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NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

**IDEAS... of
those who BUY**



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Just by way of starting the discussion, let's look once more at the Pennsylvania study, "Consumers Concepts of Fabric". The many qualities or characteristics that fabrics have were listed and checked by the women to find answers to various questions. "Altogether, the ratings of the fabric characteristics suggest that homemakers generally are interested in:

- 1) a well groomed look
- 2) artistically pleasing fabrics
- 3) a minimum of upkeep

Truly a large order!

The women felt some desirable features had already been standardized by the manufacturer and so were no longer listed; these were:

- 1) color fastness
- 2) shrink resistance
- 3) the ability to hold shape

Also mentioned:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| ● The amount of shrinkage | } | as being more important for street than for special occasion dresses |
| and | | |
| ● The ease of cleaning | } | |
| ● The artistic characteristic | | — more important for special occasion than for street wear |

This may be a new way of thinking about your clothing.
What are your personal ideas along this line?

Appropriateness of the various fibers for specific uses and occasions is worth thinking about.

Some characteristics of the fabric important to these women were:

- (1) The ability of the fabric to hold its shape.
- (2) The degree to which it will or will not wrinkle.
- (3) Color fastness. (even though otherwise listed above)

However these same women said they were more influenced by three quite different things when they made their last dress purchase: Weave, color, feel. Would you have any others?

A popular term these days is EVALUATION (the weighing of values). The homemakers here thought about the many characteristics of fabric, then selected those few characteristics they felt were most important for their own needs.

WHAT FACTS CAN YOU LEARN ABOUT THE FABRIC?

Here are some fabric characteristics you might like to watch for when making selections of apparel. Keep this well in mind—the consumer needs to analyze the characteristics of the fabric which are important to her in a given situation.

EASE OF CARE: Read tags — see the manufacturer's instructions on care for washing or cleaning.

SHRINKAGE CONTROL — Generally this is being controlled by the manufacturer. Check the fac-tag to determine guarantee as to possible future shrinkage. Check with wools also!

WASH AND WEAR — “Anyone can say a dress washes, drip dries, or needs no ironing but ‘it ain’t necessarily so’, which we all know.” Look for statement on tag and what it guarantees. Rely on the good name of the manufacturer.

SOME HINTS ABOUT JUDGING FABRIC QUALITY

1. Identify the fiber the fabric is made of.
Is there one or more (a blend) Their names?
What are their characteristics? And so—What may you expect?
2. How well balanced is the fabric? The more nearly alike in both directions, the more evenly garment will wear.
3. How tightly twisted are the yarns?
(a) As a rule, yarns that are tightly twisted give better wear than loosely twisted ones.
4. Is there much starchy filling which may come off when washed?

- (a) This may cause shrinkage.
 - (b) This may leave a sleazy, thin material in place of the firm one you thought you purchased.
- 5. How does it feel?
 - (a) Would you like this feel against your skin?
 - (b) Is it cool, warm, harsh, etc.
 - (c) Crush it in your hand a minute—let go—does it recover or does it stay wrinkled?
- 6. Can you notice any distinct odors?
 - (a) of dye
 - (b) of finish—occasionally women find problems here.
- 7. Linings
 - A. General
 - (a) Notice balance of weave and firmness of yarns here
 - (b) Check seams to see if they seem to ravel or pull
 - B. Reflective lining materials react very differently. The lasting qualities depend upon how the aluminum was applied; also upon the closeness of the weave of the base fabric.
 - C. Foam-type innerlining—not much information available as yet. Look at label for guarantee! Has the fabric been relaxed and would shrinkage be held to a minimum?
 - D. Satinbacked with thin layer of nap-wool, dynel, etc.
 - Check closeness of weave of fabric
 - Check density (thickness) of the nap
 - Check guarantee of the maker
- 8. Knitted fabrics:
 - (a) Type of stitch used—
 - 1. as in a hose (this will run)
 - or 2. as in a hose cross knit on the reverse side (tricot knit)
 - (b) Finish applied
 - (c) Brand names
 - (d) Generally — knits wrinkle little
 - cotton knits absorb perspiration
 - tricot knit — holds shape, does not form runs easily

9. Abrasion: Abrasion resistance is a quality we want in hard wear garments, in linings, etc.

This truly cannot be judged except by wear.

However, here are some suggestions for help:

Closeness of threads and smoothness of fabrics.

Highly twisted thread closely woven together will naturally have good abrasion resistance.

One loosely woven and loosely twisted would not have high abrasion resistance.

10. Heat-treated — most man-made knits are treated with heat in such a way as to minimize the wrinkling during wear or laundry care. This does not always appear on label so it is well to ask salesperson about it. However, the methods used by the finishers vary in quality and so there will be different quality in results also. Again, the reputation of the maker is to be relied upon.

HOW WELL IS THE GARMENT MADE

Points you might care to look for when shopping for any garment.

- Good seam allowance
- Stitching:
 - straight
 - not puckered
 - unbroken
 - ends fastened and clipped
- Fastenings — securely sewn and no loose ends
- Hems — ample, even, smooth, invisible stitching
- Collars and cuffs: easy care, neatly made, neatly attached
- Pattern — (a) on grain and straight with the design of the dress. Check at shoulders, waist line and hem
(b) Stripes or plaids or bold figures matched on seams, or on opposite sides of front
- Does the garment appear to be ample or skimpy in its cuts?
- Darts:
 - in correct position
 - smooth, ended correctly
 - ends of threads well fastened

SOME GENERAL SHOPPING SUGGESTIONS

I. On size and measurement.

- (1) Industry is working hard to standardize the sizes.
- (2) Mail order houses are working hard on this.
- (3) More and more items are being sold by dress size—blouses, skirts, even bras and girdles. This will be interesting to watch.
- (4) Make very sure you know your correct size.

II. On decision making

- (1) Take time when making a selection.
- (2) Shop around at different levels and compare similar ones at different stores.
- (3) Examine several styles and types of garment for the purpose.
- (4) Shop at reliable stores
Avoid those that have too many sales.
Avoid wholesale selling prices to retail customers.
- (5) Very important
Be sure of opinions at home. Better still, take husband along.
The McCall people suggest you take along a friend whose taste and judgment you respect.
- (6) Change of mind and who doesn't sometimes
Because of new items, you may change your mind about what you want. When you shop the stores, new values are presented to you. These may be the results of new fibers, of new fabrics, or new chemical treatments. This is the way we all learn of new things.
- (7) Look them over carefully.
- (8) Think over all you have seen.

The final evaluation in terms of fabric in dress is affected by the interrelationships of style, fabric and workmanship.