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Configural theory of why people shop for clothes: personal-attribute explanations of four stalwart segments

根据构形理论解析人们购买服装的原因：四种个人属性的解释

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The study here applies fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to offer configurations that are sufficient to identify “Clotheshorses”, “Clothesaholics”, “Clothesgourmands” and “Clothesnegators”. In contrast to prior literature investigating only clothes shopping frequency, we find these four clothes shopper types are different with regard to the perceived “importance of dressing well”. The findings demonstrate the existence of these four stalwart segments.

Keywords: clothesgourmands; configuration; qualitative comparative analysis; segments; shopping

这个研究提供了充分的因果说明识别不同类型服装购物者。这里的研究应用定性比较分析(QCA)提供配置,充分识别“服装购物中毒者”、“服装狂购者”、“服装痴迷者”、“服装反对者”。

相比之前的文献,只有调查服装购物的频率,这四个不同类型的衣服购物者感知到的“穿衣的重要性”。这些发现证明了四种类型的存在。不同配置的先行词指出人的自我认同变量(性别、满意度、自信、建议引导,建议者,不同需要)就足以解释不同的服装购物类型。例如,足够的因果说明讲究“服装购物中毒者”(频繁的衣服购物和高度重要性)表明,这种类型的成员包括女性在对生活满意度较低。这一发现表明,“服装购物中毒者”可能使用一个补偿心理来实现一些生活满意度。此外,许多“服装购物中毒者”是市场的专家,他们寻求以及给给他们的朋友建议。

定性比较分析(fsQCA)标识特定的结合有着因果关系,有关一个特定的结果。用这种方法建立理论和定性比较分析使用 Boolean 而不是线性代数。这项研究以FsQCA为分析为工具。首先,传统的方法建立的假设每个独立变量能够影响水平的结果,独立于水平的其他变量。分析这样的净效果,尤其弱势为研究案例的组合特征(Ragin, 2008)。

第二,假定高值的自变量与因果变量的高价值和低价值的独立,低价值在因果变量侧重于对称的相关性。

在现实生活中,人际关系变成了不对称,存在一个特定因果条件结合充分性(但不必要)的一个特定的结果与因果条件语句使没有预测缺失的具体因果组合。作为fsQCA分析的基础是建立关系而非相关性,fsQCA假设不对称的关系。此外,fsQCA足够分析少量事例。

因此,fsQCA 适合调查条件不同的服装购买者类型。本研究旨在确定因果说明的原则设置交叉捕捉,即连接的具体分数两个或两个以上简单的前期条件。更具体地说,研究利用fsQCA配置四个不同的服装购买者类型(服装购物中毒者:衣服购物频低和高的重要性,重要;服装狂购者:穿着漂亮衣服的购物频率低和高的重要性;服装痴迷者:穿着漂亮衣服的购物频率高和的重要性;服装反对者:穿着漂亮衣服的购物频率低和重要性低的敷料)基于因果配置的六个不同的个人属性包括性别、满意度、自信,需要看不同以信息寻求和提供信息的行为。

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总结理论,这已经导致了理论模型的底层概念研究假设进行测试。

H1:大多数的消费者是女性,服装购物中毒者,属于高阶段,她们希望看起来不同,非常满意他们的生活,是高度自信,是服装专家。

H2:大多数的消费者是女性,服装狂购者阶段高,希望看起来不同,对生活高度满意,是不自信的,是服装专家。

H3:大多数的消费者在服装痴迷者段是男性,对看起来不同又比较低的需要,对生活相当不满意,是高度自信,是一个舆论追随者。

H4:大多数的消费者在服装反对者段是男性,对看起来不同有低需要,对生活高度满意,是不自信,是一个孤立的群体。

结果:模型的最高阶段始终是服装购物中毒者,但没有必要充分表明。通过运行地块进行所有可能的因果关系的XY的配置成变量,另一个假设因果配置受到了几乎相同的一致性的分数。895对服装购物中毒者:女·被建议者·建议者·~满意度·~自信·~看起来不同(中层点,“·”表示的逻辑和条件;波浪“~”表示否定,“不”。

为服装狂购者,假设配方:女性·~被建议者·建议者·满意度·~自信·看起来不同,显示了一个解决方案的一致性。752解决方案覆盖.301。因此,结果解释了足够数量的结果。图3a显示了大多数情况,无论是在上三角或接近XY的形式的情节为服装狂购者不足为奇,因为整体只28例(共3337)成员是这类服装购物者类型。

假设服装痴迷者,男·被建议者·~建议者·满意度·自信·~看起来不同,有一个方案的一致性,885解决方案覆盖.189。因此,解释了足够数量的结果。对所有可能的运行XY情节因果配置的所有前期变量,没有其他因果配方显示更充分的解释假设服装痴迷者。因此,分析表明,男性寻求建议,但关于品牌和产品不给建议与低满意度和需要看起来不同,但具有高足够的自信。

假设,服装反对者,男·~被建议者·~建议者·满意度·~自信·~看起来不同,显示了一个解决方案的一致性,880年和解决方案.252。因此,解释了足够数量的结果。对所有可能的运行XY情节因果配置的所有前期变量,另一个因果配方揭示了一个更充分的解释加入服装反对者(解决方案的一致性。930年和解决方案覆盖.:150):男·被建议者·建议者·满意度·~自信·~看起来不同。

结论:定义不同类型的服装购物者,描述因果说明这些不同顾客类型提供了一种成熟的服装购物行为的观点。

关键词: 服装爱好者; 配置; 定性比较分析; 阶段; 购物

1. Introduction

Clothing is an important matter in various everyday life situations (Jang, Ko, Chun, & Lee, 2012). While having for centuries been dismissed as a “trivial pursuit of vain empty-headed women” (Grant, 2010, back cover), interest in clothes and dressing well has gained increased attention within the past decades, as our clothes reflect our identity, self-image and social status (Grant, 2010). As today’s society experiences a trend toward self-centrism (Putnam, 1995), self-identification symbols play an ever-increasing role in people’s lives. In such contexts, clothes represent an easily accessible and affordable self-identification tool (Buttle, 1992).

However, decreasing purchasing power of consumers, among other things due to the financial crisis in 2008 and increased intensity of competition, forces the clothing industry to rethink and realign marketing strategies. The industry today needs to target customers with specifically adapted marketing programs, realizing that clothes shoppers vary in their personal attributes, attitudes and shopping motives. “Some people seem to find their ‘sense of value’ or ‘self-worth’ from shopping; others find that shopping is a positive challenge to life-scripting”

(Buttle, 1992, p. 358). The present study examines whether or not different clothes shopper types exist, and in addition investigates whether or not different types can be explained by different personal attribute configurations and attitudes referring to self-identity. The idea of profiling different shopper types goes back to the seminal article by Stone (1954), who distinguished four different female shopper types based on social characteristics, reflecting the social position in the social structure of one's residential community.

The literature on clothes shopping has so far focused on differences between males' and females' clothes shopping behavior. For example, Peters (1989) and Ryu (2011) stress that females are more concerned about clothes and more involved in shopping for them than are males. Cox and Dittmar (1995) find that men show a self-oriented approach to clothes whereas women have more other-oriented concerns when choosing clothes. In addition, literature demonstrates that females love to shop frequently, whereas men are specialized shoppers (Buttle, 1992). The question arises: besides gender, what else distinguishes frequent clothes shoppers from infrequent clothes shoppers, and can clothes shopping behavior be described with details other than clothes shopping frequency?

Overall, based on the idea that one's identity depends upon their purchases (Mercurio & Porehand, 2011), people have a natural bias toward expressing who they are to themselves and others. Thus, a number of persons confirm their identity via their appearance and look, which is reflected in their level of commitment to clothes shopping and the degree to which they find dressing well to be important or not. As cases of compulsive shopping and shopping addiction illustrate, people may go clothes shopping very frequently while being driven not by motives related to striving to look good or dress well, but rather because of physical or psychological addiction (Clark, Marilyn, & Calleja, 2008).

Based on this knowledge, describing shopping behaviors through possible combinations of shopping frequency and perception of the importance of dressing well may be possible; research on such combinations may advance shopping theory to capture the fine-grade nuances that differentiate shopping addicts from people who exhibit different types of shopping behavior.

Commitment or lack of commitment to clothes shopping, and the objective of dressing or not dressing well, may depend on a person's self-identity. Research based on the shopping motives constructionists perspective (Buttle, 1992; Tauber, 1972) advocates that shoppers use clothes shopping for self-expression of their identity. With regard to self-expression, Roberts and Pirog (2004) propose that some shoppers use frequent or even compulsive shopping to display their social status and self-identity.

The discussion of self-expression with the help of clothes can also relate to the theory of appearance investment (Cash, Melynk, & Hrabosky, 2004). Appearance is integral to self-identity and dressing well and clothes are part of appearance management, such that clothes shopping behavior is explainable by the perceived importance of dressing well for some segments of shoppers.

Hence, the overall aim of this study is to profile different clothes shopper segments based on clothes shopping frequency and the importance consumers assign to dressing well, as well as to develop a better understanding of these segments and how retailers and clothes designers can target each segment effectively.

Thus, the following research questions guide the remainder of the present study. (1) Who are the shoppers who shop excessively and consider dressing well to be important? (2) Who are the shoppers who hardly shop and do not consider dressing well to be important? (3) Who are the shoppers who shop excessively but do not consider dressing well to be important? (4) Who are the shoppers who hardly shop but do consider dressing well to be important? Given that the main effect is positive and medium in size (Cohen,

1977) for the association between dressing well and shopping for clothes ($\Phi^2 = .12$), do the possible paradoxical cases of shoppers, who shop excessively, but do not consider dressing well to be important (and the opposite combination) actually exist? They do.

The present study contributes to clothes shopping literature in two ways. First, this study expands clothes shopping literature by accounting for additional antecedents beyond gender. In doing so, the study examines how different personal attributes define how dressing is valued and how clothes are shopped for.

Second, this is the first empirical study (using data from an omnibus survey of US residents) in the field of consumer behavior to derive profiles of specific clothes shopper segments by combining a qualitative and quantitative analysis approach via fsQCA (see Ragin, 2000; Ragin, Drass, & Davey, 2007). The study develops a conceptual model which helps to construct four stalwart consumer segments; investigates the explanatory power of personal attributes, derived from theory, with regard to consumers' membership of the respective segment; profiles the four clothes shopper segments; and derives and discusses the managerial implications of the study's results.

2. Theoretical underpinning

In the shopping motives constructionist perspective developed by Stone (1954) and Tauber (1972) and refined by Buttle (1992), people's motives for shopping are associated with particular contexts, such as the shopping location or product classes. Clothes, as one of these product classes, are commonly used as a tool for self-expression. Human beings have a natural bias toward expressing who they are to themselves and to others (Hong, 2011; Mercurio & Forehand, 2011). As the clothes people wear reflect who they are, or who they would like to be, self-image is an important construct to be examined further when seeking to understand consumers' clothes shopping behavior.

The theory of appearance investment (Cash, Melnyk, & Hrabosky, 2004) illustrates how self-image includes an investment component (the importance or cognitive-behavioral salience of one's appearance) and an evaluative component (self-ideal discrepancies, body satisfaction/dissatisfaction). When they discover discrepancies between their personally perceived self-image and their ideal self-image, people feel unsatisfied with themselves, leading to attempts to improve their appearance. Clothes are an easy tool with which to do so. Thus the frequency with which people shop for clothes and the importance they assign to clothes and dressing well seem to be closely connected to self-image, self-confidence and satisfaction with oneself. The theoretical insights from Cash, Melnyk, and Hrabosky (2004) receive additional support with regard to consumers' general shopping behavior: Roberts and Pirog (2004) relate shopping behavior to the different types of goals or motivations that drive people's actions.

Among others, Roberts and Pirog (2004) report the finding that extrinsic goals such as showing off financial success or being attractive to others relate positively to compulsive buying and the frequency with which consumers shop (Roberts and Pirog, 2004). By contrast, "intrinsic goals emphasizing self-acceptance and community feelings are negatively related to compulsive buying" (Roberts & Pirog, 2004, p. 61).

Roberts and Pirog (2004, p. 63) state that "[a]n intrinsically goal-oriented individual should have little need for material possessions to bolster self-esteem and/or give their life meaning". Early research in the field of humanistic theory supports this hypothesis through finding that intrinsically motivated people are happier and more satisfied with life than others are (Sheldon & Kasser, 2001). Extrinsically oriented people shop for clothes

compulsively or more frequently, seeking to thereby express their social status and personal identity and compensate for their lower life satisfaction.

3. Conceptual model

In order to derive different clothes shopper types, this study relies on two dimensions represented by two dependent variables – namely clothes shopping frequency and assigned importance of dressing well – as this combination is better able to explain shopping behavior than just shopping frequency, which has been used alone in most prior studies. This approach results in four different clothes shopper types to be profiled and explained by this study: (1) Clothesnegators, who do not go shopping for clothes and do not consider dressing well to be important; (2) Clotheshorses, who shop frequently for clothes and consider dressing well to be important; (3) Clothesgourmands, who shop rarely for clothes but consider dressing well to be important; and (4) Clothesaholics, who shop for clothes frequently even though they do not consider dressing well to be important, thus exhibiting contradictory, addiction-like shopping behavior.

In aiming to profile these clothes shopper types this study examines different personal attributes as antecedents which profile the four derived clothes shopper types. So far, the most often examined factor influencing clothes shopping behavior is gender (see e.g. Cox and Dittmar, 1995, 2000, 2005). While aiming at expanding this very narrow focus of consumer research, this study includes gender as a hypothesized antecedent that influences the frequency with which consumers go shopping for clothes. In accordance with earlier research (e.g. Peters, 1989), this study hypothesizes that females are more concerned about clothes and in general more involved in clothes shopping than males are. Following this line of argument, the majority of consumers in both the Clotheshorses and Clothesaholics segment should be female, clothes shopping very frequently, while Clothesnegators and Clothes Gourmands should be male, rarely clothes shopping.

Besides gender, a wide variety of additional personal attributes influencing clothes shopping behavior is still to be explored. This study in particular focuses on four additional antecedents referring to self-identity and self-expression, to help profile the four clothes shopper types under examination: (1) people's need to look different, (2) people's satisfaction with life, (3) people's degree of self-confidence and (4) people's information-sharing behavior.

A high need to look different to others, thus a high degree of individualism, is expected to result in higher frequency of clothes shopping. Individualistic people need to set themselves apart from their peers, for example by searching for and wearing clothes that have not yet reached the mainstream. The described relationship between individualistic behavior, a high need to look different and clothes consumption is further confirmed by Putnam (1995), who finds that individualistic behavior is captured in high fashion-consciousness and striving to look different, while dress conformity captures collectivistic behavior and striving to look similar. In accordance with these findings, one would expect the majority of consumers who go clothes shopping frequently (Clothesaholics and Clotheshorses) to have a high need to look different, while most occasional clothes shoppers (Clothesnegators and Clothesgourmands) should have a low need to look different.

In addition to the “clothes shopping frequency” dimension, the second dimension, “importance assigned to dressing well”, is used to derive the four clothes shopping types for focus in the present study. Properly differentiating between these two dependent variables is important: clothes shopping frequency relates to the actual task of acquisition, while the importance of dressing well relates to the consumption process and the presentation of self to others and to one's own self. In a broader context, earlier research

has examined the effect of satisfaction on actual consumption behavior (e.g., Gronmo, 1988; Martin & Hill, 2012).

Woodruffe (1997) examines how consumers use consumption as a means to maintain a positive mood, as well as to “repair” negative emotional states, such as a lack of happiness or satisfaction with life. Clothes represent an easily accessible and affordable tool to compensate for a lack of satisfaction with life; thus unsatisfied people can be expected to “consume” clothes more intensively and therefore assign higher values to the importance of dressing well. With regard to the distinct clothes shopper types, this study considers both Clotheshorses and Clothesgourmands as assigning high importance to dressing well. From their intensive consumption of clothes it can be inferred that most Clotheshorses and Clothesgourmands possess a low level of satisfaction with life, while the majority of consumers in the Clothesnegators and Clothesaholics segments possess high levels of life satisfaction.

In addition to the satisfaction dimension, this study examines the potential of the personal attribute of self-confidence to explain why some people assign high or low values to the importance of dressing well. The theory of appearance investment developed by Cash, Melnyk, and Hrabosky (2004) states that one’s appearance is positively related to self-worth and self-confidence. The more effort people put into their appearance with regard to look and dress, the more self-confident they are, and vice versa. As for Clotheshorses and Clothesaholics dressing well is not important, the majority of the consumers in these two segments can be expected to have low self-confidence. If the propositions derived from theory hold, most Clothesgourmands and Clotheshorses should in contrast be self-confident, as they assign high importance to dressing well.

Besides gender, the need to look different, satisfaction and self-confidence, this study examines a fifth and more social activity-related antecedent helping to profile the four clothes shopper types. How people are interconnected with others is also part of their social identity and therefore may also define the four clothes shopper types. The degree to which consumers share (market) information with others enables the segmentation of consumers in a useful manner within different contexts (Chung & Woodside, 2012; Feick & Price, 1987; Meier & Donzé, 2012).

The present study is the first to integrate different consumer profiling concepts related to information diffusion, and to apply them to the context of clothes shopping behavior. People can seek different degrees of contact intensity and (market) information sharing with others in their social network. Feick and Price (1987) refer to consumers as “market mavens” if they seek information aggressively and simultaneously provide others with a lot of information and advice on products, brands and shopping in general. In contrast, “isolates” are characterized by neither seeking nor providing information or advice from and to peers (Chung & Woodside, 2012). If focusing on the direction of information flow, one can derive two additional consumer groups: “market gurus”, who provide but do not seek advice and information (Chung & Woodside, 2012), and “opinion followers”, who seek but do not provide the latter (Polegato & Wall, 1980; Shoham & Ruvio, 2008).

The four different consumer types have so far not been integrated in one comprehensive concept; however, with regard to profiling the four different clothes shopper segments, this would seem particularly helpful. Clothes are a symbolic representation of self-image and identity, and represent a tool to communicate one’s self to others in a social network. People who assign low importance to dressing well and shopping for clothes rarely do so, likely because they do not seek to exchange a lot of information and advice with their peers.

On the other hand, people who assign high importance to dressing well and shopping for clothes frequently do so, because they intensively use clothes as a tool for exchanging

self-identity-related information. Accordingly, the assumption can be drawn that individuals who view dressing well as important but do not shop for clothes frequently show characteristics of opinion followers, seeking information from but not providing information to peers. Finally, individuals who shop for clothes frequently but do not place high importance on dressing well are expected to provide advice to others but not seek such advice.

Specifically, for example, Clotheshorses both provide and seek information by shopping frequently and considering dressing well to be important. Clotheshorses, being market mavens, excessively use clothes as an information-sharing tool to express their own identity and to understand their peers'. Following this logic, it can further be expected that the majority of consumers in the Clothesnegators segment are isolates, the majority of Clothesaholics are market gurus and the majority of Clothesgourmands are opinion followers (see Figure 1).

Having summarized the insights derived from theories which have led to the construction of the underlying conceptual model of this study, four hypotheses follow for testing.

- H1: The majority of consumers in the Clotheshorses segment are female, have a high need to look different, are highly satisfied with their life, are highly self-confident and are market mavens.*
- H2: The majority of consumers in the Clothesaholics segment are female, have a high need to look different, are highly satisfied with life, lack self-confidence and are market gurus.*
- H3: The majority of consumers in the Clothesgourmands segment are male, have a low need to look different, are rather unsatisfied with life, are highly self-confident and are opinion followers.*
- H4: The majority of consumers in the Clothesnegators segment are male, have a low need to look different, are highly satisfied with life, lack self-confidence and are isolates*

4. Method – Fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis

Fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) was chosen for data analysis (Ragin, 2000; Ragin, Drass, & Davey, 2007). This method indicates high generality, high accuracy and low complexity (or coverage; Woodside, 2010). FsQCA bridges both quantitative and qualitative analysis approaches. Overall, it focuses on analyzing alternative combinations of antecedent conditions (causal recipes) that represent causal conditions, rather than analyzing net effects.

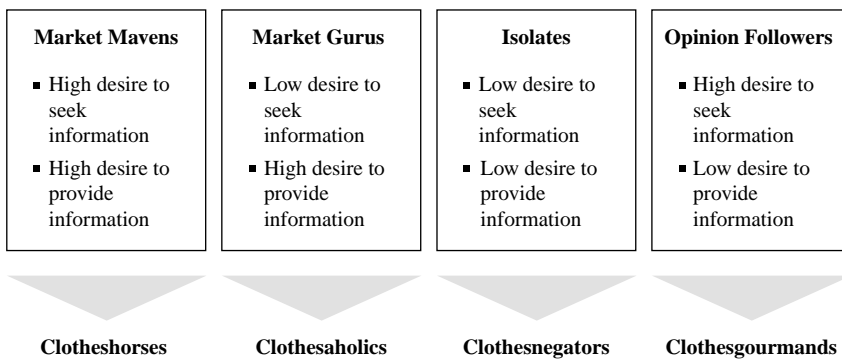


Figure 1. Segment membership explained by degree and direction of information sharing.

More specifically, the fsQCA identifies specific combinations of causally relevant ingredients relating to a specific outcome. With this, the method builds on set theory and fuzzy set analysis (Zadeh, 1965) using Boolean rather than linear algebra (Woodside, 2010). FsQCA is chosen as the analysis tool for this study because it deals with two shortcomings of conventional statistical methods: first, conventional methods build from the assumption that each independent variable is able to influence the level of the outcome independent of the levels of other variables; the analysis of such net effects is especially disadvantageous for studying combinations of case characteristics (Ragin, 2008). Second, the assumption that high values of the independent variable relate to high values of the dependent variable and vice versa focuses on symmetric correlations. In real life, relationships are asymmetrical – the presence of a specific combination of causal conditions results in sufficiency (but not necessity) of a specific outcome with the causal conditional statement making no prediction about the absence of the specific causal combination (Woodside, 2010). As fsQCA is based on the analysis of set relationships rather than correlations, fsQCA assumes asymmetrical relations. Furthermore, fsQCA allows the analysis of a small number of cases (Marx, Cambré, & Rihoux 2013, pp. 25ff.).

Thus, fsQCA fits well to the investigation of profile conditions for different clothes shopper types. The present study aims to identify causal recipes captured by the principle of set intersection (Ragin, 2008) – that is, the connection of specific scores of two or more simple antecedent conditions. More specifically, this study draws upon fsQCA to profile four different clothes shopper types (Clotheshorses: high clothes shopping frequency and high importance of dressing well; Clothesgourmands: low clothes shopping frequency and high importance of dressing well; Clothesaholics: high clothes shopping frequency and low importance of dressing well; Clothesnegators: low clothes shopping frequency and low importance of dressing well) based on the causal configurations of six different personal attributes, including gender, satisfaction, self-confidence, the need to look different and information-seeking and information-giving behavior.

This paradigm is accessible via a comparative assessment of fsQCA using conventional statistical methods. In general, the present study focuses on showing how fsQCA enables precise profiling of the four different clothes shopper types and how this method is applicable to shopping behavior segmentation research.

A fuzzy set scale accounts for different degrees of membership in a causal recipe and can be viewed as a purposively calibrated scale transformation of a variable specifying three qualitative breakpoints (full membership = 1.0; full non-membership = 0.0; maximum ambiguity – the crossover point = 0.5; Ragin, 2008, p. 30). In addition, the analysis of configurations illustrates not only combinations of the presence of causal conditions, but also the absence of those conditions (negations of variables). To calculate the membership of a case in the negation of fuzzy set A, its membership in set A only needs to be subtracted from 1.0 as follows (Woodside, 2010): (membership in set \sim A) = 1 – (membership in set A) or \sim A = 1.0 – A, where “ \sim ” indicates negation.

The findings of fsQCA analysis can be evaluated based on two specific measures: the consistency of a causal recipe and its coverage. Set-theoretic “consistency” refers to the “significance of a result and signals whether or not an empirical connection merits the close attention of the investigator” (Woodside, 2010, p. 69). Overall, if results from the membership analysis are inconsistent with the hypothesized relation, then the hypothesis is not supported (Ragin, 2008, p. 45). That is, consistency indicates how closely a subset relation of one of the clothes shopper types is approximated by a causal recipe of a configuration of antecedent conditions. Set-theoretic “coverage” indicates the empirical importance of a causal combination (Ragin, 2008, p. 55) and is definable as the “empirical

relevance or importance of a set-theoretic connection” (Woodside, 2010, p. 69). Thus, coverage estimations measure the proportion of cases following a path to high outcome scores and are therefore analogous to effect size in statistical hypothesis testing.

4.1 Data

To explore antecedent profiles of different clothes shopper types, the present study uses the annual DDB Needham Life Style Survey from the year 1983 (see “Bowling Alone data” at <http://www.bowlingalone.org/data.htm>). These DDB surveys cover a vast range of individual behavior, including voting, belonging to sororities, church outings, playing bridge, having family dinners, volunteering, clothes shopping, church/temple attendance, professing one’s faith in one’s fellow humans to a pollster and league bowling.

Overall, this data set consists of 350–400 questions, varying per year, that address respondents’ demographic profile, perceived personality traits, shopping habits, political beliefs, media habits, religious beliefs, international affairs and overall satisfaction with life; 1983 was selected here because the items relevant to the present study were measured in that year. Overall, the study’s focus is on four clothes shopper types derived from their values assigned to the two variables “clothes shopping frequency” and “importance of dressing well”. Only these four groups are included as they show extreme behavior related to shopping and valuing clothes. For the year 1983 the sample consists of 3337 cases (mean age: 46, SD: 16 years). Table 1 provides an overview of the descriptors of this sample.

4.2 Fuzzy set scores for the outcomes of interest

The outcomes of interest in the present study are the memberships of Clotheshorses, Clothesaholics, Clothesgourmands and Clothesnegators. These are calculated as the product of clothes shopping frequency and importance of dressing well. The cross-tabulation in Table 2 shows that all four clothes shopper types exist and that Clotheshorses account for 5.1 percent, Clothesaholics account for 0.8 percent, Clothesgourmands for 5.9 percent and Clothesnegators for 10.0 percent of the US household sample.

The present study concerns the antecedent conditions that profile these four clothes shopper segments. The fsQCA software program (fsQCA.com) requires the use of set theoretical conditions with a focus on case study research (Ragin, 2008). Thus, based on the tabulation in Table 1, the original absolute interval data of clothes shopping frequency was converted into seven levels of fuzzy set membership scores with annual clothes shopping frequency of one as full membership (fuzzy set score = 0.99), and annual clothes shopping frequency of zero as non-membership (fuzzy set score = 0.01).

The scale for the importance of dressing well (measured on a 6 point scale where strongly disagree = 1 and strongly agree = 6) was converted into six levels of fuzzy set membership scores, with strong agreement that dressing well is important as full membership (fuzzy set score = 0.99) and strong disagreement that dressing well is important as non-membership (fuzzy set score = 0.01). These two scores are then aggregated to a composite outcome indicator (i.e., annual clothes shopping frequency and importance of dressing well). The calibrations of the outcome variables appear in Table 3.

4.3 Fuzzy set score for causal conditions

To identify the conditions for classification into Clotheshorses, Clothesaholics, Clothesgourmands or Clothesnegators, the present study builds complex causal conditions from six simple antecedent conditions: gender (male and female), self-perceived

Table 1. Sample descriptives, 1983.

Gender	City of residence		Education	Employment	Descriptives (in %)	
	Non-Central City	Central City			Income	
Female	51.9	63.8	Elementary School	Unemployed	24.0	Below \$10,000
Male	48.1	36.2	High School	Retired	10.2	\$10,000–29,999
			College	Part-time	9.1	\$30,000–49,999
			Post Graduate	Full employed	53.7	\$50,000–69,999
						Above \$70,000
						1.9

Table 2. Cross table of the four clothes shopper segments, 1983.

Dressing well is important	Clothesnegators				Clothes shopping frequency				Clothesaholics		Total
	0	2.5	6.5	10	18	38	54	306 (9.2%)			
Definitely disagree	62 (1.9%)	108 (3.2%)	61 (1.8%)	39 (1.2%)	26 (0.8%)	9 (0.3%)	1	306 (9.2%)			
Generally disagree	24 (0.7%)	140 (4.2%)	110 (3.3%)	60 (1.8%)	35 (1.0%)	14 (0.4%)	4	387 (11.6%)			
Moderately disagree	44 (1.3%)	156 (4.7%)	184 (5.5%)	129 (3.9%)	80 (2.4%)	31 (0.9%)	4	626 (18.8%)			
Moderately agree	33 (1.0%)	218 (6.5%)	275 (8.2%)	196 (5.9%)	170 (5.1%)	60 (1.8%)	26	978 (29.3%)			
Generally agree	21 (0.6%)	112 (3.4%)	151 (4.5%)	143 (4.3%)	148 (4.4%)	72 (2.2%)	20	667 (20.0%)			
Definitely agree	18 (0.5%)	48 (1.4%)	80 (2.4%)	79 (2.4%)	72 (2.2%)	47 (1.4%)	29	373 (11.2%)			
Total	202 (6.1%)	782 (23.4%)	861 (25.8%)	646 (19.4%)	531 (15.9%)	233 (7.0%)	82	3,337 (100%)			
	Clothesgourmands								Clothesaholics		
											Clothesaholics
											Clothesaholics

Note. $\Phi^2 = .12, p < .000$; medium positive main effect size.

satisfaction, self-confidence, need to look different, advice seeker and advice giver (all measured by a 6-point scale where strongly disagree = 1 and strongly agree = 6). The calibrations of the antecedent variables appear in [Table 3](#).

The Clotheshorses – female market mavens, who show high self-confidence and need to look different – on average have high fuzzy set scores. The Clothesaholics – female market gurus, who show low self-confidence and a high need to look different – on average get high fuzzy set scores. For both types, the crisp set of gender is coded as male 0.01 and female 0.99.

Furthermore, both Clothesgourmands – male opinion followers who possess high self-confidence and a low need to look different – and Clothesnegators – male isolates who show low self-confidence and low need to look different – on average get high fuzzy set scores. For these two types, the crisp set of gender is coded as male 0.99 and female 0.01.

5. Findings

5.1 XY plots – Clotheshorses

[Figure 2a](#) shows the plot of the hypothesized recipe: female·advice seeker·advice giver·~ satisfaction· self-confidence·need to look different. This solution shows a solution consistency of .898 and solution coverage of .196. Thus, the analysis explains a large number of useful outcomes. [Figure 2a](#) shows most cases are either in the upper triangle or close to it. The Clotheshorses cases with high membership scores on outcomes are all in the upper triangle, indicating the high consistency score for sufficiency. Note that the configural statement does not reflect the lives of all Clotheshorses.

While a case (person) with high scores in the configural statement is consistently a member of the Clotheshorse segment, the configural statement is sufficient but not necessary to indicate a Clotheshorse. By running XY plots for all possible causal configurations of the antecedent variables, besides the hypothesized causal configuration, one additional causal recipe with almost the same consistency score of .895 was received (see [Figure 2b](#)): female·advice seeker·advice giver·~ satisfaction·~ self-confidence·~ need to look different.

Both causal recipes differ with regard to the presence and absence of self-confidence and need to look different. The presence as well as the absence of both, together with the interaction of female, market maven and lack of satisfaction, show sufficient membership of the Clotheshorse segment. Based on the concept of appearance investment (Cash, Melnyk, & Hrabosky, 2004), the presence of self-confidence should have explained membership of the Clotheshorse segment. Furthermore, as people become more individualistic (Putman, 1995) they show a need to look different. Such a need results in people searching and buying new and different styles, leading to Clotheshorse identification.

However, a sufficient solution to explain the membership of Clotheshorses occurs with the absence of self-confidence and need to look different (together with female, market mavens and low satisfaction). This finding indicates that an absence of self-confidence can lead to frequent clothes shopping, which might be then used as a compensation strategy (Gronmo, 1988). With regard to the need to look different, Clotheshorses are female market mavens and therefore some seek to build a self-image which conforms with that of their peers in order to achieve acceptance (Cox & Dittmar, 1995); they therefore also show a low need to look different.

5.2 XY plots – Clothesaholics

[Figure 3a](#) shows the plot of the hypothesized recipe: female·~ advice seeker·advice giver· satisfaction·~ self-confidence·need to look different. This solution shows a solution

Table 3. Calibration of outcome and antecedent variables.

Condition	Symbol	Item	Original Scale	Fuzzy Set Score
Outcome	Annual clothes shopping frequency	clothes	1 – none	0.01
			2 – 1–4 times	0.15
			3 – 5–8 times	0.35
			4 – 9–11 times	0.50
			5 – 12–24 times	0.65
			6 – 25–51 times	0.85
			7 – 52 + times	0.99
Importance of dressing well	dress	Dressing well is an important part of my life.	1 – Definitely disagree	0.01
			2 – Generally disagree	0.20
Antecedents	Gender	Sex	0 – Male	0.99
			1 – Female	0.01
	Advice seeker	brandade	1 – Definitely disagree	0.01
			2 – Generally disagree	0.20
			3 – Moderately disagree	0.40
			4 – Moderately agree	0.60
Advice giver	advice	My friends and neighbors often come to me for advice about products and brands.	2 – Generally disagree	0.20
			3 – Moderately disagree	0.40
Satisfaction	satlife	I am very satisfied with the way things are going in my life these days.	4 – Moderately agree	0.60
Self-confidence	selfcon	I have more self-confidence than most of my friends.	5 – Generally agree	0.80
Need to look different	lookdiff	I want to look a little different from others.	6 – Definitely agree	0.99

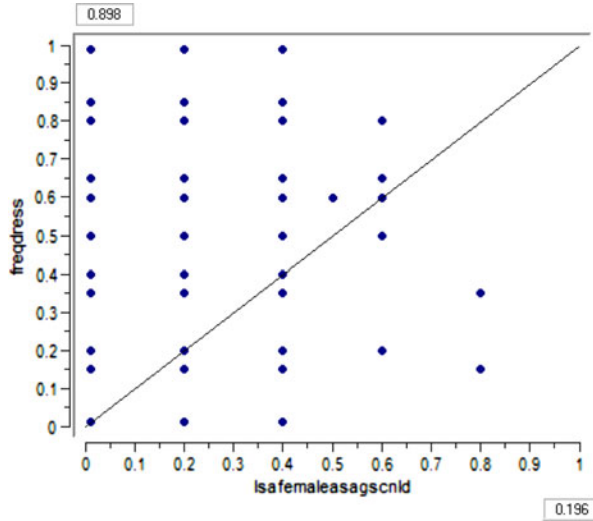


Figure 2a. Plot of Y = Clotheshorses by X = combined hypothesized causal condition configuration (female·adviceseeker·advicegiver~ satisfaction·self-confidence·needtolookdifferent). Note: The 0.898 is the consistency index; the 0.196 is the coverage index.

consistency of .752 and solution coverage of .301. Thus, the result explains a sufficient number of outcomes. Figure 3a shows most cases are either in the upper triangle or near to it. The form of the XY plot of Clothesaholics is not surprising as, overall, only 28 cases (of a total of 3337) are members of this clothes shopper segment. Running XY plots for all possible causal configurations of all antecedent variables, another causal recipe reveals a

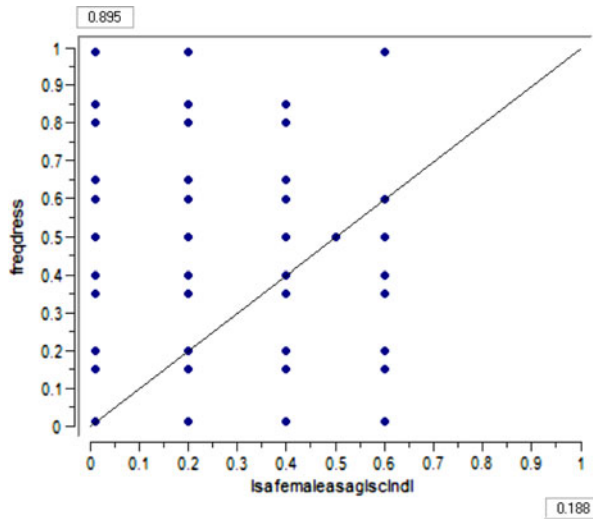


Figure 2b. Plot of Y = Clotheshorses by X = combined causal condition configuration (female·adviceseeker·advicegiver~ satisfaction~ self-confidence~ needtolookdifferent). Note: The 0.895 is the consistency index; the 0.188 is the coverage index.

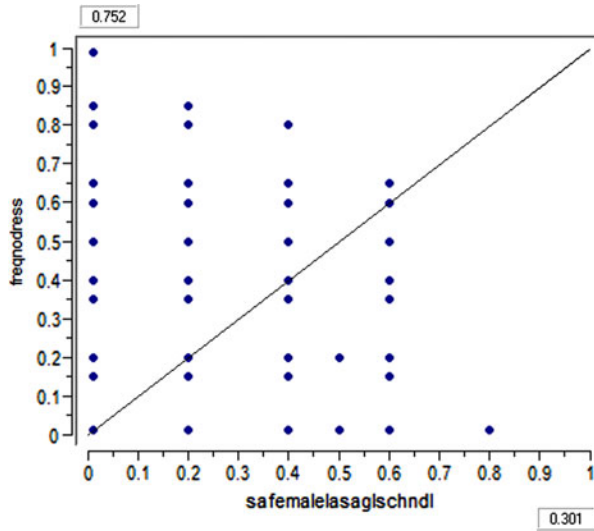


Figure 3a. Plot of Y = clothesaholics by X = combined hypothesized causal condition configuration (female~ adviseseeker~advicegiver~satisfaction~self-confidence~needtolookdifferent). Note: The 0.752 is the consistency index; the 0.301 is the coverage index.

better explanation of the membership of Clothesaholics (solution consistency of .821 and solution coverage: .245); female~ adviseseeker~advicegiver~ satisfaction~ self-confidence~ needtolookdifferent (see Figure 3b).

Both causal recipes indicate that being females who are market gurus (not advice seekers but advice givers) and do not show a need to look different is sufficient to explain

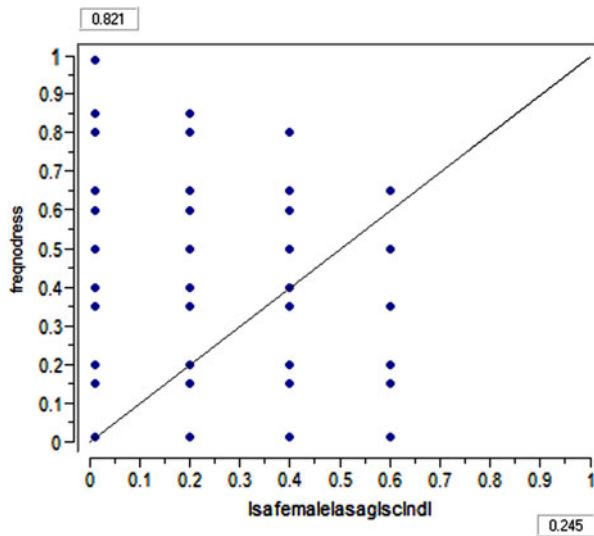


Figure 3b. Plot of Y = clothesaholics by X = combined causal condition configuration (female~ adviseseeker~advicegiver~ satisfaction~ self-confidence~ needtolookdifferent). Note: The 0.821 is the consistency index; the 0.245 is the coverage index.

membership of the Clothesaholic segment as hypothesized. However, the two causal recipes differ with regard to the presence and absence of satisfaction and need to look different. The presence and absence of both, together with the interaction of female gender, market guru and low self-confidence, show sufficient membership of the Clothesaholic segment.

For compensatory consumption, Woodruffe (1997) finds and concludes that people who show no satisfaction in life consume in order to repair their negative emotional state; this conclusion is transferrable to clothes consumption, resulting in people showing low satisfaction in life seeking to consume and wear clothes, and thus explaining the importance of dressing well. Furthermore, as people become more individualistic (Putman 1995), they show a need to look different. Such a need results in people searching and buying new and different styles, leading to Clothesaholic status. However, in contrast to these theories, the results provide a solution with the absence of satisfaction and need to look different (together with female, market guru and low self-confidence status) being sufficient to explain membership of the Clothesaholic segment. Clothesaholics exhibit some addiction-like shopping behavior with regard to clothes.

Thus, some Clothesaholics use frequent shopping to compensate for a lack of satisfaction which might be rooted in a discrepancy between self-image and low self-confidence. With regard to their need to look different, Clothesaholics are female market gurus and, thus, some of them seek to build a self-image which conforms with that of their peers to achieve acceptance (Cox & Dittmar, 1995) in order to be able to give advice. Thus, they do not need to look different.

5.3 XY plots – Clothesgourmands

Figure 4 shows the plot of the hypothesized recipe for Clothesgourmands: male·adviceseeker~ advicegiver~ satisfaction· self-confidence~ needtolookdifferent. This solution shows a solution consistency of .885 and solution coverage of .189. Thus,

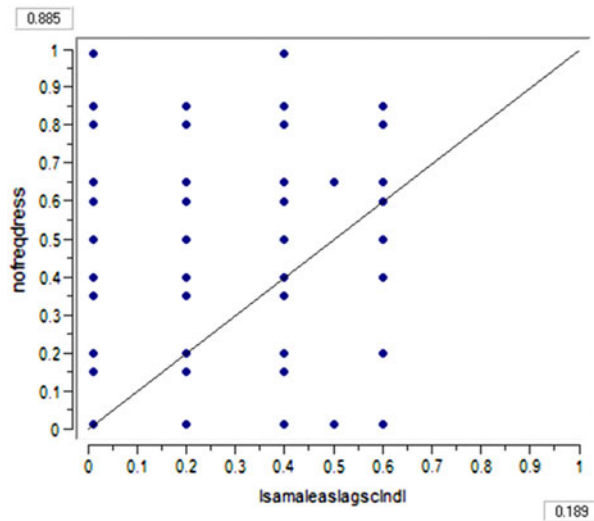


Figure 4. XY plot for Y = Clothesgourmands by X = combined hypothesized causal condition configuration (male·adviceseeker~ advicegiver~ satisfaction· self-confidence~ needtolookdifferent). Note: The 0.885 is the consistency index; the 0.189 is the coverage index.

the result explains a sufficient number of outcomes. Running XY plots for all possible causal configurations of all antecedent variables, no other causal recipe revealed a more sufficient explanation of the membership of Clothesgourmands. Thus, the analysis shows that being males who seek advice but do not give advice about brands and products, with low levels of life satisfaction and need to look different but high self-confidence, sufficiently explains membership of the Clothesgourmand segment.

5.4 XY plots – Clothesnegators

Figure 5 shows the plot of the hypothesized recipe: male·~·adviceseeker·~·advicegiver·~·satisfaction·~·self-confidence·~·needtolookdifferent. This solution shows a solution consistency of .880 and solution coverage of .252. Thus, the result explains a sufficient number of outcomes (see Figure 5a). Running XY plots for all possible causal configurations of all antecedent variables, another causal recipe revealed a more sufficient explanation of the membership of Clothesnegators (solution consistency of .930 and solution coverage: .150): male·adviceseeker·advicegiver·~·satisfaction·~·self-confidence·~·needtolookdifferent (see Figure 5b).

Both causal recipes indicate that being male, with no self-confidence and no need to look different, is sufficient to explain membership of the Clothesnegator segment as hypothesized. However, the two causal recipes differ concerning the absence or presence of information searching and sharing and satisfaction. Based on findings by Woodruffe (1997) on compensatory consumption, people who show no satisfaction in life may shop in order to repair this negative emotional state. This perspective is transferrable to clothes consumption, resulting in persons showing low satisfaction in life aiming to consume and wear clothes and thus explaining the importance of dressing well.

Based on Dittmar and Drury (2000), due to their low materialistic values concerning clothes (low clothes shopping frequency and no importance of dressing well), Clothesnegators might turn to other compensatory consumption strategies. In addition, some Clothesnegators show low satisfaction with life and might therefore not feel any

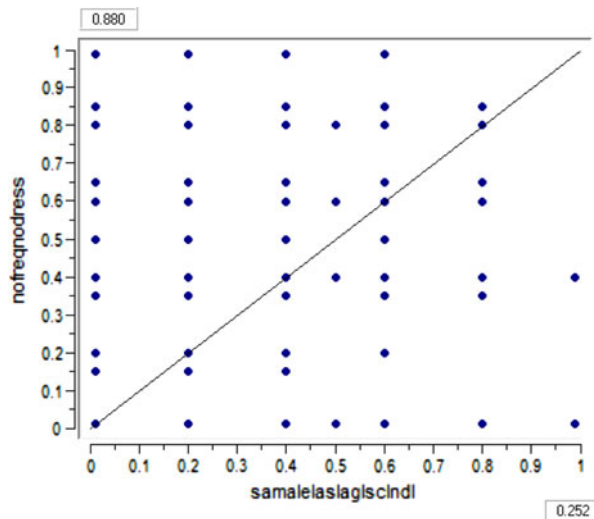


Figure 5a. Plot of Y = Clothesnegators by X = combined hypothesized causal condition configuration (male·~·adviceseeker·~·advicegiversatisfaction·~·self-confidence·~·needtolookdifferent). Note. The 0.880 is the consistency index; the 0.252 is the coverage index.

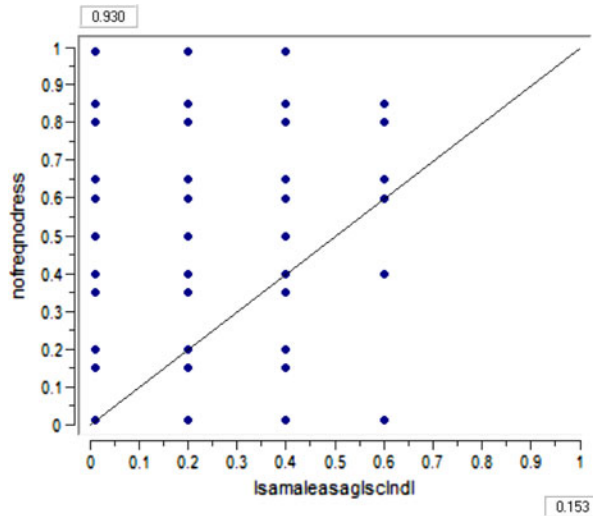


Figure 5b. Plot of $Y = \text{Clothesnegators}$ by $X = \text{combined causal condition configuration (male}\cdot\text{adviceseeker}\cdot\text{advicegiver}\cdot\text{satisfaction}\cdot\text{self-confidence}\cdot\text{needtolookdifferent})$. Note: The 0.930 is the consistency index; the 0.153 is the coverage index.

need to look different, as they are frustrated and do not see clothing as a way out, and therefore do not shop for clothes frequently.

However, this low satisfaction with life can result in Clothesnegators using interpersonal relationships as another compensation strategy, as the second causal recipe identified Clothesnegators who do seek and give advice about products and brands showing the characteristics of market mavens. However, as they are males who have no need to look different and no self-confidence, they are not members of the Clotheshorse segment but of Clothesnegators, as males are more specialized shoppers (Buttle, 1992) with low involvement in clothes (Peters, 1989).

6. Validation study

6.1 Data

For the purpose of predictive validity, another fsQCA analysis was run for the DDB Needham Life Style Survey from the year 1989 (Bowling Alone: 2011 data). This year was selected because the items relevant to the present study were measured again in the year 1989. For the year 1989 the sample consisted of 3995 cases (mean age: 46, S.D.: 16 years). Table 4 provides an overview of the descriptives of the sample.

As in the analysis of year 1983, the two variables “frequency of clothes shopping” and “importance of dressing well” are chosen as the outcome variables. In addition, the same simple antecedents are used. Therefore, the same calibrations for the outcome and antecedent variables were used for the year 1989 (see Table 3).

6.2 Findings

After running a cross-tabulation analysis with the two outcome variables “frequency of clothes shopping” and “importance of dressing well”, the results show a similar proportion of the distribution of members (see Table 5): Clotheshorses account for 6.1%, Clothesaholics account for 0.5%, Clothesgourmands for 9.6% and Clothesnegators for 7.8% of importance of dressing well and clothes shopping frequency distribution of US households.

Table 5. Cross table of the four clothes shopper segments, 1989.

Dressing well is important	Clothesnegators				Clothesaholics				Total
	0	2.5	6.5	10	18	38	54		
Definitely disagree	34 (0.9%)	105 (2.6%)	43 (1.1%)	23 (0.6%)	13 (0.3%)	4 (0.1%)	1 (0.0%)	223 (5.6%)	
Generally disagree	29 (0.7%)	142 (3.6%)	86 (2.2%)	46 (1.2%)	22 (0.6%)	10 (0.3%)	4 (0.1%)	339 (8.5%)	
Moderately disagree	42 (1.1%)	218 (5.5%)	143 (3.6%)	120 (3.0%)	85 (2.1%)	24 (0.6%)	9 (0.2%)	641 (16.0%)	
Moderately agree	51 (1.3%)	313 (7.8%)	281 (7.0%)	224 (5.6%)	186 (4.7%)	59 (1.5%)	16 (0.4%)	1,130 (28.3%)	
Generally agree	33 (0.8%)	202 (5.1%)	232 (5.8%)	210 (5.3%)	188 (4.8%)	96 (2.4%)	26 (0.4%)	987 (24.7%)	
Definitely agree	20 (0.5%)	128 (3.2%)	122 (3.1%)	132 (3.3%)	152 (3.8%)	81 (2.0%)	40 (1.0%)	675 (16.9%)	
Total	209 (5.2%)	1,108 (27.7)	907 (22.7%)	755 (18.9%)	646 (16.2%)	274 (6.9%)	96 (2.4%)	3,995 (100%)	
	Clothesgourmands				Clotheshorses				

Note. $\Phi^2 = .09$; $p < .000$; medium positive main effect size.

As in the year 1983, all possible antecedent combinations were tested to analyze the membership of the four different clothes shopper types. Overall, the results are similar for the year 1989 compared to the year 1983 (see [Table 6](#) for an overview). The hypothesized recipe for Clotheshorses, female·adviceseeker·adviciver~satisfaction·self-confidence·needtolookdifferent, shows a solution consistency of .871 and solution coverage of .220.

The hypothesized configuration explains a large number of useful outcomes. In running XY plots for all possible causal configurations of the antecedent variables another causal recipe emerged with higher consistency scores .876 for the membership of Clotheshorses than the hypothesized causal configuration: female·adviceseeker·adviciver~satisfaction~self-confidence~needtolookdifferent. This turns out to be the same configuration as for the year 1983, confirming our results.

[Table 6](#) also shows the results of the hypothesized recipe for Clothesaholics: female~adviceseeker·adviciver·satisfaction~self-confidence·needtolookdifferent. This solution shows a consistency of .737 and coverage of .288. Thus, the result explains a sufficient number of outcomes. Running XY plots for all possible causal configurations of all antecedent variables, another causal recipe revealed a more sufficient explanation of the membership of Clothesaholics (solution consistency of .757 and solution coverage: .265): female~adviceseeker·adviciver~satisfaction~self-confidence~needtolookdifferent. These results reveal the same two causal recipes for the membership of Clothesaholics as for the year 1983.

As for the year 1983, the analyses of all possible antecedent combinations reveal the hypothesized recipe of Clothesgourmands: male·adviceseeker~adviciver~satisfaction·self-confidence~needtolookdifferent with the overall highest consistency. This solution shows a solution consistency of .916 and solution coverage of .169. Thus, the result explains a sufficient number of outcomes (see [Table 6](#)).

Finally, for Clothesnegators, the plot of the hypothesized recipe: male~adviceseeker~adviciver·satisfaction~self-confidence~needtolookdifferent shows a solution consistency of .800 and solution coverage of .320. Thus, the result explains a sufficient number of outcomes (see [Table 6](#)). Running XY plots for all possible causal configurations of all antecedent variables, another causal recipe reveals a more sufficient explanation of the membership of Clothesnegators (solution consistency of .899 and solution coverage: .170): male·adviceseeker·adviciver~satisfaction~self-confidence~needtolookdifferent. This finding is in line with the results for the year 1983 and thus supports the conclusion that the model has high predictive validity.

7. Discussion and managerial implications

The present study supports the view that configurations of different identity-defining personal attributes serve as complex antecedent conditions that are useful for identifying and distinguishing different clothes shopper segments. Such research enhances clothes shopping literature.

In line with prior literature on clothes shopping (e.g. Buttle, 1992; Cox & Dittmar, 1995), the results confirm that gender matters for clothes shopping behavior. The findings demonstrate, on the one hand, that female gender is part of the causal configurations explaining the two clothes shopper types who shop for clothes frequently: “Clotheshorses” and “Clothesaholics”. On the other hand, male gender is part of the causal configurations explaining the two non-clothes shopper types: “Clothesgourmands” and “Clothesnegators”.

This study adds to previous literature on clothes shopping by not only investigating clothes shopping frequency but also examining the importance of dressing well, and thus the attitude toward dressing and clothes. In this, this study further explored clothes

Table 6. Overview of sufficient causal configurations explaining the respective outcomes for year 1989.

Satisfaction	Causal configurations								Coverage	Consistency
	Male	Advice seeker	Advice giver	Self-confidence	Need to look different	Self-confidence	Need to look different	Coverage		
<i>Clotheshorses</i>										
○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	.220	.871	
○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	.180	.876	
<i>Clothesaholics</i>										
●	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	.288	.737	
○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	.265	.757	
<i>Clothesgourmands</i>										
○	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	.169	.916	
<i>Clothesnegators</i>										
●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	.320	.800	
○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	.170	.899	

● explains the presence of an antecedent; ○ explains the absence of an antecedent.

shopping behavior and found profound evidence for the existence of four different clothes shopper types. The size of the clothes shopper types vary to some degree: among the sample, 5.1% of the respondents are Clotheshorses (1989: 6.1%), 0.8% Clothesaholics (1989: 0.5%), 5.9% Clothesgourmands (1989: 9.6%) and 10.0% Clothesnegators (1989: 7.8%). The numbers indicate that the paradoxical clothes shopper type Clothesaholics – members of which segment frequently shop for clothes but view dressing well as unimportant – does account for a very specific and small number of people.

However, the second paradoxical type, the Clothesgourmands, members of which segment rarely shop for clothes and view dressing well as important, accounts for quite a number of people. Furthermore, the two classical types, Clotheshorses (frequent clothes shoppers who view dressing well as important) and Clothesnegators (infrequent clothes shoppers who view dressing well as unimportant), make up a fair amount of the people.

Overall, the causal recipes for the four clothes shopper types overlap for some antecedents and are distinct for other characteristics. These findings serve to deepen the understanding of clothes shoppers and clothes non-shoppers. Besides gender, the present paper accounted for other antecedent variables which define a person's identity and thus were hypothesized to explain membership to one of the four different clothes shopper types: satisfaction, self-confidence, need to look different and direction of information-sharing behavior. Overlapping antecedent variables defining the membership of Clothesnegators are male gender, low self-confidence and low need to look different. As Clothesnegators display a negative attitude toward dressing and clothes, clothes companies should not specifically target these consumers.

Clotheshorses view dressing well as important and frequently shop for clothes. Female gender, a low level of life satisfaction and acting as both advice seeker and advice giver are overlapping antecedents which describe the members of the Clotheshorse profile. Clothes companies should offer them the opportunity to act as fashionistas on company homepages as well as designing special programs to provide advice for clothes shopping (e.g., virtual dressing) to this segment.

Turning to the two paradoxical clothes shopper segments, the results indicate that Clothesgourmands comprise a rather large segment which could also be described as frustrated cases, as they consider dressing well to be important but rarely shop. Thus, the Clothesgourmands seem to follow an anti-addiction strategy. The antecedent conditions sufficiently explaining the membership of the Clothesgourmand strategy include low satisfaction, male gender, being an advice seeker, not acting as an advice giver, high self-confidence and low need to look different. Hence, clothes companies could specifically target the Clothesgourmands by highlighting their offers as easy to wear 24-7. In addition, special programs should be used to provide advice on clothes shopping.

Interestingly, a small group of Clothesaholics is present: these are people who shop for clothes almost every week but think dressing well is not important, and thus display somewhat paradoxical behavior. Female gender, not being an advice seeker and showing low self-confidence are overlapping antecedents for membership of the Clothesaholic segment. Thus, clothes companies should not focus too much on providing them advice in communications and direct sales regarding how to dress and what to wear. However, clothes companies could use these Clothesaholics by turning them into fashionistas.

8. Limitations and future research

The present study examined the DDB Needham Life Style Surveys of 1983 and 1989 as the data bases for testing configural theory. These data may be viewed as providing outdated perspectives of present reality. New shopping channels (e.g. eCommerce) arose in the twenty-

first century that likely change the causal configurations of the four different clothes shopper types to some extent. Thus, future studies should be based on twenty-first-century data.

As secondary data from the DDB Needham Life Style Survey was used, the present study is limited to the variables assessed in the survey. Furthermore, all the variables are only single-item measures. Future studies should measure personal attributes, such satisfaction, with multi-item scales. Overall, future research needs to validate our findings with newer data and more valid scales and account for additional variables such as clothing attitude.

9. Conclusion

Not all clothes shoppers are alike and not all non-clothes shoppers are alike. Defining different types of clothes shoppers and describing alternative causal recipes for these different clothes shopper types provides a sophisticated perspective on clothes shopping behavior. From a marketing perspective, this study provides answers to the following questions: (1) Are there different types of clothes shoppers? (2) Who are the different clothes shopper types? (3) Are there people who shop for clothes frequently but differ in their attitudes toward dressing? (4) Are there people who behave paradoxically and shop for clothes frequently but see no importance in dressing well, or do not shop for clothes frequently but view dressing well as very important? (5) Why do people behave paradoxically with regards to clothes buying and attitude?

Given the widespread marketing strategies of clothes companies, research methods that provide complex and rich causal recipes regarding alternative clothes shopper segments provide substantial insights. Fuzzy logic is useful to identify different clothes shopper segments. FsQCA can deal with imprecise concepts such as frequency, allowing for set membership and including partial membership values between and including 0 and 1. The present study is the first to apply fsQCA to identify clothes shopper types using configurations of gender and identity attributes. Replications of the findings are necessary before adopting the perspective that distinct causal configurations identify Clotheshorses, Clothesaholics, Clothesgourmands and Clothesnegators.

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