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Seung-Eun Lee
Central Michigan University, lee6s@cmich.edu

Jaeil Lee
Seattle Pacific University, leej@spu.edu

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Coauthorship in Clothing and Textiles Research

Seung-Eun Lee, Central Michigan University, USA

Jaeil Lee, Seattle Pacific University, USA

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Publication is highly important for academic researchers because it leads to opportunities for them to be awarded funding, prestige, prizes, promotion, and tenure. Due to the emphasis of publications, a trend toward an increase in multiple authorships has been found in a variety of academic disciplines such as business and psychology. There has also been an increasing trend in multiple authorships in clothing and textiles (C&T) research. As a preliminary test, we analyzed six representative C&T research journals during the period of 2005–2014 including *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* (CTRJ), *Dress, Fashion Theory, Journal of Dress, Body and Culture* (JDBC), *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* (JFMM), *International Journal of Clothing Science and Technology* (IJCST), and *Journal of Textile Institute* (JTI). Out of a total of 2,078 research articles analyzed, the multi-authored papers accounted for 81% of the papers. With the dominance of coauthored publications, coauthored papers in C&T research included an average of three authors. While coauthorship in C&T research has been proliferated, little attention has been paid to its practices and motivations. Therefore, this research attempts to investigate coauthorship experiences among C&T researchers. Following from the study of Schroeder, Langrehr, and Floyd (1995), three research questions guided in this study:

- What are the motivations and criteria for including coauthors among C&T researchers?
- What factors are considered to determine author order?
- How was the most recent coauthorship experience perceived by C&T researchers? What issues and challenges, if any, were faced when working with other coauthors?

Data collection took place during January and February 2016. An e-mail invitation was sent to all 2015 ITAA (International Textiles and Apparel Association) membership, providing the URL to access the survey. Of the total of 780 professional, graduate student, and emeritus members contacted, 110 (14%) members responded. Twenty-five participants were excluded from the final sample because they had more than 10% of missing responses to the survey or were disqualified due to no coauthorship experience (e.g., undergraduate student, advising staff), giving an effective sample of 85 participants. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (64%) females (90%) with a mean age of 49 years old ($SD = 12.97$). A majority of the participants held Ph.D. (86%) and were the tenured or tenure track faculty members (75%) in the United States (87%). The participants published an average of five coauthored articles in the last five years. In terms of primary fields of research, about 48% of participants were involved in the areas of merchandising, marketing, retailing, consumer behavior, and international trade and 33% of the participants were involved in the areas of aesthetics, design, and product development.

The results showed that the three most primary motivations for engaging in coauthorship were: 1) to blend complementary skills ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 0.62$), 2) to pursue joint ideas ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.60$), and 3) to pursue common interests ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.65$). When asked about the reasons for including a specific individual as a coauthor, the three most important factors were: 1) having the original idea ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.99$), 2) designing the research ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.96$), and 3) outlining the conceptual content ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.89$). Other important factors included analyzing data ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.08$) and writing the first complete draft ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.11$). In determining authorship order, overall contribution to the manuscript ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 0.38$) was found to be the most appropriate rule. The majority of the participants (66%) had also used this rule. Alternating order of multiple submissions ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.14$) and the importance of the publication to promotion and tenure ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.46$) were considered as acceptable, but they were used by only about 20% of the participants. Alphabetical order of the surnames ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.25$), prestige of author ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 1.19$) and institution ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 1.13$), and academic rank ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.16$) were found to be somewhat inappropriate rules in deciding author order. Reverse alphabetical order of the surnames ($M = 1.96$, $SD = 1.06$) was rated as highly inappropriate, with random order as the most inappropriate criteria ($M = 1.73$, $SD = 1.01$).

Overall, participants were satisfied ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 0.77$) with the process of authorship decision-making based on their most recent collaboration. The participants indicated that authorship order was decided in advance ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.36$) and that all of the coauthors were perceived as equal colleagues ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.29$). The authors felt neutrally about the flexibility of the tasks ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.10$), individual responsibilities throughout the project ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.24$), and those defined at the beginning ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.21$). However, about one-fourth of the participants had worked with a coauthor, who in their opinion, was undeserving of an author designation based on their contribution to the published article. The most highly reported reasons for working with such a coauthor were 1) because he or she was not removed from the article after failing to perform as was agreed upon initially and 2) because the participants were to assist a faculty member in his or her overall career. In terms of methods used to make decisions among coauthors, over half of the participants (about 65%) did not use any formal guidelines for determining authorship or were not aware of them, but 53% believed that specific guidelines for authorship in C&T research should be established.

The findings of this study showed that C&T researchers engaged in coauthorship primarily to improve the overall quality of their work by combining complementary skills and pursuing joint ideas and common interests. Overall contribution to the manuscript was the primary rule that should be and was used in determining author order. While they were overall satisfied with their most recent coauthorship experience, some experienced problems with inappropriate authorship. This research calls for further discussion on addressing issues related to coauthorship and developing some guidelines for determining authorship in C&T research.

Schroeder, D.M., Langrehr, F.W., & Floyd, S.M. (1995). Marketing journal co-authorship: Is it a hit or a miss with co-authors? *Journal of Marketing Education*, 17(2), 45-58.