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## **USING THE FASHION COUNT TO INTRODUCE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR, GROUP BEHAVIOR THEORY, AND RESEARCH TECHNIQUES TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

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The fashion count technique was used successfully to help undergraduate students understand consumer behavior and group adoption of uniforms. The "uniform" and "group" chosen to study was blue denim jeans worn by students at a land grant university.

Students learned to develop hypotheses, procedure, definitions, and a data collection instrument. Data were collected for three fall semesters, allowing students in later classes to replicate the conditions of the original study and compare results. Findings were consistent across the three year period: blue denim jeans were observed to be the uniform for over 60 percent of students, and White students were more likely to be observed wearing the uniform than African American students. In 1998 a new variable (type of institution) was added when data were also collected at another university in the state. The purpose was to determine if blue denim jeans were also the preferred group uniform on that campus. Significant differences were found between institutions, with students at the second institution less likely to be observed wearing blue denim jeans. This finding supported students' discussions in class that blue denim jeans were more widely accepted as the group uniform on the land grant campus.

The benefits of the project warrant continuation. Students learn to accurately count and record research data, use a simple statistical application to test hypotheses, interpret findings, and draw conclusions.