

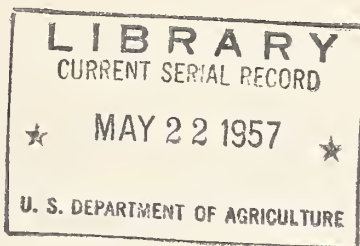
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
Marketing Research Division



MEN'S OWNERSHIP OF SELECTED CLOTHING ITEMS
and
THEIR FIBER PREFERENCES

Preliminary Summary Report

Washington, D. C.

April 1957

This report deals with men's uses of and preferences for cotton and competing fibers. It is one of a series of studies on farm products conducted by the Market Development Branch. The study was conducted under the direction of Trienah Meyers.

The research was conducted under authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. The Agricultural Marketing Service assumed major responsibility for the study, with cooperation and advice from other services in the Department, from the National Cotton Council of America, and The Wool Bureau, Incorporated.

The data on which this report is based were collected by Crossley, S-D Surveys, Incorporated, of New York, under contract with the United States Department of Agriculture.

MEN'S OWNERSHIP OF SELECTED CLOTHING ITEMS
and
THEIR FIBER PREFERENCES

A Preliminary Summary Report

by Milton Jacobs and Daniel Levine
Market Development Branch

This survey of men's ownership of selected clothing items and their fiber preferences was conducted in the fall of 1956. The data are based on 2,379 personal interviews with men 16 years of age and over. The sample of men was selected by area probability techniques to be representative of all men in the United States in the specified age group.

This summary presents selected findings of immediate interest and use to commodity groups, textile processors, manufacturers, and others concerned with men's apparel, particularly since the preliminary information shown is mainly for those items of clothing which are and will be promoted during the next few months. The summer items included are: Sport shirts, summer slacks or separate trousers, summer suits, summer sport coats or separate jackets, swimming trunks, and walking or Bermuda shorts. Data are also presented for business dress shirts.

In addition to the above items of men's apparel the full study includes sport coats or jackets worn during seasons other than summer, pajamas, bath-ropes or lounging robes, and socks. Information on these items, as well as greater detail for those discussed herein, will be included in the final report. The survey was limited to readymade items that had been worn in the last year.

This report presents information on:

The percentage of men in the United States who said they had these items in their active wardrobes, and what material the items were made of.

The preferred fibers for the items of clothing, and reasons for these preferences.

The items of clothing purchased in the last year and their fiber content.

Items owned in active use (worn in last 12 months).--Table 1 presents the proportions of the 2,379 men interviewed who said they had such readymade items of clothing in active use.

Table 1.--Ownership of selected readymade items of men's clothing worn in the past 12 months, by city size

Item	City size			
	Total	1,000,000 and over	2,500 to 999,999	Under 2,500
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Summer sport shirts ----	86	93	89	79
Business dress shirts --	91	93	91	90
Slacks or separate trousers -----	77	83	78	71
Summer suits -----	43	51	47	34
Summer sport coats and jackets -----	29	38	30	21
Swim trunks -----	45	62	42	35
Walking or Bermuda shorts -----	11	17	11	5
Cases -----	2,379	639	891	849

Of the items generally considered in the "everyday" class, the first 3--summer sport shirts, business dress shirts, and summer slacks--were found in most men's wardrobes. Ownership of summer suits was reported by about 4 men in 10. Summer sport coats were owned by only about 3 men in 10.

In the case of the specific "leisure-time" items, around half of the men owned and had used swimming trunks within the past year; only 1 man in 10, however, reported having Bermuda shorts in his active wardrobe.

The general pattern of ownership was the same irrespective of size of city. However, as city size increased, so did the likelihood of finding each of the items in the male wardrobe.

Fiber owned.--For each item of readymade clothing owned, respondents were asked to indicate its fiber content or material. The distribution of fibers for the items of clothing owned by men is shown in table 2.

Table 2.--Ownership of selected readymade items of men's clothing worn in the last 12 months, by fiber content

Fiber content	Summer sport shirts	Business dress shirts	Slacks or separate trousers	Summer suits	Summer sport coats or jackets	Swim trunks	Walking or Bermuda shorts
	Percent <u>1/</u>	Percent <u>1/</u>	Percent <u>1/</u>	Percent <u>1/</u>	Percent <u>1/</u>	Percent <u>1/</u>	Percent <u>1/</u>
Cotton -----	95	99	48	14	23	57	77
Cotton and rayon --	3	--	7	4	3	--	--
Cotton and Dacron -	2	--	3	3	--	--	--
Cotton and wool ----	--	--	2	3	3	--	--
Wool -----	2	--	27	36	53	7	--
Wool and Dacron ----	--	--	4	7	2	--	--
Wool and rayon ----	--	--	5	6	3	--	--
Rayon -----	28	4	28	15	11	14	8
Nylon -----	37	7	4	2	2	15	--
Dacron -----	9	3	13	8	--	--	--
Orlon -----	5	--	2	--	--	--	--
Linen -----	5	3	4	4	6	--	11
Silk -----	4	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cases -----	2,054	2,171	1,823	1,029	693	1,059	253

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because some respondents named more than 1 fiber. Fibers owned by less than 2 percent of the men interviewed are not shown.

Cotton was easily the outstanding fiber in the male wardrobe for 5 of the 7 items discussed: Business dress shirts, summer sport shirts, Bermuda shorts, swimming trunks, and summer slacks, in that order, ranging from a high of almost 100 percent for business dress shirts to 48 percent for summer slacks. In the case of summer sport coats and summer suits, more men owned wool than any other fiber (5 and 4 in 10, respectively), followed by cotton and rayon.

Fiber preferences.--For each item owned and in active use, men were asked to state the fiber they preferred for the specific item (table 3). Cotton was by far the preferred fiber for both types of shirts--summer sport shirts and business dress shirts--and for Bermuda shorts. Cotton edged out rayon and wool for top preference among men owning summer slacks. On the other hand, the preferred fiber for summer suits and sport coats was wool, followed by cotton and rayon.

In the case of swimming trunks, men were asked for the type of trunks preferred, rather than the fiber preferred. A majority, about 6 in 10, expressed a preference for woven swimming trunks, 2 in 10 mentioned lastex, and less than 1 in 10 preferred knit swimming trunks.

Table 3.--Proportion of men preferring each fiber for selected readymade items of men's clothing

Fiber preferred	Summer sport shirts	Business dress shirts	Slacks or separate trousers	Summer suits	Summer sport coats or jackets	Walking or Bermuda shorts
	Percent ^{1/}	Percent ^{1/}	Percent ^{1/}	Percent ^{1/}	Percent ^{1/}	Percent ^{1/}
Cotton -----	72	90	24	9	16	68
Cotton and rayon --	1	--	4	3	2	--
Cotton and Dacron -	1	--	2	2	--	--
Cotton and wool ---	--	--	1	3	3	--
Wool -----	--	--	17	29	43	--
Wool and Dacron ---	--	--	3	6	2	--
Wool and rayon ----	--	--	3	4	3	--
Rayon -----	7	1	16	10	7	4
Nylon -----	9	2	2	2	2	--
Dacron -----	2	1	8	7	--	--
Orlon -----	1	--	1	--	--	--
Linen -----	2	2	2	3	4	8
Silk -----	1	--	--	--	--	--
Cases -----	2,054	2,171	1,823	1,029	693	253

^{1/} Percentages add to less than 100 because fibers preferred by less than 1 percent of the men interviewed are not shown.

Reasons for preferring cotton or wool.--The major reasons given by men for preferring either cotton or wool for the various items of clothing are presented in table 4. More detailed reasons, and those given by fewer than 10 percent, will be shown for all the major fibers in the full report. In this preliminary release, only those reasons advanced by 10 percent or more of the men preferring either cotton or wool are provided.

The outstanding virtue of cotton in the minds of those preferring it for summer items of men's clothing was expressed simply as, "it's cool." Along with the idea of coolness went the concept of "lightweight, or thin," mentioned particularly by those choosing cotton for summer suits or sport coats. Other important factors included cotton's desirable laundering characteristics--"washable, washes well, easily laundered"--its durability and wearing qualities, and its general appearance.

In those items in which wool was a heavy favorite--summer slacks, summer suits, and summer sport coats--its wearing qualities appeared to predominate. Such comments as "fabric holds up well," "holds shape, will not stretch or shrink," and "keeps a press" were mentioned by large numbers of men. Appearance of wool was next in importance, expressed as "dressier, neater, more tailored," or merely, "looks nice, good."

Items purchased in last year by fiber content.--Men were also asked if they had purchased any of these garments in the last year and, if so, the fiber content of the item purchased. The results of these questions are presented in table 5.

Between one-third and one-half of the men owning any one item of clothing had shopped for and purchased such an item within the last year, with sport shirts and summer slacks leading the list.

Cotton was the leading fiber purchased within the past year for 4 of the items--business dress shirts, sport shirts, Bermuda shorts, and summer slacks. For the remaining two items, summer sport jackets and summer suits, the fiber selected most often was wool.

Table 4.--Reasons for preferring cotton or wool in selected readymade items of men's clothing ^{1/2}

Reasons	Cotton							Wool		
	Summer sport shirts	Business dress shirts	Summer slacks or separate trousers	Summer suits	Summer sport coats or jackets	Walking or Bermuda shorts	Summer slacks or separate trousers	Summer suits	Summer sport coats or jackets	
	Percent ^{2/}	Percent ^{2/}	Percent ^{2/}	Percent ^{2/}	Percent ^{2/}	Percent ^{2/}	Percent ^{2/}	Percent ^{2/}	Percent ^{2/}	
Cool -----	56	14	51	63	52	60	--	14	--	
Washable; washes well, nicely; easily laundered -----	35	29	33	--	11	46	--	--	--	
Fabric holds up well, durable -----	16	28	23	15	15	--	35	36	35	
Holds shape, will not stretch, shrink -----	--	10	10	21	--	--	47	45	41	
Keeps a press, holds press longer -----	--	--	13	17	--	--	45	34	10	
Wrinkle resistant -----	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	--	--	
Priced right, cheaper, inexpensive, on sale -----	12	--	--	16	10	10	--	--	--	
Feels better, more comfortable -----	10	14	--	--	--	14	--	--	12	
Lightweight, thin -----	--	--	10	23	29	10	--	13	10	
Dressier, neater, more tailored -----	--	23	--	--	12	--	16	15	23	
Looks nice, good -----	--	17	--	15	16	10	19	22	19	
Can be worn all seasons -----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	13	
Cases -----	1,478	1,963	442	98	111	173	308	295	297	

^{1/} Reasons shown are those mentioned by 10 percent or more of the respondents preferring cotton or wool.
^{2/} Percentages add to more than 100 because some men gave more than 1 reason.

Table 5.--Proportion of men shopping for and buying selected readymade items of men's clothing within the last year, by fiber content of item purchased

Purchases, and fiber content	Summer sport shirts	Business dress shirts	Slacks or separate trousers	Summer suits	Summer sport coats or jackets	Walking or Bermuda shorts
	<u>Percent^{1/}</u>	<u>Percent^{1/}</u>	<u>Percent^{1/}</u>	<u>Percent^{1/}</u>	<u>Percent^{1/}</u>	<u>Percent^{1/}</u>
All men 16 years old and over -----	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Shopped for and purchased -----	50	38	50	33	32	43
Shopped for and purchased -----	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Cotton -----	73	81	23	7	12	70
Cotton and Dacron -	2	--	2	2	--	--
Cotton and rayon	2	--	5	3	4	--
Cotton and wool -	--	--	1	2	3	--
Wool -----	--	--	16	29	50	--
Wool and Dacron -	--	--	4	8	3	--
Wool and rayon --	--	--	3	5	4	--
Rayon -----	7	1	15	6	7	9
Nylon -----	6	1	1	3	1	--
Dacron -----	3	2	12	9	--	--
Orlon -----	1	--	2	--	--	--
Linen -----	1	2	2	2	4	8
Silk -----	1	--	--	--	--	--
Cases -----	1,035	815	917	339	221	108

^{1/} Percentages shown by fiber detail add to less than 100 because fibers purchased by less than 1 percent of the men interviewed are not shown.

