

Public Abstract

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Title:WOMENS SELF-PERCEPTIONS:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF OPTICAL ILLUSION GARMENTS

Although previous research provides insight into how women construct and idealize their appearance through clothing, the connection to the design elements of a garment is lacking. Using an exploratory approach, the current study, theoretically grounded in the self-discrepancy theory, investigated a woman's perceptions of her body shape. The primary goal of this exploratory study was to understand how garments created with optical illusion prints or patterns, can affect women's perceptions of body shape and if optical illusion garments can increase body satisfaction while helping a woman achieve the appearance of a more ideal body shape. Fifteen women were body scanned to determine their body shape and then participated in an in-depth semi-structured interview while viewing a personalized avatar (created from their body scan) depicted in the seven different optical illusion garments created by the researcher. Data analysis revealed seven themes: (1) Perception of Self, (2) Clothing and the Body, (3) Defining Ideals, (4) Optical Illusion Applications, (5) Preferences by Body Shape Category, (6) Effects of Wearing Optical Illusions, and (7) A More Ideal Self. Results from this study showed that optical illusion garments do effect the visual perception of body shape and can result the perception of a more ideal body shape.