

A SURVEY OF YOUNG GIRLS' FASHION ATTITUDES: FASHION INTEREST,
STORE PATRONAGE, SATISFACTION WITH FIT AND REFERENCE GROUPS

by

ERIN HEATHER DRAKE

(Under the direction of Dr. Brigitte Burgess)

ABSTRACT

The purpose was to investigate tween girls, ages 9 to 15, in terms of fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit and reference groups. The sample was recruited from area 4-H and Girl Scout members. A total of 206 usable surveys were returned. Frequencies were used to describe the data and Pearson correlation analyses tested for relationships among the variables. Results indicated that four of the hypothesized relationships were significant (fashion interest and satisfaction with fit of clothing, reference groups and store patronage and reference group and store patronage) and two were not significant (store patronage and satisfaction with fit of clothing and reference group). Mean scores indicated that the sample had a high interest in fashion, were likely to patronize more than one type of store format, had high satisfaction with fit of clothing and saw parents as an influential reference group. Limitations and implications are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Tweens, Satisfaction with fit, Store patronage, Reference groups,
Fashion interest, Apparel attitudes.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1997 children under age 13 in the U.S. spent nearly \$23.5 billion on goods and services and influenced more than \$187 billion in family purchases (Liebeck, 1998). Pre-teens have spent at an increasing pace as a result of parents who supply their children with discretionary money, regardless of the economic status of the country (Liebeck, 1998). Children are spending their money on food, beverage, and apparel, respectively. As the third most popular category on which the generation spends, apparel marketers have an invested interest in understanding the demands of this segment of the consumer market. According to the study by Liebeck (1998), children control over two thirds of their daily apparel decisions. Of the population surveyed by Liebeck, one third has use of a credit card.

As parents continue to provide their children with discretionary income they are allowed greater independence from their parents (Lewis, Dyer & Moran, 1995). Children are demonstrating this independence through the clothing they choose to buy and wear and most adolescents are finding that clothing is a worthwhile investment. About half of the adolescents surveyed by Lewis et al. (1995) indicated that they would spend discretionary money on clothing whereas only a quarter would save their money. For retailers, targeting and cultivating the interests of children under age 13 could mean big business now and in the future, as these children become adult consumers.

Today's children are having a greater influence in family and family related decision-making. Children in mother only single-parent households are significantly influential in the decision-making process when shopping for items for the family (Ahuja, Capella & Taylor, 1998). When compared to children in two parent households they were more involved in shopping for items for the family and were more likely to shop for the items alone. Thus, children in the growing numbers of single-parent households are demonstrating a greater amount of influence over family decision-making, making it likely that the children also have a greater amount of influence over personal decisions such as clothing choices.

As children participate more and more as consumers, it is vital to the success of the retail industry to pay attention to the demands of this unique population. Jack Haddad, of the Haddad Apparel Group, indicated that department stores are neglecting the demands of the children's market and are, instead, guilty of selling clothes that look the same (D'Aversa-Williams, 2000). Thus, the department stores seem to ignore the dynamic wants of the young consumer. Currently people are demanding fashionable looks in kids' apparel rather than basics (Is time on mass retailers side?, 2000). Stores are finding that children and parents are demanding looks that mirror junior, young men and adult styles, causing retailers to provide smaller versions of more mature styles (Is time on mass retailers side?, 2000). In order to meet the demands of the transitional children's market, further insight is needed into the unique "tween" segment composed of pre-adolescents and adolescents ages 9 to 15.

Tweens are preadolescents who are "between" the children's and junior's markets. Today's tween is raised with and is able to use the Internet as a tool to gain

information and communicate, making the world smaller and easier to grasp. This generation has high expectations of themselves and is able to reap the benefits of years of equalized employment and educational opportunities for women and minorities. Research has indicated that as education levels increase, consumers are more discerning in their apparel purchases (Hsiao & Dickerson, 1995). The younger generations are being raised as informed decision-makers who are no longer told what to wear; rather they are able to pick and choose from styles that span the globe. If marketers are to reach the growing tween market, they must do away with dated strategies that may lose the interest of this savvy generation of consumers.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the study is to obtain a current picture of the fashion attitudes of tweens. Tweens' fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit and reference groups influencing clothing decisions are researched in the current study to determine the presence of relationships between the variables. Marketers and manufacturers of girl's clothing will find the results of the survey helpful in creating products and in creating marketing or promotional strategies better suited to the needs of this generation of consumers. A review of literature shows that the body of knowledge lacks a concise framework to assess the variables in the current study. Therefore a framework illustrating the relationships between fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit and reference groups for tweens is proposed and tested in the current study. Discovered relationships between the variables will allow marketers to incorporate variables into a marketing mix better suited to the needs of the growing market.

Statement of Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1) To assess participants' fashion interest.
- 2) To assess participants' store patronage.
- 3) To assess participants' satisfaction with fit of clothing.
- 4) To assess influences of reference groups on participants' dress.
- 5) To test the proposed model for relationships among fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit of clothing and reference groups.
- 6) To expand the body of knowledge of children's clothing research.

Statement of Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for the study are as follows:

- 1) There will be no relationship between the participant's fashion interest and satisfaction with fit of clothing.
- 2) There will be no relationship between reference groups and the participants' fashion interest.
- 3) There will be no relationship between participants' fashion interest and store patronage.
- 4) There will be no relationship between participants' store patronage and satisfaction with fit of clothing.
- 5) There will be no relationship between the participant's reference groups and satisfaction with fit of clothing.
- 6) There will no relationship between the participants' reference groups and store patronage.

Assumptions

The assumptions of the study include:

- 1) The participants have answered the questions in the survey truthfully.
- 2) The participants have understood the survey questions and have answered the questions appropriately.
- 3) The survey was appropriate for the age group tested.

Conceptual Definitions of Terms

“Tweens” - The age of the sample falls into the “tween” category, a new market segment previously lumped into either the children’s or junior’s apparel segment, that is now demonstrating that they are a separate category. Hall (1987) considers children ages 9 to 15 as tweens. For the purpose of the current study, tweens will be defined as female adolescents ages 9-15.

Reference Groups - Kollat, Blackwell and Engel (1970) define reference groups as follows: “When an interacting group of persons or even a single person influences the attitudes or behavior of another individual, that group is said to be a reference group for the influenced individual. The group serves as an evaluation or normative point for the individual” (p. 456).

Attitude - Attitude has been defined by Kollat, Blackwell and Engel (1970) as “the predisposition of the individual to evaluate some symbol or object or aspect of his world in a favorable or unfavorable manner” (p. 192).

Fashion Interest - Fashion, or clothing interest refers to “the attitudes and beliefs about clothing, the knowledge of and attention paid to clothing, the concern and curiosity a person has about his/her own clothing and that of others” (Gurel and Gurel, 1974, p. 12).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE SURVEY

Historical Interpretation of Children

Higonnet and Albinson (1997) present the critical role clothing has historically played in the invention and perpetuation of childhood innocence. The image of childhood innocence has depended on the relationship between clothing and children's bodies, a relationship that first existed as an ideal expressed in representations which gradually permeated the every day lives of people (Higonnet & Albinson, 1997). The relationship between clothing and children's bodies is one in which children were disembodied by their clothing, rendering them void of any social, physical, or sexual attributes that were considered adult. The authors describe the disembodiment of children's apparel as "a fashionable invention, formulated in art, refined in theory, and costumed for the part" that is now "axiomatic because it has become ubiquitous" (Higonnet & Albinson, 1997, p. 122).

Stemming from the ideals that served as a basis for mass productions of portraits of "innocent" Romantic era children, early and mid-nineteenth-century paintings, these renderings of "natural" and "timeless" children do not accurately reflect the dress of children before the Romantic era (Higonnet & Albinson, 1997, p. 122). Before the mid-eighteenth century, children's bodies were seen as small adults and thus children were dressed accordingly, reflecting the attitude that they were to behave like adults and were not expected to look innocent (Higonnet & Albinson, 1997). The authors reported that several concepts arose at the same time innocent images of children appeared: "a private,

nurturing middle-class nuclear family as the building block of society, a capitalist opposition between masculine public and feminine domestic spheres, and a political belief in the innate value and freedom of the individual” (Higonnet & Albinson, 1997, p. 122).

At a time when children were given less influence and decision making power in the family, their dress reflected this as seen by the popularity of apparel that acted to disembodied children (Higonnet & Albinson, 1997). However, today’s child is demonstrating an increasing amount of influence over family decisions as the American family becomes redefined and moves away from the middle-class nuclear family structure that stemmed from the mid-eighteenth century (Ahuja et al., 1998; Higonnet & Albinson, 1997). Children’s clothing reflects greater maturity as a result of the child’s growing influence on family issues.

The Adolescent

Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget identified four stages of cognitive development through which all children pass as they develop into adulthood (Appendix 1). The Sensorimotor Stage, Preoperational Stage, Concrete Operational Stage, and the Formal Operational Stage are the four developmental stages, each marked “by a distinctive way of thinking about and understanding the world” (Kail, 1998, p. 144). Although the ages at which one passes each stage may vary, all children pass through the stages in the same order. Appendix 1 shows the approximate ages corresponding to the stages of development.

The first stage of development, the Sensorimotor stage, ranges from birth to 2 years and consists of six substages. Throughout the substages, infants progress from

simple reflex actions to symbolic processing. The six substages include exercising reflexes, learning to adapt reflexes to experience, making interesting events happen, using a means to achieve an end, experimenting, and using symbols.

The second stage in a child's development is the Preoperational stage. This stage which spans from ages 2 to 7, is one in which the child begins to use symbols to represent objects and events (Kail, 1998). The stage is marked by egocentrism, the difficulty in seeing the world from another's viewpoint, and centration, narrowly focused thought.

In the Concrete Operational stage, children ages 7 to 11 begin to use mental operations in order to reason and solve problems (Kail, 1998). The development of mental operations, "strategies and rules that make thinking more systematic and more powerful," characterize the thinking of the child in this stage as more adult-like than child-like (Kail, 1998, p. 151).

Children ages 11 to 15 are those who are transitioning into pre-adolescence and the Formal Operational Stage. In the formal operational stage children apply mental operations to abstract entities, resulting in hypothetical thinking and deductive reasoning. In this stage the child possess adult-like thinking and perceptual tools (Acuff & Reiher, 1997).

Paralleled by the ability to think abstractly, the Formal Operator develops self-reflection that enables the child to observe his or her own thoughts and to think about his or her thoughts (Acuff & Reiher, 1997). With the preadolescent's development of abstract thoughts and self-reflection comes the appreciation of details. The importance of this new attention to details lies in the newly placed emphasis on details as an expression of the preadolescent's emerging self (Acuff & Reiher, 1997). Preadolescents may

consider clothing to be infantile or not socially acceptable and will conform to their peers to gain acceptance and affirmation (Acuff & Reiher, 1997). He or she will begin to look outside of his or herself to find how to behave and what to believe and will concern him or herself with fitting in with peers (Acuff & Reiher, 1997). The preadolescent becomes more sensitive to peer pressure, as peers become a significant force on his or her development. How well the preadolescent conforms to what is considered “in” by peers can have a great impact on future development. At this stage the preadolescent is making conclusions about his or her abilities, looks, strengths, weaknesses, and his or her overall worth that will follow him or her into adulthood (Acuff & Reiher, 1997).

“Tweens” is a term used to describe children between the ages of 9 and 15, those just entering the world of autonomy and adolescence. Adolescence is characterized by a period of dramatic development, and generally acknowledged as an awkward and complex transition (Ahluwalia & Wildres, 1984). Children are experiencing dramatic physical changes including accelerated increases in height and weight, new body proportions, and the development of secondary sex organs. Also a change in mind set where the youngster is looking for his or her own identity becomes precedent. During this time of physical and cognitive growth children are developing value sets, beliefs and assumptions about the future, as a result of unprecedented self-analysis and introspection (Ahluwalia & Wildres, 1984).

The first step a child takes towards autonomy is to distance themselves from the parents, and to establish one’s identity as a member of a peer group. Peer groups serve several purposes in the development of the adolescent’s self-realization. The peer group acts as a support to which the adolescent can look during this time of distance from the

family. The interaction where the adolescent looks to his/her peers for support and approval can clarify one's own social and personal views, thus clarifying and refining his or hers' self-concept (Ahluwalia & Wildres, 1984). It is common to find conformity to a peer group in terms of fashion, music, or vocabulary.

At the same time the preadolescent is becoming group oriented and looking to his or her peers for guidance on social and personal matters, he or she is going through an egotistical stage (Acuff & Reiher, 1997). In the egotistical stage, a child becomes attracted to personalized items that bring a sense of self-importance. Children become drawn to real-life characters or heroes including, such as movie stars or sports heroes, and attach themselves to role models (Acuff & Reiher, 1997).

MTV has revolutionized the music and television industries by bringing unprecedented media exposure to performers who, in return, have become role models for current and future generations. Children currently in the tween segment are a part of the MTV generation who experience the infiltration of media into their daily lives (Seel, 1997). The wide media exposure given to celebrities coupled with the degradation of the two-parent, or traditional, household have caused today's child to be raised with non-traditional values and to possibly mature at an accelerated pace (Marano, 1997). The psychological ramifications of the phenomenon are beyond the scope of the current research, however undoubtedly the tween segment will have a unique view of the world. Because fashion is a vehicle of expression and can be studied to indicate the social and/or political climate of a time period, the study of fashion attitudes can provide insight into changes in a society's values (Storm, 1987).

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual frameworks created by experts in consumer research, such as Howard (1973), Sheth (1974), Nicosia (1966) and others, have contributed greatly to research by creating consumer models that prove to be valid and reliable, however the models are not suitable for the purposes of the current study. Broad, simplified frameworks fail to incorporate the specific variables of consumer behavior studied in the current research. The discrepancy may be due to the fact that the variables used in the current study, when paired together, have no, or have very little, research history. Also, variables included in the study, for instance store patronage, are less thought of as variables in a framework, instead, as a result of a tested framework. Therefore a concise framework illustrating the relationship the relationship between the variables studied in the current study will be tested.

The current study will test the following variables for tween girls: fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit of clothing and reference groups. The purpose of the research is to determine whether relationships exist between the four factors. The framework to be tested in the current study is illustrated in Figure 1. Attitudes have been shown to be a cause and an effect of consumer behavior (Moschis, 1978; Francis & Burns, 1992; Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996; Kwon, 1997; Lazar, 2000) therefore the study of attitude is imperative to understanding consumer behavior. The review of literature contains explanations of the components of attitude and their roles in apparel consumer behavior.

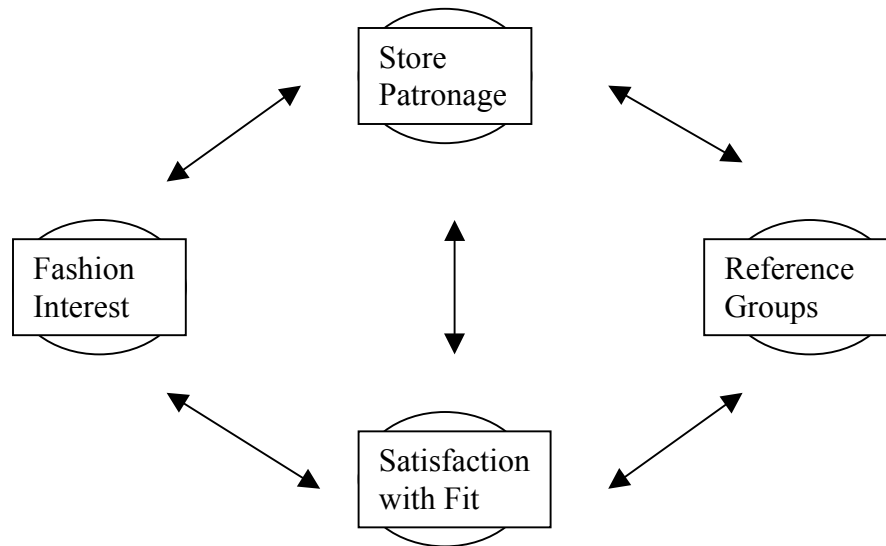


Figure 1: Proposed framework for apparel attitudes of tween girls.

The proposed framework reflects the results of previous research on apparel consumer behavior as found in the review of literature. The variables in the framework are arranged according to information provided in the review of literature. Fashion interest is predicted to have a relationship with one's satisfaction with fit and store patronage. Store patronage is predicted to have a relationship with satisfaction with fit, and reference groups are predicted to have a relationship with store patronage and satisfaction with fit.

The Study of Attitude

The review of literature reveals that attitudes affect store patronage (Lazar, 2000), attitudes towards fit of clothing is a cause and a result of fashion interest (Kwon, 1997), and that attitudes can be transferred by consumer socialization from family and peers and are linked to one's interest in fashion (Francis & Burns, 1992). Children have illustrated the progression of both affective and cognitive attitudes towards consumer behaviors as they mature from consumer socialization to consumers with discretionary income. Although children as consumers have attracted a lot of attention from marketers and researchers, research of this segment has yet to give a full picture of the demands of the growing consumer group. Because clothing and fashion have been shown to be significant factors in the children's segment, attitudes toward clothing and influences of clothing purchases are worthy of study as a basis for a tentative theoretical framework of tween's apparel consumption. The current study will measure the affective and cognitive attitudes of children in order to gain a clear picture of the demands of today's market. A

background of attitudes is necessary in understanding the significance of attitudes in consumer behavior.

Attitudes are generally considered to be made up of three components: cognitive, or belief; affective, or emotional; and conotive, or behavioral (Zaltman & Burger, 1975). The cognitive component consists of the beliefs one holds about an object or what one knows about an object. The affective component is the emotional component that refers to the feelings one has towards an object. Unlike the cognitive component where the emphasis is on the object, the affective emphasizes the individual in relation to the object. The conotive component is one in which there is a predisposition to action. Also known as the action tendency component, the conotive component seeks to determine the individual's most likely course of action, given a certain attitudinal object (Zaltman & Burger, 1975). See Appendix 2 for an illustration the relationship between the attitude object, attitudes, and actions as a result of attitude.

The affective component of attitude is considered the motivational part of attitude, as it reflects motivation, as well as the emotional component. One cannot assume that a shopper will use purely objective reasoning in making purchases, therefore the affective component of attitudes must be taken into consideration, as well as the cognitive, when testing attitudes (Brinberg & Lutz, 1986).

Moschis (1978) sought to assess the attitudes of adolescents towards marketing and retailing components including brands, stores, prices, and advertising. Self-administered questionnaires were given to 806 adolescents, ages 12 to 18, in Wisconsin middle and high schools. A balanced demographics set resulted, including age, sex, geographical location and social class.

In the study, Moschis (1978) found attitudes towards brands were a result of the child's motivations for watching television. The participants who watched television commercials to gather information regarding products were more likely to possess more favorable attitudes towards product brands. Exposure time to commercials had a positive relationship with developing and possessing positive attitudes whereas more exposure led to creation of favorable attitudes towards products (Moschis, 1978).

Moschis (1978) also found sex to be the strongest predictor of the participants' attitude towards stores. The males in the study had more favorable attitudes towards commercial stimuli relative to the attitudes of the females in the study. Age was the least significant predictor of store attitudes, however it was a strong predictor of attitudes towards prices. Shopping experiences were concluded to better familiarize one with pricing techniques that the child will discover might not reflect product quality. Those who viewed television as a primary information-gathering device were less likely to have a favorable attitude towards price whereas newspaper readership was positively related to favorable attitudes towards prices. A child develops favorable attitudes towards advertisements if the advertisement is perceived to offer gratification of social needs (Moschis, 1978).

As the child ages, he or she grows more skeptical of advertisements which may be partially due to consumer education in schools that teaches youngsters how to decipher positive aspects of advertisements, thus contributing to a more positive attitude towards advertising (Moschis, 1978). The study found that younger adolescents responded less favorably to store attributes and more favorably to advertising and price appeals. However, the conclusions of the study suggests that as the adolescent matures, he or she

will begin to develop affective orientations towards a store or type of store as a result of cognitive development or experiences with different retail facilities (Moschis, 1978).

Attitudes contribute to consumer behavior, consumers may not gather all information regarding a product upon purchase of the product and instead rely on emotional reasons for making a purchase. Thus, discrepancies exist as to whether or not attitudes can truly predict behavior. Due to the complex nature of attitudes and the countless influencers of behaviors, one's behavior may not be truly reflecting one's attitude and vice versa. Hester (1989) attempted to find a link between attitude and behavior but came up short as the results indicated that a consistent link between participants confessed attitudes and actual buying behavior could not be established. The study included the responses of 3,766 men and women, with over half of the respondents in the 21-50 year-old age group. In the study, a large proportion of the participants said that they cared if the apparel products they purchased were domestically produced or imported. However testing of actual purchasing behavior indicated that few of the participants knew where their newly purchased apparel product was made. Attitudes may contribute to one's purchase behavior; however, it is clearly not the only factor contributing to a decision.

Baldinger and Rubinson (1996) conducted a study concluding that attitudes and behaviors of consumers did have predictable traits. The findings of the study revealed that the participants' ingoing attitude towards a brand did have an effect on the brand's ability to create a higher level of brand loyalty and maintain loyalty among consumers (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996). The study also found a positive relationship when comparing a brand's market share and the confessed attitudes toward a brand. The

consistency in attitudes towards brands may be a result of the halo effect. The halo effect occurs when cognitive processes are directed by previously obtained affective attitudes to ensure consistency with the previous attitude (Brinberg & Lutz, 1986).

The basic concepts of attitude are applicable to research on consumer behavior. Children have illustrated possession of attitudes towards facets of consumer behaviors that become more sophisticated as children grow into adults. Previous studies of both adults and children regarding attitudes are the basis for the current research and serve as a basis for comparison of results. The current research assesses female tweens' fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit, and perceived reference groups to determine if a relationship exists between the variables.

Fashion Interest

Although clothing is an imperative part of daily life, interest in the necessity varies between individuals. Determining the level of one's interest in clothing is an important practice in evaluating one's apparel attitudes and consumer behavior. Previous research has shown that younger shoppers tend to be more involved in the purchase of apparel items relative to older shoppers (Fairhurst, Good & Gentry, 1989). Women over 50 recognize the importance of clothing, however they are not necessarily satisfied with their clothing selection, including satisfaction with fit (Belleau, Broussard, Summers & Dider, 1994). Satisfaction with fit is linked to one's fashion interest, which is in return linked to store patronage (Kwon, 1997). Fashion interest is important in determining fashion involvement. The Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) (Zaichkowsky, 1985) provides items useful in measuring one's interest in fashion.

Three propositions are the basis of the concept of fashion involvement. First, the population's fashion behavioral activities are distributed along a broad continuum. Second, the continuum for each fashion behavioral activity is unidimensional and third, that for several of the fashion behavioral activities the continuums either have been or can be "researched and identified for specific geographic submarkets" (Tigert, Ring & King, 1975, p. 47). Based on segmentation research, five dimensions that are most important to the aggregate continuum of fashion involvement have been theorized. The five dimensions are: fashion innovativeness and time of purchase, fashion interpersonal communication, fashion interest, fashion knowledgeability, and fashion awareness and reaction to changing fashion trends (Tigert, et al., 1975). The current study will focus on the fashion interest aspect of the adolescent's level of fashion involvement as research has revealed that this aspect is a significant aspect of one's attitudes towards clothing (Fairhurst Good & Gentry, 1989; Belleau, et al., 1994; Kwon, 1997). Also, an instrument has been previously developed and used to determine one's interest in fashionable clothing (Zaichkowsky, 1985; Fairhurst, et al., 1989).

Tigert et al. (1975) developed a fashion involvement index using answered surveys from 1,000 husband and wife pairs and found that the women scored significantly higher on fashion involvement dimensions than did the men. The study cited that highly involved fashion consumers significantly influenced the fashion adoption process by buying more clothes than the average shopper bought and by being willing to pay more for clothing than the average shopper. Highly involved fashion consumers were more often innovative and used more interpersonal communication regarding fashion relative to the average apparel consumer (Tigert, et al., 1975).

Fairhurst et al. (1989) compared the level of fashion involvement of women's specialty store customers ages 30 to 50 and of female home economics students ages 18 to 20 using a survey consisting of the PII developed by Zaichkowsky (1985). In Fairhurst, et al's. (1989) study, the scale was combined with adaptations of Tigert et al's. (1975) measures of fashion involvement for validation of the scale for use in evaluating apparel behaviors. The results indicated that fashion involvement varied across groups as the student sample was significantly more involved in the purchase of apparel items than the women's specialty store customer sample. Results of the study also revealed that, indeed, the PII scale demonstrated construct validity and that the instrument acts as a "reliable and valid measure of involvement construct" (Fairhurst, et al., 1989). An adaptation of the Personal Involvement Inventory scale (Zaichkowsky, 1985) is used to measure tween's fashion interest in the current study.

A study concerning the apparel and media attitudes of women over 50 revealed that the women both recognized and were concerned with the importance of clothing and the role clothing played in social, economic or professional success (Belleau, et al., 1994). However, the study also indicated that the women were dissatisfied with the types of available apparel and with fit of the apparel. The women expressed desire to have clothing available to them that was comfortable, yet at the same time did not label them as "old" (Belleau, et al., 1994) The current study acknowledges the importance the participant places on clothing as an indicator of fashion interest (Fairhurst, et al., 1989). Therefore, similar findings are expected for the tween market where tweens may report conflicting opinions of importance of clothing and satisfaction with clothing. However,

the current study will only indicate a non-directional relationship between satisfaction with fit and fashion interest.

From the results of Kwon's (1997) study it can be concluded that satisfaction with fit will be affected by interest in fashion. Participants were grouped into one of four categories depending on the participants' sex-role. The four groups included participants with a set of feminine characteristics, a set of male characteristics, a set of androgynous characteristics that encompassed both feminine and male characteristics or undifferentiated, with neither feminine nor masculine characteristics. The study found that among three variables, facial attractiveness, social self-esteem and interest in clothing, androgynous women rated the highest on perceived facial attractiveness, social self-esteem and interest in clothing. It is reasonable to conclude that those who felt that their attractiveness could be manipulated by clothing, and therefore used as a social skill to enhance self-esteem and attractiveness (Kwon, 1997), would find satisfaction with fit of clothing imperative in maintaining social self-esteem. Because social self-esteem is associated with a high level of fashion interest (Kwon, 1997), it would follow that satisfaction with fit can be predicted to have a positive relationship with fashion interest. Conversely, low fashion involvement is related to lower satisfaction with one's clothing wardrobe (Francis & Burns, 1992).

Fashion interest has been linked to store patronage through shopping orientation. Shopping orientation, including elements relating to fashion interest, have shown to have a weak, but direct relationship with store patronage (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992b). Shoppers of discount stores were less likely to be concerned with quality of clothing or variety of styles. Instead these shoppers were more economical relative to specialty store

and department store shoppers (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992a). Catalog shoppers were less fashion conscious than specialty store or department store shoppers. Specialty store shoppers, however, were more likely to place importance on quality of clothing and variety of style and were generally more concerned with fashion (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992a).

Results of studies assessing fashion interest imply that, like adults, a relationship may exist between satisfaction with fit and fashion interest for tweens. It is also predicted that, like adults, tweens will shop at apparel stores according to their confessed level of interest in fashionable clothing.

Store Patronage

Since little past research is specific to children, literature related to adult shoppers will be reviewed. Store patronage research reveals that children as young as 5 years old are able to recognize differences in product and store quality (McNeal & McDaniel, 1981). Children have cited both economic and non-economic reasons for choosing a favorite store (McNeal & McDaniel, 1981) and frequent some store formats more than others, with changes in patronage as the child gets older (May & Koester, 1985). Perceived reference groups that influence children's patronage behaviors also change as the adolescent matures (May & Koester, 1985). Studies on adult apparel shoppers reveal that adult shoppers patronize more than one type of store format (Korgaonkar, 1981) with store and shopping attributes effecting one's store patronage (Lazar, 2000). Studies of adults' patronage also indicate that shoppers can be classified by common behaviors.

A study on children's perceptions of retail stores by McNeal and McDaniel (1981) revealed that children have an awareness and accuracy of perception of retail

stores that increases as the child ages. The study used personal interviews of children ages 5 to 9, with an equal amount of boys and girls in each age group. The interviews performed in the study assessed perception of retail Store-Product Quality, Relationships, Perception of Retail Store-Price Relationship, Retail Store Name Familiarity and Determinant Attributes for Retail Store Selection.

Evidently perceptions of product quality progress as the child ages as the results of the study reveal that only 18-21 percent of the 5 and 6 year-olds recognized product quality differences among compared stores whereas 50-60 percent of 7, 8 and 9 year-olds recognized differences among stores (McNeal & McDaniel, 1981). A retail store-price relationship was perceived by all 8 and 9 year-olds used in the study where the children recognized differences in prices for the same products at different retail stores. More than 90 percent of 5, 6 and 7 year-olds perceived differences in price among stores (McNeal & McDaniel, 1981).

The study's assessment of economic versus non-economic attributes for retail store selection reveal that economic attributes responsible for the selection of a retail store consisted of those related to lower prices or favorable quality of the store's merchandise. Non-economic attributes consisted of all other given reasons by the interviewees not related to price. The 5, 6 and 7 year-olds gave more non-economic reasons for their favorite store than the 8 and 9 year-olds, who were more likely to cite economic reasons for the selection of a favorite store (McNeal & McDaniel, 1981). The most relevant finding of the study for the current research is the conclusion that children have the skills and knowledge that enable them to make reasonable consumer related decisions in the marketplace (McNeal & McDaniel, 1981). McNeal's and McDaniel's

(1981) study brings validity to the current study of young consumers. Further studies of adolescents also validate the current study's research of young consumers, i.e. tweens, and act as a basis from which to draw conclusions regarding the results of the current research.

Research reveals that adolescent shoppers most often frequent department stores for apparel purchases, however, as age increases, specialty stores are more often frequented (May & Koester, 1985). Adolescents also frequent mail order and discount stores, however frequency decreases with increasing age and used clothing stores are seldom patronized (May & Koester, 1985). The study of Oregon 4-H members ages 9 to 19, used the Clothing Practices Survey to assess the pre-adolescent's and adolescent's clothing purchase practices, to determine the extent to which the purchase practices were performed independently or influenced by reference groups, and identify factors involved in the practices (May & Koester, 1985).

A conclusion regarding the relationship found in May and Koester's (1985) study between reference groups and store patronage can be drawn by comparing the stores frequented by the age groups and the source of influence of the distinct groups. Results indicated that the 9 to 12 year old group, whom most often shops with parents and had final clothing purchase decisions made by parents, was the same group that most often frequented department stores. The older group, ages 13 to 15, exhibited an increase in peer influence and demonstrated patronage of specialty stores as well as department stores. The influence of siblings on clothing practices was minimal for all ages and activities.

Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1993) performed research on adult female consumers, which revealed that those with differing shopping orientations had differing consumer characteristics and market behaviors. Most of the respondents were considered “Highly Involved Apparel Shoppers” who were highly confident and felt able to choose clothes for themselves (Shim and Kotsiopoulos, 1993). The confident shoppers held good grooming in high regard, believed dressing well was important, and were fashion leaders. These women were also brand conscious and brand loyal, less concerned with convenience and preferred to shop leisurely at shopping malls (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993). Additionally, “Highly Involved Apparel Shoppers” were economic and price conscious, favored clothes made in the U.S.A., and were moderate users of credit.

The second largest group of women was labeled “Apathetic Apparel Shoppers” (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993, p. 81). These shoppers felt least confident in shopping for clothes, were not interested in fashion or brand, and did not place importance on using clothing for success-oriented dressing (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993). The women moderately frequented malls or traditional stores, were least favorable to catalog shopping, and were least frequent users of credit cards.

The smallest group of respondents is labeled the “Convenience-Oriented Catalog Shoppers” and were least likely to utilize traditional retail formats (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993). Instead, these convenience and time-oriented shoppers were more likely to shop at home. The shoppers were moderately confident in shopping for clothing, and were interested in appearance, brand, and fashion. The study on the adult female consumers may give insight into the behaviors of younger tween consumers.

Korgaonkar's (1981) study on store format preference indicated that consumers rarely patronize only one type of store format. Results of the study suggest that those who frequented discount stores less than department stores and catalog showrooms were more brand oriented, but less price oriented. The patrons were older, exhibited more store loyalty, considered price to be less important, and valued store convenience. Patrons who were labeled Infrequent Shoppers of Catalog Showrooms were also more store loyal, less price oriented, and considered convenience to be important. These shoppers were less brand conscious and less time conscious relative to the other two groups. The Infrequent Department Store Shoppers were price and time oriented and placed importance on merchandise variety. The results of Korgaonkar's (1981) study indicated that respondents in the current study may also demonstrate patronage of several store formats. However tweens are expected to frequent certain types of formats as found in previous studies (McNeal & McDaniel, 1981; May & Koester, 1985).

In a study conducted by Lazar (2000) of 215 households, a significant relationship existed between the participants' store/shopping center attributes and patronage behavior. The survey in the study assessed the participants' perceptions of the importance of given store attributes, store preference and shopping frequency, satisfaction with frequented shopping locations, influence of reference groups on store patronage, and any additional attributes the participants thought were necessary when considering a retail location. Using Fishbein's (1980) multi-attribute attitude model, Lazar found that value, regarding the entire shopping experience, and value for price were the two main attributes determining the participants' store choice. Merchandise quality followed by price and service were also reasons contributing to determining store choice. The instrument

developed by Lazar (2000) to assess frequency of store patronage has been adapted and used in the current research to assess frequency of store patronage.

As stores differentiate themselves from one another, a deduction can be made that variations in product attributes will be imperative in setting apart one store from another. A reasonable conclusion can be made that satisfaction with a store's product will be important in determining where one chooses to shop. From the literature review of store patronage, it can be concluded that as the adolescent matures, she will become more involved with clothing, be more concerned with fit and overall appearance and will change her shopping habits accordingly. Therefore one's store format preference and satisfaction with fit will be measured in the current study to determine if a relationship exists.

Body Cathexis and Satisfaction with Fit

Since clothing is seen as an extension of oneself, it can be viewed as "one aspect of appearance both to establish and validate the self and to express it, or express parts of it, or mask it" (Storm, 1987, p. 269). Clothing is ubiquitous as it permeates our daily lives and it holds the power to enhance self-esteem or to cause feelings of inadequacy. Clothing can be used to bring us closer to our ideal self by compensating for body dissatisfaction and enhancing those parts of the body of which we are proud. However, when clothing fails to do this, often a lack of confidence can result as deficiencies are attributed to the body rather than the fit of the clothing. Today's adolescent is increasingly vulnerable to body dissatisfaction as cultural ideals pervade our daily lives (Storm, 1987). Therefore providing comfortable and well-fitting clothing to children is imperative. Adult consumers' satisfaction with fit of clothing is linked to store

patronage, clothing attitudes and fashion interest and may provide some insight into the children's market.

MacGillivray and Wilson (1997) revealed in their study of early, middle and late adolescents that the youngest group of adolescents conveyed greater satisfaction with fit of clothing as satisfaction with fit of clothing decreased as age increased. The study of male and female adolescents in the sixth, ninth and twelfth grades used an adaptation of Sweeney's and Zoints' (1989) Clothing Use Scale where the participants rated, from always to never, their behavior towards clothing and appearance based on the following uses: approval, attention, comfort, dependence, interest and economies. Two items regarding satisfaction with clothing and satisfaction with body appearance were also included in the questionnaire.

MacGillivray and Wilson's (1997) results indicated no differences among gender and satisfaction with clothing. However, males in the study did illustrate a greater satisfaction with body relative to the females. Significant differences among gender were found between all clothing use factors for clothing excluding the economic factor where both male and females felt they had enough money to purchase needed and wanted clothing. Females were more likely to use clothing for approval, dependence and nonconformity relative to the males. Urban versus rural differences indicate that urban adolescents were more likely to use clothing for approval, nonconformity and dependence. Rural adolescents had a greater need than urban students for clothing to conform to peers. Older students exhibited fewer differences in rural versus urban for clothing uses, therefore the study concluded that as the adolescent matures, the influence of residence on clothing use diminishes.

In a study by Goldsberry, Shim and Reich (1996), older women who purchased clothing at discount/off-price stores, department stores and by mail-order or catalog tended to be less satisfied with fit of clothing than those who purchased clothing at specialty stores or boutiques or who had their clothing custom made or home-sewn. Department stores were still most frequented by the women, possibly due to broader selection. Specialty stores offered more customized service that may have lead to better fitting garments for the store's specific customers. Those who chose home-sewn or custom made clothing may have had greater satisfaction with fit due to identified changes which may have lead to the solving of fit problems (Goldsberry, et al., 1996).

The current study attempts to test the relationship between satisfaction with fit of clothing and fashion interest for tween girls. The results of the study by Shim, Kotsiopoulos and Knoll (1991) in which the men illustrated relationships between the body cathexis and clothing attitude is a significant finding for the current research from which a prediction between the satisfaction with fit and fashion interest variables is made. The findings from the Shim, et al. (1991) study may also prove significant in the relationship between store patronage and satisfaction with fit variables in the current study as those that have higher levels of satisfaction with fit are more likely to be more involved in fashion and will have more discriminatory tastes in where to shop for clothing.

Shim, et al. (1991) conducted research on male apparel consumers, ages 25 to 54, to segment the sample based on an interaction between body cathexis and clothing attitudes. The study considered clothing attitudes in the context of the three components of attitude, cognitive (clothing is important versus unimportant), affective (liking or

disliking clothing) and behavioral (in the context of social actions and interactions). The sample was segmented into four groups using an adaptation of Sirgy's self-image/product-image congruity theory, including: positive congruity (positive body cathexis, positive clothing attitude), positive incongruity (negative body cathexis, positive clothing attitude), negative congruity (negative body cathexis, negative clothing attitude) and negative incongruity (positive body cathexis, negative clothing attitude). Also investigated in the study were differences in clothing behavior, shopping behavior and individual characteristics among the segments.

Differences in clothing behavior were found between all four groups of men. The men in the positive congruity segment were most likely to be fashion leaders or innovators and were most confident in picking out clothing which best suited their needs. Those who were in the negative congruity group were least likely to be fashion leaders or innovators and were also least likely to be confident in choosing clothing. The positive incongruity group had higher scores than the negative incongruity group on the clothing behavior variables leading the researchers to conclude that although the men had a negative body cathexis, they were more likely to be fashion innovators or leaders and more confident in choosing clothing if they were favorable towards clothing than those who had a positive body cathexis but had a negative view of clothing (Shim, et al., 1991).

Differences in shopping behavior among the groups indicated that those in the positive congruity group were most satisfied with ready-to-wear clothing and clothing product variety/store quality and the negative congruity group was least satisfied with clothing and store quality. Participants who were satisfied with their bodies but not favorable toward clothing had higher satisfaction with ready-to-wear and product

variety/store quality than those who were dissatisfied with their bodies but favorable towards clothing. The conclusion was drawn that positive body cathexis was more significant than clothing attitude in determining satisfaction with apparel and stores (Shim, et al., 1991).

As for store patronage, shoppers who were in the positive congruity group were more likely to have preferences as to where they buy their clothing and enjoy shopping for clothing relative to those in the negative congruity group, who were least likely to have a particular preference as to where to shop and were least likely to enjoy shopping. Participants who had a lower body cathexis but high clothing attitude also had store patronage preferences and enjoyed shopping more than the participants with positive body cathexis and negative clothing attitude (Shim, et al., 1991).

Catalog shoppers in the study differed from traditional retail store shoppers in that catalogs were most often used by those with low body cathexis and low clothing attitudes and were least likely to be used by those with positive body cathexis and clothing attitudes. The distinction between the groups indicates that body cathexis and clothing orientations should be considered separately in a clothing behavior study (Shim, et al., 1991).

The focus of the current study is on the satisfaction-of-fit with clothing of tween girls. Research using LaBat's and DeLong's (1990) body cathexis and satisfaction with fit scales have revealed that greater satisfaction with body can be linked to greater satisfaction with fit and a lower assessment of lower body areas and clothing relative to upper body areas (Feather, Ford & Herr, 1996; Feather, Herr & Ford, 1997). Black

females are more likely to be more satisfied with their body and fit of clothing relative to white females (Feather et al., 1997).

Body cathexis, as defined by LaBat and DeLong, is “the evaluative dimension of body image and is defined as positive and negative feelings toward one’s body” and is an “integral part of body image and self concept” (1990, p. 43). LaBat’s and DeLong’s (1990) study regarding the relationship between body cathexis and satisfaction with apparel fit revealed that, indeed, there is a positive relationship between satisfaction with the body and satisfaction with fit of clothing. The study consisted of 107 female consumers ages 19 to 40. The study used a questionnaire to assess satisfaction with fit with the lower, upper and total body, satisfaction of fit at specific body sites, and to measure body cathexis of various body features with a 5-point Likert scale (almost always satisfied to almost never satisfied).

The participants had a lower satisfaction with fit of garments of the lower body and were also least satisfied with their lower body (LaBat & DeLong, 1990). The participants were slightly more satisfied with fit of clothing of the upper body and had higher opinions of their upper body (LaBat & DeLong, 1990). The study went further to conclude that sizing systems in use in the apparel market act as a symbol of expectation for women (LaBat & DeLong, 1990), thus as a woman tries to fit into clothing currently available, she inevitably compares herself to the ideal body shape. Women are sent the message that if their bodies do not fit into the clothing, then their bodies are not ideal.

Instead of expressing discontentment with clothing, women express discontentment with their bodies as a result of lack of fit (Feather et al., 1997). For adolescents, the level of satisfaction with fit of clothing may act as an indicator of

satisfaction of body image. Research has shown that consumer satisfaction has an effect on one's satisfaction with fit (Koester & May, 1985; Francis & Burns, 1992; Forney & Forney, 1995; Shim & Koh, 1997). The current study tests a relationship between satisfaction with fit and fashion interest, store patronage and reference groups to determine if relationships exist for members of the tweens category. To determine satisfaction with fit, the current study uses an instrument adapted from LaBat and Delong (1990).

Agents of Consumer Socialization: Parents

As the primary agents of socialization, parents are the first and possibly the most important agents for consumer socialization of children (McNeal, 1987). By the time the child is 4 or 5, the parents have established themselves as the child's "primary source of need satisfiers" and therefore have become the most important influence over their child's life (McNeal, 1987, p. 15). Early in the child's life, the parents have taught the child how to satisfy viscerogenic and psychogenic needs (McNeal, 1987). Given the parent's established position as the primary teacher and influencer by the time the child is old enough to become a consumer, it is only logical that the child would look to the parent for guidance in the area of purchasing behavior (McNeal, 1987).

Parents can teach children how to make correct or incorrect purchasing decisions. From observing the parent to receiving encouragement to make a first purchase decision, children are trained by the parents, directly or indirectly, to be consumers. The parent may encourage interaction with the child by asking the child's opinion or preference for certain products, or the parent may send the child to independently choose an item for purchase (McNeal, 1987).

Consumer behavior training exists in the home as well as in the retail store. Discussions between the parents and children concerning products for the home or products specifically for the child provide them with evaluative criteria that the child can store and use for future personal product choices, including clothing (McNeal, 1987). Discussions concerning television advertisements further enhance the child's consumer socialization within the household. Parents have the opportunity to discuss advertisements with their children thus providing interaction between the child and parent where the child may ask questions and form opinions based upon the parents' feedback.

Often the practice of teaching a child consumer behavior is not direct, as in a formal discussion or in a classroom setting. It is expected that children will ascertain some aspects of consumer behavior by simply observing parents' consumption behaviors (Ward, Wackman, & Wartella, 1977). Furthermore, consumer behavior possibly "so permeates our lives that it masks the real concern of parents for the consumership of their children and makes much organized teaching of it unnecessary" (McNeal, 1987, p. 16).

The Children's Consumer Socialization Model proposed by Ward, et al., (1977), illustrates the child's consumer socialization, placing emphasis on the parent's role in the child's development (Appendix 3). As an independent variable in the model, the family affects both initial and central information processing (Ward, et al., 1977). The model was used to predict patterns in children's consumer behaviors including spending behaviors, saving behaviors, and purchase requests (Ward, et al., 1977). McNeal recommends the socialization model of consumer behavior created by Ward et al. (1977) recognizing it as the first framework appropriate for studying children's consumer behavior, describing the framework created by Ward et al. as a "sociological concept that

primarily focuses on the social agents who influence children's learning of consumer behavior, their learning setting, and what they learn" (McNeal, 1987, p. 141).

Ward et al. (1977) "portrays an expansion of the information processing model of consumer socialization" (p. 28) in which the child's information processing is examined within the family and television advertisement atmospheres. The original framework "indicates that we believe children are active participants in communication process-attending to some messages and ignoring others, selecting some information in one commercial to compare with product information gained through experience, and so on" (Ward, et al., 1977, p. 19). The framework focuses on the parent's role as consumer socialization agents and therefore serves as a framework with which the behaviors of the child as a result of the socialization can be predicted.

Consumer attitudes have been shown to transfer from the parent to the child. Francis and Burns (1992) have found that daughter's and mother's attitudes toward clothing practices were similar and the authors attribute the similarities to consumer socialization from the mother to the daughter. The study used the results of analysis of 70 mother/daughter pairs consisting of female university students and their mothers to retain two factors for analysis, fashion involvement and shopping enjoyment. The first objective was to determine the effect of mothers as socialization agents on the apparel shopping practices and attitudes of daughters. The researchers were correct in predicting that mothers and their daughters would have similar clothing attitudes and shopping practices as no differences were found in mothers' and daughters' likelihood of shopping at used clothing stores, rummage/garage sales and department stores or of constructing garments at home. The daughters did however indicate higher levels of shopping

enjoyment and fashion involvement than did the mothers. The mothers were more likely to patronize off-price stores and specialty stores and use mail order whereas daughters patronized discount stores more often than their mothers. The similarities between the practices of the mothers' and daughters' consumer behavior are concluded to be a result of consumer socialization (Francis & Burns, 1992).

Francis' and Burns' (1992) second objective was to determine the effects of consumer socialization from the mothers to the daughters on clothing satisfaction. Results indicated that mothers in the highest fashion involvement group were least satisfied with their wardrobes compared to all other groups. Participants in the low fashion involvement group were ranked second less satisfied in their wardrobes. Thus disconfirmation can occur in both high and low fashion involvement groups. Shopping enjoyment appeared to have an affect on satisfaction of clothing wardrobes where those with lower satisfaction of wardrobe reported less shopping enjoyment than more satisfied participants. Mother and daughter pairs held similar levels of satisfaction with clothing wardrobes suggesting that clothing satisfaction is indeed a result of consumer socialization.

The findings are significant for the current study's investigation of effects of reference groups on satisfaction with fit and effects of reference groups on fashion interest. The current study takes Francis and Burns (1992) research a step further to investigate not only parental influence on satisfaction with fit and fashion involvement but peers influence over the factors as well. Although parents are not surveyed in the current research, tweens' perceived parental influence will be assessed as well as the perceived influence of peers.

A study of high school student ages 14 to 18 by Shim and Koh (1997) classified adolescents into one of three groups based on consumer decision making styles, including: Value-maximizing recreational shoppers, brand-maximizing non-utilitarian shoppers, and apathetic shoppers. Findings revealed that the three groups were exposed to different socializing agents. Value-maximizing recreational shoppers were most associated with having parents as their primary consumer socializing agents and displayed utilitarian or rational shopping behaviors. Brand-maximizing non-utilitarian shoppers mostly interacted with friends regarding consumption and were also greatly influenced by media. The group enjoyed talking with friends about apparel consumption and, therefore, the study concluded that peer and/or friends' influences can increase non-utilitarian consumer behaviors. Finally, apathetic shoppers were found to have the least amount of exposure to parents, peers, or friends as socialization agents. The results of the study indicated that little or no socialization influences lead to the apathetic shopping behaviors of the study's respondents (Shim & Koh, 1997).

Agents of Consumer Socialization: Peers

As children begin elementary school, parents must give up some of their influence over the child as consumer socialization agents to the child's peers. Influence of parents on clothing purchases, as well as use of the parent's money for the child's apparel purchases decreases with increasing age (May & Koester, 1985).

Several studies have found that peers will ultimately take over the role of socialization agents as their influence increases by each year the child attends school and will become greater than parental influence by adolescence (Koester & May, 1985; Lewis, Dyer & Moran, 1995; McNeal, 1987; Moschis & Moore, 1979). Peer influence

has been seen as early as in 5 year old children, growing through the age of 7 to 9, where peer influence becomes stronger than that of advertising, retailing and catalogs (McNeal, 1987).

Consumers accept information from peer groups on consumer products as the peer group may direct the consumers' attentions to a new style or product. Thus the peer group commences the first stage of the consumer decision-making process by directing attention to consumer products and acting as a frame of reference for the consumer (Venkatesan, 1970). Independence may be found after the peer group has directed attention to certain products by choosing among variations of the product including brand, color, and so on (Venkatesan, 1970). For children, the strong influences of peers are based in two theories, conformity and satisfaction of needs.

To gain acceptance in a peer group, children tend to conform to the norms of that group. Conspicuous consumption products such as clothing allows for greater acceptance into peer groups and further independence from the family (McNeal, 1987). The need to gain acceptance in a peer group is easier to obtain once the child "fits-in" through clothing, hairstyles, and other physical or social cues. As the child detaches him or herself from the parents, he or she becomes more involved in the peer group.

The dictates of peer influence are readily accepted by children because the peer group influence satisfies several needs for the child. The influence of peers on children is incidental rather than intentional and cannot be delineated from the influence of others, including parents, teachers, and television (McNeal, 1987).

A study by Lewis, et al. (1995) revealed that for female adolescents ages 16 to 18 friends were more influential than parents when consumer independence was gained

through an increase in discretionary income. Female students from six high schools in the southeast in grades ten, eleven and twelve were administered questionnaires designed to assess the influences of parents and peers on the adolescent's clothing purchasing practices. A four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree was used to measure parental versus peer influence for dress influences, advice given, knowing what clothes are best to buy, shopping behavior, clothing choice behavior and advice seeking (Lewis, et al., 1995). Results revealed that the adolescents preferred to dress based on advice from friends rather than based on advice from parents. However, 46 percent of the adolescents indicated that they preferred to make their own decision regarding clothing purchases. Younger adolescents shopped with parents more often than did older adolescents whereas older adolescents preferred to shop with peers.

Discretionary income may play a role in with whom the adolescent shops. A positive relationship was found between levels of discretionary income and adolescent preferences for shopping with peers. Similar findings illustrating the importance of peer influence by Forney and Forney (1995) were found in their study relating gang dress, fashionability and reference sources to influences of adolescent dress. Male and female Asian, White, Filipino, Hispanic and other ethnic group adolescents in seventh and eighth grade classes were given surveys to assess gang related influences of dress. Results demonstrated that ethnicity was associated with wearing gang dress to demonstrate belonging to a peer group. The adolescents did combine many styles including those that can be related to gangs but have been accepted into mainstream dress. Girls, who preferred to get fashion ideas from magazines, were more fashionable than boys, who preferred to make clothing decisions alone. All adolescents however did indicate that

peers were significantly influential in the adolescents' clothing decisions (Forney & Forney, 1995).

Peers do not necessarily make the child's clothing decision (Koester & May, 1985), but the influence of peers became a strong factor in the consumer behaviors of the child. However, this influence is just one of many that a child will consider upon making a consumer decision. The child's reference groups, including parents, peers, teachers, and media, give the child cues as to what behavior is appropriate for a given situation.

The current study will focus on parents and friends as the primary reference groups of tween consumers. Siblings are also considered in the survey as members of a primary consumer socialization agents, the family, however results from previous studies indicate that minimal influence from this group should be expected (Koester & May, 1985).

The review of literature suggests the influence of peers will be linked to store patronage preference, satisfaction with fit and interest in clothing and will produce distinct results compared to the relationship between parental influence and the variables. The review of literature indicates that fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit and reference groups each play a significant role in the apparel purchasing behaviors of children and adolescents. The review of literature presented in the current study served as a guide for hypotheses development and as a validation of the objectives. Links can be made between the variables tested in the current study and are applicable to the children's clothing market.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter 3 will outline and give detail to the development and description of the instrument and provide operational definitions of terms used in the research. A complete description of the sample recruitment procedures is also discussed as well as how the instrument was administered to the sample of respondents. Finally a thorough discussion of the data analysis is given. A table is given to clarify the discussion of the methods and procedures used in the study.

Development and Description of Instrument

The data for this thesis were collected using the survey method (Appendix 4). The survey for this study was built using appropriate questions adapted from related research and specific questions exclusive to this study created by the researcher. Questions were related to the participant's store format preference, reference group, satisfaction with fit of clothing and interest in fashionable clothing. The instrument also included a demographics section which asked the participant to list her age, number and age(s) of sibling(s), grade and how often they shop for clothing. The Family and Consumer Sciences statistician, the statistician's advisor, and the researcher's thesis committee reviewed the survey for face validity.

The first section of the survey asked demographics questions consisting of items related to participant's age, grade, race, total number of brothers and sisters and the sibling's age(s). The second section of the survey consisted of items used to determine

reference groups' influence (Appendix 4). These items were adapted from various studies regarding the influences of peers and family on clothing selection and purchasing behaviors (May & Koester, 1985; Lewis, et al., 1995; Forney & Forney, 1995). Satisfaction with fit was measured using adaptations of the LaBat and DeLong (1990) body cathexis and satisfaction with fit scales. Fashion Interest was evaluated in the current research by items adapted from the Personal Involvement Index (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The index has been used previously to measure female's fashion involvement and has been created to effectively measure one's involvement based upon a wide selection of products (Fairhurst, et al., 1989). Store patronage was assessed using a table adapted from a master's thesis by Lazar (2000) measuring consumer's preference of shopping locations.

The survey was one page, printed front and back, consisting of six sections and totaling 37 questions. The first section was designated for demographics, the second and third sections assessed reference groups, the fourth section assessed satisfaction with fit of clothing, the fifth section referenced interest in fashionable clothing and the sixth section asked questions regarding store patronage (Appendix 4). Also included was a question that asked participants to indicate from the following choices how often she shops for clothing: once per week, two or more times per month, once per month, once a year, or I do not shop for clothes.

Operational Definitions of Terms

“Tweens” – The current research analyzed data from girls ages 9 to 15. The participants were asked to indicate their age on the survey by writing it in a space in an open ended

question, thus only the surveys submitted by those who met the age and gender requirements were considered for analysis in the current study (Appendix 4).

Satisfaction of Fit – The current research defined satisfaction of fit as satisfaction with the general fit of given apparel products and used a satisfaction of fit of ready-to-wear clothing adapted from LaBat and DeLong (1990). The scale differs from the original scale by LaBat and DeLong in that articles of clothing have been created and are substituted for body areas in order to make the scale appropriate for use in researching children. Apparel items were listed and the participant indicated her level of satisfaction with fit of each given item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5). Nine items, as ordered in the survey, were pant length; pants, overall; T-shirts; blouses; shorts; sweaters; dresses; shirt length; and jeans were used to assess satisfaction with fit of ready-to-wear clothing (Appendix 4).

Reference Groups – Reference group was measured as the amount of perceived influence parents, friends and siblings had on apparel purchasing decisions of the participant. The participant was also given the choice to indicate herself as the main “influencer.” Participants were asked to mark the box corresponding to the reference group that best answered each of the seven questions regarding reference groups. Of the nine questions for reference groups, five questions were adapted from previous studies (May & Koester, 1985; Lewis, et al., 1995; Forney & Forney, 1995) and four questions devised by the researcher. The answer format was designed by the researcher. The respondents were asked to answer questions regarding: with whom they most often shop, who most often gives advice about purchasing apparel, whose opinion matters the most when shopping for apparel, who makes the final decision concerning apparel purchases

and whose opinion matters the most when shopping with either friends or parents. The answer format designed by the researcher consisted of a series of boxes that corresponded to each question and each question's answer selection in which the participant was to mark her response (Appendix 4).

Store Format Preference – Store format preference was assessed based on the frequency at which participants patronized each of the eight given retail settings: Mall/specialty stores, mall/department stores, shopping center stores, discount stores, downtown store locations, catalogs, Internet web sites and used clothing stores. The participants indicated how often she frequented the given store format by circling the number on the 5-point Likert scale ranging from never (1) to always (5) that best represented her response. A ninth item allowed the participant to indicate and specify “other.” The items in the store format preference section were adapted from an instrument used in the study by Lazar (2000) and included examples of each format (Appendix 4).

Interest in fashionable clothing – Fashion interest was measured using items adapted from a fashion involvement scale (Zaichkowsky, 1985; Fairhurst, et al., 1989). The participants were asked to indicate their level of interest in fashionable clothing by circling the corresponding number on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from a negative interest (1) to a positive interest (5) statement. Four items were used to assess interest in fashionable clothing (Appendix 4).

Sample

The participants, females ages 9 to 15, were recruited from Athens/Clarke county 4-H clubs and Girl Scouts in northeast and northwest Georgia. The two organizations

were chosen due to the concentrated number of potential respondents in the organizations and the accessibility of the members of the organizations. For the study's purposes, only the surveys answered by females who met the 9 to 15 age requirement were retained for analysis. Of the 950 surveys, a total of 224 surveys were returned. Of the total number of surveys returned, 206 responses were usable, thus giving a response rate of 23.6 percent. On advice from the department statistician, a sample size of 200 was targeted with the purpose of providing ample information from which reliable statistics could be calculated.

Survey Administration

The process of survey administration and attainment of proper paper work was sought and granted as required by Human Subjects Testing Board and the Clarke County School District. Three phases of survey administration were performed resulting in the distribution of a total of 950 surveys to 4-H and Girl Scout participants. The first phase of distribution failed to provide an ample number of respondents therefore the population of potential participants was expanded through a second and third administration. To ensure the anonymity of the respondents, a second mailing technique was not used.

The first administration of surveys consisted of packets that included one survey (Appendix 4), one cover letter to the parents (Appendix 5), two copies of parental consent forms (Appendix 6), two copies of assent forms (Appendix 7), and one self-addressed stamped envelope. Appendix 5 is the cover letter to the parents of the 4-H members. The cover letter introduced the study to parents and outlined the steps to be taken in order for the child to participate in the study. The letter was distributed along with a consent form, assent form, and survey to the members of the county 4-H program. Appendix 6 is

the parental consent form distributed along with cover letter, assent form and survey to the Athens' 4-H members. The consent form was to be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the researcher with the survey and assent form. The assent form distributed to the 4-H members is found in Appendix 7.

Packets were passed out during the monthly 4-H meetings to all members present. A county 4-H representative as well as an assistant and one or more teachers from each of the schools were present during the explanation and distribution of the surveys. The researcher explained to the 4-H members the purpose of the study, directions on how to complete the survey and answered any questions regarding the study and/or survey before passing out the survey packets, which were to be completed at the child's home. Explanation and distribution of the surveys took five to seven minutes and involved the sixth, seventh and eighth grade levels of Athens area middle schools with a total of 100 surveys administered. The survey was expected to take each student approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The second administration of the surveys included a mass mailing of 300 surveys to participants in the Girls Scouts program of Northeast Georgia. Labels with names and addresses were created from a roster of Cadet Scouts and affixed to envelopes containing the survey mailings. A contact person for Girl Scouts of Northeast Georgia authorized and supplied the labels used in the mailing. Packets included the Girl Scouts' cover letter (Appendix 8), researcher's cover letter (Appendix 9), survey (Appendix 4) and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The Girl Scout cover letter was provided by a Northeast Girl Scout contact person to encourage the Scouts' participation in the study. Appendix 8 consists of the cover letter provided by the Girl Scouts of Northeast Georgia that was

distributed to the Northeast and Northwest Girl Scouts. The letter accompanied the researcher's cover letter (Appendix 9), which explained the stipulations and procedures of the study and acted as a implied consent form, and a survey (Appendix 4). The Girl Scout survey mailings did not require the parental consent and participant assent forms as required by the Human Subjects Testing Board in the distribution of the 4-H survey packets. Instead, in compliance with the Human Subjects Testing Board regulations, the researcher's cover letter distributed in the Girl Scout mailings was adapted from the 4-H cover letter and indicated that parental consent and participant assent were implied if the survey was answered and returned to the researcher.

The third and final administration included 550 surveys distributed to Cadet Girl Scouts in Northwest Georgia. A contact person for Northwest Georgia Girl Scouts authorized and assisted in the distribution of surveys of the Northwest Georgia Scouts. The survey packets consisted of the same items distributed to the Northeast Georgia Cadet scouts: the Girl Scout's cover letter (Appendix 8), researcher's cover letter (Appendix 9), survey (Appendix 4) and self-addressed stamped envelope. The survey mailings were given to the contact person who distributed the survey mailings to troop leaders within the northwest Georgia region. The troop leaders distributed the survey packets to members of the Girl Scout troops during the troop's monthly meetings.

Data Analysis

Data were taken from each returned survey and entered into an Excel file. The Excel file was then imported into the Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) program for analysis. Pearson Correlation tests determined if relationships existed among the variables. Simple statistics were also generated for each individual observation and for

each variable. Using an alpha level of 0.05, p-values were analyzed to determine whether or not to reject the null hypothesis. See Table 1 for a summation of the statistics planned for use. Frequency tables for the respondents' age and grade, as well as for each variable, were generated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences' (SPSS). Each frequency table includes frequency, percent, valid percent and cumulative percent for each data set. A Cronbach alpha test was run on the fashion interest variable to ensure reliability of the measures. The Cronbach test was not an appropriate test for the other three variables.

Limitations

The following limitations were considered in the current study:

- 1) Only females were studied in the current research;
- 2) Only four variables were studied: preference of store format, satisfaction with fit, reference groups and fashion interest;
- 3) The sample of young consumers was limited to northeast and northwest Georgia;
and
- 4) The sample of young consumers was limited to members of 4-H in Athens, Georgia and/or Girl Scouts of northwest and northeast Georgia.

Table 1: Summation of the hypotheses tested by survey location, empirical support and planned statistical tests.

Hypothesis	Survey location	Empirical support	Planned Statistical analysis
There will be no relationship between the participants' fashion interest (FI) and satisfaction with fit of clothing (SF).	FI: Sec 5, Numbers 1-4 SF: Sec 4, Numbers 1-9	FI: Fairhurst, et al. (1989) Zaichkowsky (1985) SF: items created by researcher, scale adapted from LaBat and Delong (1990)	Pearson Correlation Frequency table
There will be no relationship between reference groups (RG) (parents, friends, myself and siblings) and the participants' fashion interest (FI).	RG: Sec 3, Numbers 1-7 FI: Sec 5, Numbers 1-4	RG: Forney and Forney (1995) Koester and May (1985) Lewis, et al. (1995) FI: Fairhurst, et al. (1989) Zaichkowsky (1985)	Pearson Correlation Frequency table
There will be no relationship between participants' fashion interest (FI) and store patronage (SP).	FI: Sec 5, Numbers 1-4 SP: Sec 6, Numbers 1-9	FI: Fairhurst, et al. (1989) Zaichkowsky (1985) SP: Lazar (2000)	Pearson Correlation Frequency Table
There will be no relationship between participants' store patronage (SP) and satisfaction with fit of clothing (SF).	SP: Sec 6, Numbers 1-9 SF: Sec 4, Numbers 1-9	SP: Lazar (2000) SF: items created by researcher, scale adapted from LaBat and Delong (1990)	Pearson Correlation Frequency Table
There will be no relationship between the participants' reference group (RG) (parents, friends, myself and siblings) and satisfaction with fit of clothing (SF).	RG: Sec 3, Numbers 1-7 SF: Sec 4, Numbers 1-9	RG: Forney and Forney (1995) Koester and May (1985) Lewis, et al. (1995) SF: items created by researcher, scale adapted from LaBat and Delong (1990)	Pearson Correlation Frequency Table
There will be no relationship between the participants' reference group (RG) (parents, friends, myself and siblings) and store patronage (SP).	RG: Sec 3, Numbers 1-7 SP: Sec 6, Numbers 1-9	RG: Forney and Forney (1995) Koester and May (1985) Lewis, et al. (1995) SP: Lazar (2000)	Pearson Correlation Frequency Table

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion chapter begins with a report of the data analysis process followed by a discussion of the descriptive statistics generated by the SAS program for each condensed variable, including the results of the Cronbach alpha test for fashion interest. Frequencies of each variable are also reported and discussed. Next, the results and a discussion of each hypothesis test are given. The p-value of each hypothesis test, as well as what the p-value indicates about the relationship or lack of relationship between the hypothesized variables, is reported. Finally, a comparison of the resulting theoretical framework to the proposed framework is made and discussed. Tables are provided in order to illustrate the results in a concise and clear manner.

Demographics data including age and grade were compiled and can be found in Table 2. See Appendices 10 and 11 for bar charts illustrating the demographic data. The data for each multi-item variable, fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit and reference groups, were condensed by taking the average score of all items measuring each variable. Condensed variables were then analyzed using Pearson Correlation tests. Descriptive statistics were generated by the SAS program for each of the four variables: fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit and reference groups. Tables displaying the valid percentages (excluding missing data) were generated using SPSS for each variable, excluding fashion interest. A table for fashion interest was not created

Table 2: Valid frequency table for respondents' ages and grades.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid Frequency Percent</u>
9	13	6.3%
10	15	7.3%
11	20	9.7%
12	52	25.2%
13	45	21.8%
14	36	17.5%
15	25	12.1%
<u>Total</u>	206	99.9%*
<u>Grade</u>		
3	4	2.0%
4	17	8.3%
5	12	5.9%
6	35	17.2%
7	55	27.0%
8	43	21.1%
9	35	17.2%
10	3	1.5%
<u>Total</u>	204	100.2%*

*totals may vary due to rounding.

because this variable is an average of the multiple items. Instead, the mean score and standard deviation of the variable can be found in Table 3.

Descriptive Findings

A total of 196 responses were analyzed for fashion interest. The mean score was 4.005 with a standard deviation of .955. Because the fashion interest scale went from 1 (I dislike fashion) to 5 (I like fashion) the mean score suggests that the respondents of the survey were significantly interested in clothing. The respondents in the current study exhibited a relatively high interest in fashion as measured by one's overall interest in fashionable clothing, the amount of importance one attributes to fashionable clothing, how much fashionable clothing means to the respondent and how unappealing or appealing the respondent finds fashionable clothing. The results of the Cronbach alpha test for reliability of the fashion interest items show an overall standardized alpha level of 0.880, therefore the questions measuring fashion interest had internal consistency (Table 4).

Although the respondents' scores in the current study are not compared with any other group, the findings are not surprising considering that Fairhurst et al. (1989) found that home economic students ages 18 to 20 were more involved in fashion relative to the women's specialty store customer group, ranging in age from 30 to 50. It is possible that younger consumers are awarded the luxury of having the time and means needed to be involved in fashionable clothing, therefore a higher degree of fashion interest is consistent among the groups of young consumers.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for Fashion Interest.

N	Mean	Standard Deviation
196	4.005 ^a	0.955

scale values:

a: 1 (unimportant) to 5 (important)

Table 4: Results of the Cronbach Alpha test for Fashion Interest.

Fashion Interest	Correlation with total
Overall interest in fashionable clothing, like/dislike	0.677
Clothing is unimportant/important	0.799
Clothing means nothing/a lot	0.772
Clothing is unappealing/appealing	0.715
Alpha	0.880

For store patronage 199 responses were analyzed. The mean score was 2.610 with a standard deviation of 0.524. The current research in which several store formats were frequented by each respondent, confirms Korgaonkar's (1981) study in which the respondents were found to rarely patronize only one type of store format. Mall specialty stores were almost always frequented by 55.4 percent of the respondents. Mall department stores were almost always patronized by 53.4 percent of the respondents and 61.8 percent of the respondents almost always patronized shopping center stores. Discount stores were patronized at least sometimes by 66.1 percent of the respondents (Appendix 12).

A low frequency of patronage of some format types was also found. Downtown store locations were almost never patronized by 72.8 percent of the respondents. Catalogs, Internet web sites and used clothing stores were also seldomly used. Of the respondents, 71.1 percent almost never used catalogs for apparel purchases, 85.8 percent almost never used the Internet and 93.2 percent of the respondents almost never shopped at used clothing stores (Appendix 12). Little difference between frequency percentages of specialty stores, department stores and shopping center stores for tweens in the current study were found, indicating that the respondents frequent each type of format at about the same rate. It may be possible that some stores found in malls are also found in shopping centers or the stores may offer similar formats regardless of location, thus attracting tweens with greater frequency to those store formats.

Discount stores were also often frequented possibly due to the value and trendier looks found in most discount stores. The adolescent may be interested in fashionable clothing but may not have a large amount of discretionary income to use for clothing

purchases and therefore may be drawn to the discount store which better caters to her needs. The findings are not surprising as May and Koester (1985) have previously found that adolescent shoppers most often frequent discount stores for apparel purchases. The study also found that specialty stores were also frequented by adolescents as age increased.

Since the respondents are too young to have a driver's license, the responses may be a reflection of where parents chose to bring the respondents rather than where the respondents actually wish to shop. Parents may feel more comfortable dropping their children at the mall or local shopping center for an afternoon to allow the adolescents to shop unsupervised. Thus children may shop more often in mall stores. Also, mall department stores, specialty stores, discount stores and shopping center stores offer a physical and psychological shopping experience that one does not get when using the catalog or Internet, therefore attributing to the greater patronage of the brick and mortar stores over the alternative formats. Perhaps another reason specialty stores, department stores, discount stores and shopping center stores were frequented more often than the Internet and used clothing stores is due to the greater convenience inherent to the formats (Burgess & Drake, 1995). Ample parking, easy checkout procedures, merchandise variety, fitting room facilities and easy maneuverability through the store may attract shoppers of the brick and mortar formats.

Internet apparel purchases may require a credit card or banking account to purchase goods, both of which few tweens have. Parents may be more likely to give cash to the adolescent as a means of discretionary income rather than entrusting the adolescent with a credit card for purchases.

Downtown stores do not offer the parking convenience, convenient location or price value that the mall stores, shopping center stores and discount stores offer, possibly contributing to the relatively small patronage frequency of downtown store locations (17.3%). Finally, the respondents may prefer to purchase new clothes or prefer the newer styles not found in used clothing stores, hence the low patronage frequency of used clothing stores (5.4%) (Appendix 12). The atmosphere of used clothing stores may also be a turn-off to the tweens.

A total of 182 responses were analyzed for satisfaction with fit. The mean score was 3.686 with a standard deviation of 0.681. Satisfaction with fit was measured using a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). See Table 5 for a valid frequency table for Satisfaction with Fit. Clothing can be used to bring us closer to our ideal self, however when it does not, a lack of confidence can result as deficiencies are attributed to the body rather than to the fit of clothing (Storm, 1987). Fortunately the respondents have a more than moderate satisfaction with fit of clothing (mean=3.686). A determination regarding satisfaction with fit and body satisfaction is beyond the scope of the current research, however past research has confirmed the significant link (LaBat & Delong, 1990; Feather, et al., 1996; Feather, et al., 1997).

The results of the current study are similar to MacGillivray and Wilson's (1997) study where the youngest group of adolescents, out of sixth, ninth and twelfth graders, were more satisfied with fit relative to the older adolescents. Although the respondents' ages were not compared in the current study, MacGillivray and Wilson's (1997) study provided direction for the current research by suggesting that the satisfaction of fit variable did apply to tweens.

Table 5: Valid frequency table for Satisfaction with Fit.

Respondents were asked to please circle the number that best represents how satisfied they were with the fit of clothing in these categories:

	Very Dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	Very Satisfied 5	Total*
Pant length	6.4%	12.8%	21.7%	31.5%	27.6%	100.0%
Pants, overall	5.4%	10.8%	23.5%	34.8%	25.5%	100.0%
T-shirts	2.5%	3.0%	15.8%	34.5%	44.3%	100.1%
Blouses	9.7%	10.7%	24.5%	29.6%	25.5%	100.0%
Shorts	10.8%	13.7%	22.1%	25.5%	27.9%	100.0%
Sweaters	3.0%	7.5%	21.0%	36.5%	32.0%	100.0%
Dresses	13.5%	16.0%	20.5%	28.5%	21.5%	100.0%
Skirt length	10.0%	11.9%	19.9%	33.8%	24.4%	100.0%
Jeans	4.4%	4.9%	14.8%	26.6%	49.3%	100.0%

* totals may vary due to rounding.

The majority of the respondents were most satisfied with the fit of jeans (75.9%) and pants (60.3%) and over half were also satisfied with pant length (59.1%) and the fit of shorts (53.4%) (Table 5). These findings are inconsistent with LaBat and DeLong's (1990) study where respondents in the study were least satisfied the fit of clothing to lower body sites including pant length, crotch, thigh, buttocks and hips. An explanation for the inconsistency may be due to the fact that the adolescents have not quite physically matured and therefore their bodies may better fit the apparel industry's standard measurements. Consistent with LaBat and DeLong's (1990) findings are the results of the current research in which respondents' were satisfied with the fit of upper body garments. It should be noted that t-shirts was the apparel item with which the majority of the respondents were satisfied (78.8%). It appears that the majority of the respondents are most likely to be comfortable in a t-shirt and jeans ensemble.

For reference groups, 204 responses were analyzed. Past research has revealed that children are demonstrating greater influence in family decision-making processes, specifically in single-parent households (Ahuja et al., 1998). Children in the current study have also demonstrated great independence in purchasing decisions (Table 6). The respondents indicated that their personal opinions, the myself variable, when shopping for clothes (68.8%) were the most important over those of parents (13.8%), friends (12.8%) and siblings (2.1%) (Table 6). Almost half of the respondents indicated that they make the final clothing purchase decision when shopping for clothing (48.4%). Additionally, almost half of the respondents indicated that they knew the best clothing purchases for themselves (46.9%). The majority of the respondents indicated that their

Table 6: Valid frequency table for Reference Groups.

	Parents	Friends	Myself	Siblings	Does not apply to me	Total *
Who do you most often go with when shopping for clothes?	88.2%	7.3%	1.7%	2.2%	.6%	100%
Who most often gives you advice on what clothes you should purchase?	40.6%	23.9%	26.7%	5.0%	3.9%	100.1%
Whose opinion matters most to you when you shop for clothing?	13.8%	12.8%	68.6%	2.1%	2.7%	100%
Who makes the final clothing purchase decision when you shop for clothing?	50.5%	---	48.4%	0.5%	0.5%	99.9%
Who knows what clothing purchases are best for you to make?	49.0%	2.1%	46.9%	1.0%	1.0%	100%
When shopping for clothing with your parents, whose opinion matters most to you when making clothing purchases?	25.7%	1.6%	69.6%	2.6%	.5%	100%
When shopping for clothing with your friends, whose opinion matters most to you when making clothing purchases?	1.5%	14.9%	66.0%	17.0%	0.5%	99.9%

* totals may vary due to rounding.

personal opinion mattered most to them when shopping with their parents (69.6%) or when shopping with their friends (66.0%) (Table 6).

Because the respondents were not asked to specify what type of household in which they live, the results of the current study may or may not be due to changing household patterns. It is possible that this independence may be a result of an overall greater independence demonstrated by children in not only single-parent households, but in traditional households as well. This would support Lewis et al. (1995) where 46 percent of the respondents indicated that they preferred to make their own decisions regarding clothing purchases. The results of Lewis et al.'s (1995) study reflect behaviors that are due in part to increased independence from parents as a result of the adolescent's increased discretionary income. The current study also did not ask the respondents to indicate discretionary income levels, however similar results to the Lewis, et al. (1995) study were observed. The current study's results are consistent with that of May and Koester (1985) where, like the respondents in the current study, the respondents decided on what clothes to buy without help from others at least some of the time. In Koester's (1985) study, the final clothing decisions were made by the respondents about half of the time and parents advice on what clothes to purchase was sought some of the time. Similarities in the results of the study with the current study is likely due to similarities between the data collection instruments used and between the respondent's ages.

Although the respondents seemed to be more independent in purchasing apparel, parents are found to be a significant influencer of clothing purchase decisions. Not only were parents the reference group with which the respondents most often shopped (88.2%), but parents most often gave advice about clothing purchases (40.6%), helped

make the final decision on purchases (50.5%), and were seen by the respondents as knowing the best clothing purchases appropriate for the respondent (49.0%) (Table 6).

Only 23.9 percent of the respondents indicated that friends most often gave them advice about clothing purchases and only 12.8 percent indicated that their friends' opinions matter most when shopping for clothes. When respondents shopped with their friends, only 14.9 percent indicated that their friends' opinion matter most (Table 6). In this instance, friends' opinions appear to be more important, however not as important as the respondent's personal opinion (Table 6). These results do not support the previous findings of Forney and Forney (1995) who found in their study regarding fashionability and gang related dress that friends were the only significant reference group. Differences between the results of the two studies may be a result of the absence or lower amount of gang influence on those in the current study. The greater ethnic diversity in Forney and Forney's (1995) study may also account for the differences in reference groups between the two studies. Lewis, et al. (1995) also found the peer group to be a significant influencer, even more significant than parents, of how the respondents chose to dress. Due to the findings of previous research, it is surprising that friends' opinions were not as significant as expected. The sample in Lewis, et al's (1995) study was older than the current study's sample, which may account for the differences in levels of peer influence.

The respondents in the current study may still be at an age where the parents are still the primary socialization agents and therefore do not yet look to peers for cues on how to select appropriate clothing. The respondents are either in the Concrete Operational stage or the Formal Operational stage (Kail, 1998). Adult-like rather than child-like thinking is characteristic of children in the two stages. The majority of the

respondents (86.3%) (Table 2, page 50) are Formal Operators and are more attuned to their thoughts than ever before. The adolescents place more emphasis on details as an expression of the merging self, are concerned with fitting in with peers but are also in an egotistical stage and are making evaluations of their personal strengths and weaknesses. The respondents in the study are also in a stage where they are drawn to movie stars or sports heroes and attach themselves to role models. Therefore in the respondents' current developmental stage peers may not be as influential to the tweens as they may be in later years, as has been demonstrated in the study.

Siblings' influence was minimal for all items excluding the item regarding whose opinion was most important to the respondent when she shopped with friends (Table 6). When making apparel purchase decisions, 17.0 percent of the respondents indicated that siblings' opinions mattered most when the respondent was shopping with her friends. In this instance, the frequency percent of siblings' opinions was higher than that of friends (14.9%) and parents (1.5%), but not as high as the respondent's own opinion (66.0%). Relatively few of the respondents shopped with siblings (2.2%), and only 5.0 percent of the respondents received advice from siblings regarding clothing purchases. Only 2.1 percent of the respondents indicated that siblings' opinions mattered most when they shopped for clothing, 0.5 percent indicated that siblings made the final clothing purchase decision for the respondent, 1.0 percent of the respondents felt that siblings knew what clothing purchases were best for them to make and 2.6 percent of the respondents found siblings' opinions to matter most when the respondents shopped with parents. The findings for siblings were consistent with May and Koester's (1985) findings in which

siblings were never asked by the respondents for help on making purchasing decisions and never made the final clothing purchase decisions for the respondents.

Hypotheses Tests

A Pearson Correlation analysis was used to determine if relationships existed among the four variables (Table 7). The correlation analysis, based on an alpha level of .05, determined the existence or absence of a relationship between the variables in each hypothesis:

- 1) There will be no relationship between the participant's fashion interest and satisfaction with fit of clothing.

The correlation test of the relationship between fashion interest and satisfaction with fit produced a p-value of $<.0001$ (Table 7). Because the p-value is less than .05, the null hypothesis was not accepted. The test produced sufficient evidence that a relationship does exist between fashion interest and satisfaction with fit. The results support previous findings that indicate that fashion interest does have a relationship with satisfaction with fit (Francis & Burns, 1992; Belleau, et al., 1994; Kwon, 1997).

The results of the means of the two groups, satisfaction with fit and fashion interest, indicate that the respondents in the current study had a higher rating of fashion interest than satisfaction with fit. Both fashion interest (mean= 4.005) and satisfaction with fit (3.686) were positively rated by the respondents, however the results indicate that one may rate interest in fashion higher than satisfaction with fit of clothing. Similar findings were found by Belleau, et al. (1994) that women over 50 recognized the importance of clothing, however they were dissatisfied with the types of available apparel

Table 7: Research hypotheses and corresponding results and conclusions.

Hypothesis	Correlation coefficient and Determining p-value	Conclusion
There will be no relationship between: participants' fashion interest and satisfaction with fit of clothing.	.316 <0.0001*	A positive, weak relationship exists between fashion interest and satisfaction with fit of clothing.
reference groups and the participants' fashion interest.		
a-parents	-.177 .01*	A negative, weak relationship exists between parents and the participants' fashion interest.
b-friends	.185 .008*	A positive, weak relationship exists between friends and fashion interest.
c-myself	.189 .007*	A positive, weak relationship exists between myself and fashion interest.
d-siblings	.109 .12	There is no significant relationship between siblings and fashion interest.
participants' fashion interest and store patronage.	0.192 0.008*	A positive, weak relationship exists between participants' fashion interest and store patronage.
participants' store patronage and satisfaction with fit of clothing.	0.117 0.12	There is no significant relationship between participants' store patronage and satisfaction with fit of clothing.
participants' reference group and satisfaction with fit of clothing.		
a-parents	-.077 .27	There is no significant relationship between parents and satisfaction with fit of clothing.
b-friends	-.056 .43	There is no significant relationship between friends and satisfaction with fit of clothing.
c-myself	.082 .24	There is no significant relationship between myself and satisfaction with fit of clothing.
d-siblings	.084 .23	There is no significant relationship between siblings and satisfaction with fit of clothing.
participants' reference group and store patronage.		
a-parents	-.181 .01	A negative, weak relationship exists between parents and store patronage.
b-friends	.130 .06	There is no significant relationship between friends and store patronage.
c-myself	.129 .07	There is no significant relationship between myself and store patronage.
d-siblings	.066 .35	There is no significant relationship between siblings and store patronage.

* significant at .05

and with fit of apparel. Therefore the respondent's interest in fashion was greater than their satisfaction with fit of clothing.

The results of the current study on the relationship between fashion interest and satisfaction with fit are also similar to Kwon's (1997) study from which conclusions were drawn that satisfaction with fit as predicted to have a relationship with fashion interest. In the study, social self-esteem was associated with a high level of fashion interest. Because Kwon (1997) also found that clothing was used to contribute to social self-esteem, a conclusion for the current study was drawn that fashion interest would have a relationship with satisfaction with fit.

- 2) There will be no relationship between reference groups' and the participants' fashion interest.

A total of four correlation tests were used to analyze each reference group variable, including parents, friends, myself and siblings, and fashion interest. The first test for parents and fashion interest resulted in a p-value of .01 (Table 7). Because the p-value is less than .05, the null hypothesis was not accepted. The test produced sufficient evidence that a relationship does exist between parents and fashion interest. The second test between friends and fashion interest yielded a p-value of .008 (Table 7). Again, the p-value is less than .05 and therefore the null hypothesis was not accepted. The test produced sufficient evidence that a relationship does exist between friends and fashion interest. The third test between myself, the respondents' personal opinion, and fashion interest resulted in a p-value of .007 (Table 7) and therefore the null hypothesis was not accepted. A significant relationship between the variable myself and fashion interest does exist. Finally, the test between siblings and fashion interest yielded a p-value of .12

(Table 7). Because the p-value is greater than .05, the null hypothesis was retained. The test did not produce sufficient evidence that a significant relationship existed between siblings and fashion interest. Since one of the four relationship tests was not significant, the null hypothesis was only partially rejected.

The results support previous findings (Shim & Koh, 1997; Francis & Burns, 1992) that a relationship does exist between the participants' perceptions' of reference groups and the participants' fashion interest. The results of the current study are similar to the results of Francis and Burns (1992) in which it was found that daughters' and mothers' attitudes toward clothing practices were similar, possibly due to consumer socialization from mother to daughter. Although the current study looked at friends, siblings and the respondents' independent decision as well as parents as reference groups, the results of the current study show that, as indicated by the results of Francis and Burns (1992), a relationship does exist between fashion interest and reference groups.

Shim and Koh's (1997) study also provided evidence of a relationship between reference groups and fashion interest. They determined that differing shopping behaviors are a result of primary influencers of consumer behavior patterns. From the study, a conclusion was drawn that interest in fashion may be effected by the respondent's primary consumer socialization agents. In the current study, however, a significant comparison of the high level of fashion interest (mean= 4.005) and independent decision-making (Table 6) allows one to conclude that parents, friends, and siblings had less influence on the respondents' fashion interest than the respondents' personal opinions. A higher level of fashion interest may cause the respondent to be more conscious of fashion and seek out fashion information which may in return make them more confident

shoppers, and less reliant on the opinions of others. The absence of a relationship between siblings and fashion interest is not surprising considering past research (Koester & May, 1985) and results of the current research which indicate that siblings' influence was minimal.

- 3) There will be no relationship between participants' fashion interest and store patronage.

The fashion interest and store patronage correlation test produced a p-value of 0.008 (Table 7). Since the p-value is less than .05, the null hypothesis was not accepted. The test produced sufficient evidence that a relationship does exist between the participants' fashion interest and store patronage. The findings are supported by previous research (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992, 1993) that indicated a relationship among fashion interest and store patronage. Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1992) linked shopping orientation, including elements relating to fashion interest and store patronage by showing a weak but direct relationship between the variables. Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1993) again identified a relationship between fashion interest and store patronage in their research of adult female consumers. The results of their study revealed that women with differing shopping orientations had differing consumer characteristics, including fashion interest, and market behaviors (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993). A relationship between fashion interest and store patronage in the current study was predicted from the results of the previous studies.

Because the respondents in general had a high level of fashion interest (mean= 4.005) and almost always frequented shopping center stores (61.8%), mall specialty (55.4%) and department stores (52.4%) and discount stores (47.0%), products offered in the store formats may reflect the tastes of those who are more interested in fashion or

trendy styles (Appendix 12). Shoppers who use the Internet, catalogs, downtown, or used clothing stores may have different motivations besides fashion interest for patronizing those formats.

- 4) There will be no relationship between participants' store patronage and satisfaction with fit of clothing.

The store patronage and satisfaction with fit correlation test produced a p-value of 0.12 (Table 7). Because the p-value is greater than .05, the null hypothesis was retained. The test did not produce sufficient evidence that a relationship existed between store patronage and satisfaction with fit. The findings refute previous research that has indicated a relationship between store patronage and satisfaction with fit (Shim, et al., 1991; Goldsberry, et al., 1996).

Goldsberry, et al., (1996) concluded that older women illustrated different levels of satisfaction with fit depending on the type of store format frequented. Those who purchased clothing at specialty stores or had their clothing custom made or home-sewn were most satisfied with fit of clothing with those who purchased clothing at discount stores or catalogs the least satisfied with the fit of clothing. Measurement instruments and the sample's age differences could account for the discrepancies between Goldsberry et al's (1996) study and the current research.

Shim, et al., (1991) found that men who had lower body cathexis ratings but high clothing attitude ratings had store patronage preferences and enjoyed shopping more than the participants with positive body cathexis ratings and negative clothing attitude ratings. The differences in the sex and age of the two samples could explain the lack of similarities between Shim, et al's. (1991) results and the results of the current study. Men

have traditionally had different shopping characteristics than that of women (O'Shaughnessy, 1987) therefore it is no surprise that differences in attitudes and shopping behaviors between the two groups are found. Also, different data collection techniques and instruments could have attributed to differences in the findings of the two studies.

The results of the current study may be a reflection of increasing clothing quality found in discount stores as the result of trade agreements between the U.S and developing countries that have created the opportunity for manufacturers to produce quality apparel items at lower costs. The respondents may also find little differences between the product variety and quality in frequented store formats therefore causing less differentiation in satisfaction levels between apparel products. The high levels of satisfaction with fit of clothing enjoyed by the respondents may also act to negate store discrimination due to a perceived lack of apparel quality.

- 5) There will be no relationship between the participants' reference groups and satisfaction with fit of clothing.

The four tests between each reference group variable, parents, friends, myself and siblings, each yielded p-values greater than .05 (Table 7). Therefore the null hypothesis was retained for each group. No significant relationships were found between the reference groups and satisfaction with fit. Parents and satisfaction with fit resulted in a p-value of .27 (Table 7). Friends and satisfaction with fit produced a p-value of .43 (Table 7), myself and satisfaction with fit resulted in a p-value of .24 (Table 7) and siblings and satisfaction with fit produced a p-value of .23 (Table 7). The findings refute previous

research that has indicated a relationship between perceived reference group and satisfaction with fit (Francis & Burns, 1992).

Francis and Burns (1992) found that mother and daughter pairs held similar levels of satisfaction with clothing wardrobes suggesting that clothing satisfaction is indeed a result of consumer socialization. The lack of relationships between reference groups and satisfaction with fit of clothing may be due to the lack of influence reference groups have on the respondents (Table 6). The respondents may be more confident in making apparel purchases thus promoting independent decision-making which may act to negate any relationship between reference groups and satisfaction with fit. The respondents may not trust others' opinions on clothing and therefore may not actively seek the advice or influence of others on appropriate attire. Again, the high level of satisfaction with fit demonstrated by the respondents may cause the respondents to not seek others' influence or advice regarding the appropriateness of their clothing.

6) There will be no relationship between the participants' reference groups and store patronage.

Of the four tests between the reference group variables and store patronage, three had p-values higher than .05 (Table 7), therefore only one test indicated a significant relationship. For parents and store patronage, the p-value produced was .01 (Table 7) and therefore the null was not accepted. There was sufficient evidence that a relationship exists between parents and store patronage. The correlation test between friends and store patronage produced a p-value of .06 (Table 7), which is higher than the .05 alpha level and hence the null hypothesis was retained. No significant relationship exists between friends and store patronage. For the correlation test among the variable myself

and store patronage, a p-value of .07 (Table 7) resulted. The p-value causes the null hypothesis to be retained and therefore no significant relationship between myself and store patronage was found. Finally, the correlation test between siblings and store patronage produced a p-value of .35 (Table 7), which is greater than .05 and, again, the null hypothesis was retained. The test did not produce sufficient evidence that a significant relationship exists between siblings and store patronage. The null hypothesis regarding the relationship between reference groups and store patronage was only partially retained. The results partially support previous studies regarding reference groups and store patronage (May & Koester, 1985; Francis & Burns, 1992).

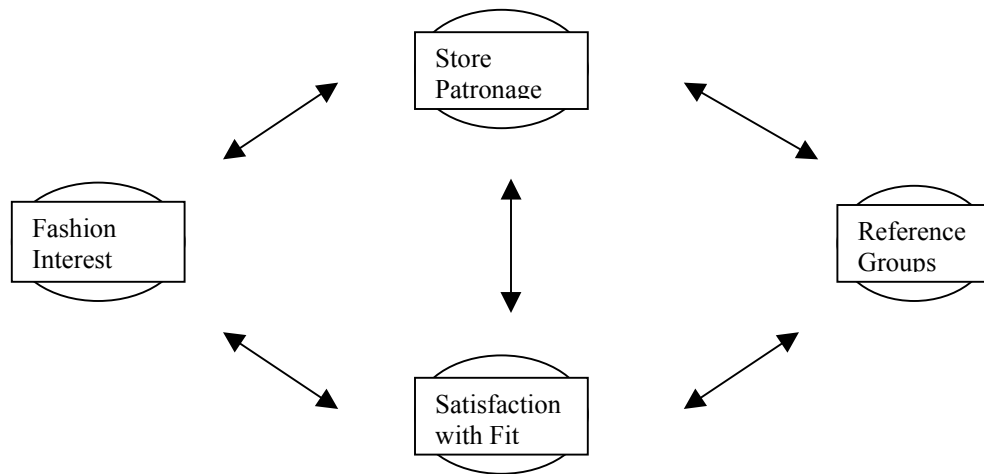
A conclusion regarding the relationship found in May and Koester's (1985) study between reference groups and store patronage was drawn by comparing the stores frequented by the age groups and source of influence of the distinct groups. May and Koester (1985) found that adolescent shoppers most often frequented department stores for apparel purchases, however specialty store patronage increased as age increased. The primary reference groups for apparel purchases also changed as the adolescent aged. However in the current study, parents is the only reference group exhibiting a relationship with store patronage. Francis and Burns (1992) found that daughter's and mother's attitudes toward clothing practices were similar, including likelihood of shopping at used clothing stores, rummage/garage sales and department stores or of constructing garments at home, due to consumer socialization from the mother to the daughter. As parents are the reference groups with which the respondents most often shop, the results of the current study are consistent as reflected by the parent reference group having the only relationship with store patronage.

Theoretical Framework

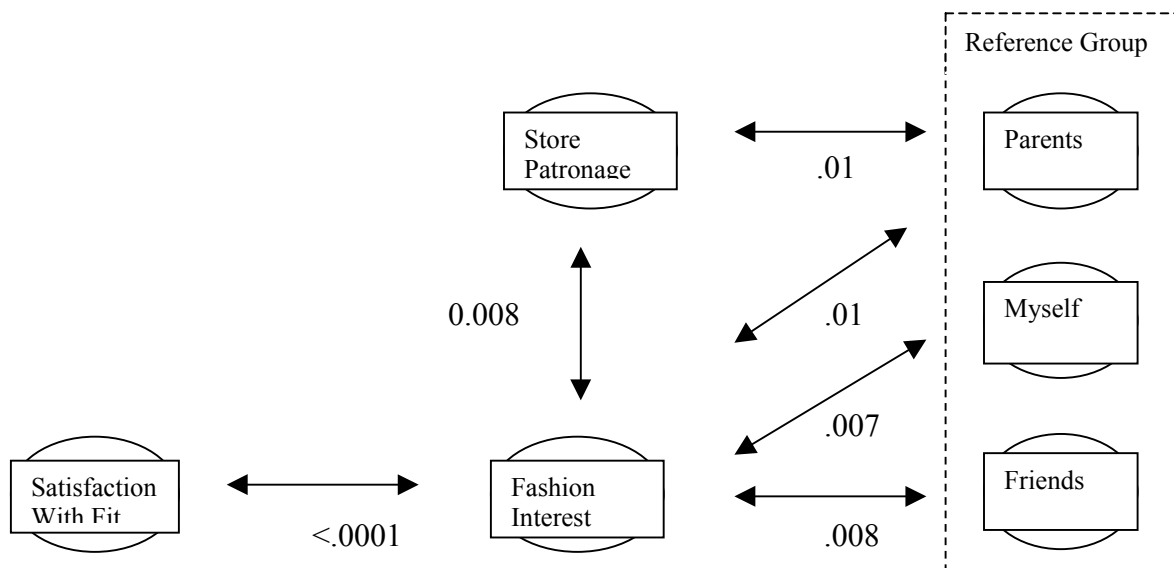
The proposed framework is a reflection of results of previous research on apparel consumer behavior as found in the review of literature. The variables in the proposed framework were arranged according to information provided in the review of literature, whereas the resulting framework illustrates results from the study's findings (Figure 2). The proposed framework predicted, from previous studies, that fashion interest would have a relationship with one's satisfaction with fit (Shim, et al., 1991; Belleau, et al., 1994; Kwon, 1997) and store patronage (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992; Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993). The framework also predicted relationships between store patronage and satisfaction with fit (Goldsberry, et al., 1996; Shim et al., 1991) and reference groups with store patronage (May & Koester, 1985; Francis & Burns, 1992) and satisfaction with fit (Francis & Burns, 1992).

Pearson Correlation analyses were used to test the hypotheses by generating a level of significance that would determine if a significant relationship existed between the variables. An alpha level of .05 with which to compare the p-values of the tested hypotheses was used in determining the presence or absence of significant relationships. As a result of the hypothesis tests, the proposed framework was modified from the original version to reflect the significant relationships determined in the analysis.

The results of the hypothesis tests failed to determine a significant relationship among store patronage and satisfaction with fit of clothing (p-value=0.12) and reference groups and satisfaction with fit of clothing (Table 7). Friends (p-value=.06), myself (.07) and siblings (.35) also failed to have significant relationships with store patronage. A comparison of the two models reveal similarities as four of the six



Proposed framework for tween girls.



Resulting framework for tween girls.

Figure 2: Comparison of proposed framework for tween girls and resulting framework for tween girls, as modified by statistical analysis.

relationships proved to be significant (Figure 2). Both frameworks indicate links between the variables tested in hypotheses 1,2,3 and 6. In both the proposed framework and the resulting framework the arrows reveal links between fashion interest with satisfaction with fit of clothing, reference groups and store patronage. Also, both frameworks reflect the predicted and confirmed relationships between the parental reference group and store patronage. The failure of satisfaction with fit to have a significant relationship with store patronage and reference groups is also reflected in the resulting framework (Figure 2). Arrows are attached to both ends of the lines in the predicted and resulting frameworks to indicate that the direction of the relationships between the variables can not be determined from the results of the hypotheses tests.

In the resulting framework, satisfaction with fit had a very significant relationship with fashion interest as indicated by the alpha level of $<.0001$. The strength of the alpha level corresponding to the relationship indicates that the relationship between satisfaction with fit and fashion interest was the most significant in the study. Not only was the alpha level for the relationship the most significant but the relationship with fashion interest is the only significant relationship for satisfaction with fit in the current study. Fashion interest demonstrated a relationship with the remaining three variables (Figure 2) and therefore is likely to be the most significant influence of apparel behaviors. It may be possible that fashion interest has a strong influence over satisfaction with fit, as fashion interest appears to be a more significant variable in the behaviors of the tween girls and satisfaction with fit appears to be a less significant variable in purchasing behaviors as reflected by the relationships found in the resulting framework. The resulting framework

illustrates how satisfaction with fit related to fashion interest, which related to the remaining two variables (Figure 2).

Upon data analysis, the data for the reference group variable was recoded into the four individual variables, parents, friends, myself and siblings, that comprised reference group. Then, correlations between each reference group variable and fashion interest, satisfaction with fit of clothing and store patronage were calculated to determine possible relationships between the variables and the individual reference groups. The resulting framework reflects the additional analysis of the reference group variable.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to take the results of the study and apply them to the field of consumer behavior. This chapter begins with a restatement of the purpose of the study. A brief discussion of the review of literature and development of theoretical framework will follow along with and a discussion of the results of the study. Finally implications for industry and parents, direction for future research and limitations of the study will be discussed.

The purpose of this study was to obtain a current picture of the fashion attitudes of tween girls, ages 9-15, by researching the presence or lack of relationships between four variables: Fashion interest, store patronage, satisfaction with fit and reference groups. The review of literature indicated that certain relationships could be predicted and that the body of knowledge lacked a concise model to assess clothing attitudes as related to the current study's variables. Therefore a framework was proposed from the review of literature, tested and modified based on hypothesis tests to illustrate what relationships exist among the variables in the current study. Frequency percentages were compiled to describe the data and Pearson correlation analyses were used to determine relationships among the variables (see Figure 2, p.73).

The results revealed that a high level of fashion interest was exhibited by the respondents and that fashion interest was also the only variable in the study to have significant relationships with each variable. The level of fashion interest illustrated by

this group indicates that they pay close attention to what they wear and are eager to learn more about clothing trends. The groups' fashion interest also implies that these information seekers are more likely to be conscious shoppers who will seek out multiple apparel and shopping experience choices.

The results of store patronage indicate that for tweens to shop at certain locations, the stores must offer an experience the patrons cannot get at other retailers. Those retailers who pay attention to the needs of the segment but offer a unique setting will be able to capture the interest of this group. The most frequented formats are those that offer convenience to the customers and therefore allow the customer to enjoy their time shopping in the store. High interest in clothing show that tweens are willing to take time to carefully select clothing and are selective in where they purchase clothing. Therefore stores should work to create atmospheres that can attract the segment and allow them to view shopping as a recreation rather than a necessity.

The majority of the respondents were satisfied with the fit of clothing (Table 5, p. 57). Of the respondents who were dissatisfied with fit of clothing, some indicated reasons why they are dissatisfied. One respondent commented "I am disappointed a little with how shorter pants are going (low rise) and how shorter shirts are going. Too much midriff." See Appendix 13 for additional comments made by the respondents in the returned surveys. Several respondents expressed discontent with some recent, less conservative styles that they found uncomfortable to wear. The greatest number of respondents were satisfied with the fit of t-shirts and jeans. The results indicate that it may be likely that t-shirts and jeans are most often worn by the tween segment, or at least they find these articles most appealing. This could be due to the comfortable attributes of

the articles and their appropriateness for school or other casual occasions or activities in which the tween is involved. The clothing is also relatively easy to care for and do not need special care attention which may allow the clothes to better fit into the tweens' lifestyles.

The respondents exhibited independent decision-making skills, however it is possible that the respondents underestimated the influence of family and peers. The questions measuring reference groups contained items regarding the direct influence of family and friends. It is possible that these groups influence tweens indirectly by introducing new ideas through example instead of telling the respondents what to buy and why. Indeed the tween is able to make up her mind regarding clothing, however family and friends can act as information sources by presenting options to the tween.

The proposed framework suggested that a relationship would exist among the participants' 1) fashion interest and satisfaction with fit, 2) reference group and fashion interest, 3) fashion interest and store patronage, 4) store patronage and satisfaction with fit of clothing, 5) reference groups and satisfaction with fit of clothing and 6) reference groups and store patronage. However the resulting framework modified from the proposed framework suggests slightly different relationships. The results of the current study reveal that out of the six hypothesized relationships, four of the variable combinations were at least partially significant whereas two of the combinations were not significant. The resulting framework reflects the current study's results, which demonstrate that the store patronage and satisfaction with fit variable set and the reference groups and satisfaction with fit variable set did not appear to have relationships

between the variables within the sets. See Figure 2, page 72, for a comparison of the proposed framework and resulting framework as modified from the proposed framework.

Implications

Implications of this study will be helpful to marketers, retailers and parents of tweens. The conclusions of the study provide insight into the tween segment that if applied, could create more satisfied customer, now and in the future as the satisfied tween market may offer higher revenues for retailers. The variables in the study, if manipulated effectively, could produce marketing strategies that will capture the interest of the potentially lucrative tween segment.

Marketers should create strategies that target the tween market and appeal to the groups' tastes. Advertisements and displays should appeal to this group's sense of independence and individual style. However, marketers must also consider that tweens are more than likely to be shopping with parents, therefore advertisements should be created that not only appeal to tweens as the target market, but that parents will find appropriate for their child. Appealing to the parent will instill a sense of brand security for this influential reference group. Because tweens also look for advice from parents, it is important to secure parental trust in a brand or store in order to reach the tweens.

Stores should portray a trendy image to appeal to the younger group combined with a wholesome image to appeal to parents. Retailers should be considerate of parents shopping with their tweens by creating a comfortable environment for the parents, as to ensure the absence of objection to patronizing the retailer. Ample seating will be appreciated by the parents who wait to review the tween's selection of clothing. Larger fitting rooms in which a parent could sit as the tween tries on clothing is also a

recommendation that will allow the parent to be involved with the tween's apparel selection. Sales clerks need to be trained in how to effectively interact with parents as well as the target market.

Retailers should take advantage of the tween markets' interest in fashionable clothing by having information sources located in stores in order to introduce new styles and promote established styles. Sales clerks need to be up-to-date with the fashion world in order to win the tweens respect which will not only allow the retailers to better meet the needs of the tween, but the tween will also come back to the store that has helpful salesclerks who are trusted fashion leaders.

Because this group is in a stage of development where they attach themselves to role models and seek personalized items, buyers should select products that will provide a sense of identity to the wearer. Sales people should also be informed on how products have been designed in order to ensure proper fit of the clothing. If the tween can be reassured that the clothes they are selecting are fashionable and fit their bodies appropriately, the tweens will be more satisfied with fit of clothing. Also, retailers should consider the clothing items with which the tweens were most satisfied. Understanding that the majority of tweens were satisfied with the fit of jeans and the fit of t-shirts should give retailers cues as to what products will sell. Promoting the product as appropriate for certain occasions may also help sales as well as build on the fashion leader image. Displays and advertisements should feature tweens wearing the clothing with which this group is most satisfied. These recommendations are made for discount stores as well as specialty stores, department stores and shopping center stores as tweens seem to favor each format.

Second to the respondents' personal opinions, parents were the most influential group to tweens and can therefore guide thoughtful consumer attitudes. Parents should be involved in the apparel purchase practices of children from an early age in order to lay the groundwork for the child's future consumption patterns. As the first and primary socialization agents (McNeal, 1987), parents should also exhibit thoughtful consumer behaviors in order to set an example to the future consumer. This influential group should be involved in presenting tweens with approved fashion information and should filter any messages they feel are not important to their child. Parents should also freely give opinions on the appropriateness of dress and fit and set clear guidelines as to what clothing is acceptable. Finally, parents are urged to choose appropriate shopping formats for the tween, but allow the tween some degree of authority in decision-making in order to allow freedom to explore all options.

Limitations

A limitation of the study is the weak relationship among the hypothesized relationships. Further research should replicate the study or adapt the study on a larger sample in order to determine the strength of the relationships. Another limitation of the study is the homogeneity of the sample. Because the respondents were members of 4-H and Girl Scouts, relatively conservative behaviors may be represented. Finally the majority of the respondents (86.3%) (Table 2, page 50) were ages 11 to 15, leaving younger tweens underrepresented.

Future Research

Future research should take in consideration the results of the current study and apply them to assess a relationship between attitudes and behavior. Future research

should also be conducted which measures the role media plays in tweens' apparel consumption behaviors.

Today children's apparel that mimics adult clothing styles reflect the greater maturity children have demonstrated in recent years. Promotion of female sexuality in the media is becoming more accepted and increasingly used by companies to sell products. Young girls are exposed to images of female sexuality in merchandise targeted to their market segment. How young girls interpret these signals and incorporate them into their daily lives and self-concepts have ramifications in apparel as reflected by the trend for mature clothing. It is important for both parents and marketers to understand the influencers and behaviors of the tween segment. Parents should be informed as to where adolescents are learning values as reflected by clothing preferences. For marketers, greater insight into the segment can lead to applying a more effective marketing mix to better attract the segment.

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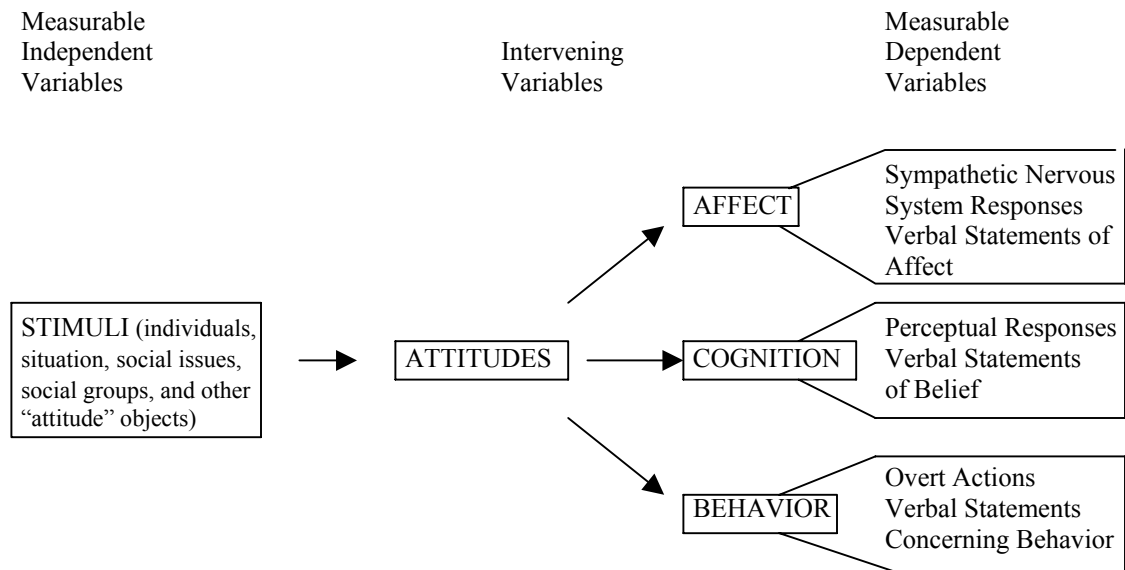
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Piaget's four stages of cognitive development.

Stage of Development	Age Range
Sensorimotor Stage	Infancy (0 to 2 years)
Preoperational Stage	Preschool and early elementary school years (2 to 6 years)
Concrete Operational Stage	Middle and late elementary school years (7 to 11 years)
Formal Operational Stage	Adolescence and adulthood (11 years and older)

(Source: Kail, 1998)

Appendix 2: A schematic conception of attitudes.



(Source: Zaltman & Burger, 1975, p. 206)

Appendix 3: The information-processing model of consumer socialization.

Independent Variables	Child's Information Processing		
Cognitive Development	<i>Initial processing</i>	<i>Central Processing</i>	<i>Behaviors</i>
Family Context			
• Parent's own consumer behavior	Information search	Interpretation and comprehension	Money use
• Parent-Child Interaction	Attention	Structuring of information evaluation	Spending
• Children's independent consumer opportunities	Information selection	Use of information	Saving
Television Advertising			Purchase requests

(Source: Ward, et al., 1977, p. 29)

Appendix 4: Survey distributed to sample.

Section 1: Demographics

Please give the following information about you:

Age _____ Race _____ Total # of brothers _____ Total # of sisters _____
 Grade _____ Age _____ Age _____ Age _____
 Age _____ Age _____

1) About how often do you shop for clothing?
 Once per week for clothes 2 or more times per month Once per month Once a year I do not shop

Section 2: Reference Groups

1) How much do the opinions of your family matter to you when you are making a decision to buy apparel?
 not at all 1 2 3 4 5 very much

2) How much do the opinions of your friends' matter to you when you are making a decision to buy apparel?
 not at all 1 2 3 4 5 very much

Section 3: Reference Groups

Please tell me who influences your apparel purchases most by marking the box that best answers the questions below. If none of the given answer choices apply to you, mark the box "Does not apply to me."

	Parents	Friends	Myself	Siblings	Does not apply to me
1) Who do you most often go with when shopping for clothes?					
2) Who most often gives you advice on what clothes you should purchase?					
3) Whose opinion matters most to you when you shop for clothing?					
4) Who makes the final clothing purchase decision when you shop for clothing?					
5) Who knows what clothing purchases are best for you to make?					
6) When shopping for clothing with your parents, whose opinion matters most to you when making clothing purchases?					
7) When shopping for clothing with your friends, whose opinion matters most to you when making clothing purchases?					

Section 4: Satisfaction with Fit of Ready-to-Wear

Please circle the number that best represents how satisfied are you with the fit of clothing in these categories:

		Very Dissatisfied				Very Satisfied
1)	Pant length	1	2	3	4	5
2)	Pants, overall	1	2	3	4	5
3)	T-Shirts	1	2	3	4	5
4)	Blouses	1	2	3	4	5
5)	Shorts	1	2	3	4	5
6)	Sweaters	1	2	3	4	5
7)	Dresses	1	2	3	4	5
8)	Skirt Length	1	2	3	4	5
9)	Jeans	1	2	3	4	5

Section 5: Interest in Fashionable Clothing

1) Overall, what is your interest in fashionable clothing?

	1	2	3	4	5	
I dislike fashion						I like fashion

Please circle the number that best describes your interest in clothing. Clothing is:

2)	Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	Important
3)	Means nothing	1	2	3	4	5	Means a lot
4)	Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	Appealing

Section 6: Store Patronage

Indicate how much you shop at each of the following types of stores by circling the number that best represents your response. For example if you never shop at mall/specialty stores you would circle number 1.

	Never					Always
1) Mall/Specialty stores (For example: GAP, G&G, GAP Kids, Lerner New York, Body Shop, Express, American Eagle Outfitters, The Limited, Gadzooks, Pacific Sunwear, and so on...)	1	2	3	4	5	
2) Mall/Department stores (For example: J.C.Penny, Belk, Sears, Rich's, Macy's, and so on...)	1	2	3	4	5	
3) Shopping Center stores (For example: Old Navy, T.J. Maxx, Cato, Goody's, and so on...)	1	2	3	4	5	
4) Discount stores (For example: Target, Wal-Mart, K mart, Manufacturer outlets, and so on...)	1	2	3	4	5	
5) Downtown store locations (For example: Junkman's Daughter's Brother, Kum's Fashions, Heery's Clothes Closet, Lotus Eaters, Masada Leather and Outdoor, McColly's, and so on...)	1	2	3	4	5	

- | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| 6) Catalogs
(For example: Land's End, L.L. Bean, Delias, Alloy,
and so on...) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7) Internet web sites
(For example: Delias.com, Alloy.com, Target.com,
and so on...) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8) Used Clothing Stores
(For example: Salvation Army,
The Potter's House, Panda, and so on...) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9) Other, please specify: | <hr/> <hr/> | | | | |

Thank you for your participation in the study!

Please give any comments you may have:

Appendix 5: Cover letter to the parents of 4-H members.

Dear Parents,

“Tweens”, adolescents between the ages of 9 and 15, have become an active and viable segment in the apparel market. Although the tween age group has recently attracted a lot of attention from marketers, research of the tween market has yet to give a full picture of the demands of the growing consumer group. To better inform marketers on the demands of the group, your child, along with other selected students, is being asked to participate in a University of Georgia research project which will give marketers a better idea of the kinds of clothes adolescents want to buy and wear. I urgently need your help to make the results of this research as complete as possible. Your child, as a member of the Athens 4-H program, has been asked to complete a survey for the research project “*A Survey of Young Boys’ and Girls’ Fashion Attitudes: Satisfaction of Fit, Store Patronage, and Reference Groups*”. The survey will ask your child questions regarding who he or she prefers to shop with, what stores he or she shops at, whether or not he or she is satisfied with the fit of ready-to-wear clothing, and finally what is his or her overall interest in fashionable clothing. There are no foreseeable risks to your child as a result of participating in the survey and your child will be able to stop taking the survey if for any reason he or she feels the need to do so. The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

Please review and sign the enclosed parental consent form and mail it to the researcher along with the assent letter, signed by your child, and completed survey using the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please feel free to ask me, the researcher, any questions you may have about the study. I hope that in completing the questionnaire, your child will learn something about his or her feelings regarding clothing and I thank you for allowing your child to participate in the study.

If you have any further questions regarding the study, you may call me at (706) 542-4888.

Sincerely,

Erin Drake
Graduate Student

Dr. Brigitte Burgess
Assistant Professor

Appendix 6: Parental consent form distributed to members of the 4-H program.

Parental Consent Form for “Survey of Young Boys’ and Girls’ Fashion Attitudes: Satisfaction of Fit, Store Patronage, and Reference Groups”

I agree to allow my child _____ to take part in the study titled, “Survey of Young Boys’ and Girls’ Fashion Attitudes: Satisfaction with Fit, Store Patronage, and Reference Groups”, which is being conducted by Ms. Erin Drake, from the Family and Consumer Sciences Department at UGA (542-4888). I do not have to allow my child to be in this study if I do not want to. My child can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have the information related to my child returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed at any time.

- The reason for this study is to obtain a current picture of the fashion attitudes of young boys and girls.
- Children who take part in the study may improve their perception of fashion and the components that lead to purchase decisions. Ms. Drake also hopes to obtain information for marketers and apparel manufacturers will use to better serve the children’s apparel market.
- If I allow my child to take part, my child will be asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding his or her feelings and behaviors towards apparel purchasing and have his or her responses mailed to the researcher using the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope.
- The research is not expected to cause any harm or discomfort. My child can quit at any time. My child’s participation in the 4-H program will not be effected if my child decides to not take part in the study.
- Any information collected about my child will be held confidential unless otherwise required by law. My child’s identity will not be associated with the survey.
- Ms. Drake will answer any questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at (706) 542-4888. You may also contact the professor supervising the research, Dr. Brigitte Burgess, Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors Department, at 542-4888.
- I understand the study procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to allow my child to take part in this study. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Signature of Researcher Date

Signature of Parent or Guardian Date

Questions or problems regarding your child’s rights as a participant should be addressed to the Human Subjects Office, Institutional Review Board, Office of the Vice President for Research, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-6514; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

Appendix 7: Assent form distributed to members of the 4-H program.

Assent Form

I _____ agree to take part in a study about fashion attitudes.

I do not have to be in this study if I do not want to be. I have the right to leave the study at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty.

I will take a survey consisting of four sections of questions regarding my interest in fashionable clothing, my store patronage, my satisfaction of fit with ready-to-wear, and the influencers of my clothing decisions. Completion of the survey should take approximately 15 minutes. This study will give the researcher greater insight into the factors affecting apparel purchases of young girls. Completion of the survey may allow me greater insight into my attitudes towards clothing and purchasing decisions.

I will not receive any compensation upon completion of the survey.

If some of the questions cause me to be uncomfortable, I may skip any question that I do not wish to answer.

My answers will be kept confidential. This means that the researcher will not use my name and my responses will not be shared with anyone else.

If I have any questions about the research I can call the researcher and she will answer all the questions I have. The researcher is Erin Drake. Her phone number is (706) 542-4888.

I will sign both copies of this form. I will keep one for myself and I will return the other to the researcher.

Signature of Participant Date

Signature of Researcher Date

If you have any problems with this research or if you have any questions about your rights, feel free to call Dr. Christina A. Joseph in the Human Subjects Office at (706) 542-3199.

Appendix 8: Cover letter provided by the Girl Scouts of Northeast Georgia.



Girl Scouts of Northeast Georgia
185 Newton Bridge Rd
Athens, Georgia 30607
(706) 548-7297
FAX (706) 548-7310
gscouts@negra.net

Girl Scouts of Northeast Georgia
1276 Jesse Jewell Parkway #11
Gainesville, Georgia 30501
(770) 536-8656
FAX (770) 532-8775
neggsc@mindspring.com

Serving Girls
In the
Following
Counties:
Banks
Barrow
Clarke
Dawson
Elbert
Forsyth
Franklin
Greene
Hartsham
Hall
Hart
Jackson
Lumpkin
Madison
Morgan
Oconee
Oglethorpe
Rabun
Stephens
Taliaferro
Towns
Union
Walton
White
Wilkes

January 24, 2002

Dear Girl Scout Parent/Guardian,

A female student, Erin Drake, at the University of Georgia needs our help to complete her Master's thesis. I think Erin's survey will not only help her complete her degree requirements but will be of value to our council since the results will be shared with us. The results will help the Girl Scout staff know better how to serve you and our girls.

Although completing the survey is not required, I hope you will do so. If you have questions, please contact me or Mary Hurst at the Athens Service Center.

Sincerely,

Cheryl K. Legette
Executive Director

Appendix 9: Researcher's cover letter distributed to Northeast and Northwest Georgia

Girl Scouts.

Dear Parents,

“Tweens”, adolescents between the ages of 9 and 15, have become an active and viable segment in the apparel market. Although the tween age group has recently attracted a lot of attention from marketers, research of the tween market has yet to give a full picture of the demands of the growing consumer group. To better inform marketers on the demands of the group, your child, along with other selected students, is being asked to participate in a University of Georgia research project which will give marketers a better idea of the kinds of clothes adolescents want to buy and wear. I urgently need your help to make the results of this research as complete as possible. Your child, as a member of the Girl Scouts program, has been asked to complete a survey for the research project “*A Survey of Young Girls' Fashion Attitudes: Reference Groups, Satisfaction of Fit, Fashion Interest and Store Patronage*”. The survey will ask your child questions regarding who she prefers to shop with, whether or not she is satisfied with the fit of ready-to-wear clothing, her overall interest in fashionable clothing, and finally at what stores she shops. There are no foreseeable risks to your child as a result of participating in the survey. Because your child will not be asked to put her name on the survey, there will be no way to connect your child's response with her identity. Participation in the study is voluntary and your child will be able to stop taking the survey if for any reason she feels the need to do so. Finally, your child's participation in the Girl Scout's program will not be effected if she decides to not take part in the study. The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

Please return the completed survey using the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope. Return of the survey to the researcher implies consent for your child's participation in the study. Please feel free to ask me, the researcher, any questions you may have about the study. I hope that in completing the questionnaire, your child will learn something about her feelings regarding clothing and that the survey will facilitate discussion among parents and child regarding consumer behavior. I thank you for allowing your child to participate in the study.

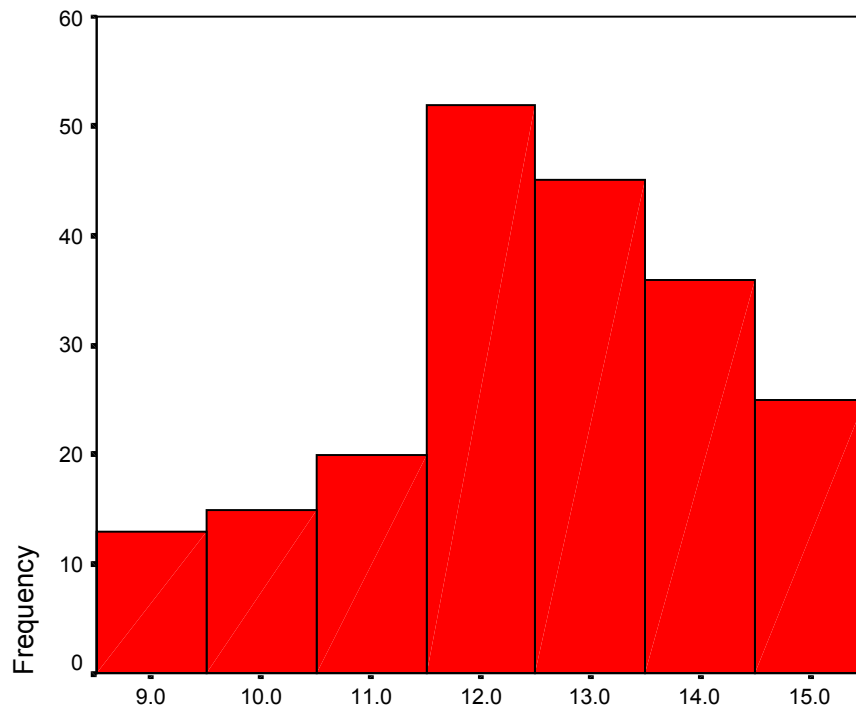
If you have any further questions regarding the study, you may call me at (706) 542-4888, or write to 321 Dawson Hall Athens, GA 30605.

Sincerely,

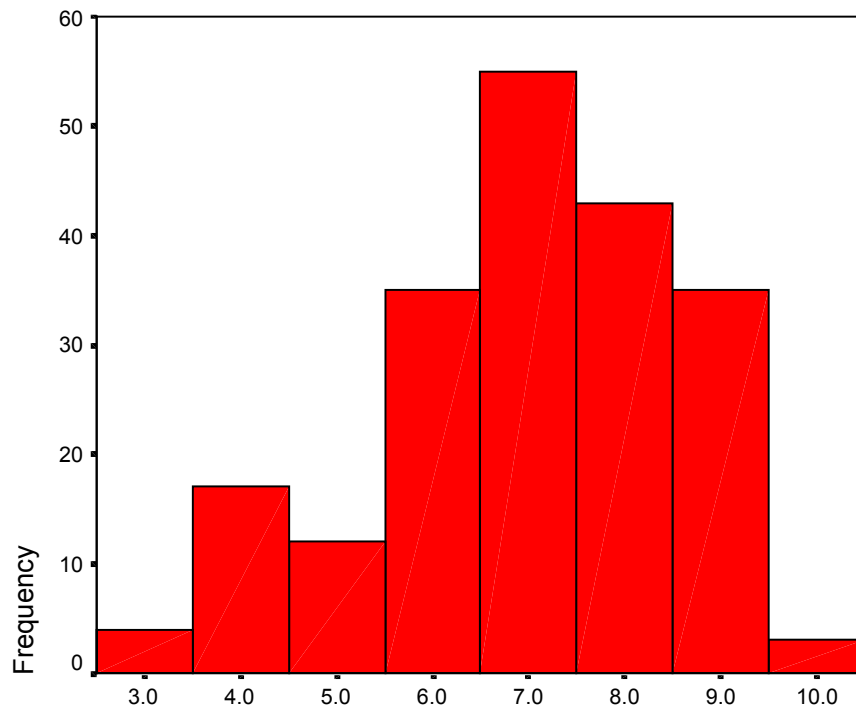
Erin Drake
Graduate Student

Dr. Brigitte Burgess
Assistant Professor

Appendix 10: Age frequency of respondents.



Appendix 11: Grade frequency of respondents.



Appendix 12: Valid frequency table for Store Patronage.

Respondents were asked to indicate how much they shopped at each of the following types of stores by circling the number that best represented their response.

	Never 1	2	3	4	Always 5	Total*
Mall/Specialty stores (For example: GAP, G&G, GAP Kids, Lerner New York, Body Shop, Express, American Eagle Outfitters, The Limited, Gadzooks, and Pacific Sunwear)	5.9%	11.8%	27.0%	27.5%	27.9%	100.1%
Mall/Department Stores (For example: J.C.Penny, Belk, Sears, Rich's, and Macy's)	5.4%	18.1%	23.0%	30.9%	22.5%	99.9%
Shopping center stores (For example: Old Navy, T.J. Maxx, Cato and Goody's)	3.9%	13.2%	21.1%	31.4%	30.4%	100.0%
Discount stores (For example: Target, Wal-Mart, K mart and Manufacturer outlets)	13.7%	20.1%	19.1%	18.6%	28.4%	99.9%
Downtown store locations (For example: Junkman's Daughter's Brother, Kum's Fashions, Heery's Clothes Closet, Lotus Eaters, Masada Leather and Outdoor and McColly's)	55.0%	17.8%	9.9%	9.9%	7.4%	100.0%
Catalogs (For example: Land's End, L.L. Bean, Delias and Alloy)	51.0%	20.1%	14.2%	9.8%	4.9%	100.0%
Internet web sites (For example: Delias.com, Alloy.com and Target.com)	78.4%	7.4%	6.9%	4.9%	2.5%	100.1%
Used clothing stores (For example: Salvation Army, The Potter's House and Panda)	80.9%	12.3%	1.5%	2.5%	2.9%	100.1%

*totals may vary due to rounding.

Appendix 13: Open-ended comments given by the respondents on the returned surveys.

Comments are numbered according to the order in which the survey was received, age of respondent is in parenthesis.

01- “Wal-Mart is the best store for clothes. Old Navy is second.” (15)

05- “Parent comment-

Now that my daughter is 14—the “tween” styles suit her, but when she was 9—the styles were too “grownup” for her. Shopping was very frustrating!”

37- “I am disappointed a little with how shorter pants are going (low-rise) and how shorter shirts are going. Too much midriff!!” (14)

42- “GAP is my favorite store!!!!!!” (15)

65- “I want my parents to like it, but I also want to like the clothes (equal)”, “My friends opinions and my opinion matter. They are about equal!”, “I like clothes, but it is not my first priority! I usually don’t care what people think, as long as I like it, but I do want my friends opinion!!!(sometimes)” (14)

68- “If I didn’t have to wear clothing I wouldn’t but since I do might as well be the best and at least half way fashionable.” (15)

82- “girls size 8-16 jeans need to be slimmer and longer to accommodate the thinner population!” (14)

88- “Clothes are hard to shop for because I am short and have to wear petites. This makes shopping in thrift stores better because I have a wider selection.” (15)

99- “I normally like the length of the pants, but I need a smaller waist size. Ex:@ [sic] Old Navy, I wear a size 12, but need a size 11 (nonexistant) [sic].” (14)

- 110- “I like old clothes so I wear my moms and my Aunts old hammidowns [sic]. I like comfortable clothes that aren’t like everyone else’s but if I see someone wearing something I like I’ll get it cause I want to not cause that persons wearing it.” (12)
- 137- “I have long legs, but am skinny so I can never find right pants.” (15)
- 139- pants, T-shirts: “too tight, too short” Dresses, skirt length: “Too ‘slut’ to grown up- not fun.” (10)
- 141- Dresses: “to low cut” “I like modest clothing. I don’t care about what my peers think as long as my parents and I are happy.” (12)
- 161- “Now a days when you go out shopping clothing is geared to the smaller teens (size 0-3). Those of us who don’t fit this groups (we are size 16-20) have to shop in the womens[sic] (old ladies) department. Also a lot of the styles conflict with dress code rules.” (14)
- 162- “Most clothing today is centered around those who are a size “0”. When you are a size “16-18” there seems to be very little appealing clothing. Much of the styles are made to be appealing to teen’s that are a size 0. Not everyone likes wearing short shorts or hip huggers or halter tops.” (14)
- 204- “I like to look nice now and then but most of the time I’m not big on fashion.” (12)
- 205- (clothing importance) “It helps give a good first impression”. “Clothes are important[sic], they can keep you warm, cool, make a first impression, ect[sic]. But, they aren’t that important, and yet they couldn’t be live without.” (10)
- 221- “ I think that shorts and shirts shouldn’t be so short.” (12)