

INFORMATION SOURCES INFLUENCING FASHION
ADOPTION BY COLLEGE MEN

By

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PREFACE

This descriptive study applied Rogers' conceptual framework with its five stages of awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption to the process of fashion adoption. A group of college men were selected to test the applicability of this adoption process in the selection of men's knit trousers.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many recent advances in science and technology have applications in the field of clothing. Consumer products which are generally considered to be of better quality, more useful and satisfying have resulted from these efforts. These advances have been especially evident in men's clothing innovations. Much work has gone into the research and development of new clothing and textile products, but how these products are actually adopted and accepted by the consumer has not yet been studied completely.

Adequate understanding of the fashion adoption process which is concerned with the acceptance of a new idea or product has not yet been achieved. This complex process is made up of various mental and action states, and covers that period of time from which the consumer actually becomes aware of a new product until he actually accepts it.¹ In the area of product adoption, considerable research has been conducted by rural sociologists concerning the adoption of agricultural innovations.²

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to apply Rogers' theoretical framework of the adoption process with its stages of awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption to the process of fashion adoption.³

A group of college men were selected to test the applicability of this adoption process in the selection of men's knit trousers.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To apply the theoretical framework of Rogers' adoption process and its stages to the adoption of men's knit trousers by a selected group of college men.

2. To identify the dominant information source used at each stage of the adoption process for men's knit trousers by a selected group of college men.

3. To determine the extent of the influence of various information sources at the different stages of the adoption process as applied to men's knit trousers by a selected group of college men.

4. To evaluate the applicability of the theoretical framework of the adoption process to the fashion adoption process followed in the adoption of men's knit trousers by a selected group of college men.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that differences will be observed in the dominant information source used at the different stages of the adoption process for men's knit trousers by the selected group of college men.

Assumptions

It was assumed that:

1. The theoretical concepts and framework developed by Rogers

concerning the adoption process would be applicable for investigating the adoption of knit trousers by college men.

2. The majority of the subjects would own at least one pair of men's knit trousers; therefore, they would have progressed through the various stages of the adoption process.

3. The following information sources identified in Rogers' theoretical framework would have been used by the sample subjects during the adoption process for men's knit trousers: awareness (mass media); interest (mass media, informal, agencies); evaluation (informal, commercial); trial (commercial, informal); and adoption (self).

Limitations and Scope of the Study

The sample was limited to 112 college men enrolled in FRCD 3012 - Home Economics for Men taught at Oklahoma State University, spring semester 1972.

Application of the adoption process was limited to the theoretical framework previously established by Rogers.

Information supplied on the basis of recall by the respondents may have affected the findings of the research.

Because of the limited scope of the study, findings should not be generalized to other populations without further research.

Definition of Terms

Adoption process.--A complex procedure followed in accepting a new idea occurring over a period of time, composed of a stimulus, interpretation and response. This process consists of the following stages:

awareness--individual learns of idea or practice but knows little about it;

interest--individual develops interest in the idea or practice but knows little about it;

evaluation--individual makes mental applications of the idea; weighs its merits for his own situations;

trial--individual actually tries idea or product, usually on a small scale; and

adoption--stage of acceptance leading to continuous use.

Information sources--The avenues used to provide information at various stages of the adoption process; they may or may not be mutually exclusive. For purposes of this study these sources were classified as:

mass media--radio, television, magazines and newspapers;

informal sources--relatives, neighbors, friends and classmates;

agencies--teachers and extension agents;

commercial sources--store salespeople, door-to-door salesmen, direct mail sales, displays, labels and other written material with garments; and

self--utilization of one's own information, experimentation and interpretation.

FOOTNOTES

¹Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations (New York, 1962), p. 76.

²For example see: Everett M. Rogers, Bibliography on the Diffusion of Innovations (East Lansing, Michigan, 1966).

³Rogers, pp. 81-86.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

Rogers has defined the adoption process as the "mental process through which an individual passes from first hearing about an innovation to final adoption."¹ This complex process of accepting new ideas occurs over a period of time and is composed of a stimulus, interpretation and response.²

Development of the Concept

The conceptual development of the adoption process has been traced through rural sociology. Probably the first to recognize that the adoption process was made up of stages were Ryan and Gross. In 1943, they distinguished between the awareness of hybrid seed corn, conviction of its usefulness, trial acceptance and complete adoption of the innovation.³

However, it was not until 1953 that Wilkening first pointed out that an individual's actual decision actually consisted of stages or steps. Wilkening described the adoption of an innovation as:

. . . a process composed of learning, deciding, and acting over a period of time. The adoption of a specific practice is not the result of a single decision to act but of a series of actions and thought decisions.

Wilkening felt that the adoption process was made up of four stages: awareness, obtaining information, conviction and trial, and adoption.⁴

As the conceptual development of the adoption process has evolved, there has not been complete agreement on the number of stages. However, there is general agreement that stages do exist and that adoption is seldom an impulse decision. Ryan, Gross⁵ and Wilkening⁶ agree that the adoption process consists of four stages. Ryan and Gross called their stages: awareness; conviction; acceptance; and complete adoption.⁷ Wilkening termed his four stages: awareness; obtaining information; conviction and trial; and adoption.⁸ However, the North Central Rural Sociology Committee, after reviewing literature available in 1954, described the adoption process in five stages: awareness; interest; evaluation; trial; and adoption.⁹ In agreement with the idea of five stages were Beal, Rogers and Bohlen¹⁰ and Copp, Sill and Brown.¹¹ From their investigations, however, Lavidge and Stiener postulated six stages consisting of aware of existence, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and purchase.¹²

Stages in the Adoption Process

The five stages utilized in this study were based on Rogers' concept of the adoption framework: awareness; interest; evaluation; trial; and adoption. The description of the type of behavior occurring at each stage and the main function that each stage fulfills in the adoption process follows.

Awareness Stage

The first stage of the adoption process is referred to by most researchers as the awareness stage. During this stage the individual first learns that an innovation exists, but he lacks information about

it. Although the individual knows an innovation exists, he has not yet been motivated to seek more information about it. The purpose of the awareness stage is to "initiate the sequence of later stages that lead to eventual adoption or rejection of the innovation."¹³

Two major views are held by researchers as to how the individual first becomes aware of an innovation. Some researchers feel that this awareness occurs by accident. This view is based on the idea that an individual cannot seek out innovations which he does not know exist.¹⁴ An opposite view is held by Hassinger who believes that the awareness stage is not accidental. This view is based on the idea that even though an individual acquires information about an innovation, this does not always create awareness. In order for awareness to occur the individual must have a need or problem which can be met by a certain innovation.¹⁵ Rogers indicates that this argument is comparable to the chicken-and-the-egg type of question and questions whether awareness precedes or whether it creates a need for the innovation. He believes that research leads one to suggest that the latter is more probable.¹⁶

Interest Stage

The second stage of the adoption process is referred to differently by various researchers. Beal, Rogers and Bohlen refer to it as the "information" stage,¹⁷ while it is referred to as the "knowledge" stage by Lavidge and Stiener,¹⁸ and as the "interest-information" stage by the North Central Rural Sociology Committee.¹⁹ Rogers refers to it as the "interest" stage.²⁰

In the "interest" stage the individual becomes interested in the new innovation. In general, the individual has begun to favor the

idea, but he has not yet projected it into his own situation. The main function of this stage is to increase the individual's knowledge about the particular innovation. The individual becomes more psychologically involved with the innovation at the interest stage than he was at the awareness stage. In the awareness stage, the individual listened or read about an innovation. In the interest stage, more information is actively sought.²¹ The terms which are used by researchers other than Rogers for the interest stage are "application",²² "acceptance",²³ "evaluation-application-decision"²⁴ and "conviction".²⁵

Evaluation Stage

During the evaluation stage of the adoption process, the individual mentally tries the innovation in terms of his own situation. After this mental trial, if the individual decides the innovation will meet his need he will most likely try out the idea. The evaluation stage is one of the most difficult stages to distinguish. Also it is one of the most difficult to question people about.²⁶ At the evaluation stage the individual is faced with a subjective risk. He is unsure of the outcome, so it is a time when the individual will most likely seek out some type of reinforcement. This will usually be in the form of advice or information acquired from a friend. The use of mass communication media is usually too general to provide enough reinforcement for the individual at this stage.²⁷

Trial Stage

The fourth stage of the adoption process is concerned with the actual trial of the innovation. This is first done on a small scale

because the individual wants to find out how the innovation actually fits into his own situation and to determine how useful it would be if he actually adopted it. This is sometimes referred to as a "dry run." How the individual judges the results of this "dry run" will play an important part in the adoption-rejection decision.²⁸

Adoption Stage

In the final stage of the adoption process, the individual decides to continue the full use of the innovation. The main function of the stage is for the individual to take into full consideration the personal satisfaction renewed from the evaluation carried out during the trial stage. Adoption of the innovation implies its continued use in the future.²⁹

Recent Trends in Men's Trousers

Recent market trends in men's trousers were studied for added information about men's knit trousers.

Growth in Production of Men's Knit Trousers

The study of recent trends in men's clothing has indicated a general breakaway from men's traditional dress. Of all such breakaways the one which seems to be the most revolutionary in concept is the use of knits. This is especially evident in men's knit trousers.³⁰

Clothes magazine in reporting Apparel Statistics for 1971 stated:

The impact that knits have made on the men's pants business is one of the rare phenomena in the history of the men's apparel business. They've hit with such force that they've virtually changed the entire structure of the pants maker.

They feel that on a technical basis knits have done for the trouser business what permanent press did for the dress shirt market in the early 1960's.³¹

Consumer enthusiasm has made knits the backbone for most tailored slacks operation in department and specialty stores. In 1969, knits accounted for only 2 percent of 143 million pairs of trousers sold over retail counters. Statistics for 1972 indicated knits would account for 30 percent of the trousers sold.³² (See Table I)

TABLE I
GROWTH RATE FOR MEN'S TAILORED KNIT
TROUSERS AND TOTAL MEN'S TAILORED
TROUSERS PRODUCTION

Year	Percent of Total Men's Tailored Trousers Production
1969	2%
1970	8%
1971*	20%
1972*	30%

* Estimated figures based on current 1971 and 1972 sales and cutting records.

All figures are representative samplings compiled by Prad's Statistical Department.³³

Further predictions were made in 1970 by Don W. Gray, manager for the Knitwear at Dupont, who saw a big growth in tailored knit trousers during the first half of the 1970's. He predicted by 1975 knits would account for 40 percent of the better trousers produced.³⁴ A survey of individual retailers at all levels indicated that these predictions will come true. Buyers' 1972 fall trouser projections for popular-priced double knit trousers indicated that from 65 percent of stock in conservative department and specialty stores to 100 percent of stock in the medium to better department stores would consist of knits.³⁵

For the period of 1969 to 1972 it was estimated that there would be a 40 million-unit increase in trouser production. This prediction included all manufacturers of trousers except makers of jeans. This anticipated increase in trouser production was attributed to the growth in the use of knits. It was projected that by the end of 1972, trouser production would be approximately 180 million pairs. This meant that 30 percent of this market would consist of knit trousers and account for a total of about 54 million pairs of trousers.³⁶

Style of Knit Trousers

Retailers were queried concerning the predominant style of knit trousers being worn by their customers for fall 1971. Better stores indicated that retailers were trying to "woo" the conservative dresser into accepting knits. This was evidenced by a minimum of half of the retailers' double-knit purchases being the straight leg silhouette. This straight leg silhouette was looked upon as being new business. This customer was added to the retailers' flare leg customer whom the retailers already had.³⁷

In the medium priced store, the 1971 fashion picture remained about the same as it had in previous years. Belt loop flares were still the dominant style sold in both the sportswear and tailored clothing departments. In both the department and specialty stores, more solids were sold than originally had been expected. This was surprising to many, since the fashion dresser is the chief customer for these stores. The continued popularity of the fancy top was cited as the primary reason for the continued popularity of solid trousers.³⁸

Similarities and differences were both apparent when retailers across the country were surveyed. It was noted that men's knit trousers sold best in warm climates. This was especially true in climates where the same trousers could be worn year round. These reports were surprising to many who had believed that knits would be too uncomfortable for hot weather wear. However, sales reports from Miami, Dallas, Phoenix and Los Angeles indicated that higher temperatures had no effect on the customers' enthusiasm for knit trousers.³⁹

With reference to the 1972 fall trousers market, Clothes magazine reported that the volume trouser market had "a tiger by the tail." The tiger they referred to was double knit. Knits held the number one spot for fall with conservative retailers quoting their fall trouser projections as 65 percent double knit. The department and specialty stores went even further with projections of 100 percent of their fall stock. The over-all projection for the fall 1972 trouser market topped the 1971 figures by 20 percent because of the knits.⁴⁰

Predictions for fall 1972 indicated that there would be an increase in the strength of solid color trousers. The expected increase was anticipated to account for 65 percent of the market. This increase

over the previous equal split was attributed to the growing strength of the sports coat market. Although patterns with surface interest stitches like the bubble and blister effect were no longer found in quantity, fancy solids were still important. Cords, twills, and sculptured looks were also still important to the fall of 1972.⁴¹

Burgundy was the color which appeared to be dominant in the fashion scene for men's trousers. However, retailers saw greys and greens as potential replacements for this color. An updated heather look was also popular. Tattersalls, herringbones, block plaids, checks, mosaics and tartan plaid were strong in the fancy end of the trouser market. The spaced and random geometrics which had been extremely popular during 1971 were worth stocking in limited selections for the 1972 fall market in men's wear.⁴²

The future for men's knit trousers appears to be very promising but there are factors which can affect the market level in the future. One such factor is the possibility that "shoddy" piece goods will work their way into the tailored knit trouser's business. If this should happen, the current attitude men have about knit trousers could be reversed. The reason given for "shoddy" piece goods being able to work their way into the market is the high demand expected for knit trousers. Throughout the men's market there will be a scramble to get goods. This may result in some cutters accepting just about any goods in order to meet the expected demands.⁴³

A look at the women's clothing business provides some evidence of what can happen when this problem occurs. During the late 1950's in women's wear double-knits became very popular. The customer was satisfied with the knits produced as long as they met expected standards.

But as customer demand began to exceed the supply of knit goods, substandard goods began to work their way into the market. These substandard goods had a bad effect on the attitude of the customer. As a result the market for double-knit fell off. It took almost a year-and-a-half to regain the confidence of consumers.⁴⁴ Clothes magazine warned that this same problem may damage the men's knit trousers market in the future if the men's trousers people fail to keep a realistic view of their situation.⁴⁵

FOOTNOTES

¹Everett M. Rogers, Diffusions of an Innovation (New York, 1962), p. 76.

²George M. Beal and Everett M. Rogers, "Informational Sources in the Adoption Process of New Fabrics," Journal of Home Economics, XLIX (October, 1957), p. 631.

³Bryce Ryan and Neal C. Gross, "The Diffusion of Hybrid Seed Corn in Two Iowa Communities," Rural Sociology, VIII (March, 1943), pp. 15-24.

⁴E. A. Wilkening, Adoption of Improved Farm Practices Related to Family Factors, Madison, Wisconsin Experiment Station Research Bulletin No. 183 (December, 1953), p. 9.

⁵Ryan and Gross, pp. 15-24.

⁶Wilkening, p. 9.

⁷Ryan and Gross, pp. 15-24.

⁸Wilkening, p. 9.

⁹North Central Rural Sociology Committee, How Farm People Accept New Ideas, Iowa Agricultural Extension Service Special Report No. 15 (November, 1955), pp. 4-6.

¹⁰George M. Beal, Everett M. Rogers and Joe M. Bohlen, "Validity of the Concept of the Stages in the Adoption Process," Rural Sociology, XXII (June, 1957), p. 167.

¹¹James H. Copp, Maurice L. Sill and Emory J. Brown, "The Function of Information Sources in the Farm Practices Adoption Process," Rural Sociology, XXIII (June, 1958), p. 149.

¹²Robert J. Lavidge and Gary A. Stiener, "Model for Practical Measurement of Advertising Effectiveness," Journal of Marketing, XV (October, 1961), p. 59.

¹³Rogers, p. 82.

¹⁴James Coleman, Elihu Katz and Herbert Menzel, "The Diffusion of an Innovation Among Physicians," Sociometry, XX (December, 1957), p. 384.

- ¹⁵Edward Hassinger, "Stages in the Adoption Process," Rural Sociology, XXIV (March, 1959), p. 52.
- ¹⁶Rogers, p. 82.
- ¹⁷Beal, Rogers and Bohlen, p. 167.
- ¹⁸Lavidge and Stiener, p. 59.
- ¹⁹North Central Rural Sociology Committee, p. 4.
- ²⁰Rogers, p. 82.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 83.
- ²²Ibid.
- ²³Ibid., p. 84.
- ²⁴Beal, Rogers and Bohlen, p. 167.
- ²⁵Copp, Sill and Brown, p. 149.
- ²⁶North Central Rural Sociology Committee, p. 5.
- ²⁷Everett M. Rogers and R. L. Pitzer, The Adoption of Irrigation by Ohio Farmers, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Research Bulletin No. 851 (June, 1960), p. 27.
- ²⁸Rogers, p. 84.
- ²⁹Rogers, p. 86.
- ³⁰Cora Carlyle, "The New Liberated Man," American Fabrics (Winter, 1971), p. 35.
- ³¹Carolyn Carpentieri Potter, ed., "Will Quantity Overshadow Quality?" Clothes (May, 1972), p. 55.
- ³²Ibid., p. 58.
- ³³Carolyn Carpentieri Potter, ed., "Volume Pants - A Safari to Adventure," Clothes (March 15, 1972), p. 57.
- ³⁴Cora Carlyle, ed., "Knits in the Seventies," American Fabrics (Spring, 1970), p. 41.
- ³⁵Ibid., p. 57.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 59.
- ³⁷Ibid., p. 60.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Potter, May, 1972, p. 61.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 60.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Potter, May, 1972, p. 61.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study was designed to determine if Rogers' theoretical framework of the adoption process with its stages of awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption could be applied effectively to the process of fashion adoption.¹ To accomplish this, data were collected to determine if this theoretical framework of the adoption process applied to the adoption of men's knit trousers. A selected group of college men were questioned in order to identify the dominant information source used at the various stages of the adoption for selecting an apparel item.

The Sample

The sample for this investigation consisted of 112 men enrolled in ERCD 3012 - Home Economics for Men taught at Oklahoma State University, spring semester 1972. The data were collected in May, 1972.

The Questionnaire

A two-part questionnaire consisting of fifteen multiple choice questions was developed by the researcher to collect the data. (See Appendix.) Part I of the questionnaire consisted of five questions and was used as the basis for formulating a description of the population. Part II of the questionnaire consisted of ten questions designed

to identify the dominant information source used by men in the sample at each of the five stages of the adoption process.

The questionnaire was pretested with 10 randomly selected Oklahoma State University male students. After completion of the preliminary questionnaire, each subject was interviewed by the researcher to determine how the questionnaire could be revised to be a more effective data collection instrument.

The questionnaire was revised and administered by the researcher and one helper to 112 students enrolled in FRCD 3012 - Home Economics for Men. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were given verbal instructions in addition to the written instructions appearing on the questionnaire. Verbally the respondents were instructed to answer all questions which applied to them. Next they were asked to enter their answers to Part I on the actual questionnaire sheets. They were then instructed to place answers to Part II of the questionnaire on the computer cards provided. Ten minutes were allowed for completion of the questionnaire.

Analysis of Data

The data collected for this research were analyzed descriptively. All data analyzed were obtained from the questionnaire.

Data from Part I of the questionnaire described the population. The subjects responding were classified according to college major, year in school, size of hometown, marital status, and fraternity membership or non-membership. In analyzing data, a written description was made of all categories. This provided a description of the number of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors enrolled in each college.

It also provided the total number of men enrolled in each college and the total number in each year in school. The remaining three categories--hometown size, marital status and fraternity membership--were analyzed individually.

Responses to Part II of the questionnaire provided data on the actual application of Rogers' theoretical framework of the adoption process to men's knit trousers. Emphasis was placed on the information sources used at the various stages of the adoption process. Data were first analyzed to determine if the men were aware of knit trousers and how many pairs each man owned. Next, the data were analyzed to indicate how the men sampled used the information sources at each stage of the adoption process. The information sources were classified into five major categories according to Rogers' theoretical framework: mass media, informal, agencies, commercial and self. The men were questioned to determine the extent they used each information source at each stage of the adoption process. For each stage a written analysis was made. This was accompanied by a comprehensive chart providing the percentage of men using each information source at each stage of the adoption process.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The applicability of Rogers' theoretical framework of the adoption process was tested with men's knit trousers. Emphasis was placed on the primary information source used at each stage of the process. Data for the study were collected from 112 men college students by means of a questionnaire.

Description of the Population

Information obtained from Part I of the questionnaire described the population. All of the 112 men who participated in the study were enrolled in FRCD 3012 - Home Economics for Men offered at Oklahoma State University spring semester 1972.

Participants included students from six colleges of the university. There were 50 enrolled in the College of Business, 31 in the College of Arts and Sciences, 18 in the College of Agriculture, 7 in the College of Engineering, and 3 each in the Colleges of Education and Home Economics. (See Table II)

The second classification was by year in school reported by each respondent. The largest number of participants were seniors with 37 men reporting this classification. The freshman class had the second largest number of participants with 29 men. The sophomore class had the third largest number of students in the sample with 26 men, while

TABLE II
 CLASSIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING
 TO COLLEGE AND YEAR IN SCHOOL

College	Year in School				Total
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	
Agriculture	3	5	2	8	18
Arts and Sciences	11	6	4	10	31
Business	13	12	9	16	50
Education	1	1	1	0	3
Engineering	0	1	3	3	7
Home Economics	1	1	1	0	3
Total	29	26	20	37	112

the junior class had 20 men. (See Table II)

The respondents were also asked to classify themselves according to the size of their hometown. Hometown populations ranged from 1,000,000 or more to men living on a farm. The largest number of men lived in hometowns with a population range of 5,000 to 10,000. For a complete listing of the number of men classified in each hometown size see Table III.

TABLE III
CLASSIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING
TO SIZE OF HOMETOWN

Hometown Size	Number (N=112)	Percent
1,000,000 or more	9	8.0
50,000 to 1,000,000	20	17.9
25,000 to 50,000	19	17.0
10,000 to 25,000	17	15.2
5,000 to 10,000	21	18.8
1,000 to 5,000	4	3.5
Less than 1,000	5	4.4
Live on a farm	17	15.2

The next classification of men was by marital status. According to the questionnaire responses, only 15 of the 112 men were married. (See Table IV)

TABLE IV
MARITAL STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS

Marital Status	Number (N=112)	Percent
Single	97	87
Married	15	13

The final classification of men was by fraternity membership. When the men were asked if they belonged to a fraternity, 77 of the 112 men responded "yes". (See Table V)

TABLE V
CLASSIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO
FRATERNITY AND NON-FRATERNITY MEMBERSHIP

Fraternity Membership	Number (N=112)	Percent
Member	35	31
Non-member	77	69

Application of the Adoption Process

Questions in Part II of the questionnaire were designed to apply Rogers' theoretical framework of the adoption process used to select men's knit trousers. Emphasis was on information sources used at various stages of the adoption process.

Findings indicated that all of the men questioned were aware that some men's trousers were made from knit fabrics. Eighty-nine percent of those participating in this study owned at least one pair of knit trousers. When queried about the number of pairs of knit trousers in their personal wardrobes at the time of the survey, 35 percent reported that they had two pairs, while 24 percent had three pairs, 23 percent one pair, 13 percent five pairs and 5 percent had four pairs.

Categorization of Information Sources

To analyze the primary information source used at each stage of the adoption process, the responses were classified into five major categories according to Rogers' theoretical framework:

1. mass media - radio, television, magazines and newspapers
2. informal source - relatives, neighbors, friends and classmates
3. agencies - teachers, and extension agents
4. commercial source - store sales people, door-to-door salesmen, direct mail sales, displays, labels and other written material with garments.
5. self - own information, experimentation and interpretation.

Different sources of information were used by this group of college men at each stage of the adoption process. (See Table VI)

TABLE VI

DISTRIBUTION FOR MEN OWNING KNIT TROUSERS WHO IDENTIFIED SPECIFIC INFORMATIONAL SOURCES USED AT VARIOUS STAGES OF THE ADOPTION PROCESS
(N=100)

Stage in the Adoption Process	Informational Source Distribution				
	Mass Media	Informal	Commercial	Agencies	Self
Awareness					
Source of initial information	20	3	50	21	6
Interest					
Source of more detailed information	13	5	27	43	12
Evaluation					
Source of information leading to trial use of the trousers	4	1	39	25	31
Trial					
Source of information influencing place of purchase	5	1	21	18	55
Adoption					
Source of information determining whether or not to continue use of the trousers	3	3	14	2	78
Source of information determining future purchase plans	7	4	28	10	51
Total	52	17	179	119	233

The data were used to determine, in the awareness stage, which sources provided the initial information about men's knit trousers. The same thing was done for the other stages. In the interest stage the sources which were used for more detailed information were given. This was followed by the evaluation stage and the sources were cited which gave information which lead to the trial use of the knit trousers. In the trial stage the source of information influencing the place of purchase and the source of information providing the most care information were cited. Finally, in the adoption stage the source of information determining whether or not to continue the use of the trousers and the source of information determining future purchase plans were given.

Awareness Stage

At this stage it was found that each information source category was used to make the men aware of knit trousers. However, commercial sources were named most frequently by the men at the awareness stage with 50 percent of the men reporting use of some type of commercial source. Agencies were utilized by 21 percent of the respondents and mass media sources by 20 percent. Self, used by 6 percent, and informal, used by 3 percent, were not very effective means of information at the awareness stage.

Interest Stage

As the men began to want more detailed information about the knit trousers, agencies were cited by 46 percent of the men as the information source used most frequently. Commercial sources were named by 27 percent; mass media, by 13 percent; self, by 12 percent; and informal

sources by 5 percent of those samples.

Evaluation Stage

In the evaluation stage, three main sources were used by the men to help make the decision whether or not to actually try the knit trousers. The three major sources reported commercial sources used by 39 percent; self, used by 31 percent; and agencies, used by 25 percent. Mass media and informal sources combined were used by only 5 percent of the respondents as sources of information during the evaluation stage of the adoption process.

Trial Stage

The important sources of information indicated at the trial stage of the adoption process were self and agencies. As the men began to seek specific information about what to buy and where to buy, how to use and handle the trousers, self and agencies were used most often. The source of information used most often to decide where to purchase the trousers was self reported by 55 percent of the men with commercial sources used by 21 percent, agencies by 18 percent, mass media by 5 percent, and informal sources by 1 percent. The source cited as providing the most information about the care of knit trousers was agencies reported by 59 percent. Sources indicated by the remaining men were commercial sources, 18 percent; informal sources, 13 percent; self, 8 percent; and mass media, 2 percent.

Adoption Stage

All of the men questioned indicated their own self judgment was

the information source utilized most often in the decision of whether or not to adopt knit trousers. When asked about the source of information which determined whether or not they would continue to wear the knit trousers, the men made their most decisive choice of the entire questionnaire, with 78 percent indicating their personal judgment as the information source used most frequently. Commercial sources were indicated by 14 percent. Mass media, informal and agencies were used rarely by the men. When asked about the information source which determined their future purchase plans for knit trousers, 48 percent of the men answered self. Commercial sources were indicated, by 28 percent; agencies, 10 percent; mass media, 7 percent; and informal, 4 percent.

Over-all Use of Information Sources

Further analysis of the data was made concerning the information source used at the various stages of the adoption process. In an over-all analysis, self was found to be the most important informational source used by this group of college men. Commercial information sources were used almost as frequently. Agencies were the third most frequently used source of information. Mass media and informal sources were not as important as sources of information in the adoption process. (See Table VI)

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to apply the conceptual framework of the adoption process developed by Everett M. Rogers to fashion adoption. This framework consists of five stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption. These stages were used to test a selected group of college men on the applicability of the adoption process to men's knit trousers.

Data for the study were collected by means of a questionnaire consisting of 15 multiple choice questions. The questionnaire was administered to 112 men enrolled in the course FRCD 3012 - Home Economics for Men spring semester 1972 at Oklahoma State University. The data were collected in May, 1972.

The data collected from the questionnaires provided two types of information. The first five questions were used to classify respondents into the following categories: college, year in school, size of hometown, marital status, and fraternity or non-fraternity membership.

The remaining questions were concerned with the application of Rogers' theoretical framework of the adoption process to the use of men's knit trousers. The 112 men were first questioned if they owned any knit trousers; 100 men responded that they owned at least one pair of knit trousers. This would indicate that these men had progressed

through the entire adoption process. The men sampled were questioned further concerning the information source which they used most often at each stage of the adoption process. These sources were categorized as mass media, informal, agency, commercial and self. Of the men who replied they owned at least one pair of knit trousers, all were able to answer the questions concerning the various stages of the adoption process. From their answers it was indicated that the major information sources used varied with the stage of the adoption process. The men were able to answer all the questions. It was assumed that the men were aware that they were going through an adoption process. It was also implied that the framework developed by Rogers was applicable for studying the adoption of men's knit trousers.

Conclusions

This study applied the conceptual framework of the adoption process developed by Everett M. Rogers to fashion adoption. The results of the study indicate for the sample used the following conclusions could be reached.

1. Rogers' theoretical framework for the adoption process is applicable to fashion adoption.
2. The dominant information sources used at the various stages of the adoption process can be identified.
3. Rogers' theoretical framework can be used to help determine the extent of the influence of various information sources at the various stages of the fashion adoption process.
4. Informal sources were not very effective at any stage of the adoption process.

5. Commercial sources were an effective means of information at all stages of the adoption process.

6. Agencies seemed to be most effective in providing the men detailed information about the product studied.

Recommendations

1. Replicate the study using men or women of different ages, educational levels and occupations.

2. In replicated studies, compare findings by sex, age, educational level and occupation.

3. Include "probe type" questions in the data collection instrument.

4. Test the adoption process on a fashion item which has had less exposure to the public.

5. Replicate the study using a larger sample.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please Answer ALL Questions That Apply To You. Remain Anonymous.

Part I

Please Circle Your Responses to Questions A Through E on This Questionnaire.

A. In which college are you enrolled?

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Agriculture | 5. Engineering |
| 2. Arts and Sciences | 6. Home Economics |
| 3. Business | 7. Veterinary Medicine |
| 4. Education | 8. Graduate |

B. What year are you in school?

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. Freshman | 4. Senior |
| 2. Sophomore | 5. Graduate student |
| 3. Junior | 6. Special student |

C. What is the size of your hometown?

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. 1,000,000 or more | 5. 2,500 to 10,000 |
| 2. 50,000 to 1,000,000 | 6. 1,000 to 2,500 |
| 3. 25,000 to 50,000 | 7. less than 1,000 |
| 4. 10,000 to 25,000 | 8. I live on a farm. |

D. What is your marital status?

1. single
2. married

E. Do you belong to a fraternity?

1. Yes
2. No

Part II

Please Answer Questions 1 Through 10 By Filling in the Correct Space on the Computer Card Provided.

Please Use a Number 2 Pencil. DO NOT USE A BALL POINT PEN!

1. Are you aware that some men's trousers are made from knit fabrics?

- a. yes
- b. no

2. Do you own any knit trousers?

- a. yes
- b. no

(If "no" this completes the questions you will answer. Please return the entire questionnaire.)

3. How many pairs of knit trousers do you have in your wardrobe at the present time?

- a. one pair
- b. two pairs
- c. three pairs
- d. four pairs
- e. five pairs

Refer to the Following Information Source Classification to Answer the Remaining Questions

- a. Mass media - radio, television, magazines and newspapers
- b. Agencies - teachers, and extension agents
- c. Informal - neighbors, friends, and classmates
- d. Commercial - store sales people, door-to-door salesmen, direct mail sales, store displays and labels, and other written material with garments
- e. Self - own information, experimentation, and interpretation

4. Through which information source did you first learn about men's knit trousers?

- a. Mass media
- b. Agencies
- c. Informal
- d. Commercial
- e. Self

5. After you first heard about men's knit trousers, where or from what information source did you get additional, more detailed information about them?

- a. Mass media
- b. Agencies
- c. Informal
- d. Commercial
- e. Self

6. Where or from what information source did you get information that helped you decide whether or not to "try" a pair of men's knit trousers?

- a. Mass media
- b. Agencies
- c. Informal
- d. Commercial
- e. Self

7. After you decided to "try" a pair of men's knit trousers, which information source influenced you most in deciding where to purchase them?
- a. Mass media
 - b. Agencies
 - c. Informal
 - d. Commercial
 - e. Self
8. After you decided to "try" a pair of men's knit trousers, from which information source did you get the most information concerning their care?
- a. Mass media
 - b. Agencies
 - c. Informal
 - d. Commercial
 - e. Self
9. After you had tried a pair of men's knit trousers, what information source influenced you most in determining whether or not you continued wearing them?
- a. Mass media
 - b. Agencies
 - c. Informal
 - d. Commercial
 - e. Self
10. Which of the following information sources influenced you most in determining whether or not you have purchased or plan to purchase a pair of men's knit trousers?
- a. Mass media
 - b. Agencies
 - c. Informal
 - d. Commercial
 - e. Self

✓
VITA

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