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The Psychology of Footwear

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ABSTRACT

Every individual has different characteristics and preferences that make them unique and distinct from one another. These are the individual differences that correspond to various personality types. An individual's personality is shown through the preferences he/she has. This study aimed to determine the possible relationship between personality types and footwear preferences. The study was conducted at the University of Saint Louis (USL) and focused more on Louisiana women whose age range is from 17 to 19 years old. Utilizing Slovin's Formula, the study accommodated 235 respondents and was picked randomly from their department. To differentiate the respondents in terms of personality: Dr. Phil's Personality test was used and its association to DISC personality was administered to measure the personality types of women and was linked to their footwear preferences. The study found no significant difference in the personality types and footwear preferences of women.

INTRODUCTION

In the early civilizations, it was believed that people made use of the raw materials available in their places to invent something to protect their feet. In a new anthropological research, it suggested that about 40,000 years ago, much earlier than previously thought, humans started wearing shoes (Koerth-Baker, 2008). Shoes, as it is generally called nowadays with a variety of its kinds have been part of an individual's daily life since then.

However, if during ancient times, people invented shoes to cover and protect their feet, nowadays, modernity influences our preferences, weighing fashion over comfort. An individual's choice reflects their preference on almost everything. Therefore, it can be concluded that one's preference can tell a lot about their personalities.

Background Of The Study

Shoes are the foundation of every outfit. According to the article entitled "The History of Shoes -Ancient and Early Footwear (Monet, 2009), it allows a person to move safely and comfortably, protect the foot from elements, and add that final statement of panache. With all the prevailing studies that provide diverse results on the relationship of shoes and personality types, it is then the researchers' objective to find out the two variables' relationship the Personality Types and Shoe Preference in the parameters of the Louisian community.

Furthermore, unlike clothes that easily shrink, shoes last longer. Our body sizes change quickly without us noticing it while our shoe size never change after we reach maturity. This one of the reasons why shoes is best suited in trying to identify what an individual tries to portray or what is their personality type. This study aims to make use of shoe preference as an indicator of personality type. It simply unravelsshoe preference as it relates to the kind of personality an individual has.

Statement Of The Problem

The study aimed to determine the personality types of Louisian women through their most preferred footwear/shoes.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following:

1. What is the prevailing personality of Louisian women according to departments?
2. What is the most preferred footwear of Louisian women when grouped according to department?
3. What is the personality of a woman using a specific type of footwear?
4. Is there a relationship between footwear preference and personality types?

Significance Of The Study

In the dynamic world of fashion industry, people prefer various styles of shoes to use in their everyday living. Shoes are beautiful and an extension of one's self and styles. Shoes give women confidence and make them beautiful. Ask any woman and she'll tell you that the rights pair of shoes can make a bad hair day turn great. They also match their mood so in essence shoes are the extension of themselves. No matter how many shoes they own, there is a certain type of shoes in their wardrobe needs. (Torres, 2012).

Hence, the study is generally relevant to all people specifically women in dealing with footwear as one of the demands in life. It emphasizes on the types of footwear that shows the personality of an individual. This research will particularly benefit Louisian students by imparting them knowledge with the commonly types of footwear they use that represents who they are. Moreover, the research intends to inform interested people specially those who are involved in the shoe industry regarding on the different types of footwear and the personality type it represents. This would give them an idea to produce

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more types of footwear that has something to do with the various personality types. It would Increase their information regarding the shoes they are going to create to increase their sales by providing appropriate shoe type and style that different personality would purchase. On the other hand, customers will also have an idea on what to consider in choosing footwear types when buying. This will also lead the future researchers to find out the most preferred type of footwear and the personality that most women possess why they chose specific kind of shoes and if personality really affects the choice of footwear.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Underpinning Theory

The study is anchored on Carl Jung's Psychological Theory which defines attitude as man's predisposition to act or react in a characteristic direction. The theory states that human attitudes are categorized into Introversion and Extraversion. Introversion is characterized as state of or tendency toward being wholly or predominantly concerned with and interested in one's own mental life, while extraversion is described as the state or habit of being predominantly concerned with and obtaining gratification from what is outside the self. According to Carl Jung, introverts are attuned into their inner world with all its biases, fantasies, dreams and individualized perceptions. These people perceived the external world but they do so selectively and with their own subjective view. On the other hand, the Extraverts display an attitude distinguished by the turning outward of psychic energy so that the person is oriented toward the objective and away from the subjective. Extraverts are more influenced by their surroundings than by their inner world. (Jung 1921/1971). They tend to focus on the objective attitude while suppressing the subjective.

Moreover, introversion and extraversion can combine with any one or more of four functions namely thinking, feeling, sensing and intuiting. Thinking is a logical intellectual activity that produces a chain of ideas. This type can either be extraverted or introverted, depending on a person's basic attitude. Extraverted thinking is described as when people rely heavily on concrete thoughts, but may also use abstract ideas if it has been transmitted to them from nothing. On the other hand, when people react to external stimuli, but their interpretation of an event is colored by an internal meaning, they bring with them objective facts. This is known as Introverted thinking.

The process of evaluating an idea or event is psychologically defined as feeling, which is sometimes known as valuing, a term less likely to be confused with either sensing or intuiting. People, who use objective data to make evaluations and are not guided so much by their subjective opinion, but by external values and widely accepted standards of judgment, at ease in social situations, know what to say and how to say it in a spur of the moment situation; well liked because of their sociability, as they conform to social standards and may

appear artificial, shallow and unreliable, are characterized to be displaying extraverted feeling. While for introverted feeling, people based their value of judgments primarily on subjective perceptions rather than objective facts. They ignore traditional opinions and beliefs, and their nearly complete indifference to the objective world (including people) often causes persons around them to feel uncomfortable and to cool their attitude toward them.

Sensing is not to the physical stimulus but is simply the individual's perception of sensory impulses. In Extraverted sensing, people perceive external stimuli objectively, in much the same way that these stimuli exist in reality. Their sensations are not greatly influenced by their subjective attitudes while introverted sensing people are largely influence by their subjective sensations of sight, sound, taste, touch and so forth. They are guided by their interpretation of sense stimuli rather than the stimuli themselves. They give a subjective interpretation to objective phenomena yet are able to communicate meaning to others.

Intuiting differs from sensing in that it is more creative, often adding or subtracting elements from conscious sensation. Extraverted intuitive people are oriented toward facts in the world. Rather than fully sensing them, however, they merely perceive them subliminally. Because strong sensory stimuli interfere with intuition, intuitive people suppress many of their sensations and are guided by hunches and guesses contrary to sensory data while, introverted intuitive people are guided by unconscious perception of facts that are basically subjective and have a little or no resemblance to external reality. Their subjective intuitive perceptions are often remarkably strong and capable of motivating decisions of monumental magnitude.

Thus, utilizing the ten-item personality quiz, the study will be able to know one's character and will thereby link the results to their perception and preference of shoes.

Discussion of Literature by themes

Footwear and Personality

In a study of McKnight, Scot, and Giliath, Omri (2012), it was found that expensive shoes belonged to high earners, flashy and colorful footwear belonged to extroverts, and shoes that were not new but appeared to be spotless belonged to conscientious types. The researchers found that some of the clues like the ones already described were obvious; other clues were more surprising such as the practical and functional shoes generally belong to agreeable people, ankle boots fit with more aggressive personalities. Moreover, the participants in this study were able to most accurately judge a person's age, gender and income followed by their emotional stability and agreeableness. Wherein, psychology tells that, emotional stability is an umbrella term that includes a person's fear of abandonment, rejection issues and the ability to handle different kinds of relationships. The researchers mentioned that people with "attachment anxiety" or

people that were most worried about their relationships generally had brand new and well-kept shoes. Researchers also suggest that this may be because they worry so much about their appearance and what others may think of them. Not surprisingly, liberal thinkers, who many think of as flip-flop wearing hippies, wear shabbier and less expensive shoes. McKnight, Scot and Gillath, Omri (2012) wrote. "Shoes serve a practical purpose, and also serve as nonverbal cues with symbolic messages. People tend to pay attention to the shoes they and others wear. Thus, researchers hypothesized that Shoes convey a thin but useful slice of information about their wearers

A similar article from the Psychology Today a Journal of Research in Personality entitled "The psychology of shoes: What women's shoes say about them" (Monday, February 4, 2013). narrates that women who are clingy and insecure tend to choose new-looking or well-kept shoes. This could be because they care more about what other people say. Practical and functional shoes belong to agreeable women. These women are more likely to follow convention. They could be working in a company or organization where sociability and courteousness are important. Ankle boots belong to women with more aggressive personality. Ankle boots are attention-grabbing so timid women prefer not to wear them so as not to bring attention to themselves. Uncomfortable shoes are usually worn by women with calm personalities. Women who wear uncomfortable shoes are innately cool so they do not fuss much about what others will think and liberal women wear less expensive shoes. This group of women includes the hippies who advocate simple living, and the environmentalists who love to recycle and reuse old things. Moreover, women who tend to wear dull shoes have a harder time forming new relationships. It is believed that women who wear boring shoes have a boring personality. Thus, researchers hypothesized that an individual's personality has something to do with their preference of shoes.

Women and Footwear

In a study of Cain, Matthew (Tuesday 07 September 2010), states that wearing of shoes were so popular among women, even during time of economic austerity. Further, he mentioned that when times are tough, women are feeling the need to treat themselves. And compared to other luxury goods such as coats or jewelry, shoes are a relatively cheap way of not only treating yourself but updating your wardrobe and sometimes your whole look in the process. Perhaps the real reason behind the popularity of shoes has more to do with the psychology of footwear. Moreover, wearing the right pair of shoes can transform not only a person's look but their whole mood too. Physically, high-heeled shoes make you arch your back, walk taller and feel like your legs are longer. It doesn't take much of a leap of the imagination to see why shoes can boost a woman's self-confidence and lead to feelings of heightened self-esteem and even empowerment. Thus, researchers hypothesized that

footwear influences women in terms of managing their emotions and increasing their self-esteem,

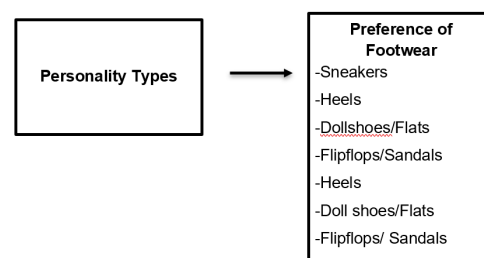
A similar study entitled "The psychology behind the \$17 billion shoe obsession (Monday, February 25, 2008). Shoes can signal power, and they certainly have something to do with sexuality. Consider the power that comes with wearing high heels. They add inches of height-as much 2 or 3 inches. Chimps and other animals' hair stands up when they are in the throes of dominance show. Humans have largely lost this ability to instantly look worse when the situation calls for it. Instead, women can use high heels. After all, people still ascribe higher status, dominance, and even income to people who are bigger- specifically taller. If men gain power and influence with their height (41 of the past 42 winners of the U. S. Presidential race have been the taller of the two candidates") who is to say women do not gain power when they elevate their height with high heels? They also make noise a ton of noise. Primates, like other animals, make a raucous display when they compete for power. Shoes do this for women. The great irony here is that although high-heels make a woman feel more badly, they would be a huge handicap if she ever had to defend herself. They throw balance off. Each step requires the utmost concentration until heel-wearing becomes so well-practiced it's like riding a bike. The fact that women can walk perfectly adroitly in stilettos and their relatives may indicate a certain kind of superiority. In the biological world, functioning well with a handicap signals greater health -and fitness in a Darwinian sense. which of course the rarity and Shoes are not simply linked with power, influence, and status price tag add to they are also wrapped up with sexuality. High heels shift posture-forcing the chest and dernière out, making each more prominent. They increase the definition of muscles in the thighs and calves. And, they make the wearers feel sexier. All of this explains the obsession behind high-heeled shoes. Thus, researchers hypothesized that footwear plays a vital role to women's self-regard.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between personality types and footwear preferences.

Research Simulacrum

The paradigm illustrates the relationship of the variables in the study. The independent variable in the study



is Personality types which includes Conscientious, Influential, Steady and Dominant. The dependent variable is the footwear preference generally grouped according to sneakers, heels, doll shoes/flats and flip flops/ sandals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study adapted a descriptive-correlational method in which the researchers conducted a frequency count, averaging and correlation to see if footwear preference of respondents can be linked to personality types. Thus, this method will be an opportunity to provide a clear view of its significance and a more accurate answer to the hypothesis. This further shows the profile or the general personality according to their department.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the University of Saint Louis having a population of seven thousand nine hundred fifty nine (7,959). The respondents of the study was taken from the different departments of the University through random sampling, particularly the School of Engineering, Architecture and Fine Arts (SEAF), School of Business Administration and Accountancy (SBAA), School of Education Arts and Sciences (SEAS), College of Health and Allied Sciences (CHAS), College of Tourism, Vocational Education (CTVE) and School of Information and Computing Sciences (SICS).

Participants of the Study

The study involved two hundred thirty-five (235) female undergraduate students of University of St. Louis.

Research Instruments

To gather the data needed for this study, the following

Personality Test Score	Interpretation
21-30	Conscientious
31-40	Influential
41-50	Steady
51-60	Dominant

instruments were used.

The questionnaire contains the (10) item personality test of Dr Phil's and the choices/preferences of footwear through graphics/pictures. The scores are interpreted with the association to DISC personality. The link of the personality test scores and the DISC Personality of William Moulton Marston are indicated below:

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers randomly selected the respondents from the different departments. The researchers gave the Personality test of Dr. Phil, then attached to it was the photographs of the different kinds of footwear. It should be noted that only the general types of footwear were included in the choices. Respondents chose among the list the one they prefer the most.

Data Analysis

In order to find whether a relationship exists between the Independent variable; personality types and the dependent variable; footwear preference, the result of the personality test should be averaged then connected to footwear preference through the use of chi-square and Pearson-R.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The table shows the personality type of students from the different departments. It reveals that SBAA and SEAS have the same percentage range and characterized

Table 1: Personality Types of students when grouped according to Department

Scores	SBAA		CTVE		SEAS		SICS		CHAS		SEAF		TOTAL	
	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%
51-60	1	1.05	1	3.125	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	2.17	3	1.27
41-50	34	35.78	17	53.12	16	37.20	8	57.14	3	60	24	52.17	100	42.55
31-40	55	57.89	13	40.62	23	53.48	5	35.71	2	40	20	43.47	120	51.06
21-38	5	5.26	1	3.125	4	9.30	1	7.14	0	-	1	2.17	12	5.10
							235							

to belong to personality scores of 31-40. This personality displays the characteristic such as influential. On the other hand, CTVE, SICS, CHAS and SEAF Department scored under 41-50, a personality that displays the

characteristic of being steady.

The table shows the allocation of percentage of footwear preference from the different departments. It reveals that SICS and CHAS departments preferred sneakers

Table 2: Most preferred Louisiana footwear according to department

Department	SICS		SBAA		SEAS		SEAF		CHAS		CTVE		TOTAL	
	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%	FR	%
FOOTWEAR														
SNEAKERS	5	35.71	26	27.36	8	18.16	12	26.08	3	40	3	9.37	56	23.82
HEELS	4	28.57	13	13.68	11	25.58	11	23.91	1	20	8	25	48	20.42

DOLL SHOES/ FLATS	3	21.42	53	55.78	17	39.53	19	41.3	1	20	18	56.25	112	47.65
FLIPIOPS/ SANDALS	2	14.28	3	3.15	7	16.27	4	8.69	0	-	3	9.37	19	8.08
TOTAL	14		95		43		46		5		32		235	

Table 3: The Personality and Preference of Shoes

S h o e Preference	PERSONALITY									
	21-30	%	31- 40	%	41-50	%	51-60	%	TOTAL	%
A (Sneakers)	8	66.66	24	19.83	23	23.23	1	33.33	56	23.82
B(Heels)	0	0	10	8.26	39	39.39	0	0	49	19.57
C(Doll Shoes)	3	25	79	65.28	28	28.28	0	0	110	46.80
D(Flip Flops)	1	8.33	8	6.61	9	9.09	2	66.66	20	8.51

It can be gleaned from the table that majority of the respondents whose personality test scores ranged from 21-30 having a conscientious personality favours sneakers, respondents with 31-40 encompasses influential personality prefers doll shoes and/or flats, respondents with 41-50 possessing a steady personality favours heels

and lastly, respondents with 51-60 having a dominant personality prefers flip flops and/or sandals.

The table shows the personality of various departments, their footwear preference and the Pearson-r value wherein SEAS, SEAFA, SICS have a positive Pearson-r value

Table 4: The correlation between personality types and footwear preference when group according to department

Department	Personality	Footwear	Pearson-r value	Decision
SEAS	27.95	2.72	.091	Not Significant
SBAA	38.96	2.48	-.169	Not Significant
SEAFA	39.97	2.50	.060	Not Significant
SICS	40.93	2.50	.055	Not Significant
CTVED	40.04	2.75	-.293	Not Significant
CHAS	41.40	2.00	-.733	Not Significant

while the rest of the departments have negative value. However, the table revealed that there is no significant difference between footwear preference and personality across departments.

Discussion

The study revealed that there is no significant difference across departments in terms of the correlation between the personality types and footwear preference of Louisian women. This study negates research studies of similar topic just like the research entitled, “Smart shoes. wherein it was found that Educational background appears to play a role in footwear choices. and it was revealed that working women who wear high-top sneakers, orthopaedic loafers are smarter (Chatteerjee, 2010).

Moreover, the study shows that majority of the respondents preferred doll shoes/flats as their footwear. It implies that this type of footwear is more comfortable to any woman, whatever their program enrolled. It is supported by the study entitled Women’s Flat Shoes where in it revealed that flat shoes or doll shoes are a great addition to any outfit and should find a place in everyone’s wardrobe Health wise, wearing heels all the time might put a strain on the back and legs and it is a good idea to alternate them with flat shoes. In addition, flats are very comfortable to wear and can be matched

with any outfit of women. They are very easy to slip on and off and you can be on your feet the whole day without any problems (Indy M. 2010).

As regards the personality types according to department, steady is the prevailing personality among CHAS, SEAFA SICS and CTVED department. The remaining two departments; SEAS and SBAA have shown an influential personality type. According to the research findings in the study entitled “Personality Clues Found in Footwear” of Katie Moisse (2012) where students were shown photos of shoes and were able to accurately predict the some of the owner’s Information, it was found An amazing amount of information can be gathered from just a fraction of a second such as age, gender and characteristics or personality of the shoe owner.

Furthermore, through the link of Dr Phil’s personality test scores and results and DISC personality of William Moulton Marston, this study came up with its different personality types known as the following (according to personality test scores): 21-30 - Conferring to Dr. Phil’s personality test, this was defined as painstaking and fussy, very cautious, extremely careful; a slow and steady plodder. it would really surprise others if they ever did something impulsive or in the spur of the moment. They will over examine everything from every angle and then, usually, decide against it. They think this reaction

is caused partly by their careful nature which manifests characteristics of a person having a conscientious personality. A Conscientious personality portrays being critical thinker, logical, fact-based, organized, private, follow rules. They don't show feelings. They have few but good friends. They ask why and how and based on the questionnaire given, majority of the respondents prefers sneakers. According to the article of Jackie Walker (2009) entitled the "Psychology of shoe, it was found that the fashion persona of a classic individual will wear a pump, loafer, sling back basic, Keds or tennis shoe. 31-40 - Individuals having this score are described as sensible, cautious, careful and practical, clever, gifted or talented, but modest. Not a person who makes friends too quickly or easily, but someone who's extremely loyal to friends they do make, and who expects the same loyalty in return. Those who really get to know them realize it takes a lot to shake your trust in their friends, but equally that it takes them a long time to get over if that trust is ever broken that displays characteristics of an influential personality, influential personality portrays that people are social, persuasive, friendly, energetic, busy optimistic, imaginative, and focus on the new and future. They are poor time manager and focused on people than tasks. They tell rather than ask (who). Influential personality craves heels this is supported by Walker (2009) that a dramatic person will wear designer shoes stiletto heels, lots of adornment like jewels the latest trends. 41-50 - Individuals having this personality test score are identified as fresh, lively, charming, amusing, practical, and always interesting, someone who's constantly in the center of attention, but sufficiently well-balanced to not let it go to their head. They also see them as kind, considerate, and understanding, someone who'll always cheer their friends up and helps out presents a characteristic of a steady personality. Steady personality illustrates that human beings are consistent, like stability, accommodating, peace seeking, good listeners and counselors. They like supporting others and ask rather than tell (how and when). Majority of the respondents prefers dolls shoes. This could be explained and supported by the article entitled "Women's Flat Shoes" (Indy M, 2010), that was discussed on the first part of the discussion. 51-60 - Individuals having this personality type are recognized as exciting, highly volatile, rather impulsive personality, a natural leader, who's quick to make decisions, though not always the right ones. They see them as bold and adventuresome, someone who will try anything once someone who takes chances and enjoys an adventure. They enjoy being in your company because of the excitement you radiate shows characteristic of a dominant personality A Dominant personality depicts that individuals are independent, persistent, direct, energetic, busy, fearless, focus on own goals rather than people, they tell, rather than ask (what). Majority of the respondents having this personality type prefer flip flops. According to the study entitled What your shoes tell others, It was found out that "Observers did well in guessing characteristics of the volunteers in

almost all categories, and concluded that people do wear shoes that reveal their personality, whether they intend to or not" (Scott McKnight, 2012).

Also, on the article entitled "If the Shoe fits: Why do women love shoes?" by Mathew Cain (2010) that shoes can boost a woman's self-confidence and lead to feelings of heightened self-esteem and even empowerment

CONCLUSION

The study revealed no significant correlation between personality types and footwear preferences among women. Unlike findings from developed countries where personality often dictates consumer choices, Filipino women's footwear preferences are mainly shaped by practicality, comfort, and prevailing trends. Limited fashion diversity and economic considerations contribute to similar footwear choices, particularly the preference for doll or flat shoes. Moreover, one dominant personality type was observed per department, suggesting that certain communities may share common behavioral traits. Overall, women's footwear choices are influenced more by environmental, cultural, and economic factors than by personality alone.

Recommendations

Future studies should expand the scope to include factors such as social influence, economic status, and students' field of study. A qualitative approach using interviews or focus group discussions is recommended to gain deeper insights. Researchers may also explore other validated personality assessments beyond Dr. Phil's and DISC tests to enhance accuracy. Conducting the study among males or broader age groups could also provide comparative perspectives. These steps will strengthen understanding of how personality and external factors shape individual preferences, contributing valuable insights to psychology and consumer behavior research.

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