



CONSUMERS' USAGE GOALS AND PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY

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Models developed by O'Neal (1992-1993) and Steenkamp (1989) theorized that consumers' quality perceptions are influenced by personal and situational factors. This study purposed to explore segmenting consumers based on the situational factor, usage goal, defined as (1) the importance of appearance and performance and (2) planned wear relating to a ski jacket.

A national sample of 450 adult skiers completed a mailed questionnaire in which they rated their agreement with 13 statements regarding appearance and performance on a 5-point Likert scale. The statements were factor analyzed and four end-use dimensions were derived. The respondents also identified the activities for which they planned to wear their ski jacket from a list of 17.

Three segments were formed for each usage goal as a result of two hierarchical cluster analyses. Statistical differences at $p < .05$ were found among both the end use and planned wear segments' weightings of nine attributes in defining quality and utilization of informational cues in distinguishing the quality attributes. The study's findings augment what is currently known about quality perception and provide marketers with valuable information to target specific consumer groups for skiwear.

O'Neal, G. S. (1992-1993). A conceptual model of consumer perception of apparel quality. Themis: Journal of Theory in Home Economics, 2 (1), 1-25.

Steenkamp, J.-B. E. M. (1989). Product quality: An investigation into the concept and how it is perceived by consumers. Assen/ Maastricht, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum.