

Public Abstract

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Title:Utilizing Social Media to Inform Inclusive Apparel Design for Baby Boomer Women

Apparel design solutions for an aging population with unique needs are lacking in the retail industry and specifically for baby boomer women. The fashion industry does not acknowledge that older women value fashion and are interested in maintaining a sense of style into old age. This study focused on expanding inclusive apparel design strategies and specifically to evaluate baby boomer women's clothing preferences through their fashion blogs. Vital to this research was the design and construction of a mini-collection of clothing that served two purposes. First, as a starting point in the development of apparel prototypes designed specifically to satisfy multiple needs without calling attention to special requirements. Second, to provide physical garments that users interacted with and provided feedback about to inform recommendations for inclusive apparel prototypes designed for baby boomer women.

The results from this study found that the study participants were interested in a variety of clothing styles and silhouettes and specifically in fashion trends that could be modified to accommodate an aging body. Design solutions addressed a range of needs without calling attention to disabilities. Simple designs with easy to manage closures and special details to enhance personal style were favored by the study participants. This research contributed to apparel design scholarship, fully documented and evaluated the inclusive design process and added to the body of qualitative research that utilizes social media and specifically blogs as a rich data source.