of an individual identity since each individual is treated as a unique being in postmodern thinking. Fashion is presented as a choice rather than a mandate. The consumer is expected to “construct” an individualized appearance from a variety of options. A collection of materials drawn from many sources, clothing styles have different meanings for different social groups.

As Davis (1992) points out, fashion expresses individual identity. In postmodern times, individuals have multiple identities with different roles to perform, and therefore, they choose their identification from the numerous ranges of images and styles. Traditional ways of collective classifications and groupings, such as class, gender, race, and place, are gradually being replaced by individual and personal consumer identities. The members of postmodern societies demonstrate a fragmented, heterogeneous, and individualistic stylistic identification (Muggleton 2000).

Fashion as a global concept

Dress from non-Western cultures was collected in Europe from the late sixteenth century onward as visual evidence of the existence of exotic, mysterious peoples. Taylor (2004: 67) explains that by the late nineteenth century the collection and examination of garments and body ornaments was included within the emerging academic discipline of anthropology, and they were treated as cultural artifacts, such as tools or weapons. Still today, studies and museum collections on ethnic dress are limited.

While Cannon (1998) argues that fashion is found in traditional cultures as well, fashion was often believed to be a Western concept and phenomenon. Some of the classical theorists, such as J. C. Flugel (1930) and Ferdinand Toennies (1961 [1909]), have argued that fashion originated in the West and is a Western product. Toennies explained the differences between fixed costume found in simple societies and modish costume found in complex societies, implying that costumes that change frequently exist only in the civilized West (1961 [1909]). Such a statement seems to confirm the idea that fashion first started in the West.

Since the 1980s, that has been much debated among contemporary writers (Cannon 1998; Craik 1994), and some argued that fashion can be found even in ethnic dress, such as Japanese kimono or Indian sari. It depends on how one defines fashion. Once we can come up with a clear definition of fashion/dress, we can then apply it to non-Western fashion/dress.

In the study of costume by European and American scholars, fashion and Western dress have enjoyed privileged positions (Baizerman, Eicher, and Cerny 2014: 123). They pay less attention to ethnic dress of non-Western cultures. We need to focus more on cultural pluralism and multiculturalism in the aspects of dress and fashion studies and conduct more in-depth research on ethnic fashion/dress so that we can acquire facts and evidence to come up with convincing findings. Studies of ethnic dress are often ethnographical, which consumes much time and money. Furthermore, museums across the United States and Europe need to collect and conserve ethnic costumes so that they can be used in material culture studies.

Baizerman, Eicher, and Cerny (2014) argue that dress has been studied from an ethnocentric/Eurocentric point of view. European aesthetic standards and European perceptions of clothing were applied when representing non-European modes. They make a provocative yet convincing statement by referring to “Social Darwinism.” Darwin’s theory of evolution justifies the colonial attitude of the Euro-American to other people of the world. Dress was touted as a visible manifestation of the civilized state of being, of cultural superiority where advancement was defined in terms of superior economic development and global dominance. Modifying dress practices of the colonized to parallel those of the West was seen as a way of extending civilization (Baizerman, Eicher, and Cerny 2014: 124).

As discussed in the “Introduction” section of this book, Eurocentric assumptions are found even in the terminology usage. Baizerman, Eicher, and Cerny (2014) also try to come up with the best term for non-Western dress. The term they eventually proposed is either “regional dress” or “ethnic dress.” Their study informs us of the significance of using the correct or the most appropriate term and also the importance of understanding the cultural biases and prejudice included in these terms so that the conclusions of any research are as objective as they can be. It is always wise to start with definitions of the terms and concepts we study so that we as researchers can make sure and confirm to ourselves that we are accurately understanding them.

In the past decade or so, Western scholars' perceptions about fashion are slowly changing, and many attempts have been made to raise the awareness about "the globalization of fashion" in every sense of the word. The symposium entitled "Cultural Transfer: Orientalism and Occidentalism in Fashion" took place at the University of Potsdam in November 2009 where fashion/dress scholars presented papers on the integration of the West and the East in fashion, the historical Oriental influences on Western fashion and vice versa. A seminar entitled "(Re)thinking Fashion Globalization" took place at Bunka Gakuen University in Japan in 2019. Craik and Jansen edited a special journal edition on "Constructing National Fashion Identities" (2015) compiling essays about fashions in Cambodia, Ghana, China, and Africa. More academic conferences, seminars, and journals with such endeavors need to be organized so that fashion/dress scholars become more cognizant of the fact that fashion was not and is not simply a Western idea or phenomenon. In addition, we need to invite and collaborate with more minority scholars to include their voices.

The Egalitarian move: Increasing diversity in research topics

In today's multicultural and pluralist society where people are mobile and immigrate and migrate from country to country carrying their own dress, it is imperative that those of us who live and work in the West understand the sociocultural meaning of what the dress signifies so that we can erase misconceptions and misunderstanding attached to the dress. Therefore, we, scholars are urged to conduct in-depth academic research on clothing items that are not conventionally Western and are sometimes politically fused and controversial. More and more scholars are shedding light on ethnic and non-Western dress styles and fashion. As Shukla points out:

> We need to examine not just the quirky and eccentric ensembles of the powerful, rich, and famous but also the unexceptional and common to comprehend the full range of human experience. This egalitarian move will carry us toward an all-encompassing social history. As we record the sartorial autobiographies of many—men and women, poor and rich, native and foreign—we can understand how people exhibit their changing bodies and changing aspirations. (Shukla 2015b: 60–61)

Since the publication of the first edition of this book in 2011, we see a tremendous upsurge in studies on Muslim dress and headscarves: *Pious Fashion: How Muslim Women Dress* (Bucar 2017), *Behind the Veil: A Critical Analysis of European Veiling Laws* (Cox 2019), and *Veiling in Fashion: Space and the Hijab in Minority*

Communities (Almila 2018), to name a few. In addition, there are studies that introduce explicit institutional oppositions against headscarves, such as *Islamic Gender Apartheid: Exposing a Veiled War Against Women* (Chesler 2017), *Refashioning Secularisms in France and Turkey: The Case of the Headscarf Ban* (Barras 2014), and *The Burqa Affair Across Europe: Between Public and Private Space* (Ferrari and Patorelli 2016). These active scholarships on Muslim dress help raise the awareness of the clothing items which are often misunderstood and stigmatized.

Other significant non-Western/ethnic dress and fashion research include *The Social Life of Kimono* (Cliffe 2017), *Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul* (Ford 2017), *Fashioning Brazil* (Kutesko 2018), and *Contemporary Indonesian Fashion* (Royo 2019), among many others. In addition, research themes are becoming narrower and more specialized in focus, such as about a particular subculture, a unique menswear style, or a class in a particular region, which makes the field very rich and deep: *Costuming Cosplay: Dressing the Imagination* (Winge 2018), *Peacock Revolution: American Masculine Identity and Dress in the Sixties and Seventies* (Hill 2018), and *Clothing and Landscape in Victorian England: Working-Class Dress and Rural Life* (Worth 2019). The two opposite sides of a class spectrum, the rich and the poor, in relation to their taste preferences are also studied: *From Goodwill to Grunge: A History of Secondhand Styles and Alternative Economies* (Zotte 2017), and *Luxury: A Rich History* (McNeil and Riello 2016).

Furthermore, in light of the ongoing discussions on redefining traditional ideas about gender or considering gender ambivalence and fluidity, we see significant scholarships investigating the past and the present coming out of different disciplines, such as *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Sears 2014), *Fashioning Identity: Status Ambivalence in Contemporary Fashion* (Mackinney-Valentin 2018), and *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past* (Boag 2011). These studies confirm that dress has historically been and continues to be an important marker for gender, and our society is in constant dialogue with gender expression and dress.

Fashion and dress studies are optimistically moving forward in the right direction while transcending not only disciplinary boundaries but also many of the existing social boundaries, such as gender, class, race, and ethnicity.

Conclusion

Fashion/dress studies is recent in its origin so there are countless opportunities and directions for scholars to take. As time changes, fashion changes since fashion is a reflection of the current ideology of a society. Fashion/dress scholars need to have more dialogue with fellow colleagues and students about where, how, and to whom to teach fashion/dress theories. Academic institutions, such as colleges and universities, academic publishers, conference organizers and sponsors, are starting to work together to make fashion/dress studies a legitimate and respected field of research.

Guide to further reading

Begum, Lipi, Rohit K. Dasgupta, and Reina Lewis (eds.) (2018), *Styling South Asian Youth Cultures: Fashion, Media, and Society*, London: I.B. Tauris.

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NOTES

Introduction

1 Throughout this book, I use "fashion" and "dress" side by side since I am simply talking not only about studies on fashion but also studies on dress, which consists of material clothing as well as any objects and practices that are related to adornment.

2 *Fashion Foundations: Early Writings on Fashion and Dress* (2003), written by Kim K. P. Johnson, Susan J. Torntore, and Joanne B. Eicher, is very helpful in understanding fashion-/dress-related research studies in different chronological times. The book includes excerpts taken from early writings between 1575 and 1940 by costume historians, economists, psychologists, sociologists, feminists, and social activists.

3 Michael Carter's book *Fashion Classics from Carlyle to Barthes* (2003) gives an overview of the writings by eight classical fashion theorists: Thomas Carlyle, J. C. Flugel, Thornstein Veblen, Georg Simmel, Herbert Spencer, A. L. Kroeber, James Laver, and Roland Barthes. They laid the foundation for and influenced the conceptual and the theoretical understanding and interpretation of contemporary clothing and fashion. I would also add William Graham Sumner, Ferdinand Toennies, and Gabriel Tarde to this list of those who have made a theoretical contribution to fashion/dress studies.

4 If you wish to explore further each of the classical theorists mentioned above, it is highly recommended that you read their original texts indicated in the bibliography at the end of this book.

5 Erling Persson is the founder of a major Swedish clothing company H&M (Hennes & Mauritz AB) that was established in 1947. It has 1,800 stores in 35 countries (www.hm.com).

Chapter 1

1 There is a clear difference between making theoretical generalizations and stereotyping. Students often mistake social scientific theorizing as stereotyping. Social science is based on solid research, and it challenges people's false assumptions and taken-for-granted preconceptions. Stereotyping simply emerges from one's speculations and guesswork, and it is often based on prejudice and biases that stem from someone's personal experiences.

2 These men were the first members of the Chicago School where researchers specialized in urban sociology using the ethnographical method. They are known for the development of the symbolic interactionist approach. The basic premise of the theory is that human behavior is shaped by social structures and physical environment factors.

Chapter 2

1 Phenomenology, which was started by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), a German scholar, in the early twentieth century, is a philosophy or a method of inquiry based on the premise that reality consists of objects and events as they are perceived in human consciousness. It emphasizes the first-person viewpoint and subjectivity. See more in *Introduction to Phenomenology* (1999) by Robert Sokolowski.

2 Epistemology studies the nature, origin, and limits of knowledge.

3 Since there is often a strong connection between a researcher and the topic he or she selects, many think that I am a fan of the Japanese designers in Paris. Fortunately or unfortunately, that is not true. I am interested in their work as a researcher, but I do not wear their clothes.

4 See Chapter 4, "Survey Methods," for descriptions. One of the major differences between probability and nonprobability sampling is that the former involves random sampling while the latter does not. See more in *Sampling* (2012) by Steven K. Thompson.

Chapter 3

1 Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation. In sociology in particular, it means the interpretation of social events by analyzing the meanings of the human participants and their culture. It is not only people's social behavior that needs attention but also the context in which it belongs.

2 In 1919, Alfred Kroeber measured the illustrations of women's dress in fashion plates that were idealized depictions of women's clothing styles. Edward Sapir wrote an article on "Fashion" and Ruth Benedict wrote one on "Dress" for *The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* in 1931.

3 Herbert Blumer published an important article entitled "Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection" in *The Sociological Quarterly* in 1969.

4 Postmodernity or postmodern condition is a state of society that comes after modernity, and it is sometimes called "late capitalism." No one knows exactly when it started. Some scholars claim that modernity ended at the end of the twentieth century, and it was replaced by postmodernity. One of the characteristics of a postmodern phenomenon is the breakdown of traditional barriers. See more in *The Postmodern Condition* (1984) by Jean-François Lyotard.

5 The term "Hawthorne effect" was named after a manufacturing facility. Research was conducted to see whether the darkness or the lightness of the room that workers worked in had any impact on their productivity level. It turned out that the productivity level increased not due to any environmental conditions, but it was the researchers' interest in the workers that improved their productivity. When the research was over, productivity dropped, so knowing that they are part of research could change people's behavior.

Chapter 4

1 A pilot study is a preliminary research and analysis conducted before the real study to assess the feasibility of the study. It pretests a research instrument such as a questionnaire or an interview schedule.

2 Rensis Likert (1903–81), an American social scientist, developed the Likert scale that indicates the level of agreement/disagreement to a given statement in questionnaires.

3 There are many graphics software programs for drawing graphs. If you have Microsoft Office installed on your PC, you can draw charts and graphs with Microsoft Excel, which is usually included in the package.

4 For further details, see "Appendix 2: Interview Schedules; Questionnaire for Focus Groups Interview Schedule," pp. 255–59, in *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (2000) by Diana Crane. Also see Paul Hodkinson's study on Goth subculture (2002), which is another research that used questionnaires. Self-completion questionnaires were distributed at the Whitby Gothic Weekend in October 1997. In order to gain some idea of typicality by garnering multi-choice answers and short comments from a wider range of Goths, Hodkinson used the questionnaire sample of 112, which was, according to the author, not large enough to make any generalizations. Thus questionnaire data is treated as secondary relative to the other methods. The quantitative questionnaire results are found in "Appendix: Quantitative Questionnaire Results" (pp. 199–202).

Chapter 5

1 Strictly speaking, there are differences between semiotics and semiology, but it is not the intention of this book to examine these differences in detail. It was Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) who first coined the term "semiotics" and viewed signs as part of an ongoing process of human action. But it was Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) who made a major contribution to the discipline of semiology as part of the social sciences as explained in this chapter.

2 The English translations of the original publications by Saussure and Barthes are too complex for undergraduate students, so read some introductory books on semiology before you tackle the original ones. *Signs in Contemporary Culture: An Introduction to Semiotics* (1998) by Arthur Asa Berger and *Roland Barthes* (2003) by Graham Allen are recommended.

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