Grouping Phenomena of Young Girl's Fashion in Japan

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Abstract

This study examines the grouping phenomena of young girl's fashion in Japan. Abundant styles are now commercially available, and the people seem to select a style as they like. Moreover many media focus the interest in fashion information. The women's university students in Japan are supposed to dress must freely, but at the same time they are easily influenced by the fashion information obtained through various media. The purpose of the present study is to examine the factors which affect their clothing selections.

The curacy on the fashion conscious was conducted mainly by the questionnaire and the classification of the style of the subjects into 6 categories. The fashion conscious of each subject was then analyzed in terms of the categories by SPSS. The results confirm that, about 80% students obtain information from a fashion magazine, and 53% from watching what other women are wearing. They are most interested to learn how to dress well from the media.

The students classified the style photograph according to the fashion magazines, confirming that their fashion knowledge is mostly due to these magazines. In fact the difference in naming the category in the classified style was observed between the students who read the magazine and who do not read magazine.

In conclusion, the groupings of the students fashion proceed in accordance with the available fashion magazine.

Keywords: Japanese fashion magazines; Tokyo girls' fashion; thought pattern; behavioral pattern; Canonical discriminate analysis; Correspondence analysis

Introduction

Wearing clothe signifies the protection from foreign enemy, the culture represented by classic clothes, and the social symbol like police and nurse. However, in its daily behavior, the most important function is an expression tool in order to identify oneself. Various types of clothes are available on the market, and we can select any clothes which appeal to our sensitivity. In this context street fashion is a suitable target to investigate the trend of thought pattern in the young people.

The choice of the clothes is influenced mostly by the fashion information provided by mass media. The Japanese market is flooded with various kinds of clothes, and the people can select a style as they like. Each district in Tokyo becomes specialized in a characteristic trend of fashion as symbolized by the name of the towns such as Harajyuku, Omotesando, Shibuya, Daikanyama, and Ginza. However, the young people living in Tokyo suburb (e.g. Tachikawa, Hachiozi, Yokohama, Kawasaki, Omiya, Urawa, Chiba, Machida, and Kashiwa) tend to find a job and complete their shopping within their hometown area as a recent consumer survey suggests. Although those towns are not a fashion center specializing a characteristic trend of fashion, the same brands and stores are also available in those town, and the young people in those towns can easily obtain the same fashion items introduced by mass media.

Thus the young people are in principle permitted to select freely a style as they like, but we observe a group of people wearing a similar fashion and acting together. Furthermore, there are several distinguishable groups of young people wearing a similar fashion, and each group is easily identified with a particular fashion magazine. Such grouping phenomena of young people fashion seem to be a special case observed only in Japan.

Why is a group distinguished by appearance formed? The answer will be given by the cultural and sub-cultural background matured in those young people. The present report provides an initial survey on the female university students in the center of Tokyo to elucidate the influential factors in their daily appearance. Following the present result, a similar survey will be conducted on the young women living in the suburb of Tokyo, and the difference in their thinking and behavioral pattern will be discussed.

Method

1. Questionnaire

(1) Subjects

260 subjects are randomly chosen from the students of Otsuma women's university in their 1st~4th year.

(2) Research method

2 sets of questionnaires were prepared, and the inquiry survey was conducted in June and July, 2006. Questionnaire 1 concerns the change of fashion consciousness of the subjects, asking when they started being interested in fashion, what made the subjects interested in fashion, and which fashion magazines the subjects were reading as a function of age. Questionnaire 2 examines the current behavior and consciousness of the subjects on fashion and daily life.

Questionnaire1: Collected questionnaire 228 sheets (Collected percentage 87.7%)
Questionnaire2: Collected questionnaire 197 sheets (Collected percentage 75.7%)
Data was analyzed according to the correspondence analysis and canonical discriminant analysis by Excel and SPSS.

2. Type classification by appearance
(1) Subjects

121 subjects were chosen from the students of Otsuma Women's University (Tokyo, Japan) in their 1st~4th year. A whole body from head to toe was photographed at a standing position with OLYMPAS E-300.

Japanese young girls fashion was classified in 6 types according to the specification of current fashion trend in Japan. Subjects were then grouped in there 6 types according to their appearance and lifestyle.

These 6 types are specified as Group A "Casual", Group B "sexy and slim-dilly", Group C "girlish elegance" , Group D "elegant and modish ", Group E "individualistic" and Group F " young carrier lady " . Each feature is described as follows.
Group A "casual ": The design is simple and not tight-fit. It features ubiquitous and non-characteristic appearance.

Group B "sexy and slim-dilly": Hair is bright colored and well cared. Skin is dark. Clothes are florid, exposed and body-tight.
Group C "girlish elegance": Hair is bright colored and well cared. Clothes are very feminine and decorated with lace and ribbon. Skirt and dress are in variety. Pink and white are preferred colors.

Group D "elegant and modish": Clothes are designed in a similar   concept of high fashion and collection. Main color is black and white. The silhouette is unique.
Group E "individualistic": Wearing multi-layer of different clothing style is a main current even in summer. Clothes are decorative. Shoes and accessories are elaborate as seen in Hrajyuku area. Include Urahara-kei and Gothic Lolita.
Group F " young carrier lady": The design is conservative, and resemble to that of carrier women.

3. Classification of Japanese fashion magazines' style picture
Feature of Japanese fashion magazines

Japanese fashion magazines carry the latest fashion every month. The items include not only clothes, but also the scene setting and coordinating examples for the featured clothes. A variety of coordinating examples are proposed for one top. For example, a popular model exclusive to a particular magazine suggests 40-day coordinating pattern for some clothes. Here the readers may identify their own life with a detailed scene setting shown in the magazine.

Each magazine is composed of the photographs of the public figures and exclusive models, and also includes popular shop staffs, buyers, reader models, and people on the street.
As a recent trend shows, the apparel companies collaborate with the fashion magazines, and new items are introduced and promoted in the magazine from the planning stage. The fashion magazine is displayed together with those items in the stores. The magazines feature often hair styles and make ups, and build up he image distinguishable from other magazines.

Magazines have a lot of reading issues on love, beauty and fortunetelling, following the trend of readers' lifestyle.

(1) Style examples

Style examples were collected from over 50 fashion magazines (July, 2006). 50 skirt and 50 pants styles were extracted from these magazines. Each style picture was scan from the fashion magazines. Adobe Photoshop was used for the image processing to remove other stimulus than wearing clothes (Resolution; 200dpi). Back color was set to a medium lightness gray. Style examples were printed out from CANON 5700LP, and each image was cut to adjust the size to 80mm×60mm.

(2) Grouping of style examples

Subjects were divided into 23 groups, each composed of 2 to 8. Each subject group was asked to classify the style examples freely into groups, and named each group.

Results and Discussion

1.Lifestyle

Fig. 1 shows how much the students spend for clothes per month. 59% students spend $85～254 for clothes in a month. 92% students purchase clothes more than once a month, and 14% students purchase clothes more than four times a month （see Fig. 2）. Fig. 3 shows the media that the students rely on to obtain the idea on the current fashion style.

The results confirm that 77 % students obtain information from fashion magazines, and 53% from watching what other women are wearing, and 29% from an attendant in a shop.

Fig. 4 shows the change of students' favorite magazines with age. Each fashion magazine for younger readers displays various characteristic styles from individualistic to florid style, but gradually specializes in a particular genre of styles for older ages. The age (the abscissa axis in Fig 4) covers from junior high school to college ages and the corresponding magazines are classified in the vertical line according to their feature.

Most of the students started reading a fashion magazine such as "Pichi-lemon", "Nicola" from the age of 12 to 13 years old, and obtained fashion information from a fashion magazine. "Pichi-lemon", "Nikola", "Seventeen", "Puchiseven", and "Popteen" are read by young girls from 12 to 15 years old. These magazines display general fashion styles, and specify no particular styles.

They tend to choose a particular fashion magazine and their own style in the high school days. Their choice and taste of the fashion magazines are branched into several groups in college.
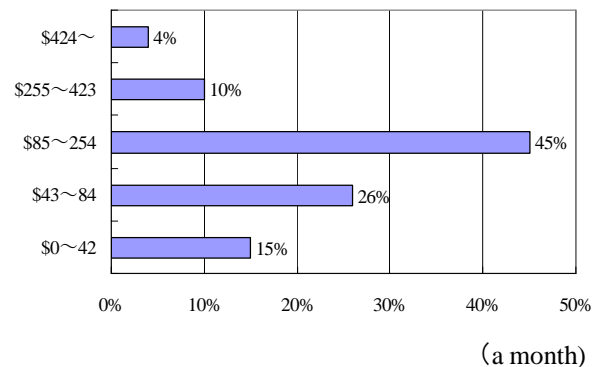

（a month)

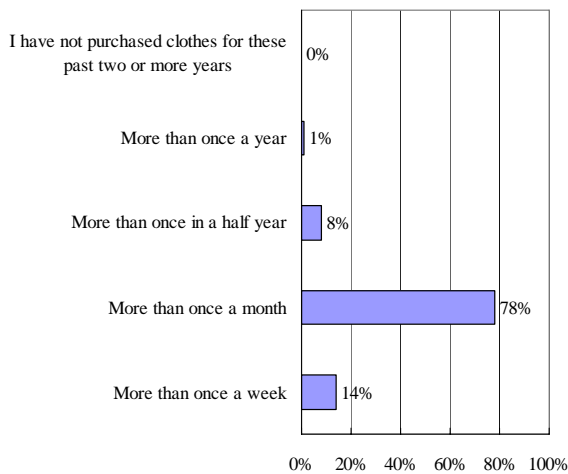**Fig.1   Clothes spending per month**
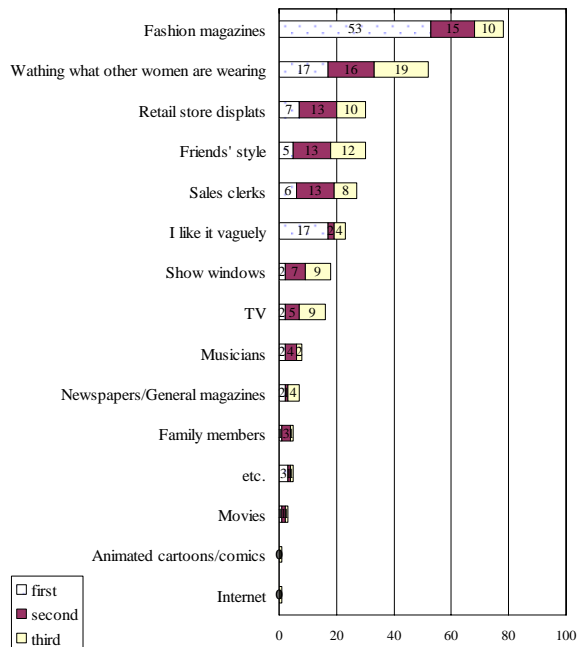
Fig.2 Fequency of shopping

Fig.3 Media that the students rely on to obtain fashion information.
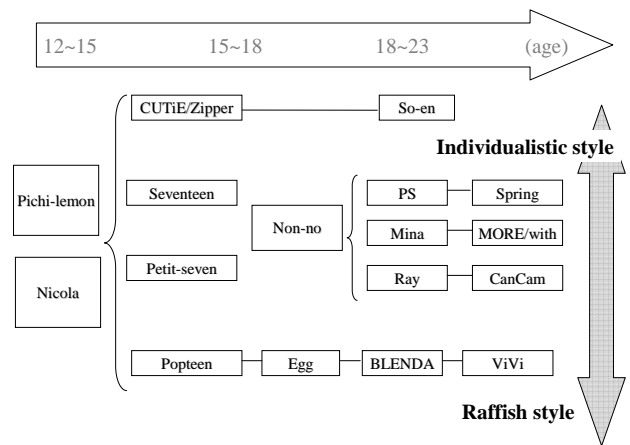

Fig.4 Fashion magazine map

2. Plain clothes photographs of students

The conscious survey on fashion was conducted by the questionnaire 1 and 2. The styles of 251 subjects were classified according to their full-length photographs into 6 types. The results are summarized as follows: 84 people (34%) are classified to Type 1 (casual), 18 people (7%), toType 2 (sexy and slim-dilly), 41 people (16%) to Type 3 (girlish elegance), 9 people (4%) to Type 4 (elegant and modish), 64 people (25%) to Type 5 (individualistic) and 8 people (3%) to Type 6 (young carrier woman). 27 people (11%) cannot be classified to any particular type. The fashion conscious of each subject was then analyzed from the results of the questionnaire by SPSS on 5 types except for Type 6 and unknown type (see Fig 5).
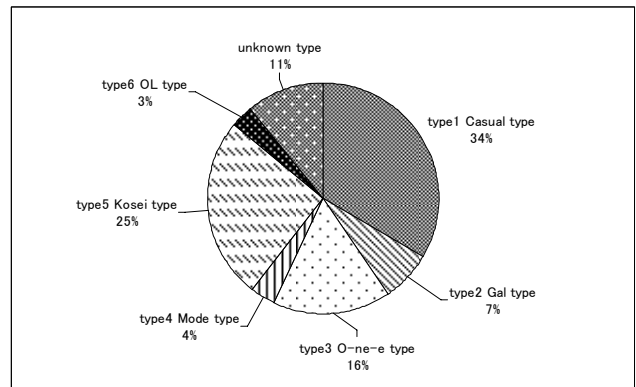

Fig.5 The grouping due to the type

Table.1 characteristic questions to specify the feature of the fashion group

questions	function 1	function 2
cloth price in a my prime concern	-0.395	0.128
shose size is my prime concern	0.227	0.612
I shop at Marui	-0.551	0.217
I shop at "109"	0.398	0.633
I shop at shopping mall	-0.336	0.253
I shop at second hand clothing store	-0.014	-0.585
I shop by internet auction	0.309	0.084
I shop by order through internet	0.438	0.33
Monthly expense for clothes is my prime concern.	0.523	0.407
I like my own fashion	0.409	-0.171

88 questions in the questionnaire were excerpted and subjected to the canonical discriminate analysis. 10 questions were extracted as characteristic questions, but 6 questions among them are concerned with the shopping place (see Table 1). The feature of the groups revealed by those question is summarized in Fig-6.
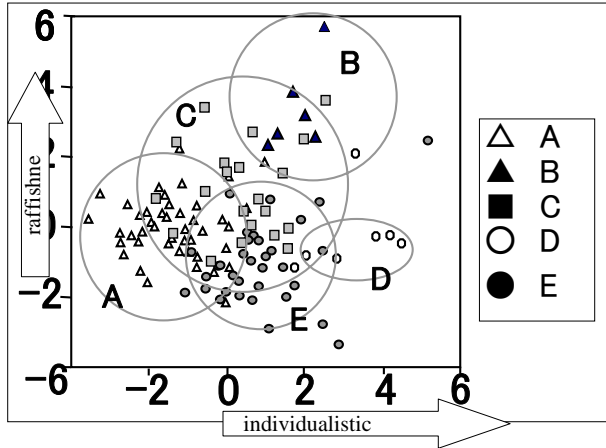

Fig.6 Grouping of the subjects by canonical discriminate analysis

Fig- 6 is a grouping map, compiled according to the canonical discriminate analysis of the answer to 10 questions mentioned above. Here the abscissa axis and the longitudinal axis denote the individualistic tendency and the raffishness, respectively. A lange circle represents each group classified by the type A to E. A seen from Fig 6, each group is positioned characteristically in the map, suggesting that each group has a particular thought pattern. For example, the group B (sexy and slim-dilly) is positioned at more individualistic and raffish side than other groups, while the D group (elegant and modish) is characterized by the most individualistic attitude and the moderate raffishness. The C group (young elegance) is widely distributed around a centre, indicating that the C group is composed of the individuals with wide range of thought patterns.

Table 2 Similarity of thought pattern with in a group

		A classification result[a]					
		predicted from the appearance					
	Type	A	B	C	D	E	total
confirmed by group individuals	frequency A	34	0	7	0	5	46
	B	0	6	0	0	0	6
	C	2	3	13	2	2	22
	D	0	0	0	5	2	7
	E	2	1	2	3	25	33
	% A	73.9	0	15.2	0	10.9	100
	B	0	100	0	0	0	100
	C	9.1	13.6	59.1	9.1	9.1	100
	D	0	0	0	71.4	28.6	100
	E	6.1	3	6.1	9.1	75.8	100

[a]72.8% in Group divided into type.

Table 2 is confirms the consistency of answering patterns to the questionnaire. The similarity of thought pattern of the subjects in a particular group was found to be a average 72.8%. The C group (young elegance) shows the lowest similarity (59.1%). This result corresponds to the wide distribution of the thought patterns of the individuals belonging to this group. On the contrary, the B group shows the highest score (100%) in the

similarity probability, indicating that the thought pattern is unique within the group.
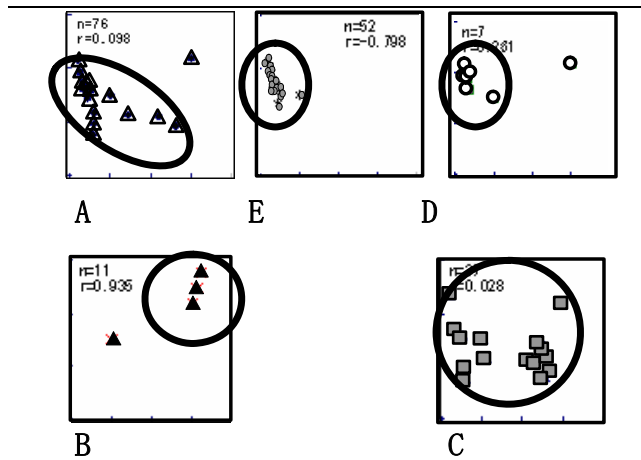

Fig.7 Distribution of the regular reading magazine of the individual who belongs to the group by correspondence analysis.

The fashion magazines can be mapped similarly onto the regular readers belonging to a particular group by the correspondent analysis (see Fig. 7). Here the longitudinal and abscissa axis represent raffishness and individualistic element, respectivity. The fashion magazines read regularly by the A group (casual) distribute widely along the abscissa axis from non individualistic to individualisticelement.

The fashion magazines regularly read by the E group (individualistic) and the D group (elegant and modish) introduce fashion items raffish but mot much individualistic. The magazines in the B group (sexy and slim-dilly) offer raffish as well as individualistic items.
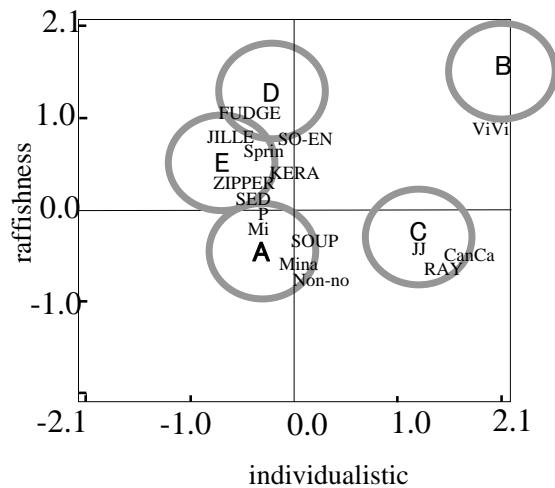

Fig. 8 shows the distribution of fashion magazines regularly read by each group. Each group seems to choose the magazines of their taste. Each magazine reports not only fashion, but also proposes a life style. The correspondence analysis positions the magazines in terms of individualistic element and raffishness, and the clusters are formed in correspondence to the fashion groups. As a result, it was found that the students belonging to

the same group think and behave in a similar fashion.

The present survey indicates that the female students are much influenced by the fashion magazine in their thought as well as behavioral pattern. In consequence, the grouping of thought and behavioral pattern in the female students is more emphasized and standardized as the fashion trend is identified with the name of the magazines

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