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## **RETAIL BUYERS AND CONSUMERS: PURCHASE DECISION BEHAVIOR FOR AND SATISFACTION WITH APPAREL**

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Apparel manufacturers strive to satisfy two groups-retailers and consumers. However, few studies have compared purchase decision behavior and satisfaction of apparel buyers and consumers. This study evolved in collaboration with the design/production manager of a wholesale clothing firm that sources apparel from Asia for distribution to U.S. retailers/catalogs. Oliver's (1980) disconfirmation model guided measurement of satisfaction.

Survey questions were based on previous research and developed in partnership with the production manager. Buyers and consumers were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with nine shopping orientations, believed that 15 variables influenced apparel purchasing decisions, and expected and found 18 attributes when shopping. Buyers were asked to respond in the context of their firms; consumers responded relative to purchasing apparel for themselves. Survey items also addressed demographics. Surveys were mailed to retailers and consumers identified by random sampling of company lists.

Respondents were 66 buyers and 344 consumers. MANOVA revealed differences in retailers' and consumers' shopping opinions ( $p < .001$ ) and the influence of variables on purchase decisions ( $p < .01$ ). Paired sample t tests of mean differences between what was expected and found concerning 18 apparel/ shopping attributes indicated dissatisfaction for buyers on 10 items and consumers on nine ( $p < .01$ ). Results may enhance manufacturers' strategies to appeal to apparel retailers and consumers. Dissatisfaction of both groups justifies reexamination of related strategies and further research.

Oliver, R. L. (1980, November). A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decision. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17, 460-469.