

EXPLORING APPAREL RELATIONSHIPS AND BODY IMAGE OF TWEEN GIRLS  
AND THEIR MOTHERS THROUGH QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF  
SEGMENTED FOCUS GROUPS

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SEGMENTED FOCUS GROUPS

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EXPLORING APPAREL RELATIONSHIPS AND BODY IMAGE OF TWEEN GIRLS  
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## VITA

Mary Katherine Brock, daughter of Dr. Don and Mary Brock, was born October 1, 1980, in Augusta, Georgia. She graduated from Dutch Fork High School as Valedictorian in 1999. She attended Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina from 1999 to 2003. She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry and a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Visual Arts in May, 2003. After working as a defense contractor in Washington, D.C., she entered Graduate School at Auburn University in January, 2005.

THESIS ABSTRACT

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Tweens are individuals who are no longer a children, but are not quite teenagers. This study defines tweens as girls between the ages of 9 and 14 years. The U.S. female tween population is estimated to be 10.4 million (U. S. Census Bureau, 2006), and total tween spending power is said to be more than \$221 billion annually (de Mesa, 2005). During their tween years, most girls go through puberty and their bodies change at a rapid pace. Like adults, increasing numbers of this group are now characterized as overweight or obese (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 1999). Thus, given this period of rapid change, compounded by problems with obesity, it was theorized that there are many subgroups, particularly related to age and size, that affect these consumers' apparel

relationships and body image.

Though tweens are identified by researchers as a consumer demographic, their intrinsic nature and individual apparel needs have only been studied in a few, limited academic contexts. As the trend towards obesity trickles into the youth generations (CDC, 1999; Torgan, 2002), there are many far-reaching implications for the plus size tween. General problems observed in the apparel marketplace are lack of selection in clothing choices for plus size shoppers and lack of age appropriate garments in the market for larger, but younger plus size consumers.

The purpose of this research was to characterize subgroups based on age and size of female tween consumers. This was done within the context of niche markets in the apparel industry. Mothers were included in this study in order to understand how mother/daughter relationships affect the tweens' apparel relationships and body image.

This exploratory study of tween girls and their mothers used content analysis of segmented focus groups to understand the apparel relationships and body image of tween girls. It is through this qualitative approach that the researcher was able to probe the nuances that exist between subgroups based on the age (younger and older) and size (normal and plus size) of tween girls. The results found through an emergent theme methodology, showed that tween girls have complex apparel relationships and are sensitive about the size of their bodies. Subjects in all groups indicated that they were unable to find clothing that was stylish, age appropriate, and fit their bodies. These identified gaps show the potential for niche markets within the tween consumer group and established a conceptual framework for further research.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background and Setting

The term tween recently emerged in academic literature to describe a consumer group that is no longer a child, but not quite a teenager. In the context of this study, the term tween, which references the subteen or preteen demographic, is defined as girls aged 9-14. It is important to note this distinction because in literature and popular culture, this term often refers to both boys and girls ranging from 7 or 8 to 13 or 14 years old (Cook & Kaiser, 2004). The term sometimes refers to children as young as 6 years or youths as old as 16 years (Cook & Kaiser, 2004).

This group is important to study not only because it is a large consumer segment, but also because tweens have tremendous buying power. The U.S. Census Bureau (2006) reports that there are an estimated 10.3 million female girls aged 10-14 in the United States, and according to trend forecaster Lettieri, there are “2.7 million tweens who spend more than \$14 billion annually on clothing” (Neider & Figueroa, 2001). De Mesa notes that this spending power comes in two ways: money from gifts and influence over spending decisions (2005). Allowances, birthday money, and generous grandparents account for personal disposable income among tweens, and tweens influence family spending decisions in subtle and direct ways on a daily basis (Paterson, 2003). Through these combined resources, total tween spending power is estimated by 360.com to be approximately \$221 billion annually (de Mesa, 2005). These tweens are concerned with

not only conspicuous consumption but also with self-expression (Gibbs, 2005), and for tweens, apparel is a major avenue of this articulation (Argyle, 1988).

Current literature does little to address this consumer group with respect to their specific interactions with clothing. If apparel manufacturers are to capitalize on this niche market, they must intrinsically grasp tween psyche and purchase decisions. Because of the broad range of ages (9-14) and sizes (normal and plus size) represented in this group, it is deemed wise to segment tweens into subgroups in order to characterize them as consumers of apparel. By exploring issues facing subgroups of tween consumers (younger and older, normal and plus size), this study discovered some of the implications of age and body size, as defined by weight, on the consumption of apparel by this group.

#### Current Situation

Many studies have documented the rise in American obesity as well as its trickle into younger generations (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 1999; National Institutes of Health (NIH), 2004; World Health Organization (WHO), 2006). Popular culture has commented on it with newspaper and magazine articles, books, and films. These commentaries carry titles such as, “Study: Obesity in kids to increase sharply” (Kirka, 2006), “Why are we so fat?” (Newman, 2004), and “Super Size Me: A Film of Epic Portions” (Spurlock, 2003). These sources not only speak to the growing girth of waistlines in America, but also to the marketing ploys that led them there. Now is the first time in recorded history that there are as many overnourished as undernourished people in the world (Newman, 2004). With this trend comes the consequences of youth obesity. Today’s youth represent the first generation whose life expectancy will be less than that of their parents (Kirka, 2006). With this in mind, politicians, governments, retailers,

marketers, researchers, and physicians alike are grappling with how to deal with this epidemic. Nonetheless, few researchers have explored the implications of added weight on children and adolescents. Even more rare are studies of obese consumers, much less tweens, through the lens of apparel.

This study described apparel relationships through exploratory research of tween girls and their mothers. Younger and older, normal and plus size girls and their mothers participated in focus groups. It was a goal of this research to analyze the dialogue from these groups in a manner that would enable the researcher to understand the apparel relationships of this consumer segment. By understanding both age and size subgroups, it was theorized that some of the previously unidentified discrepancies between both the younger and older and the normal and plus size consumer could be identified.

The mothers were included because, as stated before, parents and other influential adults are a major source of income for this consumer group (Forney & Forney, 1995; Gibbs, 2005; Hardt & Craig, 2005). An example of the type of insight tween mothers can offer is found in this quote from Janis Prado, mother of a plus size 10-year old daughter. Ms. Prado said that, “a lack of [sizing] variety in children’s departments often forced her to shop in junior departments—even though the clothing costs more and she considers the styles too mature” (Canedy, 1997). The collection and understanding of statements such as this will enable researchers to begin understanding the apparel needs and preferences of the subgroups of tween consumers because trend analysis shows that tweens acquire a majority of their spending power from their parents.

## Implications of the Obesity Epidemic on Youth and Apparel

As stated earlier, the obesity epidemic identified by the CDC (1999), NIH (2004), and WHO (2006) is a problem that now plagues a large portion of the United States and is spreading to other parts of the world (Newman, 2004). The WHO (2006) projects that globally, there are over 1 billion overweight adults, 300 million of whom are obese. In America, an estimated one-third of the adult population is obese (Freudenheim, 2005) and current youth generations are quickly following this trend (Kirka, 2006; NIH, 2004). In the context of apparel, designers, retailers, and manufacturers are grappling with how to provide clothing for overweight and obese consumers. Questions arise such as: What are the apparel expectations of this plus size population? What styles and types of clothing do they expect to find in the marketplace? How much are they willing to pay for these garments which require higher costs in materials than their smaller-sized counterparts? And, where do these plus size consumers expect to go in order to find this clothing? As this epidemic spreads into younger generations, these same questions emerge.

Some retailers such as Old Navy are already addressing this by placing plus size garments in a new section of their store, as well as adding a “Women’s Plus Size” section to their website (2006). JC Penney is another retailer that is directing marketing and products toward the plus size market (2006). Also, the retailer Hot Topic addressed these issues by launching an entirely new retail outlet, Torrid, which targets plus size juniors (James, 2001). However, none of these retailers are geared specifically toward plus size tweens who are no longer children, yet not quite juniors. Even mega-retailers such as Wal-mart and Target have struggled in meeting the apparel needs of the plus size tween



consumer (Kang, 2004). In discovering the apparel needs and desires of this underserved market, it is important to understand the many facets of tweens, including the needs of both normal and plus size tweens.

Implications of providing apparel for the subgroups of tween consumers may reach much further than just providing stylish clothing for a specific consumer. Understanding the unique needs of plus-sized tween consumers may help some obese individuals overcome issues associated with obesity such as decreased social interactions—known as social deprivation (Kelley, Daigle, LaFleur, & Wilson, 1974)—and low-self esteem (CDC, 2006a). Kelley et al. (1974) attributed social deprivation of 8<sup>th</sup> grade males and females to an inability to purchase (due to economic factors) clothing that allowed them to conform to their desired peer groups. These same issues may apply to obese consumers because like the economically deprived group, this consumer segment is size deprived. This concept of social deprivation has not been studied with respect to obesity.

#### Gaps in Current Research

Due to the sensitive nature of younger consumers, it is of no surprise that there is a lack of data concerning this segment of the American population. There are intensive, apparel-based surveys of the American population such as the recent Size U.S.A. project by Textile/Clothing Technology Corporation ([TC]<sup>2</sup>), in which 10,800 Americans completed surveys and allowed themselves to be scanned using a [TC]<sup>2</sup> body scanner (Lovejoy, 2005). However, these projects generally do not include participants younger than 18. Studies such as Shim and Bickel (1994) did not include participants under the age of 16. Moreover, it is important to note that none of these studies specifically

addressed plus size consumers. One could list example after example of apparel-related studies about American female consumers, which only consider females above the age of 18. However, it would be more time efficient to utilize the studies of older consumers and the contextual frameworks of those studies to begin modeling tween behaviors and thus fill in the gaps in current knowledge.

#### Statement of the Problem

Though tweens have been identified as a group of consumers, their intrinsic nature and individual apparel needs have only been studied in a few, limited academic contexts. In addition, tweens identified within subgroups of age and size may have different apparel needs and desires than those expressed when researchers, marketers, designers, and manufacturers address them as a whole. As the trend towards obesity trickles into the youth generations (CDC, 1999; Torgan, 2002), there are many far-reaching implications for the plus size tween. General problems observed in the apparel marketplace are lack of selection in clothing choices for plus size shoppers and lack of age appropriate garments in the market for larger, but younger plus size consumers. These two main problems can be observed simply by walking in any shopping mall in America. Popular tween and teen stores such as Wet Seal, Abercrombie & Fitch, and The Limited cater to smaller sized females and have very limited (if any) offerings for plus size tweens and teens. Larger consumers are generally confined to specialty stores such as Lane Bryant, which caters to plus size middle-aged women. Old Navy is one of a handful of exceptions of teen stores that cater to both the normal and plus size market, yet even there the focus of plus size apparel is on women. A new retail outlet emerging under the Hot Topic conglomerate is Torrid, a fashion-forward store that caters to both

sizes and styles of the plus size teen and young adult market (James, 2001). As innovative and business forward as Old Navy and Torrid are in reaching this underserved market, they still fail to address the tween consumer. Little is known in the marketplace and in academia about what exactly this group desires with respect to apparel.

#### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research was to characterize the under-researched subgroups of the female tween consumer within the context of niche markets in the apparel industry. This was accomplished by conducting focus groups with tweens and their mothers, and comparing and contrasting dialogue of younger and older plus size tweens and their mothers to their normal size counterparts in terms of their apparel preferences, apparel needs, and apparel availability. The mothers of the tweens were used for the two primary reasons of money and influence. It has been shown that although tweens do have spending power (Hardt & Craig, 2005; Neider & Figueroa, 2001), a majority of these funds come from non-allowance gifts from parents (Gibbs, 2005; Hardt & Craig, 2005). Thus, exploring apparel perceptions of mothers of tweens with respect to clothing for their daughter(s) provided more insight as to the needs and desires of this market, as well as determined how much influence mothers have over the apparel spending of their daughter(s). The research questions that guided analysis of the focus groups were as follows:

1. Apparel Preferences (i.e., desired styles and fashion sensibilities of consumers)
  - a. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel preferences?
  - b. Do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel preferences for their daughters?
  - c. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express different opinions about apparel preferences than their mothers?
2. Apparel Needs (i.e., actual and perceived needs of consumers with respect to apparel)
  - a. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel needs?
  - b. Do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel needs for their daughters?
  - c. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express different opinions about apparel needs than their mothers?
3. Apparel Availability (i.e., how easy or hard it is for consumers to find what they are looking for in terms of apparel in the marketplace)
  - a. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different issues with respect to the availability of apparel in the market place?

- b. Do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different issues with respect to the availability of apparel for their daughters in the market place?
  - c. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express different opinions about apparel availability than their mothers?
4. Body Image (i.e., “The disparity between estimated current body image and ideal body image” (Fitzgibbon, Blackman, & Avellone, 2000, p. 583))
- a. How do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express their body image through conversation?
  - b. How do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express their images of their daughter’s bodies through conversation?

#### Significance

As highlighted earlier, little is known about the tween consumer demographic, particularly in the context of the apparel industry. Through this study, it was thought that researchers in academia would be able to more intimately understand the issues, problems and shopping behaviors of both younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls and their mothers. In doing so, this information can then be funneled to industry, which in turn may enable industry to provide goods and services to meet the needs of this consumer group. Particularly, this study may help the apparel industry equip itself to combat health risks of obesity in children such as low self-esteem and social discrimination (CDC, 2006a).

## Definition of Terms

The following terms will be a part of the common vernacular for this research study.

Apparel availability — The difficulty with which consumers find what they are looking for in terms of apparel in the marketplace.

Apparel needs — Actual and perceived needs of consumers with respect to apparel.

Apparel preferences — The desired styles and fashion sensibilities of consumers and shopping preferences in terms of apparel stores, brands, sizes, and styles.

Body Mass Index (BMI) — A standard established by the NIH and the CDC, which is a ratio of height (in inches) to weight (in pounds). BMI is calculated using the following formula:  $\text{weight (lb)} / [\text{height (in)}]^2 \times 703$  (CDC, 2006b). BMI standards are both sex and age-specific (CDC, 2006b) and scales for measuring BMI are available at several online resources (CDC, 2006b; Keep Kids Healthy, 2006; KidsHealth, 2006). Figure 1 is the example the CDC (2006a) provides on their website for how BMI numbers are interpreted.

Body dissatisfaction — “The disparity between estimated current body image and ideal body image” (Fitzgibbon, Blackman, & Avellone, 2000, p. 583).

Body image — “An internalized view of one’s appearance that drives behavior and influences information processing” (Altabe & Thompson, 1994, p. 171).

Discourse analysis — A generalized term meaning qualitative content analysis techniques to interpret written and spoken words.

Emerging theme method — A method of content analysis that allows the analyst to aggregate focus group dialogue based on initially identified themes, and in the course of

this grouping, expand the themes to encompass new information gathered from the data.

This data reduction method assists the analyst in capturing compelling data while also parsing the data into manageable chunks (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Normal size — Either underweight (<5<sup>th</sup> percentile) or healthy weight (5<sup>th</sup> to 85<sup>th</sup> percentile) of sex and age range according to BMI scales established by the CDC (2006a).

Plus size — At risk of overweight (85<sup>th</sup> to 95<sup>th</sup> percentile) or overweight ( $\geq$  95<sup>th</sup> percentile) of sex and age range according to BMI scales established by the CDC (2006a).

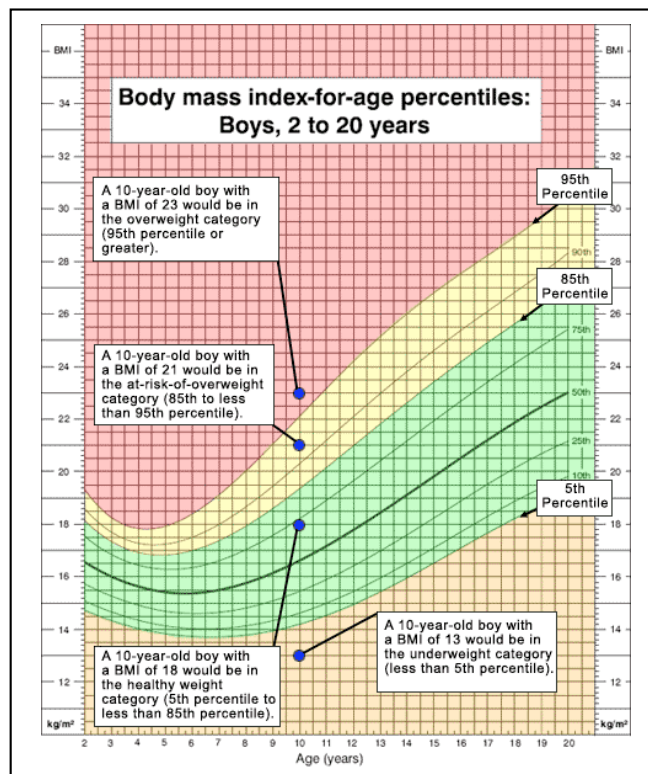


Figure 1. Illustration provided on the CDC’s website to describe BMI-for-age percentiles and illustrate the interpretation of BMI numbers (CDC, 2006a).

Self-esteem — An individual's global attitude (favorable or unfavorable) towards himself/herself (Simmons, F. Rosenberg, & M. Rosenberg, 1973; Sukumaran, Vickers, Yates, & Garralda, 2002).

Tween — Girls aged 9-14 years old.

Younger Tween — Tweens between 9 and 11 years old.

Older Tween — Tweens between 12 and 14 years old.



## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to explore apparel preferences, apparel needs, apparel availability, and body image for younger and older, normal and plus size tween consumers. In understanding these consumers, it is important to understand how apparel impacts their lives. This was done by comparing the younger and older, plus size tweens to their normal size counterparts as well as by exploring how the mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tweens described their daughters relationship to clothing.

The review of literature examined issues related to understanding tweens and their relationships to apparel. Understanding who tweens are and how they have been studied in the past created a platform from which to explore the proposed subgroups (age and size) of tweens. Research related to apparel such as body image, clothing deprivation, social development, self-esteem, perceptions of beauty, and body satisfaction is also presented. In understanding the role of apparel in each of these things, one can then begin to understand the multidimensionality and impact of apparel. Additionally, information related to obese and overweight consumers is presented. Justification for the exploratory nature of the focus group approach and subsequent analysis methodology are also provided at the end of this literature review.

### Tweens

In understanding who tweens are, it is first important to understand them in a historical context. In their article, "Betwixt and Be Tween: Ambiguity and the

Sexualization of the Female Consuming Subject,” Cook and Kaiser (2004) outline the emergence of this term in both historical and consumerist terms. Historically, the term ‘subteen’ or ‘preteen’ emerged sometime after World War II. In 1954, *Life* magazine (April 12, 1954) was published under the theme “Subteen Styles” and it included an article titled, “Not Yet Thirteen: Sub-Teens Foster Whole New Branch of Dress Business.” These terms continued throughout the rest of the twentieth century and began to express nuances in this consumer subject. Cook and Kaiser (2004) highlight this and provide academic definitions of each term.

The mixed use of the terms tween, Tween, subteen and preteen is telling of the shifting boundaries and meaning of this persona. In this article, subteen/preteen refers to the 1940s-1970s trade use of the term; tween with a lower case ‘t’ refers to the age range or market in general. Tween with a capital ‘T’ refers to the newly constructed persona and market of the 1990s (p. 205).

Although this study is more concerned with the market personality of Tween culture as defined by Cook and Kaiser (2004), the word tween with a lowercase ‘t’ will be used because this study is not only addressing the market concerns of this group but also the age-related concerns. By 1998, the tween idea was common in marketing jargon (Cook, & Kaiser, 2004). In the same time period, Fairchild Publishers began publishing, *Tween Business*, a supplement to its *Children’s Business* monthly (Cook & Kaiser, 2004). Academia, however, only peripherally dealt with this emerging demographic, and not until the late 1990s did the term tween emerge in the literature. Even then, academicians were still grappling with what exactly constituted a tween. Though marketers had long been capitalizing on this new demographic, it was not until Cook and Kaiser’s article that

academia defined tweens. Prior literature can be reviewed and information related to the tween demographic with this lens of understanding.

### *Tween Market Share*

Though there is limited characterization of this demographic in the literature prior to 2000, there is quite a bit of commentary found in popular culture. According to the Dualstar Entertainment Group, founded by Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, tweens defined as kids ages 8-12 constitute a \$335 billion market (Hopkins, 2005). The Dualstar estimate may be quite high, as other estimates range from \$170 billion (Ko, 2001) to \$221 billion (de Mesa, 2005). Regardless of the actual number, it is important to note that a) the market is there and b) they spend money. In fact, by pioneering this market, the Olsen twins took first mover advantage and each landed on Fortune's list of the richest people under 40 by 2004 (Hopkins, 2005). Though most of this spending power is projected to come from parents and other family adults such as grandparents (de Mesa, 2005; Forney & Forney, 1995; Hardt, & Craig, 2005; Paterson, 2003), tweens show tremendous economic influence in both their own personal spending and in their influence over family purchase decisions for things ranging from groceries to cars (de Mesa, 2005; Paterson, 2003). Rice of NPD Funworld states that tweens:

tell you exactly what they do and don't want . . . they [tweens] influence the family car, what food you are going to buy . . . I think they [tweens] have much more influence at an earlier age, and they can wield that power. And they [tweens] are going to continue doing that throughout their lives. They are learning to be savvy consumers and that is going to be very important. (Paterson, 2003, p. 19)

Though it is clear that marketers grasp that the tween consumer exists, there is a lack of understanding of what this consumer expects in the marketplace particularly when it comes to apparel. Even less understood are the subgroups that exist within the context of tweens. In order to understand and benefit from the economic influence and power to which Rice alluded, marketers and academicians alike must understand this consumer physically and psychologically, and perhaps recognize the notion that there may exist subgroups within this demographic. This is particularly important in the context of apparel where body shape, body size, buyer preference, fashion trends, socio-demographics, and other factors play into consumer apparel buying behavior.

### *Tween Subgroups*

Though marketers and academicians have both noted the existence of tweens, there are studies, which show that tweens may be too broad a category. The following discussion presents literature supporting the notion of tween subgroups. The subgroups were identified by gender, age, ethnicity, and body size.

#### *Gender*

The Cook and Kaiser (2004) article mainly focused on tween females, but obviously there is a male counterpart. Marketers and academicians are beginning to study this portion of the group, but there is even less information on boys than on girls. In a study investigating gang dress, Forney and Forney (1995) gathered data from junior high students (male and female) of varying ethnicities (white, Hispanic, Asian, Filipino, and other) using a structured questionnaire that assessed gang dress level, fashionability level, and fashion reference sources. The results showed that female participants in this study appeared to be more fashionable than the male participants. Because the proposed

study reported here focuses on tween girls, primarily studies involving females will be used in this review of literature.

### *Age*

In studying the types of beauty valued by predominately Caucasian American females aged 7 to 13 years old, Martin and Peters (2005) evaluated 80 girls in this age range through card sorting and collage construction exercises. The researchers used 47 advertisements chosen from popular magazines that target females in America. In the results, the girls were segmented into three age groups: 7-8, 9-10, and 11-13. Though the purpose of this study was to determine how these younger females perceive the advertising messages of popular culture, these researchers also noted in their results and discussion sections that there were distinct differences between the age brackets of girls. For instance, the researchers noted that, “while some brands and products were chosen more frequently . . . in general, the use of brands and products in the girls’ collage constructions increased, as they got older (p. 400).” The researchers noted that this was particularly true for the 11-13 year old age group, and concluded that there were distinct periods within the tween age group where the girls develop brand and product associations.

### *Ethnicity*

Subcultures that are defined by the ethnicity of their members are not a new concept in academia, marketing, or popular culture. Ethnicity may define one’s group membership such as a nationality, culture, or social group. The study investigating gang dress (Forney & Forney, 1995) showed that ethnicity for this sample did appear to be a factor in gang dress.

Research has also shown that ethnicity may be an element in one's body image. Fitzgibbon, Blackman, and Avellone (2000) performed a study of 389 women from three ethnic groups: white, Hispanic, and black. The women completed a three-part questionnaire. The three parts consisted of a general demographic self-report questionnaire, the Figure Rating Scale to assess body image (Stunkard, Sorensen, & Schulsinger, 1983), and the Short Acculturation Scale (Marin & Marin, 1991) to assess the acculturation of the Hispanic participants. The BMI's for all participants were also calculated using height and weight measurements taken by the researchers. Regression models were then constructed for the data collected. Although the researchers found no difference in the percentage of women in each ethnic group expressing body dissatisfaction, they did find that white women experienced body dissatisfaction at a lower BMI level than women of other ethnicities. It is discrepancies such as these that suggest if one is to study concepts such as body image and/or body satisfaction, ethnicity should be a factor considered when examining sample configurations.

### *Body Size*

As noted in Chapter one, there is a rising number of overweight and obese children in America (Freking, 2005; Kirka 2006; Newman, 2004), and yet, there is a gap in the literature exploring this consumer segment. Currently, only popular culture addresses this group with respect to apparel. In 1997, retailers began to bring sizes and brands to the marketplace for the plus size tween shopper (Canedy, 1997). However, in terms of research, there is little, aside from proprietary marketing data, which delve into the apparel preferences, needs and desires of the plus size population. For example, Kahn, the chief executive of a children's clothing manufacturer states that, "we've done

some focus studies and found that large children are not really pleased to shop where the word ‘chubby’ is used” (Canedy, 1997, p. D1). Current marketing and merchandising methods targeting this group are more like guessing games (Canedy, 1997; Kang, 2004) than strategic plans based on sound research.

Though there exists an abundance of research surrounding disordered eating for adolescents, it is primarily focused on anorexia and bulimia, and neglects the other end of the spectrum, under which most plus size individuals fall. There are no known studies that address the effects of obesity on apparel relationships for tweens. The only studies known, which are somewhat peripherally related, involve clothing deprivation issues faced by adolescents (Francis, 1992; Kelley & Eichner, 1970; Kness, 1983; Smucker & Creekmore, 1972). Each of these studies will be discussed in more detail, but are mentioned here because of their relevance to adolescents and clothing deprivation, which is an important consideration for the plus size tween consumer (Canedy, 1997; Hey, 2002). However, none of these studies specifically dealt with obesity in the tween context. Obviously, the size requirements of plus size tween consumers are different than their normal size counterparts, and perhaps tweens should be addressed academically under both contexts: normal and plus size.

#### Adolescent Research

Under the guise of research on adolescents, there exists a plethora of research on concepts such as body image, body satisfaction/dissatisfaction, and self-esteem. Each of these topics will be explored through the lens of tween consumers as defined by Cook and Kaiser (2004) so as to build a base for what is known about these consumers in terms of psychology, social development, and apparel relationships.

### *Body Image and Body Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction*

Academic literature defines body image in the context of a cognitive schema where body image is, “an internalized view of one’s appearance that drives behavior and influences information processing” (Altabe & Thompson, 1994, p. 171). Body image is a multidimensional construct, and researchers have determined that within body image, there are three sociocultural constructs: awareness, perceived pressures, and internalization (Cash, 2005; Presnell, Bearman, & Stice, 2003). However, in the literature researchers are still grappling with the conceptual framework needed to evaluate these constructs; in other words, there is not a clear understanding about, “how these various constructs should relate to one another and, ultimately, to evaluate body image” (Cash, 2005, p. 439). Thus in investigating these constructs, psychological, psychiatric, somatic, and neurological aspects must be addressed when dealing with assessing a subject’s body image (Brodie, Bagley, & Slade, 1994).

Body dissatisfaction is a related concept and is often referred to in the literature as body image discrepancy and is defined as the difference between one’s perceptual body image (how they see their body) and one’s attitudinal body image (how they feel about their body) (Fitzgibbon, Blackman, & Avellone, 2000). Blyth, Simmons, and Zakin (1985) assert that body satisfaction and dissatisfaction are respectively, the positive and negative manifestations of one’s body image.

With respect to body image and body satisfaction/dissatisfaction among the tween age range, there are many studies that aim to understand body image, yet they are mostly in the context of the onset of eating disordered behaviors. In fact, in speaking to the dramatic increase in academic studies on body image, Cash (2005) states, “one driving



force behind the escalation of body image scholarship is the ardent clinical and scientific interest in eating disorders among girls and young women” (p. 438). There are also many studies that speak to influences on tween’s body image. The concepts of body image and body dissatisfaction are multidimensional (Blyth, Simmons, & Zakin, 1985; Cash, 2005; Presnesll, Bearman, & Stice, 2003; Sinton & Birch, 2006), and may be predicted by multiple factors, such as:

- pubertal timing (Blyth, Simmons, & Zakin, 1985; Brodie, Bagley, & Slade, 1994)
- BMI (Brodie, Bagley, & Slade, 1994; Wills, Backett-Milburn, Gregory, & Lawton, 2005)
- familial influences (Usmiani & Daniluk, 1996, Sinton & Birch, 2006)
- media and socio-cultural variations (Abrams & Stormer, 2002; Sinton & Birch, 2006)
- physical activity (Neumark-Sztainer, Goeden, Story, & Wall, 2004).

The concept of body satisfaction/dissatisfaction will be addressed in tandem with the concept of body image due to the interconnectedness of these two ideas. In the context of tweens, body dissatisfaction is very important because of its implications in the onset of eating disorders as they enter their teen years. RoperASW conducted a 2003 Unilever/Girl Scout Self-Esteem Survey (Troy & O’Donnell, 2003) of more than 800 tweens aged 8-12. Perhaps the most striking result is that for tween girls, looks are a major source of dissatisfaction. More than half of the girls surveyed (54 %) say they like how much they weigh only “a little” or “not at all,” and 15% are completely dissatisfied with their bodies (Market Wire, 2003). These high percentages may lead these tweens

toward an increased predisposition to develop disordered eating. Thus, much research in the field of body image and body satisfaction/dissatisfaction is geared towards preventing such behavioral developments.

In a series of three studies, Altabe and Thompson (1994) confirmed a schema view of body image, with the term schema meaning, “a mental representation of information with processing consequences” (p. 172). The first study involved 117 females aged 18 to 41 (mean age of 20.66). Each female completed a series of questionnaires, and the results determined that physical discrepancy was significantly correlated with prior body image and mood. In their second study, 64 undergraduate females completed questionnaires similar to those in the first study, as well as participated in an experiment where they completed experimentally controlled timed sentence tasks (i.e the participants were given prompts like “women with smooth elbows . . .” and asked to complete the sentence). The results of this experiment combined with the questionnaires, allowed the researchers to determine that patterned mood responses to the experimental manipulation of body image existed. In their third and final study, Altabe and Thompson replicated the results from experiment two and expanded the experiment from sentences to pictures. The sample for this study was 102 female undergraduates. The results from the third study confirmed the findings from experiment two, and when combined with the first study, confirmed the notion that body image is a cognitive structure. Essentially these researchers confirmed that body image has a schematic structure that for females can be activated by factors such as reading a fashion magazine or viewing a commercial with beautiful women. Once activated, these environmental factors have the potential to interact with one’s perceived body image and

cause them to have a negative self-reaction to themselves, and in doing so, “elicit a negative mood and body image distress” (Altabe & Thompson, 1994, p. 188).

In assessing the multidimensionality of body image, other researchers have tested various factors to determine their effect on body image. In a study measuring perceived and ideal body image of pre- and post-adolescent females, Brodie, Bagley, and Slade (1994) studied 59 girls whose average age was 9.3 (SD +/- 1.3) years old and 41 girls whose average age was 14.1 (SD +/- 1.3) years old. These girls were within the age range of tweens in the research reported here. Each girl completed a visual distortion task and two body satisfaction scales (one pictorially and one Likert-type format). In performing this study, the researchers were trying to assess the relationship between adolescence and body image disturbance. Their results concluded that disturbances in body image were unrelated to the onset of puberty. However, the researchers also noted that there were increased desires for thinness between pre-adolescents and post-adolescents tested in this study.

In an earlier study, Blyth, Simmons, and Zakin (1985) found through longitudinal research of 225 white females in grades six and seven that there were was a strong relationship to pubertal timing (early, middle, and late developers) and satisfaction with body image. Satisfaction with body image was determined by a questionnaire that asked the girls to assess aspects of their bodies (height, weight, figure development, and evaluation of overall looks) on a 4-point scale ranging from “not happy at all” to “very happy.” The findings from this study support the idea that body image is a multidimensional construct.

In another study by Brodie, Bagley, and Slade (1994) involving body image and puberty, researchers assessed 182 females ranging from 11-18 in a single-sex school. Participants completed questionnaires that asked them to assess their bust, waist, and hip measurements as well as rank their features according to how much distress each induced. The results showed that as the girls became proportionately heavier for their height (i.e. their BMI increased), they became less satisfied with their waist and hip measurements.

### *Influences of Weight Status*

A dimension related to body image and body dissatisfaction is weight status. BMI is the metric used by the CDC to determine relative body size, and it assesses overall body mass as underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese. In addition to the Brodie, Bagley and Slade (1994) research, Fitzgibbon, Blackman, and Avellone (2000) conducted a study where ethnic (black and Hispanic) women experienced body image dissatisfaction only when they were overweight, whereas white women who were not overweight experienced body dissatisfaction. With respect to tweens, only one study was found to deal with body image perceptions and body size. This study by Wills, Backett-Milburn, Gregory, and Lawton (2005), was exploratory in nature. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 36, 13 and 14 year olds. Half of the sample was classified by BMI to be overweight or obese, while the other half was classified as normal. Analysis of the interviews revealed that most of the normal weight participants had little to say about their body image, while those who were overweight or obese, “often talked in contradictory and complex terms about their weight and body size” (p. 399). This qualitative study is important because it probed the upper end of the

tween demographic and showed that the concepts of body image and body satisfaction/dissatisfaction are complex and multidimensional. Barker and Galambos (2003) found, through a 3-year longitudinal study of 91 girls, that having higher BMI predicted higher body dissatisfaction.

### *Familial Influences*

Familial influences are very important to tweens. In the study reported here, mother and daughter relationships and influences were particularly of interest. In a study by Usimani and Daniluk (1996), body image was assessed for 82 mothers and their menstrual daughters (aged 11-16 years old, mean = 13.42) and 31 mothers and their premenstrual daughters (aged 11-14 years old, mean= 12.5). The girls were between grades 7-11. This study was of particular interest because the sample includes the upper age range of tweens. A self-image questionnaire and the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) were administered to the girls and their mothers. Usimani and Daniluk's results showed that there was, "not a significant correlation between body image scores for the mothers and their premenstrual daughters" (p. 55); but there was a significant correlation found between the body image scores of the menstrual girls and their mothers. This result suggests that as the girls get older, the influence of their mother on the daughter's body image may be more prominent.

In a longitudinal study of 173 11-year-old girls, where girls were interviewed and completed questionnaires on two separate occasions, Sinton and Birch (2006) found that parental influence on weight concerns was associated with the girls' level of body satisfaction. Benedikt, Wertheim, and Love (1998) examined 89 mother-daughter pairs. Each mother and each daughter completed eating attitudes and behavior questionnaires

and their BMIs were collected through self-report of height and weight. The study found significant correlations between daughters' body dissatisfaction and mothers' encouraging their daughter to lose weight and mothers' reports of their own body dissatisfaction.

In another study, researchers Levine, Smolak, and Hayden (1994) surveyed 385 girls from age 10 to 14 years old to evaluate eating behavior, body satisfaction, concern with being slender, and cues from parents, peers, and magazines. The results from this survey showed that one of the strongest correlations observed stemmed from girls who exhibited disordered eating behaviors and experienced body size and shape related teasing and criticism from family members. Additionally, Smolak, Levine, and Schermer (1999) found, through a survey of parents (131 mothers and 89 fathers) and their fourth and fifth grade children, that direct parental comments, more than parental modeling, about body size and body shape appeared to be important in affecting the child's body-size-and-shape-related concerns and behaviors. This study also showed that mothers appeared to influence children in this regard more than fathers.

#### *Media and Socio-cultural Influences*

Socio-cultural influences and variations have been shown in the literature to affect one's body image and body satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2003) found that viewing thin ideals in television commercials led adolescent girls to have increased body dissatisfaction. In this study 310 adolescent girls aged 13 to 17 years old were either exposed to 15 commercials with actors who exhibited thin ideals for women or 15 commercials containing no such images. The results showed that viewing the commercials with thin-ideal women led the girls to have increased body

dissatisfaction. In an experiment with 138 Caucasian females aged 18 to 48 years old, Heinberg and Thompson (1994) found that viewing thin ideals on television negatively affected the mood and body satisfaction of the participants.

Tiggeman, Verri, and Scaravaggi (2005) studied body dissatisfaction in similar samples from two different cultures: Australia and Italy. The researchers developed questionnaires “to assess the internalization of thin ideals, fashion magazine exposure, and the importance of clothes, in addition to containing measures of body dissatisfaction, dieting, and disordered eating symptomatology” (p. 293). The results from this survey research (with a sample of 140 Australian and 95 Italian college aged women), showed that although the same factors (i.e. BMI, thin ideals, fashion magazine consumption, etc.) influenced both cultures with respect to body satisfaction/dissatisfaction, the magnitude of the influence from each factor differed as a function of nationality.

In the Sinton and Birch’s (2006) longitudinal study, socio-cultural influences were also measured by interview and questionnaires. The results showed that both peers and media messages influenced girls’ self-perceptions of their bodies. Abrams and Stormer (2002) recruited 208 adolescent females from ethnically diverse backgrounds and had the girls complete a questionnaire that assessed their attitudes towards appearance. The results from this study revealed that primary ethnic group membership was a predictor of the level of awareness of dominant societal standards of appearance.

#### *Influences of Physical Activity*

In 2004, Neumark-Sztainer, Goeden, Story, and Wall analyzed body satisfaction and physical activity of 4,746 boys and girls aged 11-18 years old (mean= 14.9 years old) of varying ethnic backgrounds. Survey and anthropometric data were collected from

students in their Health, Physical Education, and Science classes. Body satisfaction, physical activity, television viewing, team sport participation, and weight status (BMI) were assessed in the data collection and analysis processes. With the boys, significant correlations were observed between higher levels of physical activity and body satisfaction. The same trend of increased physical activity and increased body satisfaction was observed with the girls, but the findings were not statistically significant.

### *Self-Esteem*

Self-esteem is defined as an individual's global attitude (favorable or unfavorable) towards himself or herself (Simmons, Rosenberg, & Rosenberg, 1973; Sukumaran, Vickers, Yates, & Garralda, 2002). Thus, it is logical to follow discussion of body image and body satisfaction/dissatisfaction, with a discussion of self-esteem. Rosenberg is the most prominent researcher in the area of self-esteem. His Likert scale measures global self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), and is ubiquitous with this type of research. Modified versions exist for use with younger adolescents.

In a survey study of 82 female students in grades 7 to 11 and their mothers conducted by Usmiani and Daniluk (1997), the researchers used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and determined that mothers' self-esteem was closely correlated to their daughters' self-esteem. In postmenstrual daughters and in both groups of mothers, self-esteem made a statistically significant contribution to the participants' body image perceptions. However, in the premenstrual group, self-esteem was not significantly related to body image.

In another study looking at self-image disturbance, Simmons, Rosenberg, and Rosenberg (1973) gathered data from a random sample of 2,625 students from 25 urban



schools. The students ranged from grades 3 to 12. The students' self-esteem, self-consciousness, self-image, and perceived self were assessed through questionnaires. In analyzing the results, the younger participants were compared to the older participants to see if age was a factor in producing disturbance in the participants' overall self-picture. The findings related to self-esteem showed that global self-esteem (defined in this review as self-esteem) improved in later adolescence. However, self-esteem based specific traits (intelligence, honesty, diligence, good behavior, helpfulness, good athlete, humor, and most important to this study, looks), declined sharply between childhood (8 to 11 years old) and early adolescence (12 to 14 years old) and continued to decrease into later adolescence (15 years old and older). These findings are significant for several reasons. They reinforce the notion that within the tween demographic, there are subgroups delineated by age that exist and show that looks are an important factor to tweens and can negatively affect their self-esteem.

In continuing the notion that looks affect self-esteem, Daters (1990) addressed the role of apparel and self-esteem in adolescents. The two-fold purpose of Daters' study was to a) assess the importance of clothing comfort for adolescents in three urban situations, and b) assess the relationship between the importance of clothing comfort and the level of self-esteem of adolescents in those situations. Daters randomly selected a sample consisting of 197, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade female students. These students completed a series of questionnaires, and the results showed that clothing comfort was more important to these students in social and school environments than in leisure situations. Daters showed that for this group, self-esteem was not related to situational clothing comfort.

Other researchers attempted to develop a model to relate the proximity of clothing to self (Sontag & Lee, 2004). Despite the fact that the model developed held true in the adults tested and the results were confirmed in several rounds of trials, when applied to adolescents, results could not be confirmed. Though the findings of Daters (1990) and Sontag and Lee (2004) were not conclusive in relating clothing to self-esteem, clothing is important to self-esteem in other capacities such as social development (Francis, 1994).

#### Role of Apparel in Tween Culture

Apparel is a means of communicating oneself to one's peers. Through dress, we portray who we are and who we perceive ourselves to be to the world around us (Lowe, 1996). For instance, employee roles such as scientist, doctor, nurse, and postal worker are all associated with certain types of dress. These uniforms are but one avenue of the way dress identifies social function (Smucker & Creekmore, 1972). Daters (1990) explains "society recognizes the role of clothing as a communicator of information during social interaction and as an aid in the establishment of self identity" (p. 45). In youth culture, social tribes such as jocks, cheerleaders, and the "in" crowd are all delineated by dress (Forney & Forney, 1995; Kelley & Eicher, 1970). Observation of any grouping of people, particularly youth in Western cultures, reveals these patterns. Though the Uniquely ME! Survey mentioned earlier found that 80% of tweens said that they are "not at all worried" about having cool clothes (Market Wire, 2003), academic and other research has shown that clothing does have an effect on social interactions for this age group. In fact, Littrell and Eicher (1973) stated that, "adolescents regard clothing and social acceptance as *very important*" (p. 197). Nickelodeon market researcher, Bruce Friend stated that tweens are very concerned with their look, and cited stores like

Abercrombie & Fitch and Delia\*s as catering to this phenomenon (Hymowitz, 1999). Tweens also have preferences with respect to fit (Tselepis & de Klerk, 2004) and brand (BUZZBACK Market Research, 2004).

Through a survey of 1000 female consumers aged 16 to 64 years old, Shim and Bickle (1994) identified different benefit segments of the female apparel market. The three segments were: symbolic/instrumental, practical/conservative, and apathetic users of clothing. Though tweens did not constitute any of this sample, the models and segments identified by this study may be useful in exploring the tween demographic.

#### *Influences of Family and Peers*

In a study closely linked to the tween demographic, Kernan (1973) found, through a survey study of 57 girls from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, that younger girls are “compliant shadows” of older girls with respect to their fashion choices and that younger girls see use of the same clothing and cosmetic fashions of older girls as “shibboleths” or rather, proof of their association with the older girls. In the same study, Kernan (1973) also noted that this association with older girls is accompanied by a “simultaneous passage from the hovering influence of their mothers” (p. 349). Such passage may account for the tensions between parents and tweens observed in popular culture (Kaiser, 2003; Walis, 2003). In the context of apparel marketing, this group membership has strong implications for marketing to the tween consumer.

In a study investigating gang wear and fashion, Forney and Forney (1995) identified, through questionnaire and interview methods, how 131 male and female teens in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades from one school used clothing to associate with groups (in this case, gangs). These researchers also explored reference sources for clothing choices and

identified that both the girls and the boys overwhelmingly relied on their friends' advice for making decisions about clothing.

### *Role of Apparel in Social Development*

In the 1970s, Kelley and Eicher pioneered research that related apparel to social participation and group membership (Kelley, Daigle, LaFleur, & Wilson, 1974; Kelley & Eicher, 1970; Eicher & Kelley, 1974). The 1970 research conducted by Kelley and Eicher was a longitudinal study of high school girls. Each year for four years, social class and social acceptance data were collected from each girl through questionnaires. The results showed that although clothing and appearance were important factors in teen culture, each alone was insufficient for explaining group acceptance or exclusion. Following this, Kelley et al. (1974) investigated 324 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The researchers investigated how gender, ethnicity and social class level (working and lower class) related to clothing and social participation. Results showed that regardless of gender, ethnicity, or social class level, respondents having a high level of participation in group activities felt a low level of clothing deprivation feelings. This confirmed results from a study by Smucker and Creekmore (1972) that showed significant positive correlations between peer acceptance and conformity in clothing. In other words, adolescents from the same social situations (in this case high school), dressed alike in order to appear as part of the group.

In 1974, Eicher and Kelley also completed another longitudinal study where they examined this socialization effect. In this study, the researchers examined and confirmed clothing deprivation feelings of girls from lower social levels who were placed in school environments with girls from upper social levels. This study also revealed that the lower

social class participants exhibited a lower level of social participation. In terms of obesity, this study may have other implications. Perhaps socioeconomic status is not the only predictor of clothing deprivation and depressed social participation.

In 1983, Kness continued to build upon the work of Kelley and Eicher, by investigating clothing satisfaction and deprivation feelings of three adolescent ethnic groups: Anglo-American, Afro-American, and Mexican-American. Her study found that for each ethnic group, feelings of clothing deprivation were affected by different factors unique to each group. In another study, also on high school students, Francis (1992) found that inability to buy clothing and clothing deprivation relative to peers significantly affected the participants' social participation. In terms of plus size tweens, such findings could have significant implications with regard to the lack of plus size apparel in the marketplace.

### Obesity and Apparel

As previously discussed, there is an increasing trend towards obesity in America (CDC, 1999; WHO, 2006; NIH, 2004). Current literature does little to address obese and overweight consumers in terms of apparel, especially with respect to plus size tweens. Though Tselepis and de Klerk (2004) set up a conceptual framework to study fit expectations of tweens, specific concerns of the plus size demographic are not addressed. Some retailers, such as JC Penney, Old Navy, and Torrid are attempting to reach out to the plus size demographic, but there is a lack of knowledge within academia about this consumer group and their apparel relationships, needs, and preferences.

### *Apparel Availability for the Plus Size Market*

As stated earlier, the success of stores and brands like Limited Too, Delia\*s and the Olson twins, speak to the fashion sense and market profitability of the tween market. However, the plus size tween is often underserved. Clothing available for these girls, who often exceed junior's size ranges, can be limited to adult sizes and styles. This gap in the marketplace may cause the negative feelings of clothing deprivation (Kelley, Daigle, LaFleur, & Wilson, 1974; Kelley & Eicher, 1970), which Kness (1983) and Francis (1992) showed had significant effects on social participation factors in high school students. That said, the apparent lack of apparel for this demographic may have significant impact on their social participation. This trend could pour over into their adult lives and have a more widespread and negative impact on society as a whole. Thus, there are more far reaching implications of this research than simply meeting the apparel needs of tweens.

### Qualitative Research

Due to this lack of knowledge of tween consumers, and even more so plus size tweens, an exploratory study is appropriate to probe this demographic. Thus, a qualitative method best suits exploration and description of this consumer group and its subcomponents (i.e. normal size, plus size, younger, and older). Focus group data was chosen as the source of information for this study because within the focus group setting, conversations can be guided to cover topical areas, and participants have opportunities to offer information and ideas that may have been overlooked by quantitative researchers. By using qualitative analysis techniques, the researcher was able to explore the data and

describe the findings in a manner that will hopefully reveal something previously unknown about the subject of interest.

### *Content Analysis*

Content analysis techniques were exploited to analyze the focus group data because they offered the researcher the ability to extract in a systematic manner, basic themes from the focus group data as well as glean themes that may have emerged during the dialogue (Lindkvist, 1981). There are two aspects of content analysis: quantitative and qualitative. There are advantages and disadvantages to using each of these aspects, and both allow for the data reduction and data interpretation needed to extract meaningful information from the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). In discussing qualitative content analysis, George (1959) asserted four designations for this term. These are shown in Table 1.

Because of the preliminary nature of this study, George's (1959) clear outline of qualitative and quantitative content analysis techniques makes it clear that qualitative content analysis should be used in analyzing the focus groups in this study. The flexibility and impressionistic procedures offered by qualitative content analysis are desired because so little is known about the specific apparel relationships of tweens and their mothers.

The content analysis flow chart in Figure 2 is adopted from Mayring (2000), and illustrates the more rigid, deductive, quantitative approach and the flow of the, inductive, qualitative approach to content analysis. This information, combined with the goals of this research, make it clear that an inductive methodology is appropriate for this project. Another figure from Mayring (2000) further breaks down the inductive model in terms of

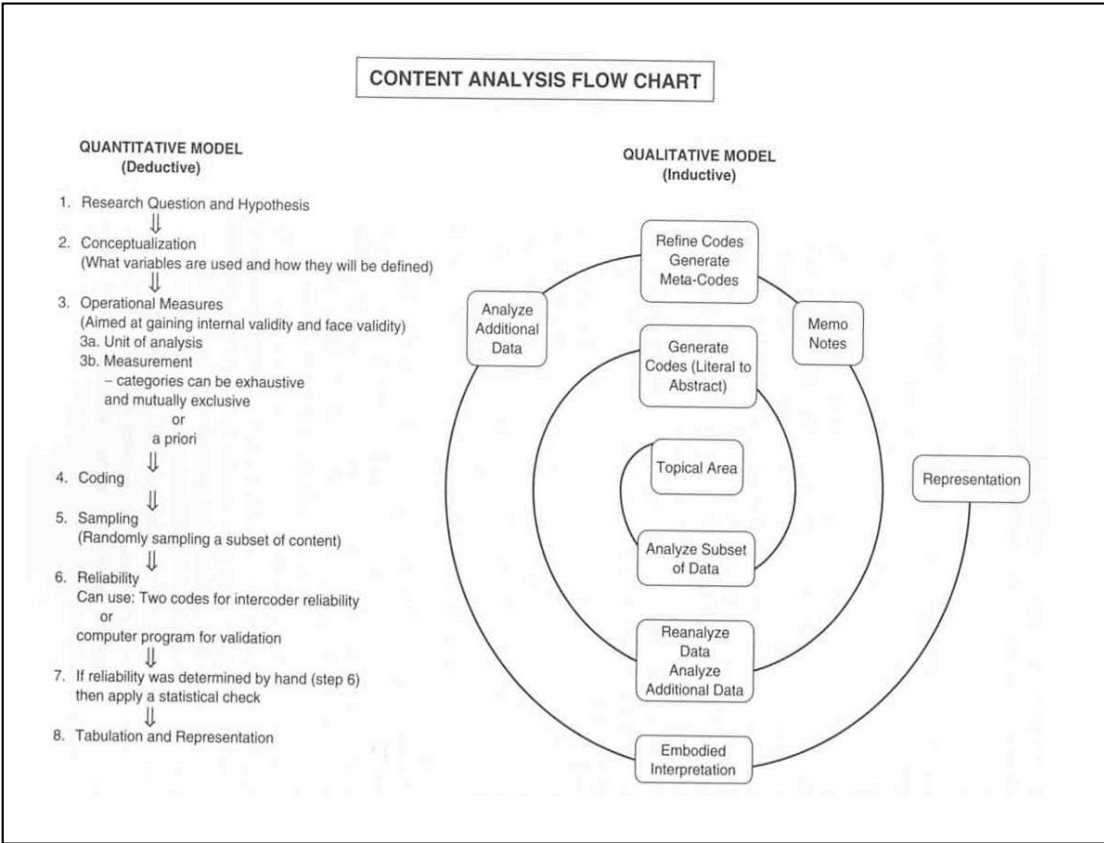
the specific steps of category development. These are shown in Figure 3, which is adopted from Mayring (2000).

Table 1

*Comparison of Uses of Qualitative and Quantitative Content Analysis Techniques*  
(George, 1959)

Uses of Qualitative Analysis Techniques	Uses of Quantitative Analysis Techniques
The preliminary reading of communications materials for purposes of hypothesis formation and the discovery of new relationships	Systematic content analysis for purposes of testing hypothesis
An impressionistic procedure for making observations about content characteristics	A systematic procedure for obtaining precise, objective, and reliable data
Dichotomous attributes (i.e., attributes which can be predicated only as belonging or not belonging to an object)	Attributes which permit exact measurements (i.e., the true quantitative variable) or rank ordering (i.e., the serial)
A “flexible” procedure for making content-descriptive observations, or “coding” judgments	A “rigid” procedure for doing the same





*Figure 2.* Content analysis flow chart showing essential differences between quantitative and qualitative analysis models adopted from Mayring (2000).

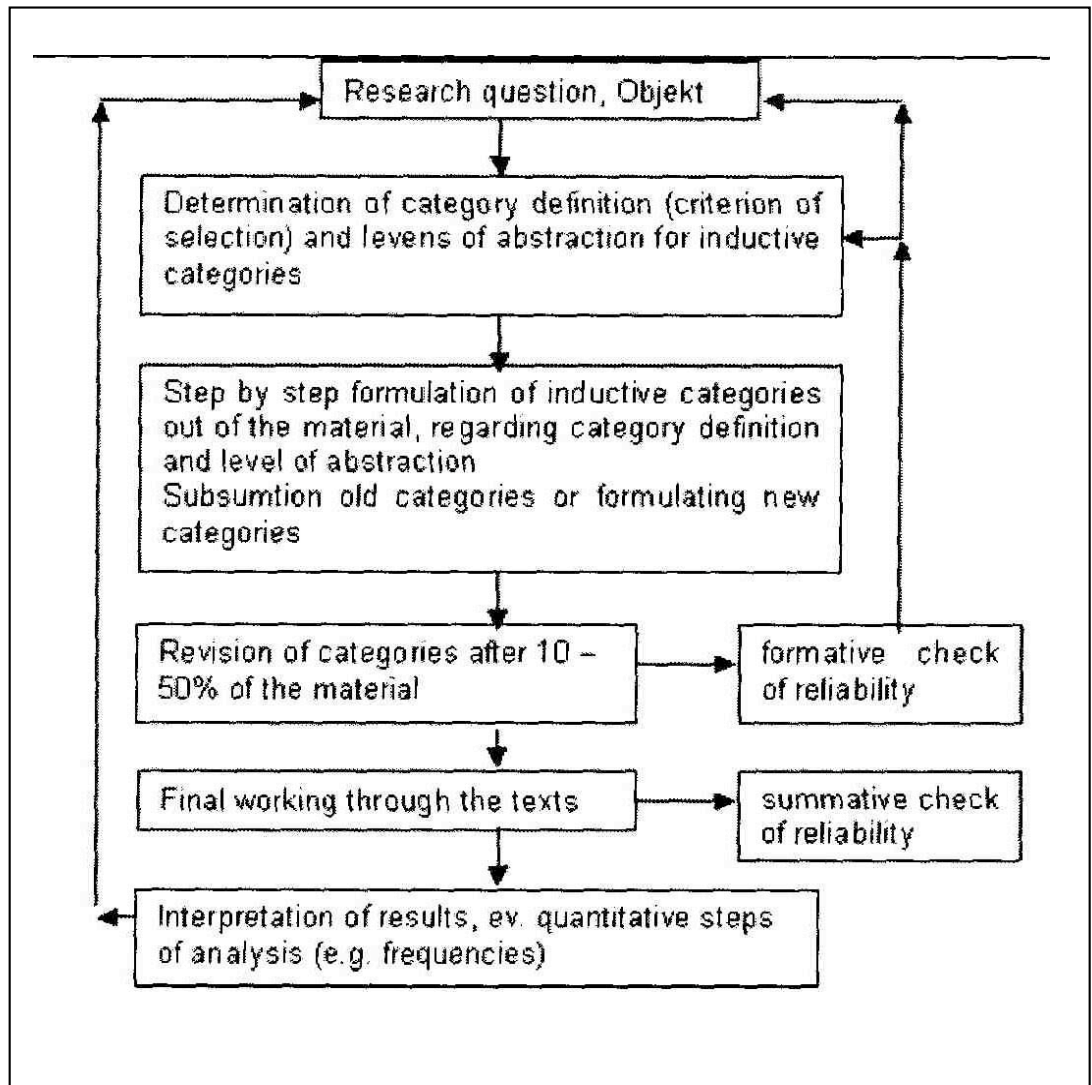


Figure 3. Step model of inductive category development, adopted from Mayring (2000).

As outlined in this review of literature, category development is one of the primary methods that will be used to understand this data. In research involving adolescents, ethnographic techniques are commonly used as a form of qualitative content analysis. Several methodologies fall under the umbrella of ethnography, including: discourse analysis and emergent theme analysis.

### *Discourse Analysis*

Discourse analysis is a technique where texts are deconstructed and interpreted to reveal hidden meaning through the lens of postmodernism (Palmquist, 2006). In the field of psychology, Korobov and Bamberg (2004) published an article that utilized discourse analysis as a method of interpreting 72 lines of conversation spoken by 10 adolescent boys. Two articles (Campbell, 2004; Edwards & Stokoe, 2004) were published soon thereafter in opposition to Korobov and Bamberg's technique. Though many holes were found in Korobov and Bamberg's specific use of discourse analysis, Edwards and Stokoe (2004) were clear to emphasize the validity of discourse analysis in their concluding remarks.

In the field of pragmatics, discourse analysis is more accepted as a means of analysis. Tagliamonte (2005) used this technique to analyze conversations of young Canadians aged 11 to 19 years old. In this study, Taglimonte mined conversational data for discourse markers, which allowed the researcher to characterize the linguistic features of the sample with respect to new 'pragmatic markers' in the language of young Canadians. These markers were identified as the following words: like, just, and so. In Tagliamonte's study, the new meanings of these words were characterized through discourse analysis and patterns extracted from simple frequency counts of the words.

### *Emergent Theme Analysis*

There is much less controversy surrounding the emergent theme technique of qualitative content analysis. Emergent theme analysis is a technique of inductive analysis where the researcher extracts important categories from the data and classifies them in a matrix format (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). In the social sciences, this technique is

common in exploratory studies involving focus groups. Wills, Backett-Milburn, Gregory, and Lawton (2005) used this technique to investigate young Scottish teenagers' perceptions of their own and others' bodies. Engebretson (2004) used a more structured version of this technique wherein she analyzed focus group data with preset categories and used a constant comparison to find the central ideas within each category. In another study investigating casual versus formal uniforms in flight attendants, in-depth interviews were conducted and themes identified through line-by-line analysis, a modified version of the emergent theme method (Adomaitis & Johnson, 2005).

Due to the limited number of participants in the focus groups, the emerging theme method presented in Marshall and Rossman (1989, p. 114) was chosen. The emerging theme method enabled the researcher to construct logical groupings of the data, while maintaining flexibility in analysis such that themes previously unclear can emerge in the analysis process (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). This type of flexibility makes content analysis an enriching method for interpreting data. That said, from the Mayring (2000) charts, the step-wise methodology that is provided in Figure 3 was followed except for the final quantitative step of analysis, which was replaced by Venn diagrams as described in the next section. This inductive methodology is consistent with the emerging themes assessment of qualitative data presented.

#### *Venn Diagrams to Represent Relationships and Relative Importance of the Themes*

In utilizing the emerging themes conceptual framework for analysis, visual representations of the data were constructed to illustrate not only emerging themes, but also the magnitude and relevance of those themes to each of the tween and mothers of tweens subgroups. This step replaced the final step in the Mayring (2000) model. Venn

diagrams similar to the one presented in Figure 4 were constructed as a part of the analysis process. Note, this chart was adopted from Carney 's (1972) figure, *Issues in the career of Marius, depicted as a form of Venn diagram*. It is in constructing these diagrams that the dependent variables emerged in a clear and tangible manner. This conceptual framework for defining and tracking themes in qualitative research was gleaned from Carney (1972, p. 239).

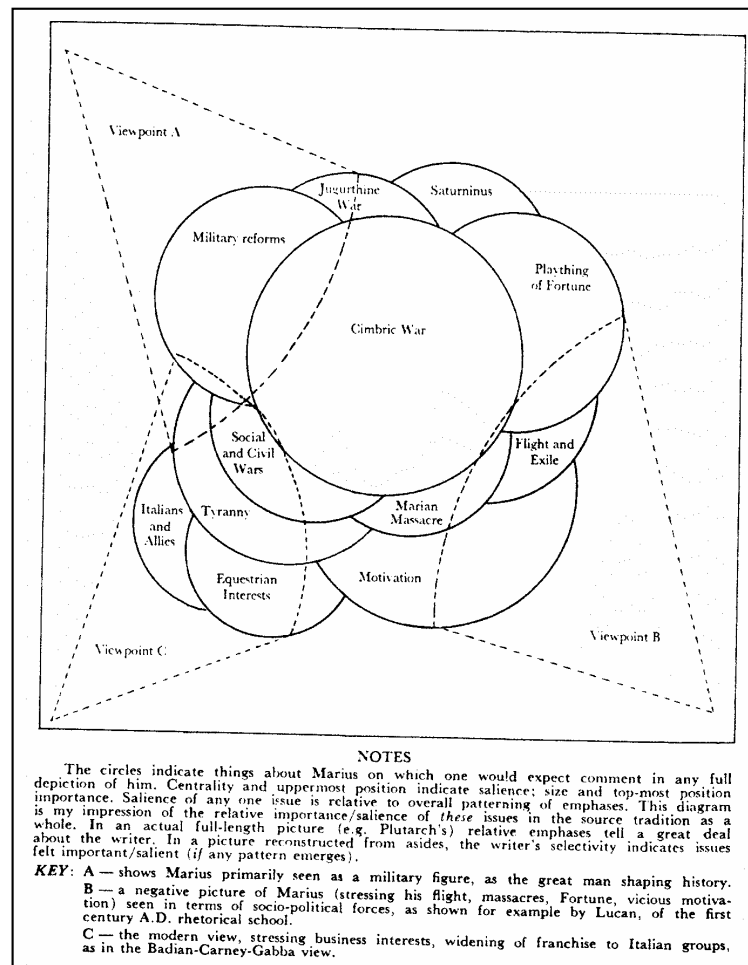


Figure 4. Example of a Venn Diagram constructed using content analysis techniques and procedures (Carney, 1972, p. 239).

The construction of these Venn diagrams enabled the researcher to visually link the emerging concepts and themes from the focus groups in a tangible manner. The ultimate goal of content analysis is to enable researchers to qualitatively process volumes of data and somehow link and describe phenomena that exist within that data. Coupling the emergent theme method with the creation of these Venn diagrams provided the structure necessary to complete valid data analysis, as well as easily represent the findings of the analysis.

### Summary

According to Gibbs' (2005), the tween consumer segment is formed by a complex group of individuals. Tweens desire power and independence, yet still rely on their parents to provide most of their spending power (Gibbs 2005; Hardt, & Craig, 2005). Tween girls also have strong concepts of beauty and are able to communicate what they desire with respect to fashion (Martin & Peters, 2005). Based on this information, this research attempted to fill in gaps within current knowledge of tween apparel needs by exploring the similarities and differences due to age (younger and older) and body size (normal and plus size), as well as exploring how the mothers of these girls influence their apparel relationships. Knowledge gained from this study may contribute to the apparel marketing research models for this demographic.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This research was designed to explore and describe tween girls' and their mothers' relationship to clothing. As shown in the review of literature, tweens girls are an under-researched consumer group. In this research project, normal and plus size tween girls and their mothers participated in focus groups, completed questionnaires, and had their bodies scanned using a 3-D body scanner. The primary purpose of the focus group portion was to enable researchers to utilize qualitative data analysis techniques to glean major themes related to tweens and their relationships with apparel and shopping. Questionnaire responses and body scans were used to enhance interpretations of the qualitative data and offer more explicit illustrations of the tweens and mothers represented in the sample. This chapter details sample selection, data collection, and procedures for data analysis.

Because the nature of this research was to explore and describe the subgroups within the tween consumer segment as well as investigate the roles of the tween girls' mothers in making apparel decisions, a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis is most appropriate. The focus group set-up enabled the researcher to explore themes while at the same time allowing tween girls and their mothers to express ideas that may be overlooked in other methodologies. The flexibility and exploratory quality of focus groups allowed researcher to delve into the psyche of these tween girls as the researcher tries to understand the tween girls' relationships to apparel. In doing this,

there are a myriad of methodologies available to organize the dialogue resulting from focus groups. For this research, the emerging theme method (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 114) was chosen as most appropriate for analyzing the focus groups of the tween girls and their mothers. This method also enabled the researcher to work from established themes (determined by the focus group scripts) as well as identify and include in analysis the themes that emerge during the analysis process.

### Sampling

This research was conducted at the Textile Technology Clothing Corporation ([TC]<sup>2</sup>) in Cary, North Carolina. The focus groups took place at [TC]<sup>2</sup> because of access to 3-D body scanning equipment. [TC]<sup>2</sup> recruited a purposive sample of tween girls and their mothers from the area surrounding Raleigh, North Carolina. This procedure was chosen because of the sensitive nature of the research and budget constraints, which prevented a broader and more randomized sampling procedure. Mothers were asked in a preliminary phone screening to report the age, height, and weight of their daughter. BMIs of each potential candidate were calculated using these self-reported measures according to the BMI charts available from the CDC (2006a) as shown in Chapter 1. From these BMI calculations, tween girls and their mothers were assigned to groups based on their daughter's age (9-11 or 12-14 years old) and BMI (normal or plus size). Tween girls and their mothers each received a \$75 compensation for participating in the research. Figure 5 illustrates the basic makeup of the four separate tween focus groups.

The four focus groups of mothers were characterized by the assignment of their daughter to a particular group; thus descriptions of age and BMI are not given for the mothers' focus groups. In the mothers' groups, researcher was more concerned with



factors affecting how the mothers shopped with and/or for their daughters, not for themselves. It is important to note that in the normal size 9 to 11 year old group, there were two sets of sisters. This accounts for why there were ten girls and only eight mothers. Sample body scans from each group are also shown in Figure 5 to illustrate the richness of body scan data in determining body size and shape as well as to show one facet of how participant dialogue was interpreted in the data analysis portion of this study. Though ethnicity was not used as a factor of the analysis, self-report of ethnicity was collected. The mothers groups consisted of 56% Caucasian, 22% African-American, 2.5 % Caucasian/Hispanic, 2.5% Native American, 2.5% other, and 14.5% of the mothers did not indicate their ethnicities. For the tween girls, 61% of the sample was Caucasian, 29% African American, 2.5% Caucasian/Hispanic, 2.5% Native American, 2.5% Caucasian/African American, and 2.5% other.

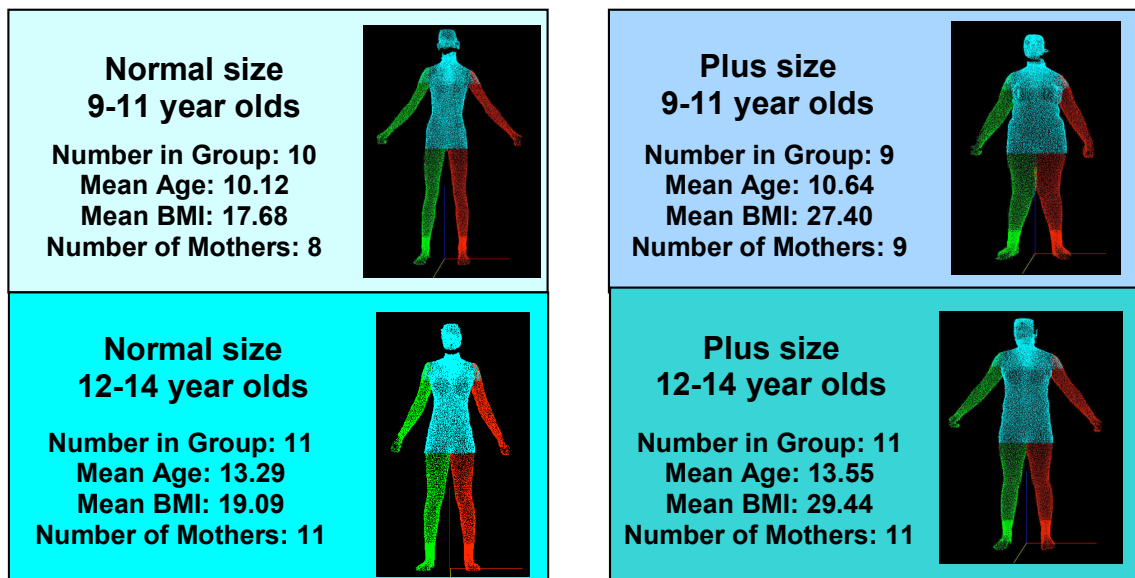


Figure 5. Tween focus group layout with sample statistics

The age range of 9-14 was chosen because the researchers felt that this was the most common age range considered in the tween marketing demographic. In recognizing the vast changes (socially and physically) that females undergo between the ages of 9 and 14, mothers and daughters were placed in these age-and-BMI-defined groups in order to capture the concerns of younger and older tweens in both the normal and plus size categories. These subgroups were some of the subgroups identified in the literature review. It was thought that by placing the tweens in groups of similarly aged girls, they would be more verbal. A 9-year-old participating in a group discussion with 14-year-olds might not feel comfortable because of the physical and social differences between the two tween age groups.

#### Procedures

A series of eight focus groups (four groups of daughters and four groups of mothers) were conducted over two nonconsecutive days in October 2004. Focus group participants were recruited through non-probabilistic sampling to fill the focus groups with a goal of having ten to twelve tween girls per group. Experienced moderators conducted each focus group. The moderator of the tween girls group was a specialist in childhood development and had prior experience moderating focus groups. The moderator for the mothers' focus groups was an experienced moderator and an expert in apparel and consumer research. Both moderators were given scripted questions to ask each group.

Auburn researchers conducted focus groups, collected questionnaire responses, and gathered body scans from both tween girls and their mothers. Additionally, each tween girl was asked to create a collage of a favorite new outfit that she would want to

buy for school or meeting friends. These collages were then used in the tween girls' focus groups both as icebreakers and as a visual image of what these tween girls look for or expect when they go shopping. These collages spurred the conversation of the focus groups and data collection related to the collages was in the form of dialogue. Though each of these activities produced different types of data, the focus group dialogue was the primary source of analysis, and the other types of data (questionnaire and body scan) were used to supplement analysis of the transcripts in an attempt to paint a clearer picture of the tween girls and their relationships to apparel.

As shown earlier in Figure 5, the tween girls were divided into groups based on both age and BMI classification. Older tween girls and their mothers participated in focus groups on October 9, 2004, and younger tween girls and their mothers participated in focus groups on October 30, 2004. On each day of data collection, the normal and plus size tween girls and their mothers were interviewed at different times in the day (i.e. one group of mothers and daughters came in the morning and the other group in the afternoon). This segmentation prevented the normal size tween girls and their mothers and plus size tween girls and their mothers from being in the building at the same time. Primarily, this was done in order to prevent the tween girls and their mothers from inferring the nature of this study. Each focus group lasted from 45 minutes to a little over an hour, and participants were only referred to by first name to protect their personal privacy.

## Instrumentation

### *Focus Group Discussion*

Because of the exploratory nature of this research, focus group discussion was chosen as a method for investigating tween girls and their relationships to apparel. Particularly of interest were the ways the tween girls expressed shopping attitudes and influences, sizing and fit preferences, and general body size and self-esteem issues. Mothers of the tween girls participated in simultaneous but separate focus groups. They explored the same issues related to shopping for apparel with and/or for their daughter. A scripted line of questions guided the discussion for each group and is included in Appendix A. These covered topics such as tween shopping attitudes and influences, sizing and fit, and body size and self-esteem. Videotapes and audiotapes of each focus group were recorded for transcription.

The basic assumption of this study was that focus group participants were able to understand questions asked by the moderators and were honest in their responses. Another assumption of this study was that although focus group participants were chosen by convenience sampling, content analysis of participant responses to targeted questions enabled the researcher to find generalized themes which relate to understanding the apparel preferences, apparel needs, and apparel availability of the designated subgroups of tween consumers. It is also thought that an analysis of younger normal size, younger plus size, older normal size, and older plus size tween girls and their mothers enabled the unique needs of the plus size tween girls to be discovered as well as showed if the observed differences are related to the age of the tween. As themes emerged from the

focus group scripts, the questionnaire and 3-D body scan data were examined for their explanatory potential.

### *Questionnaire*

The questionnaires (see Appendix B) developed by Auburn University researchers, based on published instruments, were used to assess various aspects of apparel relationships of tweens and their mothers. The questionnaire given to the tween girls examined how they choose clothes to buy and wear, magazine readership, peer influences, familial influences, and personal assessment of their bodies. The questionnaire given to the mothers consisted of four sections which covered topics related to apparel shopping for their daughters, perceived attractiveness of tween girls, personal shopping preferences for themselves, magazine readership, body image, and personal family information and demographics. The information from these questionnaires was used to supplement focus group discussion analysis. Findings from the questionnaire were presented as they were reported in the unpublished dissertation of Lee (2006).

### *3-D Body Scans*

Three-dimensional body scans were taken of each subject (both mother and daughter). The participants were scanned using the [TC]<sup>2</sup> 3-D body scanner onsite at the [TC]<sup>2</sup> offices in Cary, North Carolina, where the focus groups took place. Participants were scanned using normal protocol outlined in the [TC]<sup>2</sup> NX-12 Operations Manual. For purposes of this research, these images, as shown in Figure 5, were used as illustrations to demonstrate the body shapes and sizes of the participants as well as suggest relationships between body shapes and sizes and tween girl apparel preferences, needs, and availability.

## Data Analysis

As mentioned previously, this study was exploratory in nature and qualitative content analysis was thought to be the best method for assessing the focus group data. In content analysis, there are two categories: inductive and deductive. Each of these categories are illustrated in Figure 2. The research questions that guided this inductive content data analysis were as follows:

1. Apparel Preferences (i.e., desired styles and fashion sensibilities of consumers)
  - a. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel preferences?
  - b. Do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel preferences for their daughters?
  - c. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express different opinions about apparel preferences than their mothers?
2. Apparel Needs (i.e., actual and perceived needs of consumers with respect to apparel)
  - a. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel needs?
  - b. Do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel needs for their daughters?

- c. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express different opinions about apparel needs than their mothers?
- 3. Apparel Availability (i.e., how easy or hard it is for consumers to find what they are looking for in terms of apparel in the marketplace)
  - a. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different issues with respect to the availability of apparel in the market place?
  - b. Do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different issues with respect to the availability of apparel for their daughters in the market place?
  - c. Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express different opinions about apparel availability than their mothers?
- 4. Body Image (i.e., “The disparity between estimated current body image and ideal body image” (Fitzgibbon, Blackman, & Avellone, 2000, p. 583))
  - a. How do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express their body image through conversation?
  - b. How do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express their images of their daughter’s bodies through conversation?

To begin the process of inductive analysis, the researcher watched the DVD of each focus group. In this process, the researcher made notes and highlighted different themes that characterized the conversations of the focus groups. These themes were combined with the pre-ordained categories established by the focus group scripts

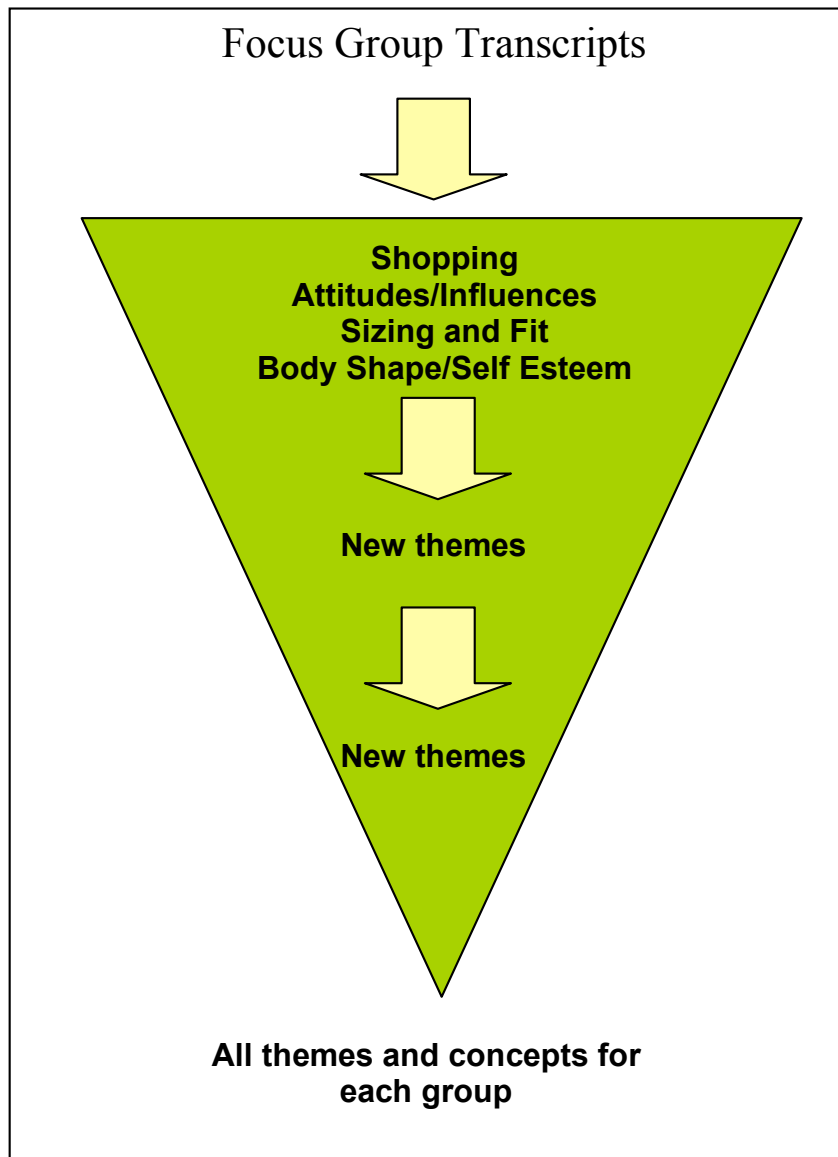
(Appendix A). These pre-ordained categories were: shopping attitudes and influences, sizing and fit, and body size and self-esteem. Each of the eight focus group discussions were then transcribed verbatim noting each participant's dialogue by either first name (if it was used in the discussion) or the first letter of their first name. Once transcribed, the transcripts were reviewed alongside a DVD recording of the focus group to clear up any garbled speech from the cassette recordings, as well as to double check the accuracy of the transcription. Once the data set was complete and accurate, the researcher then re-watched each focus group DVD and made another iteration of notes of any themes or any key phrases that appeared to be important per each scripted focus group question. Once identified, these themes and phrases were analyzed to identify topical categories.

The emerging theme method for content analysis, as presented in Marshall and Rossman (1989) and illustrated in Figure 3 (Mayring, 2000), was used to extract themes in the data and answer the research questions. This data reduction method assisted the researcher in capturing "conceptually intriguing phrases," while parsing the data into manageable chunks (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). In using the emergent theme method, the generalized themes of shopping attitudes/influences, sizing and fit, and body size/self esteem delineated from the focus group scripts served as the basis for segmenting the data during the first stages of analysis. To bring validity to this methodology, a member check with the researcher's research advisors (shown as formative and summative checks of reliability in the Mayring (2000) illustration), was used to validate the identified themes at several steps along the analysis process such that as much researcher bias could be eliminated as possible. In following the generalized ideas of content analysis, one can compare these emergent themes with sieves through which the data can be processed



(Marshall & Rossman, 1989). By using increasingly finer sieves and two member checks for validity, the data was systematically reduced, allowing previously hidden concepts to emerge. Essentially, this means that as a theme was identified, the data was re-processed to look for either support or denial of this theme. This idea is presented in Figure 6.

Once themes were identified, Venn diagrams, similar to the one in Figure 4, were constructed. The age and BMI segments intrinsic within the sample enabled the researcher to perform compare and contrast analysis among the Venn diagrams of emergent themes of the different groups and thus explore similarities and differences between younger and older tween girls and their mothers, as well as similarities and differences between the normal and plus size tween girls and their mothers. This information was supplemented with additional data from the questionnaire and body scans, which enabled the researcher to explore the multidimensionality of the data and enhance the understanding of this consumer group. Figure 7 illustrates this process as well as shows how the final Venn diagrams illustrate the emergent themes.



*Figure 6.* Illustration of the emerging theme method of content analysis with respect to focus group analysis and sieve metaphor.

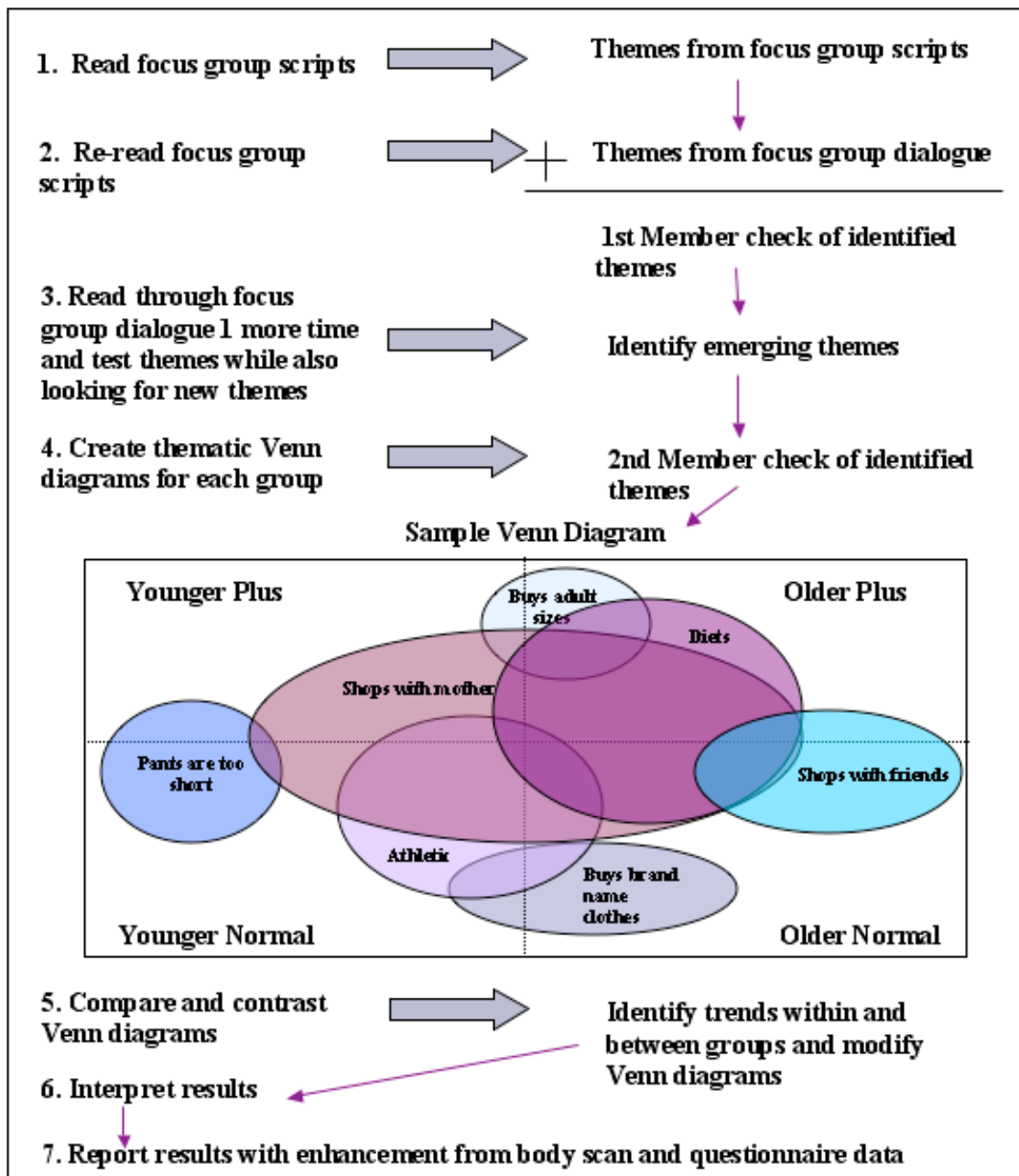


Figure 7. Outline of methodology with sample Venn diagram.

#### IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data in this chapter were obtained from eight focus groups composed of four sets of tween girls and their mothers. The focus groups were scripted to facilitate discussion as well as ensure similar topical dialogue among the eight groups. Mothers and daughters were asked parallel sets of questions; each pair also completed questionnaires and was scanned using a 3-D body scanner developed by [TC]<sup>2</sup>. Primary data analysis included content analysis of focus group dialogue, which was supplemented by questionnaire and body scan data.

##### Description of Sample

A convenience sample was drawn from a population surrounding Raleigh, NC. A total of 80 subjects participated in the study. There were 41 tween girls, and 39 mothers. Two mothers brought more than one child, which was why in the younger normal size group there were only eight mothers, but ten daughters. To maintain confidentiality, all subjects were assigned a number, and during the focus groups, only first names were used. In soliciting subjects, mothers were asked their daughter's age as well as to estimate the height and weight of their daughter. From this information, girls were assigned to one of four groups: younger normal size, younger plus size, older normal size, and older plus size. Mothers were categorized by their daughter's group. Focus group characterization and demographic information is presented in Chapter II and Figure 5. Each focus group was tape-recorded and videotaped. Transcripts of each focus group were prepared from

the audiotapes, and the videos were used to confirm the accuracy of the transcripts. All quotes presented in this report were derived directly from the transcripts and were not edited for grammar or speech problems. Questionnaire data were coded and input into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Images of all of the 3-D body scans were collected for each participant.

#### Description of Content Analysis Technique

The transcribed focus groups were analyzed using the emerging theme method for content analysis, as presented in Marshall and Rossman (1989) and discussed in the methodology section. This method was employed by the analyst to systematically identify themes in the focus group dialogue. Specifically, the analyst went through the following procedure:

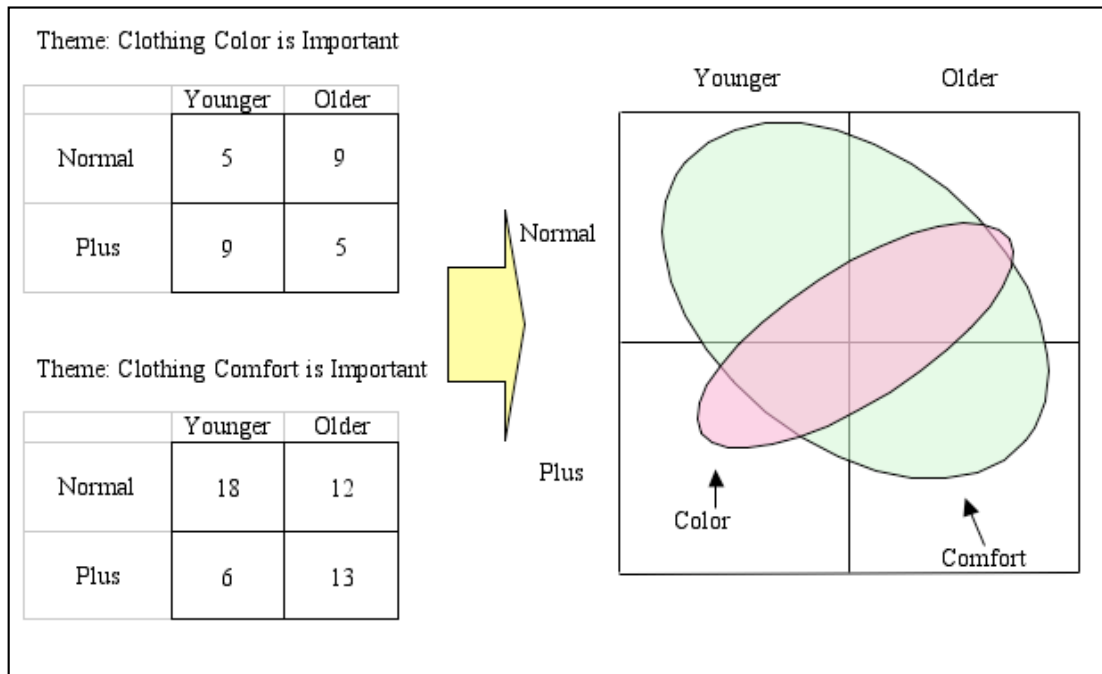
1. Read through the focus group scripts and identified emerging themes through a frequency count of common dialogue.
2. Compiled a list of themes from the frequency counts.
3. Conducted a member check of identified themes.
4. Re-read the focus group scripts and verified existing themes through another frequency count, while also looking for new themes.
5. Characterized each identified theme as relating to apparel preferences, apparel needs, apparel availability, or body image.
6. Constructed thematic Venn diagrams for each theme.
7. Conducted a second member check of identified themes.
8. Compared and contrasted Venn diagrams.
9. Interpreted results.

10. Reported results and when possible, included enhancement from body scan and questionnaire data.

The following is a sample analysis from the data. It was provided in order to clarify the specific method used as well as assure that the methodology is repeatable. In conducting the frequency count of common dialogue, the researcher determined intuitive linkages within the text. For example, tween girls in all groups consistently stated things like, “my favorite color is blue . . . I picked this shirt because it’s all kind of colors blue” (younger plus size tween) and “I chose this outfit because I like pink and blue together,” (younger normal size tween), which the researcher interpreted as the theme *clothing color is important*. *Clothing color is important* was characterized as a theme related to apparel preference because apparel color is related to a desired style or fashion sensibility. If a focus group participant agreed with a previous statement by saying things like “yes, me too” or “yeah,” or if they answered a direct question related to a specific topic such as “is color important to you?” with a “yes” or “no,” then their responses were added to the frequency count. Two by two tables, as shown by the sample in Figure 8, were used to conduct the frequency count. A topic was counted twice if that topic was mentioned more than once by the same person under different contexts. If, however, the topic was mentioned twice by the same person within the same context, then it was only counted once.

After completing two frequency counts, the themes were segmented under each heading (i.e. apparel preferences, apparel needs, apparel availability, or body image) and any discrepancies for each theme were handled. This was done by averaging the counts from the two readings and rounding to the nearest whole number. For example, if a

theme had a frequency count of 4 in the first count, but a frequency count of 5 for the second, then these numbers would be averaged to 4.5 and rounded to the nearest whole number, 5. This was done to ease the conversion from the numeric frequency counts to the visual format of the Venn diagrams. Once the themes were identified and frequency counts compiled and verified through two readings of the focus group transcripts, a third and final reading was done in order to pull key quotes of supporting evidence from the text. Following these conversions, Venn diagrams, as described in the methodology section, were created in order to visualize the scope and magnitude of the various themes and to show how important the themes were to the eight groups of tween girls and their mothers. A sample Venn diagram is also shown in Figure 8. It is important to note that at first, groups of tween girls were compared to each other while moms were compared to other groups of moms. Mother/daughter comparisons took place after the Venn diagrams were constructed. Then, the researcher utilized body scan and questionnaire data to enhance understanding of the focus group themes. It is also important to note, as each theme was defined and supported with evidence, the sample focus group statements were provided verbatim, and thus inconsistencies in speech, particularly for the girls, exist. These inconsistencies included repetitive words, garbled speech, nonsense phrases, and the use of filler words such as “um” or “hmmmm.”



*Figure 8.* Sample of content analysis methodology

*Note.* The left portion represents a sample frequency count, and the right hand side represents a sample Venn diagram. In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

### Summary of Findings

Discussions of findings related to the specific research questions are presented below. Each question was analyzed first through frequency charts and Venn diagrams and then, if relevant, supplemented by questionnaire and body scan data.



## Apparel Preferences

Research Question 1 a: Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel preferences?

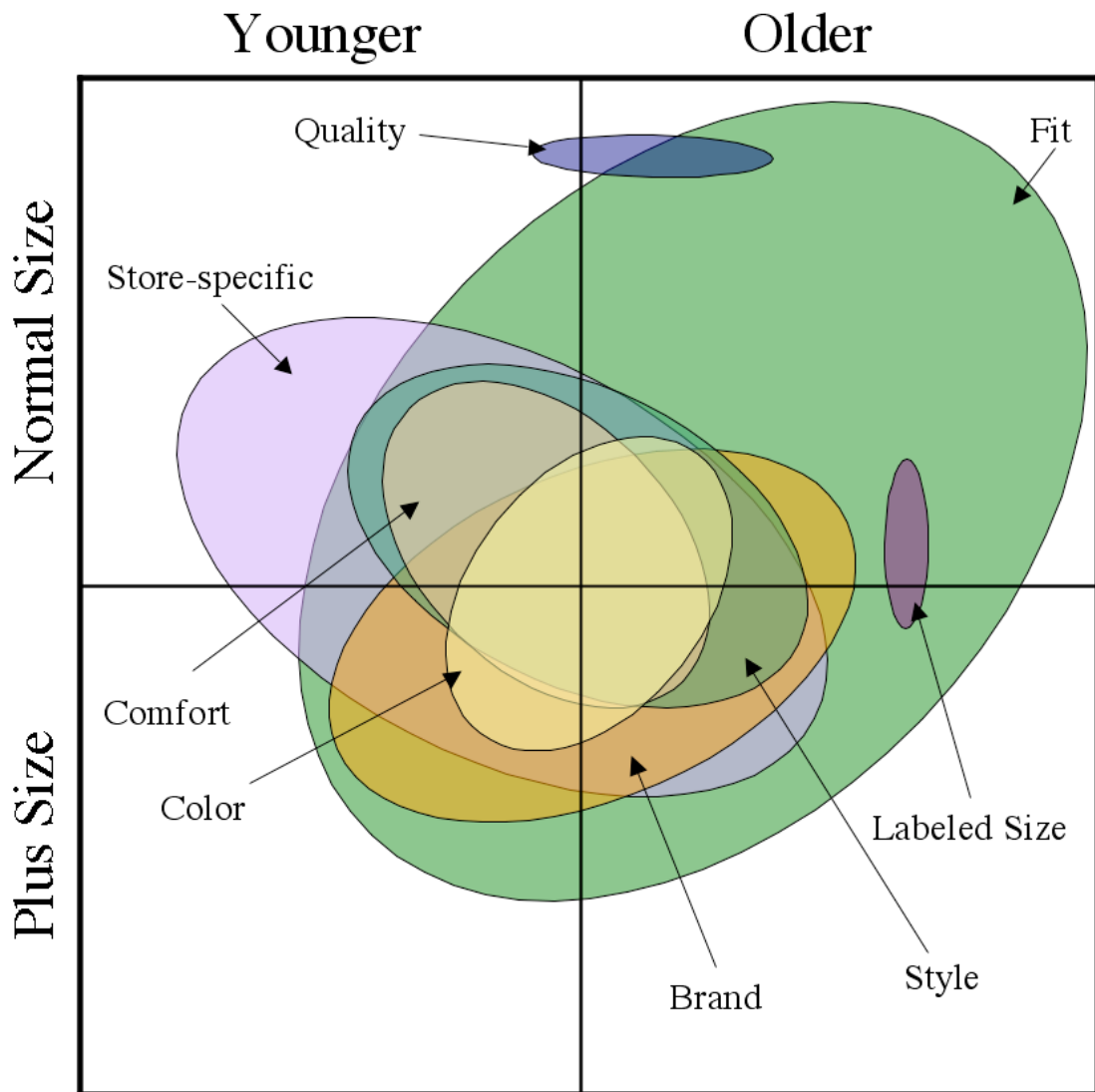
### *Apparel Preferences of Tween Girls*

Content analysis of the girls' focus groups revealed eight themes related to apparel preferences. These themes are listed in Table 2 along with frequency counts for each group. Following Table 2 is Figure 9, the Venn diagram derived from the data.

Table 2

#### *Frequency Counts of Emergent Apparel Preference Themes of Tween Girls*

Emergent Themes	Younger	Older	Younger	Older	Total
	Normal	Normal	Plus	Plus	
	(N = 10)	(N = 11)	(N = 9)	(N = 11)	
Brand	9	18	15	18	60
Color	4	7	9	4	24
Comfort	9	6	6	5	26
Fit	27	49	16	22	114
Labeled Size	0	3	0	1	4
Quality	1	4	0	0	5
Store-specific	27	18	25	21	91
Style	6	12	6	10	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>331</b>



*Figure 9.* Diagram of emergent apparel preference themes from tween girl focus groups.

*Note.* In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

### *Theme Explanation and Interpretation*

Each of these apparel preference themes implies various factors that are important to tween girls in choosing apparel and should be interpreted as such. For instance, the theme *color* should be interpreted as the notion that color is an important factor in tween girls' expression of their apparel preferences. In the next sections, each theme is described in more detail, and key quotes and other supporting evidence provide illustrations showing how the girls expressed the various facets of their apparel preferences.

*Brand.* Apparel brand was an important facet of tween girls' expression of their apparel preferences. Tween girls consistently mentioned brand throughout focus group discussions. Sometimes they described them in a positive manner, and other times they discussed brands negatively. An example of a positive brand expression was, "That is my store. Macy's. It [Macy's] carries, like urban clothes, like Rocawear [and] Baby Phat." (older normal size tween). An example of a slightly negative brand discussion was:

I know my little sister has the same problem, and the only brand that I have found, and this is pretty sad, it has been the Wal-mart Faded Glory brand, because they fit me and they're, they fit right; it's just that they're Wal-mart brand, (older normal size tween).

Here this tween expressed that although Wal-mart's brand fits her, she was not pleased that it is the only brand available to fit her body type. Regardless of the expression of brand (positive or negative), the researcher measured the importance of brand to the tween girls, and thus any mention of a brand was included in the frequency count. In

addition, the tweens indicated on the questionnaire that brand was important in clothing decision factors, but was not the most important factor. The mean score for the importance of brand on a five-point Likert-type scale, with five meaning the factor is always important, was 2.59 (SD = 1.245) (Lee, 2006, p. 91). Most of the brand discussion centered around the tweens responding to the names of brands they liked or disliked. Other examples of brand discussion were, “Well first with my jeans, I like Tommy Hilfiger jeans,” (younger plus size tween), and “my mom likes to shop like for me like at Kohl’s and stuff, but I don’t really like to shop there because I like name brand stuff really . . . Volcom and Billabong and Quicksilver, Roxy, stuff like that” (older plus size tween). Table 3 shows the compiled list of brands and the brand names mentioned in each group. Check marks indicate that the brand was either mentioned or discussed in the focus group.

*Color.* Throughout the focus group discussions, some of the tween girls referred to specific colors when discussing why they made certain apparel purchase decisions or expressed their apparel preferences. Some statements that showed this were, “I picked this outfit and I picked it because I kind of like pink,” (younger normal size tween) and “I chose these two outfits because um, there’s pink in them, and that’s my favorite color.” (older normal size tween). In each case, the tween girls were describing why they picked an outfit that they would purchase out of a magazine. Lee’s (2006) findings from the questionnaire supported the theme of color as an important factor in describing tween girl apparel preferences. The mean color score on a five-point Likert-type scale for tween girls in this sample, with five meaning the factor is always important, was 3.15 (SD = 1.062) (Lee, 2006, p. 91).

Table 3

*Brands Mentioned by Tween Girls in the Focus Groups*

Brands	Younger	Older	Younger	Older
	Normal	Normal	Plus	Plus
	(N = 10)	(N = 11)	(N = 9)	(N = 11)
Abercrombie	✓	✓		✓
Abercrombie and Fitch		✓		✓
Aeropostle	✓	✓		✓
American Eagle				✓
Baby Phat				✓
Billabong			✓	
Claire's		✓		✓
Delia's	✓			
Energie	✓			
Faded Glory			✓	
Gap	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hollister		✓		
Hot Topic			✓	
J. Crew				✓
Just My Size			✓	
L.E.I.	✓			✓

Table 3 (Continued)

Brands	Younger	Older	Younger	Older
	Normal	Normal	Plus	Plus
	(N = 10)	(N = 11)	(N = 9)	(N = 11)
Lee	✓			
Lerner				✓
Limited			✓	
Limited Too		✓		✓
LL Bean				✓
Mudd	✓		✓	✓
Old Navy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pac Sun			✓	
Paul Frank			✓	
Polo				✓
Quicksilver			✓	
Rave		✓		
Rainbow	✓			
Riders	✓			
Rocawear	✓		✓	✓
Tommy Hilfiger	✓		✓	✓
Volcom			✓	
Wet Seal	✓		✓	✓

*Comfort.* Apparel comfort was an important theme that emerged in the tween girl focus groups. When describing apparel, the tween girls consistently expressed the following ideas:

- “I just like comfortable shirts” (older normal size tween).
- “I chose this one because it looks really comfortable, and I like it a lot” (older normal size tween).
- “Um, they have low prices and the stuff that they have is comfortable” (younger plus size tween).
- “and like these pants I really like cuz they’re tight up here but a little looser down here . . . and they’re not high waters . . . and they’re comfortable. They’re really, really comfortable” (older plus size tween).

This notion was backed up by questionnaire data, which showed that tween girls rated clothing comfort as an important factor in deciding what clothes to wear. The mean comfort score on a five-point Likert-type scale, with five meaning the factor is always important, for tween girls in this sample was 4.05 (SD = 0.947) (Lee, 2006, p. 91).

*Fit.* Clothing that fits emerged as the most supported theme for all of the focus groups. The concept of fit as an apparel preference was noted by the researcher as a description of the tween girls’ desired fit. It is important to make this distinction because fit can also be interpreted as an apparel need, and this perspective will be discussed later. For the most part, the tween girls were able to specifically verbalize how they wanted their clothes to hang on their bodies. In the following quote, the tween girl described how she wanted her jeans to fit: “I like them to be like . . . skinny fit like up at your thighs and then kinda loose when it gets down” (older plus size tween). Fit was linked to

style preferences for the tween girls; they tended to use the word “fit” to describe a certain desired style of garment. For example, “I like pants that are tight and I like those stretch jeans, not like the real jeans, cuz they’re hard to bend in, and I like them to [be] tight and I like to wear my pants really low, because it’s like uncomfortable to wear them high” (younger normal size tween). In this quote, the tween girl described how she wanted her pants to fit. She also described how she wanted the jeans to look and indicated that comfort was important to her. Other quotes related to fit preferences were as follows:

- “My mom likes me to wear clothes that fit me, and they’re good for my body and my dad likes me to wear baggy clothes and I don’t know” (older plus size tween).
- “I’ll go because, just because, they have a lot of clearance sales and they have stuff that that best fits me” (younger plus size tween).
- “Well, um I love my jeans if they’re like not like the stretch ones that are so tight on you, and but the problem is they’re always too long on me. So I always have to get my aunt or my other aunt to hem them up and then in about two months I’ve already grown a lot so they have to take the hem out and sometimes they cut them so I have to throw them away or give them away, and get more jeans and then the same processes over and over again” (younger plus size tween).
- “I kinda like don’t like them too tight or like too like big, and I kinda like them to go like right to my like waist” (younger normal size tween).



- “I have to go up in size to fit around my waist and my butt but then they’re either like too baggy in the legs or too long” (older normal size tween).
- “I don’t like tops that are real loose like you can pull them up and whatever, I hate tops like that. I like them to fit and sometimes like the shirt I have on now, not too tight but it’s not too loose” (older normal size tween).
- “Um I know like a lot of shirts for me like they’ll come down to my waist . . . like they’re all the way down to my finger tips. And like I have to wrinkle them up and pull them up and then, when I put my hand back down they just fall. So that really bothers me” (older normal size tween).
- “ I love the way it feels when I have like long sleeves on my jacket, like I can pull them over my hands” (older normal size tween).

Questionnaire data supported this theme of fit as an important theme in describing tween apparel preferences. The mean fit score on a five-point Likert-type scale, with five meaning the factor is always important, for tween girls in this sample was 4.34 (SD = 0.762) (Lee, 2006, p. 91).

*Labeled size.* The tween girls revealed sensitivity when expressing the importance of the size indicated on a garment’s label. The most poignant example occurred in the older plus size focus group when one of the tween girls said that she would not shop with her friends because she did not want them to see the size of her pants; she expressed embarrassment over her larger size and did not want her peers to know how big she was. “I mostly like to shop with um sometimes my friends but not

really cuz I don't really want them to know my size in my pants even though there's . . . I'm kind of self-conscious about that" (older plus size tween).

*Store-specific.* Throughout all of the focus groups, the tween girls named stores towards which they either had positive or negative affinity. These store-specific apparel preferences emerged through quotes like "I like Hollister" (younger normal size tween) and ". . . if you were to go to Target, like there's a lot of like cute things there" (younger normal size tween). These were examples of tween girls expressed a positive affinity towards a certain store. The tween girls also expressed negative feelings toward some stores. An example of this was:

Cuz I like, I would like to shop at Pac Sun and stores like Delia's and stuff it's just that I can't find the stuff in my size there and the stores like American Eagle that I can find the stuff in my size is too expensive (older plus size tween).

In this quote, the tween girl was essentially saying she would like to shop in these stores, but either the stores did not carry her size or were too expensive.

It was more common for the plus than normal size tween girls to express negative feelings about a store. For example one plus size tween girl said, "Pac cuz I couldn't cuz I've been to Pac Sun several times in several different malls . . . and they don't have the stuff in my size" (older plus size tween). Another older plus size tween said:

OK, it's hard cuz some people are real thick and then they're real small. But small people, those are stores you can go to like Rave's. Rave's cuz if you're real small and then other stores where like probably me and you you really can't find nothin' cuz they won't have it in your size or it's too much showin' or it's just you won't you don't look right in it.

Still another older plus size tween said:

Um, I think it's real hard to find like stuff that you want for people that are, you know, I guess, kinda big because like most of the really popular stores that have like really, really good clothes like Gap and Rave and Delia's and that kind of stuff, it [is] for really small people. And like they don't have like bigger sizes and I think they should.

Table 4 lists each store (both brick and mortar and online) that the tween girls mentioned, and shows whether they expressed positive (green shading) or negative (red shading) opinions about the store. Boxes that are half red and half green indicate that tween girls in that particular focus group expressed both positive and negative opinions about that store.

Table 4

*Apparel Stores Mentioned in Tween Girl Focus Groups*

Store Name	Younger Normal (N = 10)	Older Normal (N = 11)	Younger Plus (N = 9)	Older Plus (N = 11)
Abercrombie	Red	Green		Green
Abercrombie and Fitch		Green Red		Green
Aeropostle	Red	Green		Green
American Eagle			Red	Green
Avenue	Green			

(Continued)

Table 4 (Continued)

Store Name	Younger Normal (N = 10)	Older Normal (N = 11)	Younger Plus (N = 9)	Older Plus (N = 11)
Belk's				
Bloomingdale's				
Burlington				
Coat Factory				
Cato				
Charlotte Russe				
Citi Trend				
Claire's				
Delia's				
Dick's Sporting				
Goods				
Dillard's				
Dress Barn				
eBay				
Fashion Avenue				
Fashion Cents				
Funky Rags				
Gap				

(Continued)

Table 4 (Continued)

Store Name	Younger Normal (N = 10)	Older Normal (N = 11)	Younger Plus (N = 9)	Older Plus (N = 11)
Goody's			Green	
Guess			Red	
Hecht's				Green
Hollister	Red	Green		
Hot Topic			Green	
J. Crew				Green
JC Penney	Green	Green	Green	Green
John Allen's	Green	Green	Green	Green
K-mart			Green	
Kohl's	Green	Green	Green	Green
Lerner New	Green	Green	Green	Green
York				Green
Limited			Green	
Limited Too	Red	Green		Green
LL Bean				Green
Macy's			Green	Green
Old Navy	Green	Green	Green	Green
Pac Sun			Green	Red
Plato's Closet	Green			

(Continued)

Table 4 (Continued)

Store Name	Younger Normal (N = 10)	Older Normal (N = 11)	Younger Plus (N = 9)	Older Plus (N = 11)
Rack Room	█			
Shoes	█			
Rainbow	█			
Rave		█	█	
Ross		█	█	█
Sears	█			
Shoe Carnival	█			
Skateboard			█	
Shops			█	
Target	█	█	█	█
The Body Shop			█	
TJ Maxx			█	█
Vertical Urge			█	
Wal-mart	█	█	█	█
Wet Seal	█	█	█	█

*Style.* As previously noted in the discussion of fit preferences, the tween girls commonly mixed terms when discussing apparel fit and apparel style. Regardless of this, both themes emerged as factors effecting tween girl apparel preferences. An example of a tween girl describing both fit and style preferences was:

When it's hard to find the jeans that fit you, if you go and look at like the petites and the shorts and stuff, a lot of times it's not the wash that you want or like they have that really, really basic styles but you want like the other styles that come in the regular sizes stuff (older normal size tween).

Here, the tween girl was discussing problems with size and style availability for jeans, while also stating that she would prefer to have the styles of regular jeans in her size. Generally, the tween girls in these focus groups were very specific in describing the styles that they desired, such as baggy pants, jeans with flare, or layered t-shirts.

*Quality.* Though not a major theme, several tween girls mentioned the importance of high quality, well-made clothes when describing their apparel preferences. Mainly these tween girls said that they would pay more for higher quality clothes and that they preferred clothes that lasted a long time. A sample comment was “the pants would probably be about 30-40 dollars cuz they're like really good quality pant” (older normal size tween). They spoke negatively of clothing that was either too thin (such as a lightweight cotton t-shirt) or falling apart (such as aged blue jeans).

#### *Similarities and Differences in Apparel Preferences Among Subgroups of Tween Girls*

Among the tween girls groups, older girls generally expressed more opinions about their apparel preferences. Although all groups of tween girls were able to articulate what they looked for in terms of apparel fit, comfort, brand, store, and so on, the older

tween girls expressed more often their thoughts and feelings about apparel preferences. More specifically, older normal size tween girls expressed the most in terms of apparel preferences. In addition to this age-related finding, normal size tween girls expressed more specific apparel preferences than plus size girls. Overall, fit preferences, store-specific, brand, and style were the major themes for these tween girls. Other less important themes were style, comfort, and color. Minor themes were quality and labeled size.

Fit preference emerged as the predominate theme in all four of the tween girl focus groups. In terms of an apparel preference, fit is defined by the author to be a description of the tween girls' desired fit. The tween girls expressed fit as an apparel preference by describing things like how they want clothes to hang on their bodies, where they wanted waistbands to sit, and how long or short they wanted sleeves and pant legs. Normal size tween girls more often expressed fit preferences than plus size tween girls, but in both sets of tween girls (normal or plus size), the older tween girls expressed more in terms of fit than the younger tween girls.

Second to fit preferences, store-specific apparel preferences emerged as an important theme. Though in each focus group, different stores were mentioned, overall the theme of store-specific apparel preferences was fairly evenly dispersed among the groups. The younger tween girls mentioned more store-specific preferences than the older tween girls. It is unclear why the younger tween girls were more verbal about store preferences than the older tween girls and further research should be conducted to confirm and explain this finding. Table 4 highlights the specific store preferences of the tween girls, and is separated by group.



Brand emerged as the third most noted theme overall. Overall, brand was mentioned more often in the older and plus size focus groups. Younger normal size tween girls did not refer to brand when discussing apparel preferences as often as the other three groups. Table 3 shows the different brands mentioned by each group of tweens. It is not surprising that brand and store-specific themes closely followed one another because in apparel, brand name and store name are closely related, particularly with private label goods. Private labels such as Abercrombie & Fitch, Wet Seal, and J. Crew make brand name and store name difficult to distinguish.

Style preferences were difficult to distinguish from fit preferences because the tween girls tended to mix the terms style and fit when describing specific garments such as pants or shirts. The researcher separated these two themes by deciding if the described garment features were more related to stylistic, non functional features such as flare versus more fit related features such as inseam length. Older tween girls expressed more in terms of style preferences than younger tween girls, and there did not appear to be a discrepancy between normal and plus size tween girls.

Themes of comfort and color appeared to be more equally represented themes in all of the focus groups. Questionnaire data confirmed that there were no significant differences between the groups with respect to apparel color and comfort decision factors (Lee, 2006). Minor themes of labeled size and quality only appeared in a few of the groups. Labeled size only came forth in the older normal and older plus size tween girl focus groups. Finally, preferences for apparel quality emerged only in the normal size tween girl focus groups. Thus, in answering the research question, these findings suggest

that yes, younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel preferences.

Research Question 1 b: Do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel preferences for their daughters?

### *Apparel Preferences of Tween Girls as Expressed by Their Mothers*

Content analysis of the mothers' focus groups revealed many themes related to apparel preferences for their daughters. These themes are listed in Table 5 along with frequency counts for each group. Following Table 5 is Figure 10, which shows the Venn diagram derived from the data.

### *Theme Explanation and Interpretation*

Each of the apparel preference themes reflect various factors that were important to mothers of tween girls in choosing apparel for their daughters and should be interpreted as such. For instance, the theme *brand* should be interpreted as the notion that mothers of tweens thought that brand was an important factor in their daughters' apparel preferences. Each theme is described in more detail in the next section; key quotes and other supporting evidence are provided to illustrate each theme and to show how the mothers of tween girls expressed the various facets of apparel preferences of and for their daughters.

*Brand.* Mothers of tween girls identified apparel brand as an important facet of the tweens' expression of apparel preferences. Sometimes the mothers discussed brands in a positive manner, and other times they described brands negatively. An example of a positive brand discussion was, "L.E.I., that, those are the jeans that we have gotten at Belk's that fits her [my daughter] really well" (mother of older normal size tween).

Negative examples were “[my daughter is] not into a brand name because she’s too big” (mother of older plus size tween), and “We don’t buy brand name; we buy what fits” (mother of older plus size tween). It is important to note that the mothers of older tween

Table 5

*Frequency Counts of Emergent Apparel Preference Themes of Tween Girls as Expressed by Their Mothers*

	Mothers of Younger Normal Size Tweens (N = 8)	Mothers of Older Normal Size Tweens (N = 11)	Mothers of Younger Plus Size Tweens (N = 9)	Mothers of Older Plus Size Tweens (N = 11)	Total
Brand	1	19	9	16	45
Comfort	2	3	3	6	14
Fit	10	10	19	42	81
Labeled Size	0	0	2	18	20
Quality	10	18	0	5	33
Sales/Price	10	6	9	2	27
Store- specific	14	11	14	16	53
Style	6	16	8	21	51
Total	53	83	64	126	326

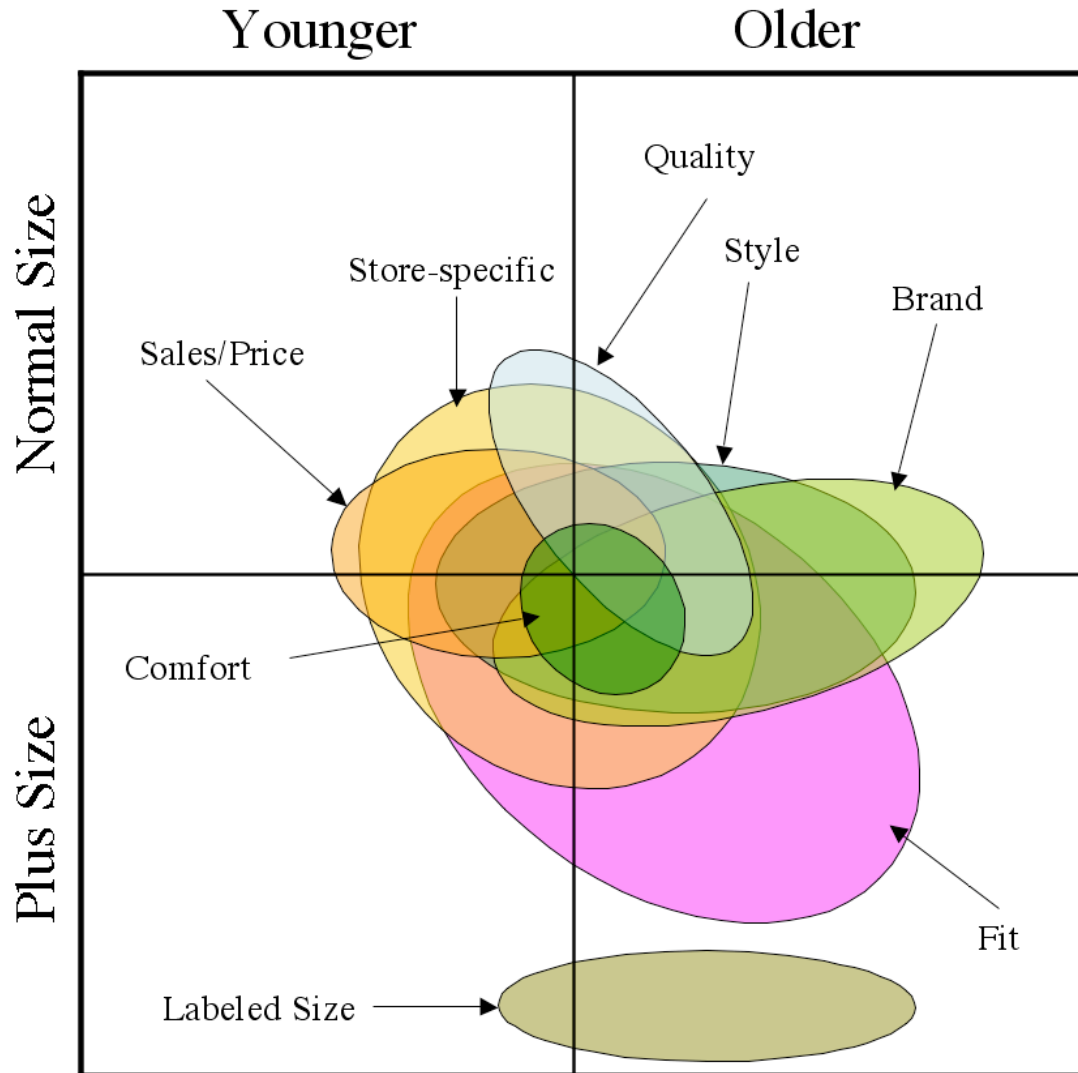


Figure 10. Diagram of emergent tween girl apparel preference themes from mothers' focus groups.

Note. In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

girls spoke much more about brands than the mothers of younger tween girls, and when asked, “how important is brand to your daughter?” mothers in the older plus size group unanimously answered “very.” The mothers’ mean score for the importance of brand on a five-point Likert-type scale, with five meaning the factor is always important, was 2.49 (SD = 1.502), and was not significantly different from the daughters’ average score (Lee, 2006, p. 91). This evidence supports the qualitative evidence that mothers and daughters appeared to value brand fairly equally.

*Comfort.* Comfort emerged as an important apparel preference theme for the mothers, meaning that mothers of tween girls perceived comfort to be an important factor for their daughter’s apparel preferences. Mothers of tween girls expressed this theme through statements such as “she [my daughter] likes to be comfortable in her clothes” (mother of older plus size tween). The mean comfort score on a five-point Likert-type scale, with five meaning the factor is always important, for mothers of tween girls in this sample was 3.56 (SD = 1.141) (Lee, 2006, p. 91). This was significantly different than the daughters.

*Fit.* Much like their daughters, mothers in this sample identified fit as an important theme in apparel preferences for their daughter. The concept of fit as an apparel preference is noted by the author as a specific description of the mothers’ expression of a desired fit for their daughters. As previously stated, it is important to make distinctions in the meaning of the word fit because fit can be interpreted in many different ways. The mothers specifically verbalized how they wanted their daughters’ clothes to hang on the body. Some examples were:

- We [my daughter and I] try and buy them [pants] with like the spandex in the [waist] . . . because those just tend to fit a little better so you can buy them a smidge small and then they stay on, cuz she almost never wears a belt (mother of older normal size tween).
- And they [retailers] make it [jeans] what it is, it's still not it's not you know the crotch length isn't long enough for like a woman, so the kids don't . . . have that yet, but it's [the jeans have] a smaller waist and fuller fanny.(mother of older normal size tween).
- You can get extra small but tall. So it fits her, fitted but longer (mother of older normal size tween).
- I don't wear stuff that's form fitting for me, I look like a snowman. You know already so, but that's the style and that's what she [my daughter] wanted to wear and frankly it didn't look good on her and I didn't want her to buy it you know and just, it was just awful shopping umm and I told the father, you take her for now, because I'm not going back. It's [shopping for my daughter is ] just a terrible experience (mother of older plus size tween).
- She [my daughter] likes big, she likes the-the t-shirts, and she likes the-the men's pants because [she] can't [fit into other things]. There's her shape, she can't get a form fitted shirt, everything has to either be bigger or i-i-if, if she puts it on, it's like it fits up here, but it goes in down here . . . and that she that's why she wears big, she likes big. She likes to get a little

little [movement and she likes to] move around and breathe in the clothes  
(mother of older plus size tween).

Much like their daughters, these mothers used fit to describe style preferences for the tween girls. Questionnaire data also supported the theme of fit as an important theme in describing tween girl apparel preferences. The mean fit score on a five-point Likert-type scale, with five meaning the factor is always important, for mothers of tween girls in this sample was 3.59 (SD = 1.183) (Lee, 2006, p. 91), which is also significantly different from the daughters.

*Labeled size.* The mothers revealed sensitivity when expressing the importance of the size indicated on a garment's label. The most poignant example occurred in the older plus size focus group when one of the mothers said that she cut the tags out of her daughter's clothes before she gave them to her daughter:

Yeah, I think it's [labeled size] an issue for [my daughter] because it it's an issue with her friends . . . I've bought her a sweatshirt one time and I cut the tag out of it before I took it home because it was a large. But I knew it would fit her, and I didn't want her to know that it was a large and not a medium, so I cut the tag out  
(mother of older plus size tween).

This mother acknowledged that her daughter was sensitive about her size and sensitive about the labels in her clothing. Another mother described how her daughter liked the labels to be printed in inconspicuous places in the garment. "Now, I like the ones I bought for [my daughter] at Goody's. The label is in the shirt, but it's way down in the shirt. It's like almost midway of your back, nobody can't see that label" (mother of older

plus size tween). Another mother spoke about how her daughter did not like her friends to see the size of her garments:

That's the thing. You know, they don't want to go into gym class and change out of a shirt that says you know, large or extra large. And all their friends that are looking, gosh you're big. You know, you were that big had to wear a extra large (mother of older plus size tween).

All of these statements illustrated an expressed sensitivity that both the girls and their mothers had about the labeled size of apparel.

*Quality.* Much like label size, quality was a theme that emerged for both tween girls and their mothers. However, for the mothers, quality appeared to be a much more prominent theme. A statement that reflected how the mothers expressed this theme was:

I also try to, you know, to teach my daughter that you get what you pay for and if you buy quality, you get quality. And it will last a long time. I mean, she has some jeans that she's, she has spent a lot of money on or I've spent a lot of money on. We've done it together, but they've lasted a long time and um, she might she'll save money or not buy as uh spend as much on tops, and get more tops to spend to wear with a nice pair of jeans that are gonna last a lot longer and hold their color (mother of younger normal size tween).

Here the mother described facets of quality in jeans, durability and colorfastness, as well as says that she valued quality in the apparel purchases of her daughter.

*Sales/price.* Though tween girls showed themselves to be price-conscious, mothers of tween girls appeared to place importance on sales and clothes at certain price points in making apparel purchase decisions for their daughters. This theme was



classified as an apparel preference because the mothers expressed favoritism towards apparel items on sale or within certain specific price ranges. They also spoke to how they instilled this notion in their daughters. An example of this was:

They [my daughters] like to shop um, and so of course we go shopping. But um, I'm miserly and they've learned to be that way because they go straight to a clearance table. They don't even look at a rack that doesn't have a big sign on top of it (mother of younger normal size tween).

*Store-specific.* Throughout all of the focus groups, the mothers of tween girls named stores towards which they either had positive or negative affinity. These store-specific apparel preferences emerged through quotes like the following:

- I feel so, my heart goes out to for my baby, cuz she just goes in Limited 2 and she looks around, like I wish I could wear that . . . My baby who's thick and so [her cousin] is a Limited 2 diva for sure, and then [my daughter is] like I wish I could wear that . . . You know so, so of course then I try and compensate . . . so I shop at any and every store cuz I feel bad for [my daughter] when she, she just wanders around Limited 2 like, I wish I could get those jeans, I wish I could (mother of younger plus size tween).
- [My daughter likes] Abercrombie . . . it is truly a store that you walk in there and you start going like this because the music is so loud and I and the people work there, I ask them one time, I said, "do you have to take a-a test to see if you can reveal your stomach to be hired here?" because they all the they all the girls show their mid-drift and stuff. But anyway, [for] the kids, that's a

very popular place. For the . . . middle school age (mother of younger normal size tween).

- Um, the last shopping trip um, I remember, um the family went to Crabtree and she would drag me into. Of course we had to go to Abercrombie (mother of younger normal size tween).
- I mean even if they [my daughter] go to Limited 2, the clothes that they sell at Limited 2, I think, the styles are way too old for these little girls (mother of younger plus size tween).
- It's probably when she was beginning the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and we shopped at Old Navy and Kohl's I think and were pretty successful finding things from there (mother of older plus size tween).

Here these mothers highlighted the importance of a specific store for their daughters. Some of these comments also showed how these mothers, dealt with their daughter's inability to purchase apparel at the same stores as her peers. The store-specific theme appeared to be fairly evenly represented in all focus groups.

*Style.* As previously noted in the discussion of fit preferences, mothers of tween girls commonly mixed terms when discussing apparel fit and apparel style. Regardless of this, both themes emerged as factors affecting apparel preferences. The mothers commonly described how the daughters wanted or did not want their clothes to look. An example was “she [the daughter] liked the fit, they're real fitted . . . And tailored, so she [the daughter] started layering tops and that became that new thing and then the same with the skirts” (mother of older normal size tween). This demonstrates how the mothers

specifically described the styles that their daughters desired. Some other comments the mothers made were:

- [My daughter is] broad shouldered, and some of the little tops are coming with the little tiny little sleeve on them. And she wants to wear those, but she's so broad shouldered that the seam of the shirt is way up here, and the sleeves don't come up to here, and it just looks silly, looks like they're wearing something that their kid sister should be wearing, and the length isn't long enough (mother of younger plus size tween).
- One of the problems I have is not, as much fit, is as with the-the fashion sense of the shirts (mother of younger plus size tween).
- And everybody, all her friends want to do a makeover on her [my daughter]. They all, "we're taking you shopping." . . . and she's [my daughter's] just like, this is me guys, you know. She had personal style (mother of older plus size tween).

*Similarities and Differences in Apparel Preferences of Tween Girls as Expressed by Their Mothers*

Like the daughters, mothers of older tweens expressed more ideas and opinions in terms of apparel preferences for their daughters than mothers of younger tweens. Differing from their daughters, mothers of plus size tweens had higher frequency counts than mothers of normal size tweens with respect to fit, labeled size, and store specific themes. In general, mothers of older plus size tweens had the greatest number of comments on apparel preferences of all the groups of mothers. The major themes for the

mothers' groups were fit, store-specific, brand, and quality. Other less important themes were sale/price, labeled size, and comfort. There were no minor themes for the mothers.

Like the daughters, fit was the most predominating theme for the mothers.

Mothers of plus size tweens expressed far more opinions about the fit of clothes for their daughters than mothers of normal size tweens. Also, mothers of older plus size tweens made more comments on fit preferences for their daughters. The mothers expressed fit as an apparel preference for their daughters by talking about how they preferred for their daughter's clothes to be snug enough to stay on and be comfortable, but not too tight so that their daughter's bodies are exposed or made to look too mature. Second to fit preferences, store-specific apparel preferences emerged as an important theme. There did not appear to be any major discrepancies between the different groups of mothers. For the third major theme, brand, mothers of older tween girls mentioned brand as an apparel preference for their daughters more often than mothers of younger tween girls. Also, mothers of younger plus size tween girls mentioned brand as an apparel preference for their daughters more than mothers of younger normal size tween girls. The fourth major theme that emerged in the mothers' groups was quality. This theme was much more apparent in the normal size group than the plus size group. In fact, quality did not appear at all in the focus group of mothers of younger plus size tweens.

The other less important themes were sale/price, labeled size, and comfort.

Mothers in all groups were concerned with the price of garments for their daughters and preferred to purchase garments on sale. However, mothers of normal tweens seemed to be more price-sensitive than mothers of plus size tweens. Only mothers of plus size tweens mentioned labeled size as an apparel preference for their daughters. More notably

mothers of older plus size tweens mentioned this nine times more often than mothers of younger plus size tweens. This suggests that perhaps, as the girls age, they become more sensitive to their size. Though comfort emerged as a theme for the mothers, and although mothers of older plus size tweens mentioned comfort more often than the other groups, there did not appear to be a trend among the groups. Thus, in answering the research question, these findings suggest that mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel preferences for their daughters.

Research Question 1 c: Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express different opinions about apparel preferences than their mothers?

*Similarities and Differences in Apparel Preferences Among Tween Girls and Their Mothers*

By showing the two Venn diagrams adjacent to one another in Figure 11, one can immediately see the difference in theme scope and magnitude between the tween girls and their mothers. For both groups, fit was the most prominent theme, although it appeared to be much more important to the tween girls than to their mothers. In the questionnaire, tween girls significantly ranked fit as a more important apparel preference factor than did their mothers (Lee, 2006). It is also important to note that fit was discussed more by older normal size tween girls in the girls' focus groups while mothers of older plus size tweens spoke more of fit in the mothers' focus groups.

Both girls and their mothers identified specific stores when speaking about their apparel preferences. Brand also emerged in both sets of focus groups. Frequency counts were relatively equal for both sets of focus groups. The notion of equality is supported

by questionnaire data, which found no significant difference in brand importance between tween girls and their mothers (Lee, 2006). Style as an apparel preference emerged in both groups.

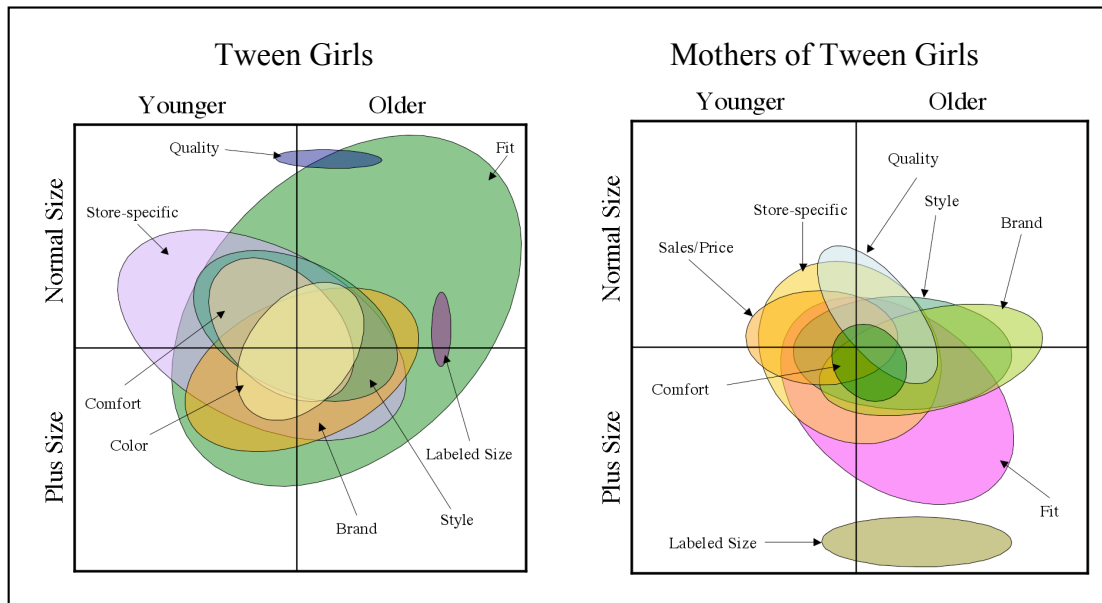


Figure 11. Side-by-side comparison of Venn diagrams of apparel preferences of tween girls and their mothers.

*Note.* In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

Comfort emerged as a more important theme for the tween girls. It had a frequency count of 14 for the mothers and 26 for the daughters. The questionnaire revealed significant differences between mothers' and daughters' value of comfort in the daughter's choice of apparel, with the girls valuing comfort more than their mothers (Lee, 2006). Quality appeared to be more important to the mothers than to the tween girls, while color was identified as important to the girls, but did not emerge at all in the

mothers' focus groups. Labeled size was a major theme for the mothers while it appeared minimally in the girls' focus groups. Finally, sale/price emerged as a theme for the mothers but did not appear in the girls' groups.

In answering the research question, it is interesting to note that the same top three major themes emerged for the mothers and the daughters. These were, in order of magnitude: fit, store-specific, and brand. In terms of fit, distribution across the groups differed between the mothers and the daughters. Normal size tween girls expressed more fit descriptions than plus size tween girls, but for the mothers, mothers of plus size tween girls, expressed more fit descriptions than mothers of normal size tween girls. However some differences did emerge between the apparel preferences for the girls and their mothers. For example, the fourth major theme differed between the girls and their mothers. For the girls, style emerged and for the mothers, quality. With respect to the lesser themes, the girls and their mothers also differed. For the girls (in order of magnitude), comfort, color, quality and labeled size emerged, and for the mothers (in order of magnitude), sale/price, labeled size, and comfort emerged.

#### Apparel Needs

Research Question 2 a: Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel needs?

#### *Apparel Needs of Tween Girls*

Analysis of the girls' focus groups revealed ten themes related to apparel needs of tween girls. These themes are listed in Table 6 along with frequency counts for each group. Following Table 6 is Figure 12, which shows the Venn diagram derived from the data.

Table 6

*Frequency Counts of Emergent Apparel Needs Themes of Tween Girls*

Emergent Themes	Younger	Older	Younger	Older	Total
	Normal	Normal	Plus	Plus	
	(N = 10)	(N = 11)	(N = 9)	(N = 11)	
Adjustable Clothing	3	0	0	0	3
Agreement with Parent	11	4	5	18	38
Consistent Sizing	3	0	0	0	3
Fit	16	10	10	10	46
Half Sizes	6	6	7	0	19
Modesty	13	28	20	12	73
Price	8	8	10	13	39
Sports Clothes	4	1	1	5	11
Store Sections	2	0	7	2	11
Style for Plus Sizes	0	2	2	9	13
Total	66	59	62	69	256



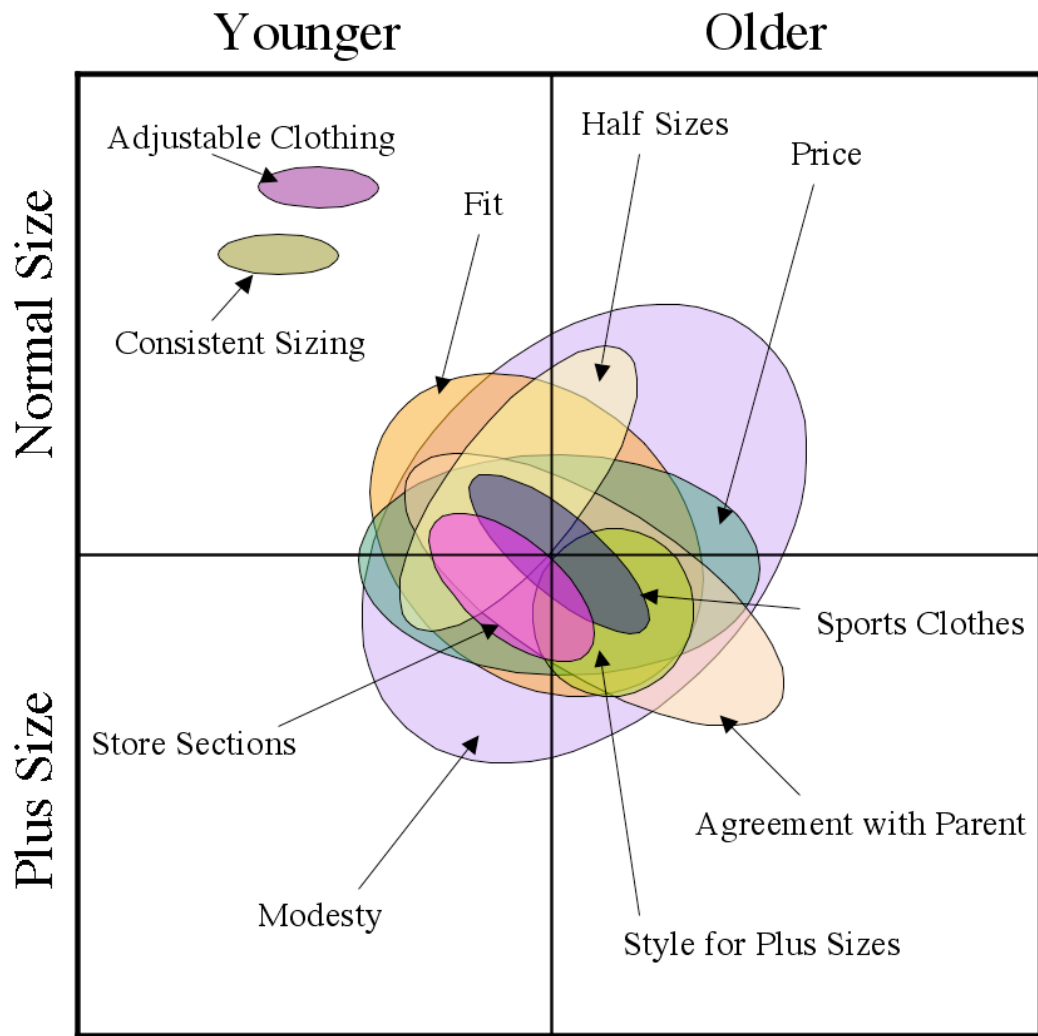


Figure 12. Diagram of emergent apparel needs themes from tween girls focus groups.

Note. In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

### *Theme Explanation and Interpretation*

Each of these apparel needs themes implies various factors that are important to the tween girls. For instance, the theme *consistent sizing* should be interpreted as the notion that being able to find consistent sizes among stores and brands is either an actual or perceived need for these tween girls. In the following section, each theme is described in more detail, and key quotes and other supporting evidence are given to illustrate each theme and show how the tween girls expressed the various facets of their actual and perceived apparel needs.

*Adjustable clothing.* Though only mentioned in the younger normal size focus group, it was very clear that these tween girls perceived a need to have adjustable clothing. For instance, one tween girl described how she was able to adjust the waistband of her pants as she grew and could therefore wear her pants longer. When asked what they would say to people in the fashion industry, one girl's response was:

I'd tell them [industry] that . . . they should they should, um, make like in every like shirt, like and pants, every single thing, of clothing. Um, they should make . . . . I know that there are a lot of pants that are stretchy . . . [so] that when you like grow older you'll still have them, but um, like they'll also fit [when you are older] (younger normal size tween).

Though slightly discombobulated in her speech, this tween girl was describing how she wanted more clothes to be stretchy and essentially, adjustable so that when she grew, her clothes would still fit her. Another tween girl said, also in a slightly unintelligible manner:

I have to usually shop at like Gap . . . because um, like I have long legs but I'm pretty short and I have like a really short I mean long waist but it's really small.

It's kind of hard to find something that I could, expandable waist, cuz I like keep my legs get longer and my middle half gets longer (younger normal size tween).

Here the tween girl expressed her desire to get pants with an expandable waist so that as she grew, she could still wear the same clothes.

*Agreement with parent.* Mother/daughter agreement emerged as a theme in all of the focus groups. It was more prominent in the younger normal and older plus size groups than in the older normal and younger plus size groups. The tween girls consistently acknowledged that this was important for them in deciding what clothes to wear and buy. This theme was categorized as an apparel need because when discussing mother/daughter agreement, the tween girls consistently qualified that they needed their mothers to concur on their clothing purchasing and wearing decisions because, their mothers otherwise would not pay for the clothes and/or not allow them to wear the clothes. The tween girls made comments such as the following:

I care [about my mom's opinion] because I might get something that's not appropriate, and then I might wear it to school because my friends were going to wear it to school that day, and then I know that I'm gonna wear, it and then I plan on not wearing it because my parents will find out so I wouldn't get it because I wouldn't wear it more than once (younger plus size tween).

Other statements included "They [a particular store] have clothes that I like, and clothes that my mom would agree with, and low prices" (younger plus size tween), and "pants that I think that fit and she [my mother] might think that they don't and, ummm, shirts

that she doesn't like the look, umm, wording on them [the pants]" (younger plus size tween). These statements described where the tween girls liked to shop and garments they are allowed to purchase. Some tween girls described how they even had to agree with their mothers about how to wear their clothes. In the following passage, the tween girl discussed how she liked to wear her pants lower on her hips than her mother preferred:

Well, I always like to wear my pants like low down on my hips, like hip huggers and my mom doesn't really like that cuz sometimes I have really short shirts and sometimes you can see like some of my stomach, and she doesn't like that, so . . . well, I kind of like I don't really care what my clothes look like, but my mom does (younger normal size tween).

Another tween girl stated:

Not at all, I don't really care [about my mother's opinion], I know that was mean to say, even though, but there's some things that I wanna wear that she won't let me, and so then I have to be conscious of that. Like she [my mother] will not let me wear tube tops, halter tops, the skirts have to be a . . . certain length so do the shorts, so stuff like that. But I really don't, if I didn't have a a dress code, for school or . . . [a dress code] for my mother (older normal size tween).

Though some tween girls, like the one above, did say that they did not care if their mother agreed with them about their clothes, the same tween girls added that their mothers' would not buy clothes or would prohibit them from wearing clothes if they did not agree with them. A final example of this was:

The only reason I would care if my mom doesn't like any of the clothing that I picked out or I would wear, is because like it like, that I wouldn't, I wouldn't be able to get any of those kind of clothes (younger normal size tween).

Here the tween girl confirmed that her mother's opinion mattered to her because her mother would not let her purchase the clothes that she did not agree with.

*Consistent sizing.* A problem with consistent sizing was a theme that only emerged in the younger normal size focus group. These young tween girls expressed frustration at not being able to go from store to store or brand to brand and purchase the same size. The following comment illustrates how the tween girl wanted jeans to have the same sizing label so that it would be easier for her to find what she needed:

Well, it's kinda hard, cuz, I have to wear a 12 slim, and those are kinda hard to find, cuz some labels don't have slim and um, it's weird, cuz I like getting shirts from places like juniors stores but I can't fit in the pants, so it's like you have to go to two different stores (younger normal size tween).

Two other younger normal size tween girls expressed this same sentiment by saying similar things about discrepancies in the labels of clothing.

*Fit.* Fit, in terms of an apparel need, is described by the author to be the desire to find clothing that fits. As in apparel preferences, notions of fit emerged as the second most prominent theme for the tween girls. In the case of apparel needs, tween girls made statements like "I would probably only shop at It's Fashion or Fashion Sense because they do have a lot of clothes that I could fit in" (older plus size tween), or "I think that it's very hard for me to find clothes that I like and that would fit my size" (older plus size tween). In the first quote, the tween girl was describing that she shopped in a certain

store because she knew that she could find clothes that fit her. In the second quote, the tween girl described the difficulty of finding clothes that fit. Other tween girls described how they had to get garments altered in order for them to fit. The following statements illustrate this:

Well, um, I love my jeans if they're like not like the stretch ones that are so tight on you . . . but the problem is they're always too long on me. So I always have to get my aunt or my other aunt to hem them up and then in about two months I've already grown a lot so they have to take the hem out and sometimes they cut them so I have to throw them away or give them away, and get more jeans and then the same processes over and over again (younger plus size tween).

And,

I had to get my 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance, um, dress, um, altered because . . . it was way too long cuz it dragged on the floor when I walked and I, that was even with heels on. And, also, um, the area underneath the arms was cut way too low, and you could see skin underneath where my bra was and that was like really bad; so I had to get it altered (older plus size tween).

Together, these passages illustrate how tween girls characterize fit as an apparel need.

*Half sizes.* The expressed need for half sizes emerged in three of the four focus groups. Examples of how the younger normal, younger plus, and older normal size tween girls verbalized the need included, “[tell industry] to make clothes for people that are stuck in the middle, um umm, kids clothes and juniors” (younger plus size tween); “It’s pretty hard for me cuz I’m not yet a 10-12, but I’m not a 7-8 still . . . so I’m kind of

stuck in the middle” (younger normal size tween); and “I’d tell them [industry] if they [industry] could just make some sizes for people that are in the middle of their size” (younger normal size tween). One tween girl clearly expressed this theme when she described how different sizes fit her body:

. . . and yet like if you try to make it [waist measurement in jeans] smaller, it seems like the legs are too long, but then you try to go up one size and it’s baggy again, and it’s just there’s too, there’s always one size that you’re stuck in the middle, but there’s no half size (older normal size tween).

Older plus size tween girls did not mention a need for half sizes. This may have been because their bodies were the most developed of all of the focus group participants; they primarily stated that they found their clothing in either Junior’s or Women’s sections. Body scan data shown in Figure 13 illustrates the discrepancy in body development among the four groups of tween girls. Because, height and weight are difficult to discern visually in these images, they are listed below each body scan. These scans illustrate the differences in body shape and body development of the tween girls. They also show how the plus size tween girls appear more developed and curvier than their normal size counterparts.

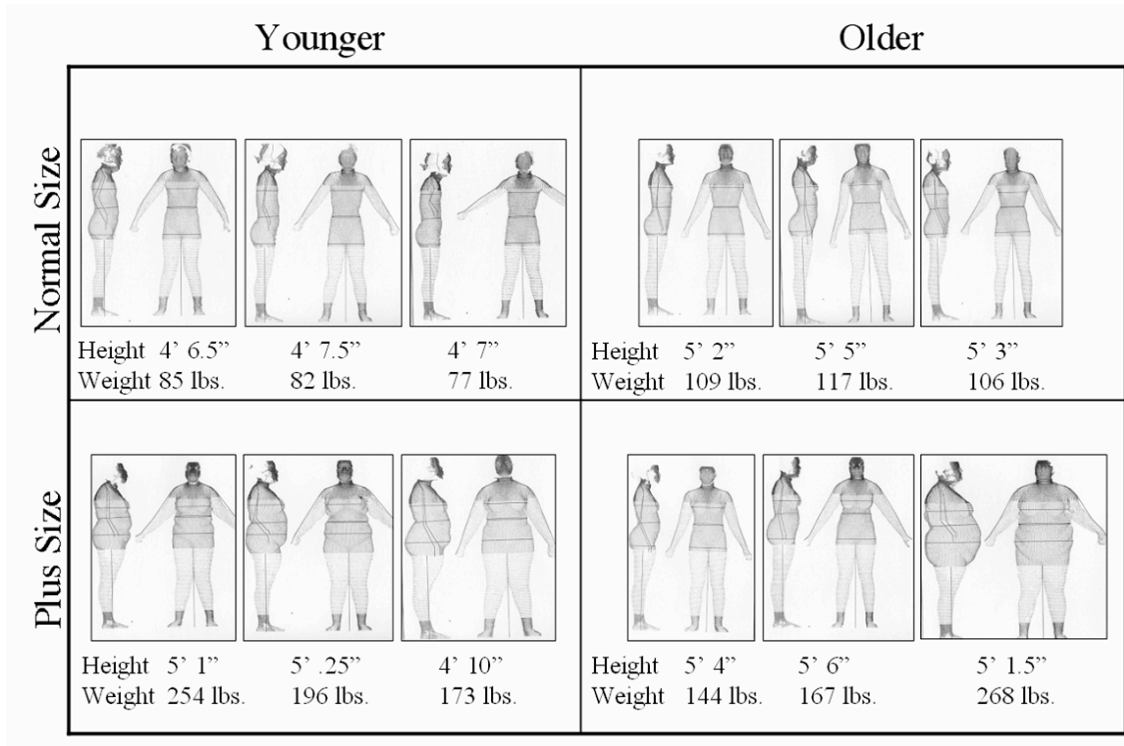


Figure 13. Representative body scans from each of the tween girls' focus groups. Three representative scans were chosen for each group. Both side and frontal views are shown.

*Modesty.* A need for modest apparel emerged as the most prominent theme within the tween girl focus groups. This theme was expressed in several different ways. However, many of the total comments, expressed a statement of affirmation, which is why the sample statements are limited. In some instances, the tween girls described a need to find apparel that complied with school dress codes. One such comment was:

My mom thinks of, my parents think of the price range and appropriate cuz, say your school say, says if you're wearing to school, something to school and it's



against your school rules, and you forget . . . the school won't be happy to call your parents to come and bring you something.(younger plus size tween).

At other times they discussed how they did not like showing their stomachs or other parts of their bodies. For example, one tween girl said "I don't like shirts that are like have your stomach showing because it shows a little too much" (younger normal size tween).

While some tween girls said that they were not as modest as their peers, they also recognized that finding appropriate clothes for certain occasions such as a church function was important. Additionally, these tween girls expressed the need for other people to be more modest in their apparel choices. One tween girl said:

I see people like at the mall, and their pants are like below their hips; they're like really low like and I wear mine like at my hips, but theirs are like past that and they're really low and that doesn't look really right because they look like really just like unattractive (younger normal size tween).

Girls in all groups expressed both perceived and real needs for modest apparel for both themselves and for others. Other comments that the tweens made related to modest apparel were:

- Well my opinion is if you, there's a certain size to where you should stop wearing [clothing] that shows [too much skin]. You know, like, real skinny people, yeah, they show it [their bellies], but some [larger-sized] people shouldn't (older plus size tween).
- Um, I will shop at J.C. Penny's because, um, they have lots of sales including, you can find things [that] won't show like a whole bunch of stuff [too much skin]

for kids like . . . lately [the style is that] you have your stomach showing, your whatever showin' (older plus size tween).

- Yeah I agree with, like, people that have, like, a lot of cleavage and they'll wear, like, really low cut shirts, and you just don't wanna see that sometimes, like, especially at school, but I just think that's sorta gross (older normal size tween).
- But most of the stuff that I choose is appropriate for school (younger plus size tween).
- Like, um, there's this girl who is in my school and she's kinda like her shirt doesn't really fit her sometimes and so like her stomach is like coming out and it's really disgusting (younger normal size tween).

*Price.* Overall, most of the tween girls described real needs to find apparel within their price range. This theme was relatively evenly dispersed in all of the groups. In talking about price, the tween girls reported not being able to shop in certain stores because the clothes were too expensive, and other times they stated specific prices that they would be willing to pay for apparel products. Quotes that illustrate this theme are, “and they have like accessories and, uh, shoes; it is really nice, but it is very expensive” (older plus size tween); “also, looking at like sales, and stuff, like even like sometimes they have really good stuff on sale” (younger normal size tween); and “Oh, I thought you said Dillard's, I'm like you know that costs a little too much!” (older plus size tween). Limited examples are provided here because many of the tween girls said similar things when talking about price, and the examples provided illustrate a majority of how the tween girls expressed their opinions about price. For the most part, these tween girls showed themselves to be very price-conscious. However, further studies need to be

performed in order to assess whether the price ranges specified in this group are applicable to a larger population or are influenced by other factors such as socioeconomic status.

*Sports clothes.* The theme, sports clothes, encompasses the tween girls' expressed needs for clothes for specific sporting activities, like swimming, soccer, and volleyball, or clothes for gym class. Though linked to apparel availability in that some of the tween girls could not find the sports clothes that they needed, this theme was categorized as a need because in most statements supporting it, the tween girls described specific needs for sports clothing. This description usually was coupled with the shopping mechanisms such as the internet or catalog that the tween girls used to get the needed clothes. For example, "me and my sister sometimes, cuz we're into swimming too, and, so, like, we look in magazines and we look on the internet for stuff" (younger normal size tween). Only in some instances did the tween girls state that they could not find the sports clothes that they needed.

*Store sections.* The theme, store sections, was derived from the tween girls' expressed need for clearly marked areas in stores (i.e. Kids, Juniors, Women's, etc). For example, one tween girl said, "Wal-Mart does not have a Juniors section. Target does not have a Juniors section" (older plus size tween). This particular discussion was followed with the tween girl and moderator discussing how it was hard for her [the tween girl] to find clothes in Wal-mart and Target because the Women's and Juniors' sections were not separate. Other tween girls reported frustration with the gap between Kids' and Juniors' sections with statements such as, "Because since I'm really tall, I can't fit in the Childrens and I'm like smack dab in the middle of Juniors and Childrens, so it's really

hard” (younger plus size tween). Older normal tween girls were the only group not to address this theme.

*Style for plus sizes.* The theme, style for plus sizes, was mentioned in all groups except for the younger normal size tween group, the subjects in this study clearly articulated the need for better styles for larger sizes. Statements like the following illustrate this point: “I would like to shop at Pac Sun and stores like Delia’s and stuff; it’s just that I can’t find the stuff in my size there” (older plus size tween); “I’ve been to Pac Sun several times in several different malls . . . and they don’t have the stuff in my size” (older plus size tween); and “Mudd, but the only thing that’s wrong with Mudd, a, they don’t fit on, uh mms, they don’t fit on like people my, um, shape. It’s either too too tight, not they don’t have my size” (older plus size tween). In all of these comments, the plus size tween girls were showing that they wanted to wear popular brands and styles, but they could not because of their size. Also, the normal size tween girls expressed recognition that there were not stylish clothes for plus size tween girls their age. An example of this, found in the older normal size group, was:

Um, I think it’s real hard to find like stuff . . . for people that are . . . big because like most of the really popular stores that have like really, really good clothes like Gap and Rave and Delia’s and that kind of stuff; it [is] for really small people. And like they don’t have like bigger sizes and I think they should.

Perhaps the most poignant illustration of this theme was the following statement, in which an older plus size tween girl shared that she could not find a youthful style in her size and had to buy adult women’s clothing:

I rarely wear t-shirts anymore, but it's hard to find shirts like that in my size because there's are normally kept in the junior department. And I wear a size that's like one size larger than what you normally find in the junior department so, I'm kind of upset about that you know. And I have to wear shirts that out, if they're OK, and I wear them, it's just that the first day of school I walk in to my English class, I have the same shirt on as my English teacher, so . . . umm, that's that was scary, so . . .

Discussion generally painted a picture of the style needs for larger sized tween girls, the expressed desire of these tween girls to shop at the same stores as their normal size counterparts, and a recognition by the normal size tween girls that their larger friends had a hard time finding stylish apparel.

#### *Similarities and Differences in Apparel Needs Among Subgroups of Tween Girls*

When looking at all of the tween girl apparel needs themes together, there did not appear to be a pattern like the one found for apparel preferences. Tween girls in all groups expressed apparel needs with similar frequency counts. The major themes that appeared were modesty, fit, price, and agreement with parent. Other less important themes that emerged in the tween girls' focus groups were half sizes, style for plus sizes, sports clothes, and store sections. Minor themes were consistent sizing and adjustable clothes. Although the overall frequency distribution is similar for all groups, younger normal size tween girls talked about more overall topics than the other three groups. This is because themes about adjustable clothing and consistent sizing emerged in this group, but were not found in the other groups.

Modesty emerged as the most prevalent theme in the tween girl focus groups. In terms of an apparel need, these tween girls expressed a need to find clothes that were age-appropriate, not too grown up, and conformed to school dress codes. It is interesting to note that normal size tween girls expressed this need more often than the plus size tween girls. Additionally, older normal size tween girls expressed this need for modest apparel more than any of the other groups.

Second to modesty, fit-related apparel needs emerged as an important theme. Fit, in this context, is described by the author to be the desire to find clothing that one perceives to fit their body. Tween girls in all groups expressed this apparel need, but younger normal size tween girls talked about this need more often than the other groups.

The next two major themes, price and agreement with mother, were very close in their frequency counts. It was not surprising that girls in these groups were exhibiting evidence of price consciousness. Although tween girls influence spending decisions, they are not completely independent from parental controls. As the tween girls revealed the theme agreement with parent, they acknowledged that their parents still maintain authority in their lives. The tween girls also stated that if their parents did not agree with an apparel choice, the parent would either not allow her to purchase the garment or not allow her to wear the garment in certain contexts. This theme appeared most often in the older plus size and younger normal size groups.

Other less important themes were each more predominant in particular groups. Needs for half-sizes appeared most in the normal size groups than in plus size groups. In fact, this theme does not appear at all in the older plus size group. Style for plus sizes as a need emerged most in the older plus size group and not at all in the younger normal size

group. A need for clearly marked store sections was expressed most in the younger plus size group while older normal size tween girls did not express it at all. A need for sports clothes emerged most in younger normal and older plus size groups. As stated previously, minor themes of adjustable clothing and consistent sizing were only found in the younger normal size group. Though minor theme in the tween girls' focus group, mothers of tween girls found problems with inconsistent sizing to be a major theme when discussing the apparel needs of their daughters, as will be shown later.

Research Question 2 b: Do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different apparel needs for their daughters?

#### *Apparel Needs of Tween Girls as Expressed by Their Mothers*

Content analysis of the mothers' focus groups revealed ten themes related to the apparel needs of their daughters. These themes are listed in Table 7 along with frequency counts for each group. Following Table 7 is Figure 14, which shows the Venn diagram derived from the data.

#### *Theme Explanation and Interpretation*

Each of these apparel needs themes reflects factors that the tween girls' mothers viewed as important to their daughters. Each theme is described in more detail in the following sections, and key quotes and other supporting evidence are given as illustrations and show how mothers expressed the various facets of their daughters' actual and perceived apparel needs.

Table 7

*Frequency Counts of Emergent Apparel Need Themes of Tween Girls as Expressed by Their Mothers*

Emergent Themes	Mothers of Younger Normal Size Tweens (N = 8)	Mothers of Older Normal Size Tweens (N = 11)	Mothers of Younger Plus Size Tweens (N = 9)	Mothers of Older Plus Size Tweens (N = 11)	Total
Adjustable Clothing	6	0	2	6	14
Agreement with Daughter	4	11	7	16	38
Consistent Sizing	1	10	16	11	38
Durability	4	3	1	7	15
Fit	12	13	19	31	75
Modesty	34	33	40	77	184
Nice Clothes	4	3	19	21	47

(Continued)



Table 7 (Continued)

Emergent Themes	Mothers of Younger Normal Size Tweens (N = 8)	Mothers of Older Normal Size Tweens (N = 11)	Mothers of Younger Plus Size Tweens (N = 9)	Mothers of Older Plus Size Tweens (N = 11)	Total
Price	9	17	13	5	44
Style for Plus Sizes	0	5	12	20	37
Versatility	2	5	1	0	8
Total	76	100	130	194	500

*Adjustable clothing.* Though not mentioned in the older normal size tween girl focus group, mothers in all of the other groups discussed a need for adjustable clothes for their daughters. For instance, one mother described how she was able to purchase pants at Old Navy that had adjustable waistbands:

A 10 fits her [my daughter] around the waist, but you know, now they're just right but as soon as I wash them, they're gonna start to creep up, and then she's growing so, they're not gonna last long, but, uh, she can't wear a 12 because the way they fall off of her. One thing, good thing about Old Navy is they have those adjustable waist [bands] (mother of younger normal size tween).

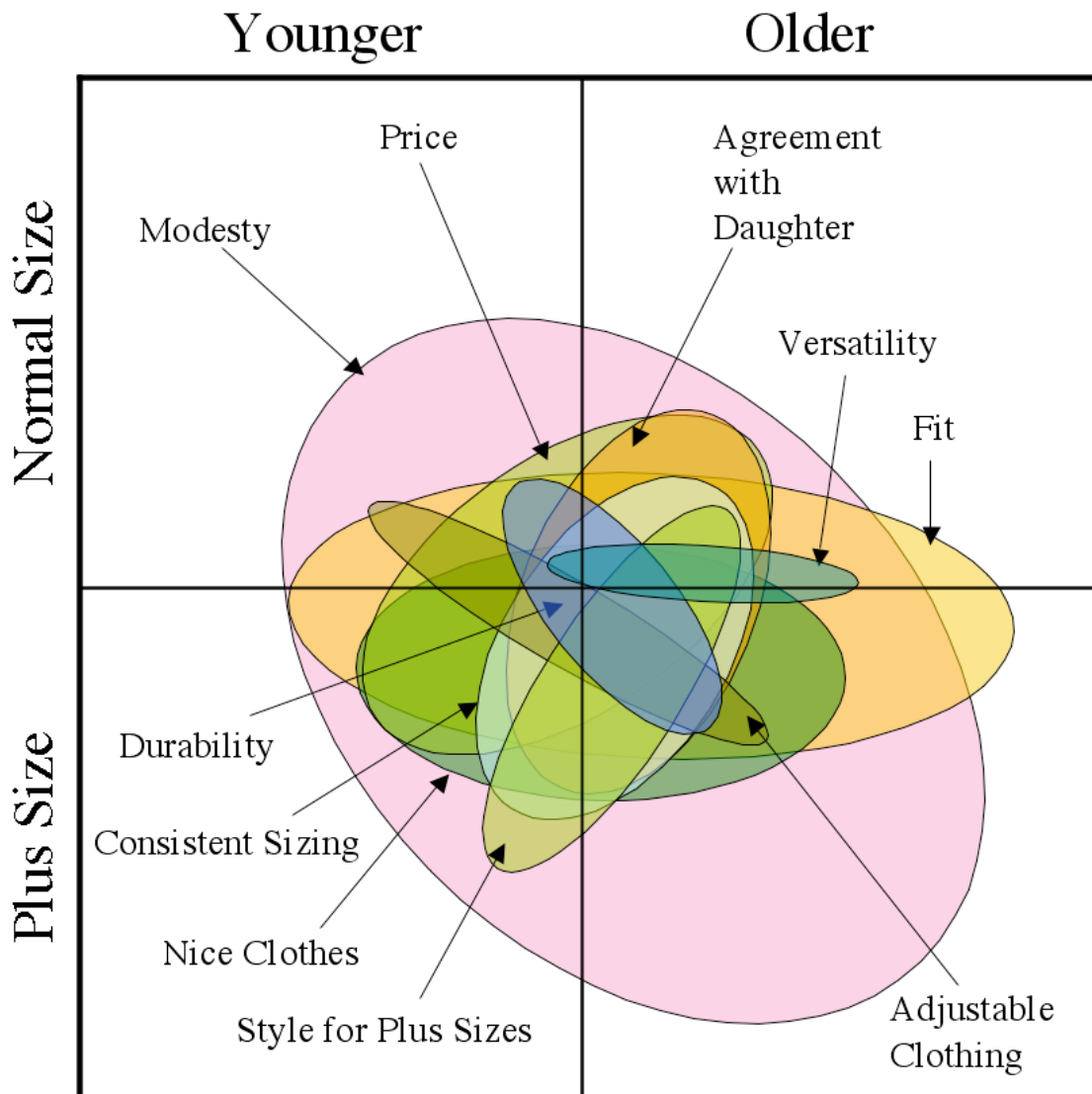


Figure 14. Diagram of emergent apparel need themes from mothers of tween girls' focus groups.

Note. In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

This adjustable feature allowed her daughter to wear pants that fit both her waist and length. Another mother stated, “Yes, I was just thinking that and the Gap does too, those, uh, adjustable waists are wonderful” (mother of younger normal size tween). These mothers were expressing a need for adjustable clothing as well as showing how they favorably viewed stores that provided this for their daughters.

*Agreement with daughter.* Mother/daughter agreement emerged as a theme in all of the focus groups but was more common in the older focus groups. The mothers consistently acknowledged that this was important for them in deciding what clothes their daughter could wear and buy. This theme was categorized as an apparel need because when speaking about mother/daughter agreement, the mothers consistently qualified that they needed to agree on clothing purchases with their daughters in order to have pleasant shopping experiences. One mother’s description was:

The last time [my daughter] and I went shopping we did find a shirt that she really like[d] that was too low cut. And I said, ‘we can get it, but you’ll have to wear something under it.’ And she said, ‘but it won’t look good with something under it,’ and I said, ‘well then don’t buy it.’ . . . So, and that was what we did; we ended up picking a different shirt that we could both agree on, cuz that one obviously wasn’t going to work for both of us (mother of older normal size tween).

This quote was typical of the statements made by mothers when talking about agreeing with their daughter’s apparel purchasing and wearing decisions. Some mothers had a harder time finding apparel that both they and their daughters liked. One mother talked about shopping for bathing suits with her daughter and said:

I mean it was, when I saw her in them [bathing suits], she's 12 years old. It was, it was very horrible for me because she wanted it; she thought this was the fashion; this was what her friends were wearing who are toothpicks, and I mean I it was a fight because you know, she was not, I did not think she was covered. I didn't think that if she was going on a beach where there are men or whatever I mean (mother of older plus size tween).

For this mother/daughter pair, the lack of agreement caused tension and worry for the mother in that she did not think the style was appropriate, and she felt that men would look at her daughter in an inappropriate manner. Other mothers would negotiate with their daughters about what clothes and styles they could wear. An example of this was:

I have to negotiate with her when we talk about age appropriate because, for instance, the skirt doesn't bother me but something low cut would. Like if she has on a really short skirt and some tights, I'm cool with that, you know. Umm, but like in the summer time she'll take her boxer shorts and for some, and she's got, she's thick in here but for some reason she wants to be J-Lo. And so she rolls it down and you know, her stomach's hanging over the top (mother of older plus size tween).

The dimensions of agreement, compromise, rule-setting, and negotiation were all represented in the mothers' groups.

*Consistent sizing.* A problem with consistent sizing was a theme that emerged in all of the focus groups, although it had only one mention in the mothers of young normal size tween girls focus group. This was interesting because in the tween girls' focus groups, this was the only group that addressed it. The mothers repeatedly complained

about not being able to buy the same size clothes for their daughters in different stores and across different brands. One example from a mother of a young plus size tween girl was:

You [the parent] don't know what size your child wears; you know, you would be really excited about that she's a size 14, in this store, but the next store she's a size 12 and the next store she's a size 16, so you you don't even know; if somebody asked me today, and said, I'll shoot you if you don't tell me what your size your child is, I'd be like which store? (mother of younger plus size tween).

Another example was:

Well no, like say for example, if we went to Walmart and we picked up a 16 in their young misses department in jeans, which would be fine you know, we could keep buying that same Rider's brand or whatever brand, but if we went to Kmart and bought their brand of a 16, it would not fit . . . and that's what's disappointing; she, she thinks well, oh I can get this size and we can just buy it. And one day we did that, we bought a bunch in one size and from a different store, and, it doesn't, or grandma buys her these for Christmas, and they're so cute, and . . . Just don't fit (mother of younger plus size tween).

*Durability.* Mothers in all focus groups expressed some need for their daughters' clothes to be durable. The most poignant example was, "I just have to vent this; I picked up a t-shirt and was so vintage that it was see through and holes on it and it was like 32 dollars!" (mother of younger normal size tween girl). This mother was describing her annoyance with an Abercrombie t-shirt that was not durable.

*Fit.* Fit as an apparel need, is described by the researcher to be the desire of mothers of tween girls to find clothing that fits their daughters. As in apparel preferences, notions of fit emerged as one of the prominent themes for mothers. In this instance, mothers made statements such as, “she just doesn’t fit in that stuff any more” (mother of younger normal size tween), or “I would personally pay more per item if the things . . . fit better” (mother of younger normal size tween). Both of these quotes illustrate how mothers characterized fit as an apparel need in that in each case the mother was stating that fit was a key component in apparel selection for their daughters. Other comments the mothers made in terms of fit were:

- “And now we’ve moved up to the Junior department, we just discovered this for the back to school. I couldn’t find anything in any store to fit her until we realized she is a Junior. And so then we go in there and they they’re too you know, too revealing, too like tight in the hips and low and then the sayings on the clothes, I’m like “ahh, we can’t find anything for this girl to wear to school.” So we had a hard time” (mother of younger normal size tween).
- “I would personally pay more per item if the things were if they fit better, they were age appropriate, and they lasted longer” (mother of younger normal size tween).
- “She [my daughter] loves Aeropostle because the jeans fit her in the waist; that’s the only place she can go and get jeans that fit in the waist. Everything else, the jeans is too balky for her, even if you pay a hundred bucks for them” (mother of older normal size tween).

- “Yeah they’re-they’re [jeans are] just sometimes they’re even this much [holds up hands to indicate length] too long, to make, you know, to get them to fit her [my daughter]; they’re just so long. She [my daughter] knows that whatever we get is gonna hafta be cut off and hemmed” (mother of younger plus size tween).
- “If they fit her, I’ll buy it. I don’t care what it costs as long as they fit her” (mother of older plus size tween).
- “It [the shirt] will be, it will hang a too low, but then the arms are fitting her right, or tight in the belly part but then the V is down here [points to chest]. You know, it’s just not proportioned for her” (mother of older plus size tween).

In these examples, all of the mothers expressed the need to find clothing that fits their daughter’s bodies. Mothers in all groups also spoke about how there was a gap in the marketplace and that if the clothes were there, these women were willing to pay more for them. Though this was a frustration for the mothers, the mothers of plus size tween girls indicated that not finding the apparel that fit their daughters bodies made shopping a painful and unpleasant experience for both them and their daughter. For example, the following mother explained that trying to find clothes that fit her daughter made shopping not fun:

I’d say the number of times she has to change [makes shopping not fun with my daughter], because she’s [my daughter is] in the changing room and you’re trying on 14 different pair of jeans, and the sweaters, that’s no trouble finding a sweater to fit, but it’s the pant and the skirts . . . Yeah, always trying to find the right

length, because she's wider here and she's tall, but not so tall to fit the, to find the right size around her waist; they're always gonna be way too long. And so, that's really, really frustrating for her to try to find the right fit, and she's changing over, and over, and over, and over (mother of younger plus size tween)

*Modesty.* Overall, these mothers expressed both perceived and real needs for modest, age-appropriate apparel for their daughters. Like their daughters, mothers expressed a need for modest apparel. This theme clearly emerged as the most prominent theme within the mothers' focus groups and was discussed in several different ways. In some instances, the mothers addressed a need to find apparel that complied with school dress codes, and at other times they discussed how they needed to find age-appropriate clothes for their daughters. For example, one mother said, "if you get too juvenile, they're way too small, and if you get size-appropriate, they're not age-appropriate" (mother of younger normal size tween). Another mother of a younger normal size tween girl noted the influence of older celebrities on her daughter:

And they're very influenced by Lindsay Lohan and Hillary Duff and Brittany Spears. And these girls are 16, 17, 21, 22, who have matured; their bodies have blossomed, and they have the curves where they're supposed to have the curves, and you've got this 10—10 year old that's got mosquito bites and she's trying to fill in this criss-cross top, and so it's just it's a battle, and it's so frustrating.

Another mother said, "And she's 10 and the clothes look like she's 21" (mother of younger plus size tween). Another mother of a young plus size tween girl said:

I think part of the problem is that that what is offered for this age is what I deem inappropriate in a lot of places. And not only what I deem inappropriate, like you



were talking about the sayings and the low, very low riders; I mean there are some seriously icky clothes out there for girls who are 10 and 11. I mean it's just ridiculous.

The mothers also expressed negative opinions about the sayings and pictures printed on tween garments. An example was:

The other thing with like those t-shirts and stuff, where they have sayings like um, hottie, or ohh, I my 11-year-old picked up a shirt yesterday, and it had an owl on it, and it had like "shake you're hootie" or, or something that just you, you kinda you, your mother radar went eh-hh-ehh no, that's not right. And there's several of them that they're veiled sexual references, and then your daughter says, "but mommy I don't get, it's just an owl," and so then you're set up because well, let me tell you what this really means; so you're almost in this situation when you're, you're having to explain values in a store and it-it-it is difficult (mother of younger normal size tween).

*Nice clothes.* Mothers of tween girls in all focus groups, but particularly those in the older focus groups, stated that they had a need for nice clothes for their daughters. These mothers even stated that they would pay more money for these nice clothes. For instance, one mother of an older plus size tween girl stated:

Oh she had, um last year she [my daughter] does cotillions and finding her a ball gown for cotillion. I couldn't find her one. So I had to go to a specialty boutique in Cameron Village and a designer, they called a designer, and they made her a special dress that was three hundred dollars for her to wear to cotillion. So you just you do what you have to do. I mean that's not, you know I don't do that all

the time, but sometimes you get to the point where, you're back's up against the wall and you don't really, your options are so limited. It's what you can do.

This was not the only instance where mothers of tweens stated that they needed more nice and/or dressy clothes for their daughters for events like church and weddings. Other mothers made statements such as the following:

Oh yeah, if it was something you know, special like a-a birthday and it was a really good quality outfit, that looked good, I would pay. I wouldn't do it all the time, but a special occasion like a birthday for sure. It would be worth it to . . . have something good (mother of younger normal size tween).

As a whole, these mothers were willing to pay more money for nice clothes for special occasions.

*Price.* Mothers in all groups articulated real needs to find apparel within their price range. This theme appeared in all groups. In talking about price, the mothers would say things about not wanting their daughters to shop in certain stores because the clothes in them were too expensive. The following comment is an example of this: "There's no way I'm paying \$40 [for a pair of jeans]. So, so cost is a real negative thing for me . . ." (mother of younger plus size tween). Other mothers would talk about only shopping for sale items and expecting that same behavior from their daughter(s). The following statement exemplified this:

I'm miserly and they've [my daughters] learned to be that way because they go straight to a clearance table. They don't even look at a rack that doesn't have a big sign on top of it. Umm, and they spend their, they have to earn their own money a lot, or save their own money, umm I let them spend it how they want to, but I try

to encourage them to think. Do you want to spend 40 dollars for a pair of jeans that you're gonna probably just wear for you know, a few months and that sort of thing? So, they [my daughters] have become very cost conscious, and they have walked out of stores not buying a thing because, they don't wanna part with that much money for one item (mother of younger normal size tween).

This sort of shopping behavior (i.e. bargain shopping) and the expectation that daughters would contribute financially to some purchases were common sentiments among all groups of mothers. Some mothers felt that the prices for tween clothing were too expensive, particularly when they did not approve of the clothing. Illustrative comments included:

But also, the price, the price point, like you were saying a t-shirt for \$26.50, or something at at Limited Too, and my daughter, my 8-year-old, picked out a-an outfit yesterday. We went to South Point, and it was 42.50 for a little knit dress . . . it's hard for us to enjoy it, when you know how much it costs and how it's gonna affect the family budget and your dressing you're child to look like Brittany Spears when she's only 10 (mother of younger normal size tween).

Overall price was a big issue for mothers in all groups.

*Style for plus sizes.* Like their daughters, mothers in most focus groups expressed needs for better styling for plus sizes. Mentioned in all groups except the mothers of younger normal size tweens group, the subjects in this study very clearly articulated the need for better styles for larger sizes. Comments such as the following articulated this theme, and painted a picture of both the style needs for larger sized tween girls and

expressed the desire of these tween girls to shop at the same stores as their normal size counterparts.

And there's some other stores, too, in the mall, um, the little funky rags kind of, stores . . . she [my plus size daughter] goes in and she goes and she tries to find the extra large . . . and I'm like, that's not gonna work (mother of younger plus size tween).

Another mother said:

It seems that you would think in marketing as we know society or America, 50% of America is overweight, but yet we still make clothing for when America was in 1960 and very small, that, you know, the statistics are always there that America is 50% overweight, but yet we're still selling low riders for, you know it's just almost like we're in denial with some things you know that America is overweight but we don't accommodate that. We accommodate it with eating but we don't accommodate it with apparel (mother of younger plus size tween).

Though this mother was speaking more to the American population in general, the crux of what she was saying was that there were limited styles and sizes available for larger, more curvaceous body types. When asked, "if you could tell people in industry anything about tween clothing, what would you tell them?" two mothers of older normal size tween girls said:

I think another thing too, this is my campaign, is everyone is not an ironing board; some have curves, different places, and you need to look at pattern sizing and shapes to kinda alter as the population of the United States is kinda more a larger oriented we are shaped a little bit different . . . So we can't buy straight up and

down. Some of us cannot buy straight up and down (mother of older normal size tween).

And, “And then the styles has just gone once if you get a little over well not really overweight, but if you get to a certain size, you don’t have any style” (mother of older normal size tween). Another mother addressed the inability for her to find styles for her younger plus size daughter with the following comment:

The full selection, you don’t have very many choices, I mean you can go to Penney’s or Sears, and they may have 4 pair, 4 different styles of jeans for girls that need a 12.5 or a 14.5 and you look at the regular [and there are a lot of choices], you know, 2 to whatever I mean they can have 20 different styles to choose from and we don’t [have very many choices] . . . But you know, even tops you know they’ll have like 14.5 tops but I mean there may be just 6 styles and then the regular departments are for, you know regular normal sizes so we need [more styling or more options]. Yeah or more choices (mother of younger plus size tween).

*Versatility.* A small theme that emerged in the mothers’ focus groups was a need for more versatile apparel for their daughters. It appeared in all groups except the mothers of older plus size tweens. Mothers expressed the content with statements such as, “she [my daughter] picks out a cute belt and I encourage her . . . to make sure she has at least 2 or 3 tops that go with that belt so that she can wear it more than just once” (mother of older normal size tween).

*Similarities and Differences in Apparel Needs of Tween Girls as Expressed by Their Mothers*

Like the daughters, modesty materialized as the most prevalent theme in the mothers' focus groups. These mothers verbalized a need to find clothes for their daughters that are age-appropriate, not too grown up, not too sexual, and conformed to school dress codes. It is interesting to note that mothers of plus size tween girls communicated this need more often than the mothers of normal size tween girls, which is the opposite from their daughters. Additionally, mothers of older plus size tween girls proclaimed this need for modest apparel more than any of the other groups.

Second to modesty, fit-related apparel needs came forth as an important theme. Mothers in all groups voiced this apparel need, but mothers of older plus size tween girls stated this more often than the other groups, which is different from the tween girls' groups. In the tween girls' group, younger normal size tween girls said the most in terms of fit as a need.

The next three major themes — nice clothes, price and agreement with daughter, were very close in their frequency. Nice clothes was much more prevalent in the plus size groups than in the normal size groups. Mothers of plus size tween girls repeatedly stated that they would pay more for nice clothes for their daughters, and in some instances, charge a credit card if only they could find nice clothes to fit their daughter's bodies. Lack of clothing is addressed in the apparel availability section of this summary. But, it is consequential to note that these mothers qualified a need for nice clothes for their daughters whereas mothers of older normal tween girls and mothers of younger plus size tween girls seemed to be more price conscious than the other mothers. This trend

did not appear in the tween girls' groups and may be due more to the socioeconomic status of the mothers in this sample than to other factors, which were not explored in this research because socioeconomic factors were not within the scope of this research.

Mothers in all groups revealed that they were price-conscious and would not allow their daughters to shop in certain stores or buy certain brands because they perceived them as too expensive. Consistent sizing and style for plus size tween girls were the final two major themes for the mothers. Consistent sizing emerged least in the young normal size group and most in the younger plus size group. Mothers of plus size tween girls articulated the need for style for plus size tween girls more often than mothers of normal size tween girls. This was an expected response because these mothers are much more familiar with the apparel needs of their plus size daughters than mothers of normal size tween girls.

In terms of lower moderate themes, these mothers spoke to needs about adjustable clothing and apparel durability. These two themes are somewhat related because in both instances, the mothers voiced a desire to extend the wearable life of their daughter's clothing. The only minor theme that appeared for the mothers was versatility. This concept is theoretically linked to the notion of durability and adjustable clothing because versatility implies that the clothing can be worn in many different contexts and can thus be worn more often. There did not appear to be a trend between the groups for any of these themes. Thus in answering the research question, there did appear to be similarities and differences among the groups of mothers.

Research Question 2 c: Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express different opinions about apparel needs than their mothers?

*Similarities and Differences in Apparel Needs Among Tween Girls and Their Mothers*

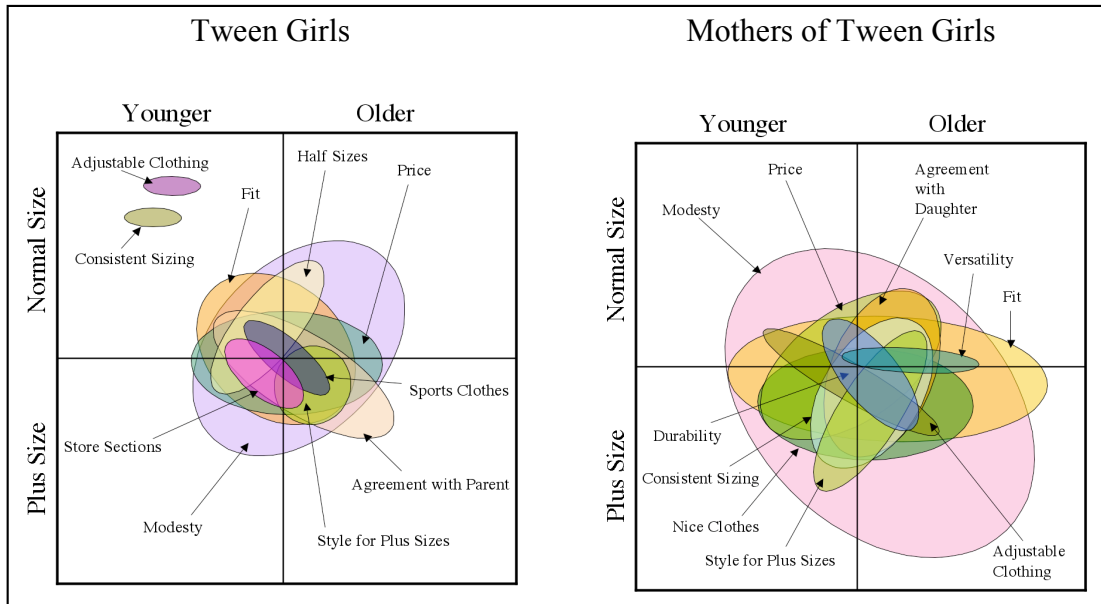


Figure 15. Side-by-side comparison of Venn diagrams of apparel needs of tween girls and their mothers.

Note. In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

By showing the two Venn diagrams adjacent to one another, one can immediately see the difference in theme scope and magnitude between tween girls and their mothers. In general, apparel needs themes appear to have been discussed more in the mothers' groups. Modesty and fit were the two largest themes in both the tween girls' and mothers' focus groups. The mothers' frequency counts for both themes were more than



double those for their daughters. This can be seen most clearly in Figure 15. Other areas of thematic overlap between tween girls and their mothers were price, mother/daughter agreement, adjustable clothing, style for plus sizes, and consistent sizing. Themes appearing in solely the daughters' group were sports clothes, store sections, and half-sizes, whereas themes of nice clothes, durability, and versatility appeared only in the mothers' focus groups.

Overall the themes that surfaced within the mothers groups appeared to be more established (i.e. higher frequency counts for each theme) than those of their daughters. Also, like the daughters, ten themes emerged in the mothers' groups. However, the mothers had slightly different themes. In other words, the mothers perceived different apparel needs for their daughters than the daughters perceived for themselves. The daughters identified needs for half sizes, sports clothes and store sections whereas mothers identified durability, nice clothes, and versatility as apparel needs themes for their daughters. This aside, there were many similarities between the mothers and the daughters in terms of themes. The themes that came forth in both groups are adjustable clothing, mother/daughter agreement consistent sizing, fit, modesty, price and style for plus sizes. Overall modesty was the most important apparel need identified by both the tween girls and their mothers; second to that, fit emerged as the second most important apparel need. After this, the mothers and daughters diverged in their ranking of apparel need themes. For the mothers, nice clothes, price, and agreement with daughter emerged; for the daughters, price and agreement with mother were revealed as the major themes.

Also different were the distribution of counts within the groups. For example, normal size tweens indicated more of a need for modest clothes than plus size tweens, but

the opposite was true for the mothers (i.e. mothers of plus size tween girls exhibited more needs for modest apparel than mothers of normal size tween girls). Another example was that mothers of normal size tween girls said that price was more of an apparel need than mothers of plus size tween girls; but plus size tween girls identified this theme more than normal size tween girls. This was not the case in for all themes. For example, mothers and daughters were similar in that plus size tween girls and their mothers identified mother/daughter agreement as a need more often than the normal size groups. Overall, the tween girls and their mothers established similar themes when speaking to the apparel needs of tween girls. The thematic differences in the themes among the groups were minor.

### Apparel Availability

Research Question 3 a: Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different issues with respect to the availability of apparel in the market place?

#### *Apparel Availability of Tween Girls*

Content analysis of the girls' focus groups revealed seven themes related to apparel availability. These themes are listed in Table 8 along with frequency counts for each group. Following Table 8 is Figure 16, which shows the Venn diagram derived from this data.

#### *Theme Explanation and Interpretation*

Each of these apparel availability themes implies various factors about how easy or hard it was for tween girls to find apparel in the marketplace. For instance, the theme *pants/jeans hard* should be interpreted as the notion that the tween girls had a hard time

finding pants and/or jeans in the marketplace. Each theme is described in more detail below, and key quotes are provided to illustrate each theme. It is important to note that discussion of some themes was combined due to their intuitive linkages in their interpretation.

Table 8

*Frequency Counts of Emergent Themes Related to Apparel Availability for Tween Girls*

Emergent Themes	Younger	Older	Younger	Older	Total
	Normal	Normal	Plus	Plus	
	(N = 10)	(N = 11)	(N = 9)	(N = 11)	
Online	6	7	6	11	30
Pants/Jeans Hard	10	11	5	6	32
Shirts Easy	7	1	4	3	15
Shirts Hard	4	6	3	3	16
Size/Fit	11	12	7	18	48
Skirts/Dresses Easy	3	1	0	0	4
Skirts/Dresses Hard	1	6	4	4	15
Total	42	44	29	45	160

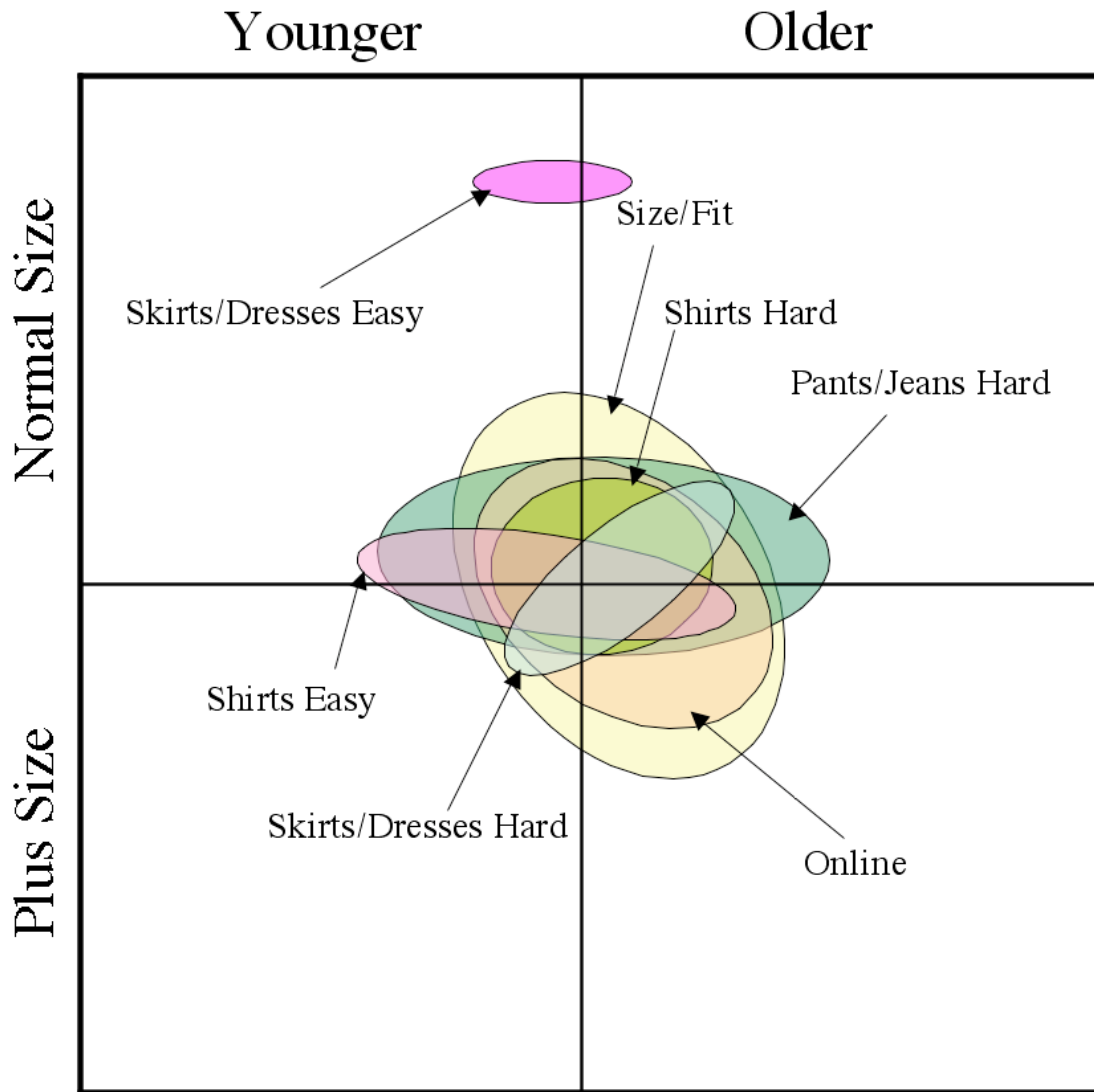


Figure 16. Diagram of emergent apparel availability themes from tween girl focus groups.

Note. In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

*Online.* This theme implies that the tween girls utilized the Internet in finding apparel. Though this theme is somewhat disconnected from other themes in this category, the author put it in this section because of how the tween girls spoke about online shopping. These tween girls viewed websites of brick and mortar stores as store extensions. Therefore, if the tween girls could not find the clothes they needed in the store, they would go online to purchase apparel. The tween girls expressed this theme through statements such as, “I know that kind of like at American Eagle, and places like that will, they only carry jeans up to a certain like size 8, and you have to go online to buy any sizes that are larger than that” (older plus size tween). Overall the tween girls in all groups held similar views of online shopping, but older tween girls expressed somewhat more interest in shopping online than the younger tween girls. These older tween girls provided specific examples of their online purchases such as, “I got two skirts for \$19.99; it was the same thing just different colors. And they [the online store] send them to you, I mean it’s [shopping online] just a lot easier” (older normal size tween).

*Pants/jeans hard.* Tween girls revealed that finding pants and/or jeans that they liked and that fit their bodies was the most challenging shopping task. Most problems were due to the waist-to-length ratio of the pants. In other words, the tween girls said that they had trouble finding pants and/or jeans that fit their waist and were the right length. The tween girls spoke negatively about having to have their pants and/or jeans hemmed or altered. Overall, the tween girls expressed the most frustration about availability of pants and/or jeans that fit them and that were in the style they liked. Some key comments were:

- “Like up here my legs I can’t fit into some pants but then once I can fit into them they’re too big in the waist. So I have a hard time” (older normal size tween).
- “It’s hard for me to find jeans at Pacific Sun where I like to go because usually they don’t have like my length; like I went, I bought a pair like last week, and when I got home they were like way too short” (older plus size tween).
- “But pants are really difficult because I don’t know I’m short and like I’m not huge, but sometimes trying to find things that aren’t so long, like, a lot of times when I go to the store and I try on jeans, I’m like walking on them, so” (older normal size tween).
- “It’s hard to find the jeans that fit you, if you go and look at like the petites and the shorts and stuff, a lot of times it’s not the wash that you want or like they have that really, really basic styles but you want like the other styles that come in the regular sizes stuff” (older normal size tween).

Each of these comments was a response to the question, “how hard or easy is it for you to buy pants/jeans?” Overall, the inability to find jeans and/or pants frustrated the tween girls.

*Shirts easy and shirts hard.* When talking about the availability of shirts, tween girls said that finding shirts was sometimes easy and sometimes hard. The tween girls were not as specific in describing how they wanted shirts to fit them as they were in describing jeans and pants. A number of tween girls from the groups were involved with sports and preferred wearing t-shirts, which they said were easy to find. However, when

talking about finding specific types of shirts or more dressy shirts, the tween girls said that shirts were harder to find. Overall, the older normal and older plus size tween girls expressed the most frustration about shirt availability. These tween girls made statements such as:

Shirts Easy: “for me . . . these shirts that have like stuff on them, it’s kinda easy to find because they’re . . . at Kohl’s” (older plus size tween).

Shirts Hard: “I rarely wear t-shirts anymore, but it’s hard to find shirts like that in my size because [they’re] normally kept in the junior department. And I wear a size that’s like one size larger than what you normally find in the junior department; so, I’m kind of upset about that, you know” (older plus size tween).

*Size/Fit.* Size/fit emerged as a major theme for all focus groups. In the context of apparel availability, size/fit encompasses the availability of sizes and desired fit. Though older tweens expressed more frustration in the lack of availability of clothing that was their size and fit them, tweens in all groups discussed this issue. These girls expressed this theme through statements such as:

Like when, um, me, and my friend, um, go shopping, we always, like, want, like, the same shirt, but, um, the problem is, like, I’m way taller than her so, we can like-like, they might have her size, but they never have mine (younger normal size tween).

And:

I’m very short. So, like, I usually have to find, like, a short slim, like, put together and everything and I can, and it’s very hard to find something like that. And I’m

in that stage where I have a very hard time finding what I need (older normal size tween).

Other tween girls made statements such as, “Well I have a problem cuz I have, like, no butt so when I go to find jeans, like, either it’s too big, like I could fit another person back here” (older normal size tween); “Like up here my legs I can’t fit into some pants, but then once I can fit into them, they’re too big in the waist. So I have a hard time” (older normal size tween); and “But when I go down [in size] it’s too small and when I [look for] . . . the half size, it doesn’t work out because they [the stores] don’t have them” (older normal size tween).

This theme overlapped many of the other themes, such as pants/jeans hard, because the tween girls expressed problems with fit and sizing when they talked about finding specific types of clothing.

*Skirts/dresses easy and skirts/dresses hard.* When talking about the availability of skirts and dresses, tween girls in all groups said that sometimes finding skirts and/or dresses was hard; only normal size tween girls said that sometimes finding skirts and/or dresses was easy. Statements illustrating each theme were:

- Skirts/dresses easy: “But I like to go to Aeropostle for my jeans and skirts because I’m pretty tall, and, well, I’m not small, but I’m smaller than my height, so I have to get a smaller size and get longs; that way it will fit me right” (older normal size tween).
- Skirts/dresses hard: “And the other thing I don’t like is that all the skirts there are based on like what the model shapes are. They’re not based on what the shape we



have; it's based on people out there already. So, it's harder to find skirts" (older normal size tween).

#### *Similarities and Differences in Apparel Availability Among Subgroups of Tween Girls*

When looking at all of the tween girl apparel availability themes together, tween girls in the younger normal, older normal, and older plus groups communicated more in terms of apparel availability than girls in the younger plus size. The major themes that appeared were size/fit and jeans/pants hard. Other less important themes that came forth were online, shirts hard, shirts easy, and skirts/dressed hard. The minor theme that emerged was skirts/dresses easy. Although, the overall frequency distribution was similar for three of the groups, normal size tweens talked about more overall topics than the plus size groups. This was because in these groups, the theme skirts/dresses easy turned up. Plus size tweens did not indicate that finding skirts and/or dresses was easy.

The tween girls talked about apparel availability by answering a series of questions about how easy or hard it was for them to find particular garments such as jeans or skirts that they like and that fit them. There did not appear to be any differences between normal and plus size tween girls in the ability to find clothes that fit them or were their size. Despite that, older plus size tween girls noted more than twice as many problems related to finding apparel that fits them than the younger normal size tween girls. The other major category for the tween girls' groups was pants/jeans hard. This theme was more almost twice as dominant in the normal size groups than in the plus size groups.

Online was a theme related to how the tweens solved problems with lack of apparel availability. These tween girls stated that using the online stores is a mechanism

for them to get sizes that brick and mortar stores do not carry, find styles they cannot find in other places, search for deals/sales, and research apparel choices and availability.

Older plus size tween girls indicated that they use online tools more than the other tween girls. Other themes of shirts easy, shirts hard, and skirts/dresses hard appeared in all of the groups. Shirts easy surfaced most in the younger normal size group than in the other groups. Normal size tween girls indicated that they have a harder time finding shirts than tweens in the other groups. For skirts/dresses hard a similar pattern appears. The only minor theme that became apparent was skirts/dresses easy. As stated before, this was only in the normal size groups.

Overall, tweens in all groups expressed frustrations in finding the apparel they desired. Tween girls in all groups utilized the Internet to compensate for lack of apparel availability in traditional brick and mortar stores. Also, tween girls in all groups had issues with finding the desired fit and size they needed. The availability of shirts seemed to be a 50/50 split between easy and hard. The tween girls in all groups provided evidence that finding skirts and/or dresses was difficult for them as well. Only normal size tween girls indicated that finding skirts and/or dresses was easy. Tween girls in all groups expressed frustrations over the lack of availability of pants and/or jeans in the marketplace. This lack of availability stemmed primarily from issues about a lack of size, style, or fit. The tween girls in all groups identified these gaps and articulated their expectations as shown in the dialogue provided. A majority of these themes were expressed as negative comments about the inability to find apparel in the market. Size/fit issues and the inability to find pants/jeans showed up as the two main themes among all of the tween girls. Also, the tween girls indicated that they view online retailers as an

avenue to obtain the clothes they cannot find in brick and mortar establishments. This notion came forth as the third overall major theme for the tween girls. Older normal tween girls appeared to express the most in terms of apparel availability. This is interesting in that according to the market survey of plus size apparel (J. C. Penney, 2006; Kang, 2004; Old Navy, 2006), one would suspect that plus size tween girls should not be able to find as many clothes in the marketplace as their normal size counterparts. Thus, these findings indicate that all subgroups of tween girls had trouble finding apparel.

Research Question 3 b: Do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express, through conversation, different issues with respect to the availability of apparel for their daughters in the market place?

#### *Apparel Availability of Tween Girls Expressed by Their Mothers*

Content analysis of the mothers' focus groups revealed eight themes related to apparel availability for their daughters. These themes are listed in Table 9 along with frequency counts for each group. Following Table 9 is Figure 17, which shows the Venn diagram derived from the data.

#### *Theme Explanation and Interpretation*

Each of these apparel availability themes implied various things about how easy or hard it was for mothers of tweens to find apparel for their daughter. For instance, the theme, *nice clothes hard* should be interpreted as the idea that mothers of tweens had a hard time finding nice clothes for their daughters. Each theme is described in more detail below, and in most instances, key quotes are provided to illustrate each theme.

Discussions of some themes are combined due to linkages in their interpretation.

Table 9

*Frequency Counts of Emergent Apparel Availability Themes of Tween Girls Expressed by Their Mothers*

Emergent Themes	Mothers of	Mothers of	Mothers of	Mothers of	Total
	Younger Normal Size Twins (N = 8)	Older Normal Size Twins (N = 11)	Younger Plus Size Twins (N = 9)	Older Plus Size Twins (N = 11)	
Jeans/Pants Hard	10	10	17	39	76
Nice Clothes Hard	3	7	3	7	20
Online	0	7	0	4	11
Shirts Easy	6	0	0	3	9
Shirts Hard	0	1	2	10	13
Size/Fit	5	8	29	30	72
Skirts/Dresses Hard	6	8	19	9	50
Style	4	10	4	9	27
Total	34	51	74	111	270

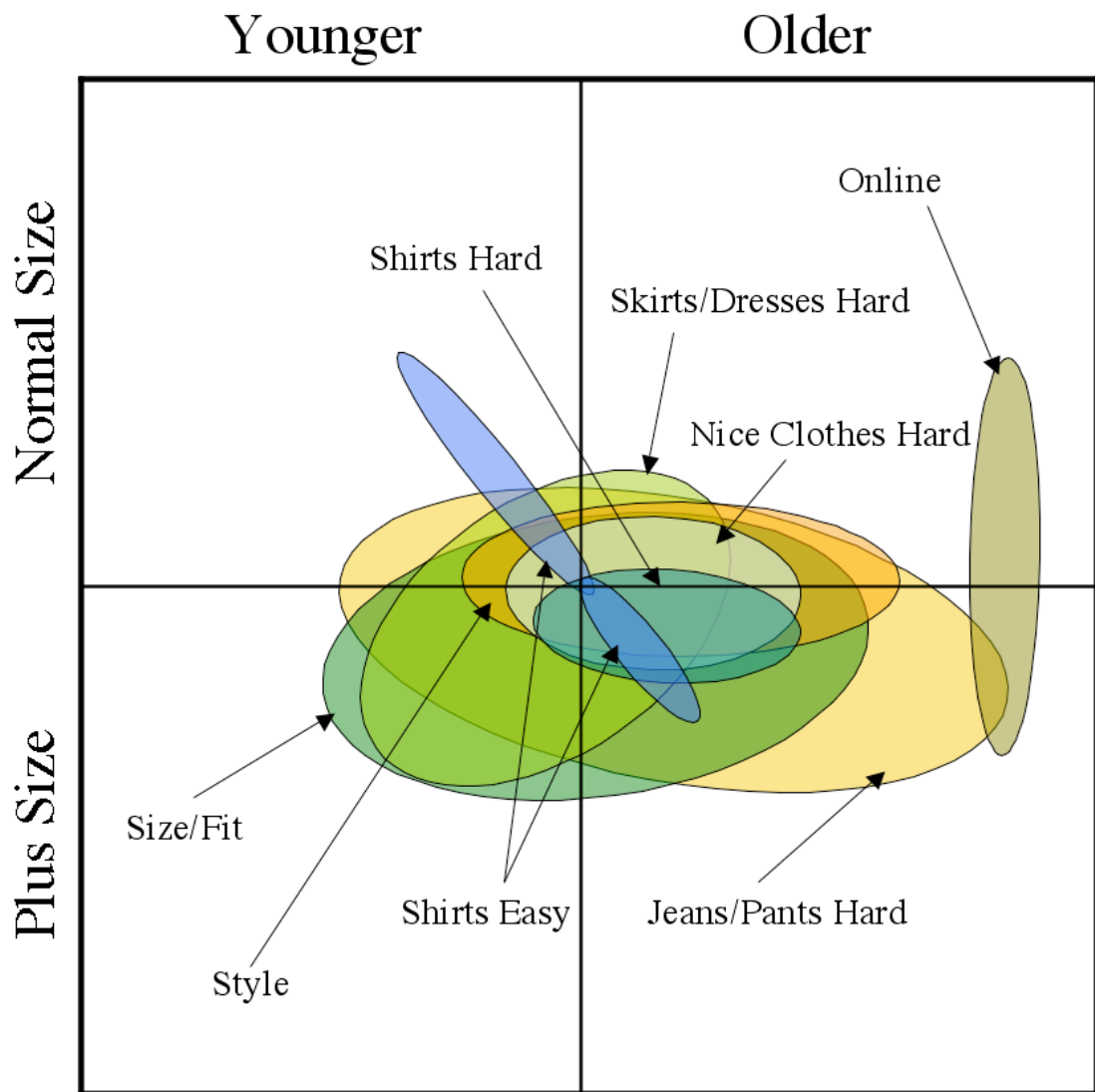


Figure 17. Diagram of emergent apparel availability themes from mothers' focus groups.

Note. In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

*Jeans/pants hard.* All groups of mothers expressed difficulty in finding pants or jeans for their daughters through statements like, “And so it’s, it’s hard to find jeans that fit her [my daughter] now” (mother of younger plus size tween). The problem seemed more pervasive for mothers of plus size tween girls. Most of this deficiency was found in problems with the waist to length ratio. This was also a common problem expressed by both normal and plus size tween girls. The mothers expressed frustration about the lack of sizes as well as having to alter the pants once they were purchased. One mother’s description of this issue was:

. . . but what’s the problem with her is when she see[s] a pair of jeans that she can fit up here [her waist], and this, say it’s the bell bottom, and by the time, but it’s long . . . So, by the time . . . [I] cut it [the extra length in the pant legs] off and hem it. Well, you done cut the bell out. So it’s not a bell bottom anymore, you know; it’s just a regular pair of jeans . . . So that’s when she becomes frustrated. Then, cuz she can fit it, but it’s too long, and it’s hard to find a size that fit her because she’s short. So I have to go, as everyone was saying before, you gotta get it longer to fit here, but then you cut the design out (mother of younger plus size tween).

When elaborating on this theme, other mothers made statements such as:

- “I mean you have to buy them [jeans] like a size too big, for them to fit her thighs. Then they’re too big everywhere else” (mother of older plus size tween).
- “Well I, you know. My daughter you know in around age 11, 12 somewhere in there, they really don’t you know, a lot of them don’t have defined waists and hips . . . Their figure’s are not real defined yet. And I think . . . a lot of these, these

jeans are made for full figures . . . with the curves and everything, for girls who haven't achieved that yet" (mother of older normal size tween).

- "Because she is slimmer, she has really long legs but they're thin, and her hips are thin, and, I mean, those are still fallin' off, but you know she's sort of between sizes, where a 12's too small, a 14 is too big. We try and buy them with like the spandex in the, that because those just tend to fit a little better, so you can buy them a smidge small and then they stay on, cuz she almost never wears a belt" (mother of older normal size tween).
- "They're [jeans/pants] tight, but they're tight in . . . and [my daughter is] muscular so her legs are a little bigger, so they're really tight here, but then the waist is big, and we were in American Eagle, and she put these jeans, and I thought, oh my. I can see [my daughter's] underwear, you know it's just the back, . . . Yes, she said, "well mom, I can wear a belt;" I said, "well let's just try a different size." I mean she's just getting to where she fits into those, so she's in the smaller sizes" (mother of older normal size tween).

By and large, mothers in all groups said that finding jeans and pants that fit their daughters and was a style they wanted was difficult.

*Nice clothes hard.* Mothers in all groups said that it was hard for them to find nice clothes for their daughter. Generally nice clothes were for things like weddings, church events, or school dances. Most notably, this theme emerged in the older groups, although some mothers of younger tween girls had issues with finding nice clothes as well. Mothers expressed this theme through statements such as:

At school or if you're buying clothes for Easter Sunday, and you try to pick out something that's age appropriate but trendy enough for your daughter to be happy with, and they don't want the little girl looking dress, . . . But you don't want the dress that looks like it should be on a 19-year-old (mother of older normal size tween).

And:

I had a issue with, um, all my daughters were in a wedding recently, and they needed, they had their dresses for the wedding as flower girls and brides, junior bridesmaids, but finding something for the rehearsal dinner; it was very difficult finding something between looking to Gymboree as [my daughter] said, which was the younger like, um, linen, the Strasburg kids, I mean that's of course I was, like oh, you're beautiful . . . And they were like "Mom." So then you go looking at other dresses, and they're all spaghetti strapped, . . . they look like miniature cocktail dresses, eh-eh they should have been carrying martini glasses. It was the weirdest thing; I just look at them going they're . . . like shrunk adults, it's just that was very difficult. We ended up having to buy blouse and skirts that were not too tight and clingy (mother of younger normal size tween).

Generally, these mothers had a hard time finding nice clothing for special occasions without having to either have the garment altered or in one case, custom made.

*Online.* Mothers of older tween girls utilized the Internet in finding and researching apparel options for their daughters. Though mothers of younger tween girls discussed online shopping, many of them were hesitant to actually shop online, due to insecurities about the fit of the garments, and would instead only use the internet as a



research tool. An instance of this was, “I mean, we have researched things online at different stores, and then we’ve gone to the store to get a particular item that we saw online but we don’t order it” (mother of older plus size tween). However, mothers of older tween girls did utilize the Internet as a shopping resource. Many of these women saw online stores as an extension of their brick and mortar complements and perceived there to be more variety and selections online. Thus, these mothers used the Internet as a means to find apparel not otherwise available to them. This is similar to how their daughters used online shopping. For example, “I’m starting to a lot, do research on the Internet because I’ve been doing a lot on eBay. Because I don’t, I’m leery on what would fit” (mother of older plus size tween).

*Shirts easy and shirts hard.* When talking about the availability of shirts, only mothers in the younger normal and older plus size group expressed that finding shirts was easy. One mother of an older plus size tween girl said, “And I was absolutely delighted because I found . . . shirts too that weren’t screaming at the seams that she could put on.” However, other mothers, in all groups except the younger normal size one, expressed that finding shirts for their daughters was hard. Many of these mothers expressed frustration with not being able to find shirts that were age appropriate for their daughters. This idea particularly emerged in the older plus size group. Perhaps the co-existence of the themes shirts easy and shirts hard in the older plus size group was due to the notion that there were some tween girls who only wore baggy t-shirts, which are fairly ubiquitous in the market, whereas tween girls desiring more style had a harder time finding shirts with styles that were also age appropriate.

*Size/fit.* The theme size/fit in terms of apparel availability emerged in all groups, but was much more prominent in the plus size groups. In this instance, as with the daughters, size/fit refers to the availability of sizes and desired fit. Some key comments describing this theme were as follows:

- “It [clothes] probably doesn’t fit them, so that is real frustrating” (mother of older plus size tween).
- “It [not finding clothes that fit] lowers their self-esteem I think for sure” (mother of older plus size tween).
- “If they fit her in the hips, then they’re you know, it it’s not long enough for her” (mother of older plus size tween).
- “And I think that’s common for other girls you know to be too big in the waist but tight around the rear end. And they like them really tight in the thighs, and of course a lot of them have this spandex, so they’re more comfortable than they look like they would be, but they’re still really big and baggy in the waist” (mother of older normal size tween).
- “I mean you have to buy them like a size too big, for them to fit her thighs. Then they’re too big everywhere else” (mother of older plus size tween).

Essentially, mothers in all groups, but particularly mothers of plus size tween girls, expressed that finding apparel in an available size that fit their daughter was difficult.

*Skirts/dresses hard.* The theme skirts/dresses hard emerged in all groups, but was observed more in the younger plus size group. This theme emerged as mothers expressed an inability to find skirts and dresses that either met the style requirements of their daughter or complied with the regulated length of school dress codes. A few examples of

this theme were, “Most of them [skirts] are too short . . . It’s very hard to find [skirts]” (mother of older normal size tween), and “I have had a terrible time, finding clothes to fit the school regulations” (mother of younger normal size tween).

*Style.* Style emerged as a theme related to apparel availability. This theme was discussed more in the older groups than in the younger groups. These mothers said things such as, “well the problem that I’ve had with my daughter is, if you buy a dress to fit her, cuz she is larger, uh, she has to go to a style perhaps I would wear” (mother of older plus size tween). And:

Yeah no, like [my daughter’s] dress I had to get the 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance, we got from Belk’s from the ladies department. And it had to be altered a little bit on the shoulders to-to make it fit her across her shoulders cuz it was a little big, but mostly in the ladies department is where we have to shop (mother of older plus size tween).

Both mothers are describing how their daughters have to shop in adult departments, and are forced to compromise style for fit. These mothers were unable to find both style and fit for their daughters.

#### *Similarities and Differences in Apparel Availability of Tween Girls as Expressed by Their Mothers*

Overall, mothers of tween girls in all groups expressed frustrations in finding the apparel their daughters either needed or desired. Mothers in all groups found pants and jeans difficult to find. This theme of jeans/pants hard was, however, much more apparent in the plus size groups. All groups had a hard time finding nice clothes for their daughters. This theme was expressed more in the older than in the younger groups. Only

some mothers of older tweens found online shopping to be a method with which to fulfill some of their daughters' apparel needs. Only mothers of younger normal and older plus size tween girls found shirts easy to find, whereas mother of older normal, younger plus, and older plus size tween girls described difficulty when finding shirts in the market. All mothers expressed difficulty finding the correct size/fit for their daughters, but like the jeans/pants hard theme, this was much more apparent in the plus size groups. Size/fit were also themes in apparel availability and all size/fit relationships stemmed from an inability to find clothes that were the correct size and the daughters. This problem was more concentrated in the plus size groups. These women were unable to find skirts and/or dresses to fit their daughters. And finally, there was an inability for these women to find styles that were either age appropriate or stylish enough for their daughters. This issue occurred more often with the older tween girls.

Mothers of older plus size tween girls voiced the most comments in terms of apparel availability for their daughters, followed by mothers of younger plus size tweens. Interestingly, unlike their daughters, mothers of plus size tween girls followed the trend of difficulty in finding apparel for their plus sized daughters. Like their daughters, pants/jeans hard and size/fit emerged as two major categories. However, for the mothers, skirts/dresses hard also emerged as a third main category. This was primarily due to the mothers' discontent with the current style of short skirts. Overall these mothers did not think that this style was age appropriate for their daughters. Other less salient themes for the mothers were style, nice clothes hard , shirts hard, and online. The only minor theme that emerged in the mothers' focus group was shirts easy.

Though not in the same order as their daughters, major themes of pants/jeans hard and size/fit were the dominating themes in the mothers groups. When shopping for pants and/or jeans for their daughters, mothers of plus size tween girls, particularly mothers of older plus size tween girls, voiced much frustration in terms of the availability of jeans and/or pants that their daughters like and that fit them; where as mothers of normal size tween girls only moderately expressed this theme. A similar trend occurred when observing the frequency counts for size/fit. Here, mothers of older plus size tween girls communicated the most frustration, and were closely followed by mothers of younger plus size tweens. The normal size mothers did not convey this theme nearly as much. The third major theme of skirts/dressed hard appeared most in the mothers of younger plus size tween girls group and only moderately in the other groups.

Style was manifested more in the mothers of older tween girls groups than in the younger groups. There did not appear to be any trends with this theme related to size. Nice clothes hard was similar to style in that mothers of older tween girls indicate more often that it was difficult for them to find nice clothes for their daughters than mothers of younger tween girls. When looking at the shirt hard theme, mothers of plus size tween girls indicated more difficulty than mothers of normal size tweens. In fact, mothers of younger normal size tween girls did not mention this theme at all. Also, mothers of older plus size tween girls made comments related to this theme five times more than mothers of younger plus size tween girls. Most of the time when mothers addressed this theme, they talked about difficulties finding more formal shirts or more stylish shirts. When looking at the converse minor theme of shirt easy, this theme was revealed in only two groups: mothers of younger normal size tween girls and mothers of older plus size tween

girls. When mothers spoke about this theme, they mostly referred to sports wear clothing, like t-shirts or other more casual tops. The theme online, showed that like their daughters, these mothers recognized and identified that their daughters and/or themselves used Internet shopping to fill gaps in the marketplace with respect to apparel. Different from the tween girls though, was the fact that in the tween girls groups, all groups mentioned this theme; yet, in the mothers groups, only mothers of older tween girls mentioned online shopping as a mechanism their daughters use to mitigate issues with apparel availability.

Research Question 3 c: Do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express different opinions about apparel availability than their mothers?

*Similarities and Differences in Apparel Availability Among Tween Girls and Their Mothers*

By showing the two Venn diagrams adjacent to one another, one can immediately see the difference in theme scope and magnitude between tween girls and their mothers. Differences in theme emergence (i.e. which themes emerged in which groups), also becomes more apparent in this visualization. Apparel availability themes emerged more within the mother's focus groups than within the daughter's focus groups. This can be seen in Figure 18 with the mother's themes taking up more area on the chart than the daughters. This could be due to the mothers making many of the apparel purchases and being more cognizant of needs than their daughters. It is interesting to note that all groups had some similar issues with apparel availability, but mothers identified some issues not mentioned by daughters.

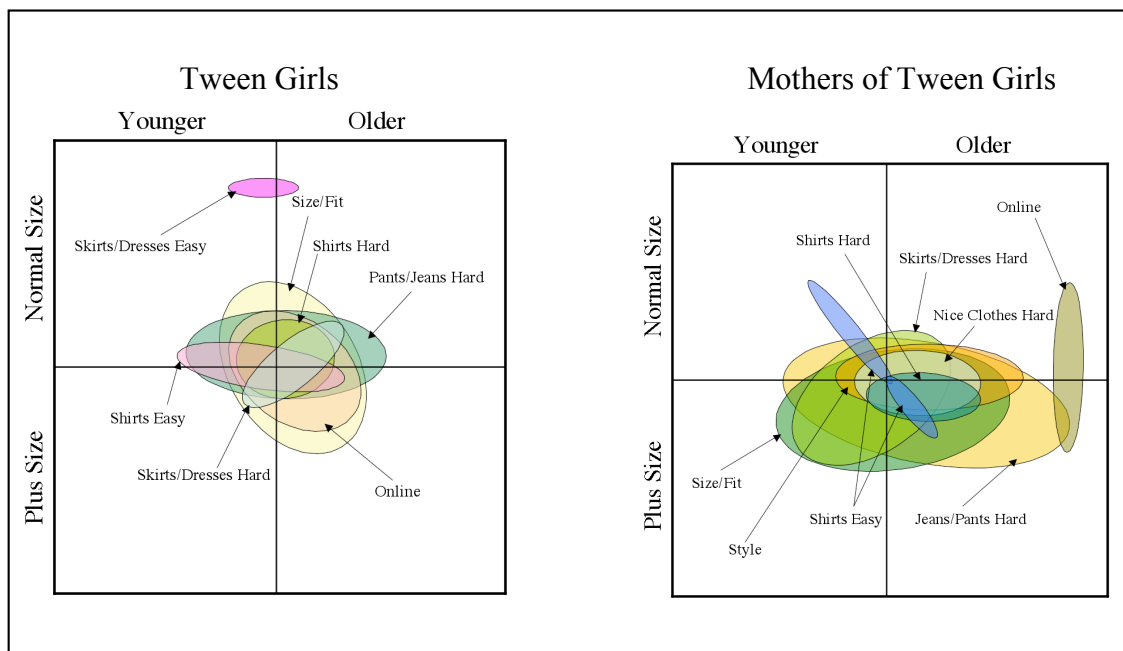


Figure 18. Side-by-side comparison of Venn diagrams of apparel availability of tween girls and their mothers.

*Note.* In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

In answering the research question, several similarities and differences emerged between subgroups of tween girls and their mothers. Much like apparel needs themes, the mothers groups appeared to be more established (i.e. higher frequency counts for each theme) than those of their daughters. There did not appear to be a major overall pattern for the tween girls groups other than younger plus size tween girls talk the least about apparel availability. On the other hand, for the mothers groups, plus size mothers talk more than twice as much about apparel availability for their daughters than mothers of

normal size tween girls. Also, mothers of older tween girls talked more about apparel availability, than mothers of younger tween girls. Similar themes appeared for both tween girls and their mothers, except that some normal size tween girls identified the theme skirts/dresses easy whereas this theme does not appear in the mothers groups. Also, mothers (particularly mothers of older tween girls) identified the themes style and nice clothes hard, but these did not appear in the tween girls' group. A theme related to nice clothes also appeared when the mothers spoke about apparel needs, but again did not appear in the tween girls' groups.

These differences aside, there were many similarities between the mothers and the daughters in terms of apparel availability themes. The themes that came forth in both groups were online, pants/jeans hard, shirts easy, shirts hard, size/fit, and skirts/dresses hard. Overall, the mothers and daughters said that the right fit/size and jeans/pants is the hardest thing for them to find in terms of apparel. Also of note was that only mothers of older tween girls identified online shopping as a resource for their daughters, where as tween girls in all groups identified the internet as a resource. Though the frequency counts and ranking of themes differed between the moms and the daughters, overall each group identified gaps and problems in the market for both normal and plus size tween girls.

### Body Image

Body image, though related to apparel through concepts such as social deprivation, is different than the other three topics analyzed in this report. With respect to body image, tween girls were asked what they liked and what they would change about their own bodies. The mothers were asked similar questions in relation to what they



thought their daughters would like to change about themselves. Because the two questions were closely related and the emergent themes had very low frequency counts, discussion of tween girl body image is combined for mothers and daughters. For instance, discussion of the themes, body parts positive and body parts negative, are combined for both tween girls and their mothers, and examples given for each extreme. Questionnaire responses concurring body satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as reported by Lee (2006), are included in this discussion because these findings complement each other and provide insight into the findings.

Research Question 4 a: How do younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express their body image through conversation?

Research Question 4 b: How do mothers of younger and older, normal and plus size tween girls express their images of their daughter's bodies through conversation?

### *Body Image of Tween Girls*

Content analysis of the tween girls' focus groups revealed eight themes related to the body image of the tween girls. These themes are listed in Table 10. Five themes related to mothers' perceptions of daughters' body image are listed in Table 11, along with frequency counts for each group. Note that the data in Table 10 were from the tween girls' focus groups while the data in Table 11 were from the mothers, but both tables are related to the body image of the daughters. In this section, the mothers and daughters are not segmented into two sections, because the themes are more inter-related and can be explained and defined together. Figure 19 shows the Venn diagram derived from the girls data, and Figure 20 shows the diagram from the mothers' data.

Table 10

*Frequency Counts of Emergent Body Image Themes of Tween Girls*

Emergent Themes	Younger	Older	Younger	Older	Total
	Normal	Normal	Plus	Plus	
	(N = 10)	(N = 11)	(N = 9)	(N = 11)	
Body Features (+)	7	3	11	7	28
Body Features (-)	2	2	4	0	8
Body Parts (+)	0	2	2	3	7
Body Parts (-)	1	3	0	4	8
Health (+)	6	0	0	0	6
Shape/Figure (+)	4	2	3	2	11
Weight (+)	4	0	0	0	4
Weight (-)	3	0	0	1	4
Total	27	12	20	17	80

Table 11

*Frequency Counts of Emergent Themes of Mothers' Perceptions of Their Daughters'**Body Image*

Emergent Themes	Mothers of	Mothers of	Mothers of	Mothers of	Total
	Younger	Older	Younger	Older Plus	
	Normal Size	Normal Size	Plus Size	Size	
	Tweens	Tweens	Tweens	Tweens	
	(N = 8)	(N = 11)	(N = 9)	(N = 11)	
Body Features (-)	0	0	1	0	1
Body Parts (+)	0	0	0	3	3
Body Parts (-)	3	0	7	4	14
Health (+)	5	6	4	0	15
Shape/Figure (+)	0	1	0	0	1
Weight (-)	0	0	0	10	10
Total	8	7	12	17	44

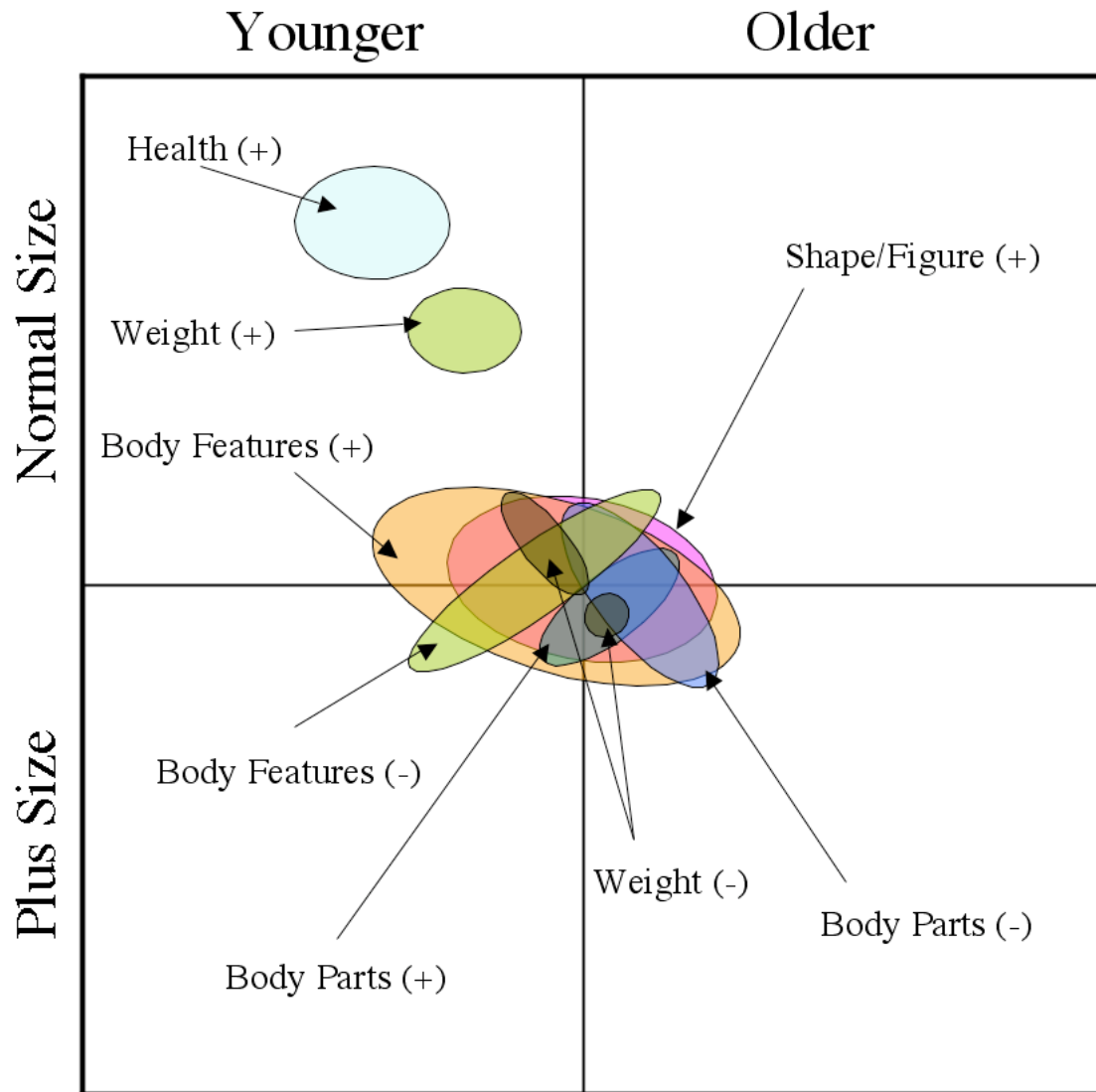


Figure 19. Diagram of body image themes from tween girls' focus groups

Note. In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

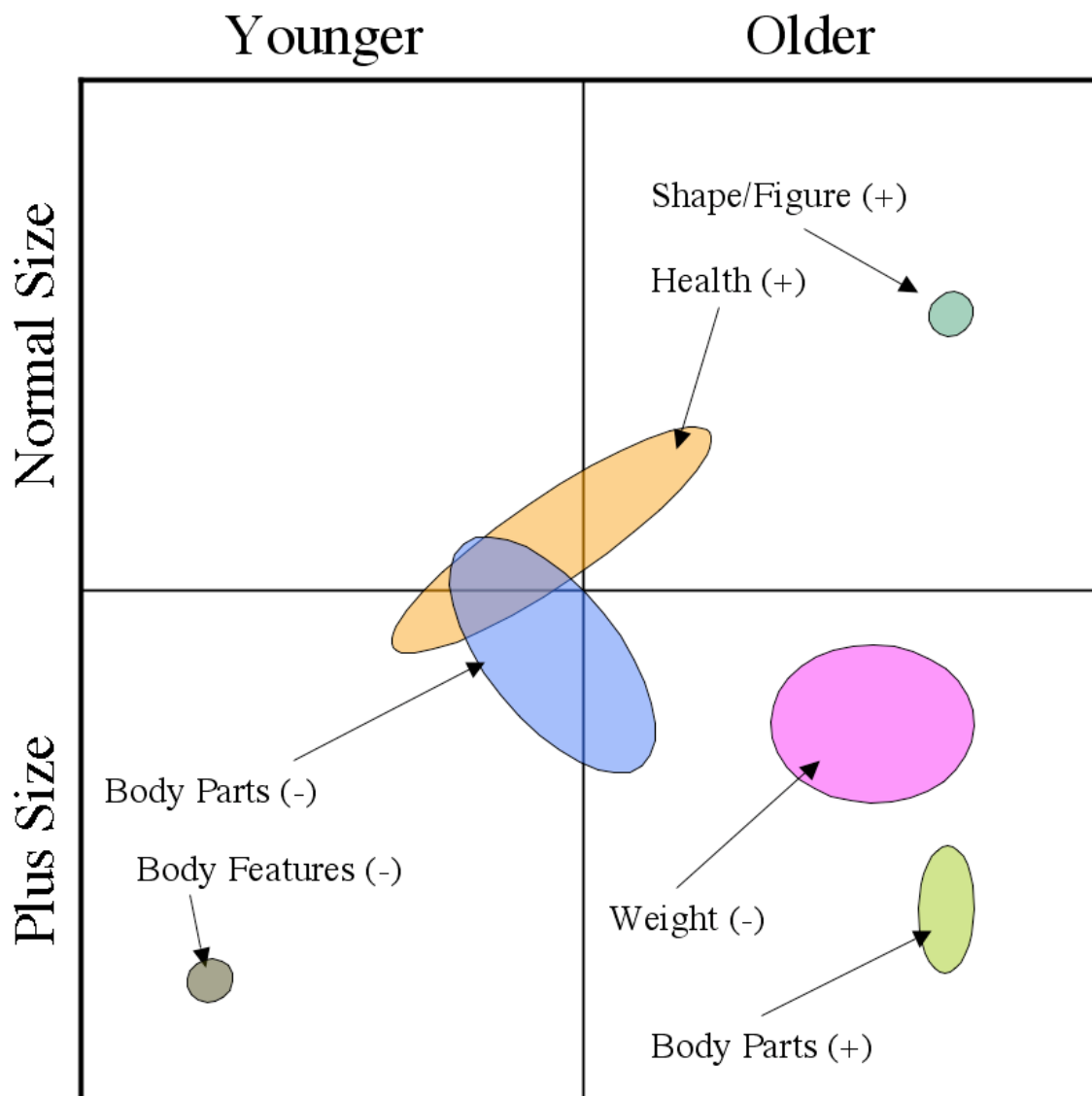


Figure 20. Diagram of body image themes from mothers' focus groups

Note. In the Venn diagram, frequency counts were translated into a spherical area so that the themes were visualized. Grids were used in determining the volume of each shape in the Venn diagrams to ensure that volumes corresponded accurately to the frequency counts, but were removed after construction to make the diagrams easier to decipher. Colors were used to differentiate spheres, but have no interpretable meaning.

### *Theme Explanation and Interpretation*

Each of these body image themes implies various factors that reveal how the tween girls feel about their own bodies or how their mothers feel about their daughters' bodies. For instance, the theme, *weight (+)* should be interpreted as the idea that either the daughter or the mother spoke positively about the daughter's weight. Each theme is described in more detail below and in most instances, key quotes are provided to illustrate each theme.

*Body features (+) and body features (-)*. The theme body features emerged when the tween girls and their mothers were asked questions about what they liked and did not like about their bodies. Features like hair, nails, height, eye color, lips, and smile were combined under the umbrella term body features. Tween girls in all groups identified what aspects they liked about their characteristics through comments such as, "I also like my height because I'm the tallest girl in my class" (younger plus size tween), and "I like my eyelashes because they're really thick" (older normal size tween). In all groups, except for the older plus size group, the tween girls identified what they did not like about their body features. These included characteristics like problematic skin (several girls reported having eczema) and hair length. Only one mother in the younger plus size group reported a negative body feature for her daughter; she said her daughter did not like her hair.

*Body parts (+) and body parts (-)*. The theme body parts emerged through the same line of questioning as body features. Discussions that included, the like or dislike of legs, feet, hands, midsection, thighs, stomach, and arms were combined under the term body parts. Tween girls in groups (except younger normal) discussed body parts that

they liked; tween girls in groups other than younger plus mentioned body parts that they did not like. An example, of a positive statement was,

I like my hands because my, um, volleyball coach tells me that my hands are like the perfect shape and . . . the way that they're made up to be a setter. In volleyball, which is really good considering I'm a setter, so that's one thing that I really like about my body (older plus size tween).

Conversely, another older plus size tween girl said she would change, "my legs because I think that they're really fat, and, um, I'm a snowman in my rolls." This was an example of a negative statement about body parts. Among the mothers, only three positive comments were made in the older plus group about body parts; mothers in groups (except older normal) reported perceiving their daughters to have negative feelings about their body parts. In these focus groups, the mothers of younger plus size tween girls reported the most negative comments about their daughters' bodies. Some examples of what the mothers said about their daughters' body parts were:

- "[My daughter] is more so her her waist, she just feels that she has a JLo waist" (mother of older plus size tween).
- "She's, my daughter's real conscious about her stomach, because she kinda, like I said she's still squishy in the middle. That's her nickname, is Squishy, you she just used to be this, I look at baby pictures and god, she was like huge. But she was just like, like a teddy bear to me. Hee squishy. And now you look and her and she's just got this little pouchyness around the middle and the clothes that she likes are made for very slender girls, much taller than she is, and so she tries to wear it. The

button is just like barely holding on. And so she gets very self-conscious about that button not buttoning and being flat. I'm like but you know you're trying to wear something that doesn't fit you and is not your size. She she doesn't like that, but she's, I'm trying to tell her, you if you, if you keep you know, exercise a little bit more, do some more activity, give it another six months, you're gonna shoot up two inches and then you won't see that squishiness anymore" (mother of younger normal size tween).

- "I think [my daughter] likes everything with the exception of her stomach. She'll say every now and then she'll say I look good, and then she'll look at her stomach and say, but I need to do a little ab work, don't I?" (mother of younger plus size tween).
- "[My daughter's] breasts, she's she does not like having larger breasts (mother of younger plus size tween).

*Health (+).* Health emerged as a theme in the younger normal group; the tween girls talked about how they liked that they were athletic or that they didn't get sick very often. One girl said, "I like that I'm healthy" (younger normal size tween). Another example was, "me and my sister do swim so, I kinda like that I'm like fit" (younger normal size tween). Among the moms, all but the older plus group spoke positively about the health (i.e. muscularity or fitness) of their daughters' bodies.

*Shape/figure (+).* Tween girls in all groups spoke positively about their body shape or their figure development. This topic also encompasses dialogue related to height. The tween girls said things like:



- “Well, I’m glad that I don’t I’m not short and I’m not um I don’t stay one size. Like I haven’t stopped growing and I’m glad of that” (young normal size tween).
- “I like that I’m tall” (young normal size tween).
- “I also like my height because I’m the tallest girl in my class” (young plus size tween).

This theme was only mentioned once the mothers groups, when a mother of a older normal size tween girl said:

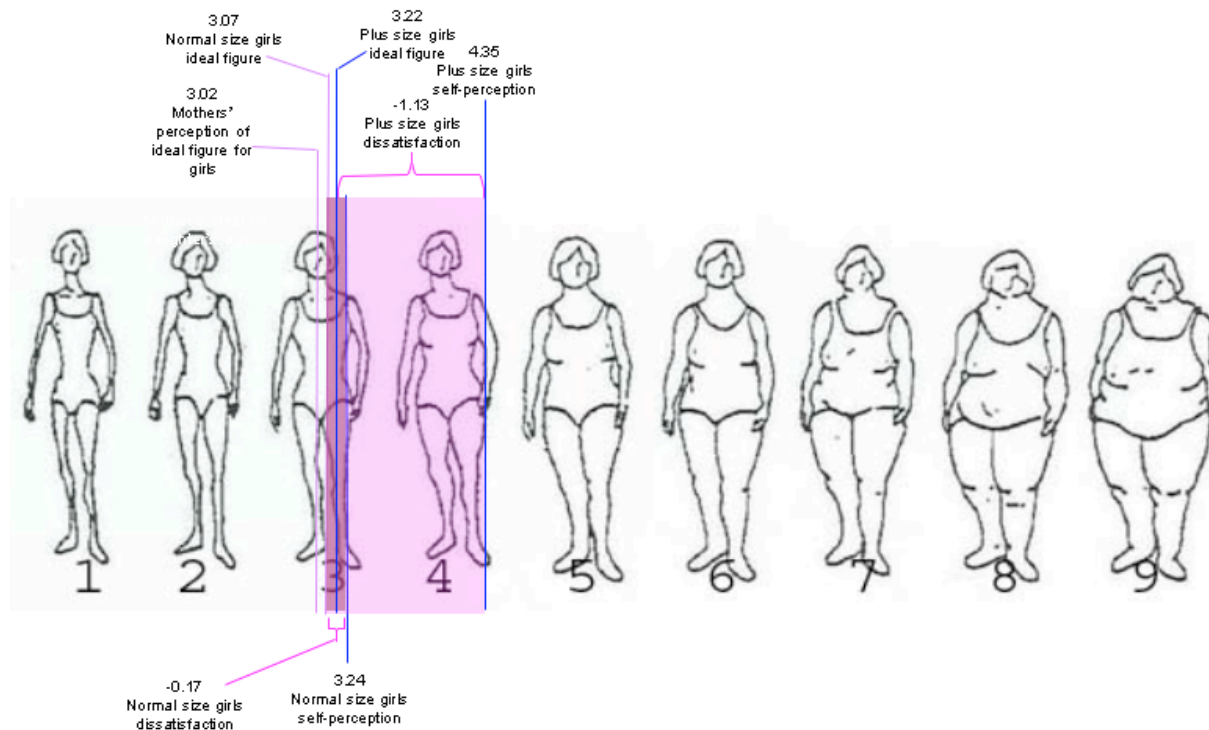
I think my daughter loves everything, she just about everything about about her[self]. She likes, she loves. Yes. She loves her figure. She’s a I guess one, I don’t want to say she loves herself but she has a very outgoing personality and the world is great, it’s great for me” (mother of older normal size tween).

*Weight (+) and weight (-).* As a whole, the tween girls and their mothers did not talk about weight very much. Only tween girls in the younger normal size group and the older plus size groups even mentioned it. They said things like, “I like how I’m like average weight and average size” (younger normal size tween) and, “Getting weighed kind of sucked because I really didn’t want to know my weight” (older plus size tween). Tables 10 and 11 revealed that weight was not a large topic in this group of tween girls, and that weight was only mentioned by the mothers of older plus size tween girls. When asked if there was anything their daughters would like to change about her body, these mothers said that their daughters would like to change their weight.

### *Similarities and Differences in Body Image of Subgroups of Tween Girls*

Overall, the tween girls seemed to have positive body images. When combined, the themes appeared to reveal more positive than negative statements among all groups of tween girls. But, when compared to questionnaire data shown in Figure 21, there were more negative body images among the plus size tweens than among the normal size tween girls. In the questionnaire, normal size girls reported an average body dissatisfaction of -.17, while plus size girls reported an average body dissatisfaction of -1.13. These values are shown in Figure 21.

According to the frequency counts, the tween girls spoke three times more positively about their bodies than negatively. The categories of themes that emerged were related to the like or dislike of specific body features, the like or dislike of specific body parts, health, shape and/or figure development, and weight. The tween girls spoke more positively than negatively about their body features across all focus groups. When looking at the theme body parts, the older tween girls seemed more dissatisfied with their body parts than the younger tween girls. The normal size tween girls appeared to be more pleased with their shapes and figures than did the plus size tween girls. Mothers, however, expressed more negativity about their daughters' bodies. It is important to note that these mothers were discussing their perception of how their daughters thought about their bodies, not what the mothers thought about their daughters' bodies. Mothers of plus size tweens indicated negative frequency counts on weight, body features, and body parts whereas their normal size counterparts only mentioned positive health attributes of their daughters' bodies.



*Figure 21.* This diagram shows body perception results for tween girls and their mothers.

*Note.* This chart was developed using Stunkard, Sorensen, and Schulsinger's (1983) scale, and shows that normal size tweens (-0.17) are much less dissatisfied with their bodies than the plus size tweens (-1.13). It also shows that the mother's have a thinner ideal figure for their daughter's (3.02) than the daughter's have for themselves (normal (3.07) and plus (3.22)) (Connell & Ulrich, 2006). Because this figure was gleaned from a source, the small font sizes could not be altered.

Overall the tween girls expressed mostly positive things about their bodies. As a whole, the tween girls talked about how they were pleased with their body parts, their shape and figure development, their weight, and their health. However, there was some negativity expressed by the tween girls with respect to weight, features, and body parts. Even so, this negativity was only a minor part of the discussion and there did not appear to be a pattern for the groups. Overall, the younger normal size tween girls expressed the most satisfaction their body image. When compared to the questionnaire data, shown in Figure 21, the tween girls expressed more negativity towards their bodies. The questionnaire found that overall, plus size tween girls were much more dissatisfied with their bodies than the normal size tween girls (Lee, 2006). This phenomenon may be due to the notion that in groups, the tween girls may not feel comfortable enough to share their true feelings about their bodies, but in a more anonymous setting, they are more apt to express their feelings.

#### *Similarities and Differences in Body Image Descriptions of Tween Girls as Perceived by Their Mothers*

Mothers of tween girls did not talk about their daughters' bodies as frequently as the tween girls talked about themselves. The mothers identified the most were health positive and body parts negative. All of the other identified themes were minor: weight negative, body parts positive, and body features negative. The mothers only made a total of 35 comments about their daughters' body image where as the girls made 80 comments about their body images. More over, the mothers spoke much more negatively about their daughter's body parts, body features, and weight than the tween girls spoke about themselves. Though the mothers mentioned some positive attributes of health (all groups

except older plus size) and body parts (only older plus size), overall the mothers were negative in discussing their perceptions of their daughters' body image. Mothers of younger normal, younger plus, and older plus size tween girls mentioned that their daughters do not like some of their body parts. One mother in the younger plus size group says her daughter did not like a particular body feature, and ten mothers in the older plus size group said that their daughters do not like their weight. When compared to the questionnaire which only found significant differences between how mothers saw their daughters and how daughters saw themselves for the plus size group (Lee, 2006). Thus showing that in this sample, mothers and daughters express the daughter's body image in different ways.

## V. SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

The purpose of this research was to characterize subgroups of female tween consumers (aged 9 to 14 years old) within the context of niche markets in the apparel industry. The research in this study focused on four areas: apparel preferences, apparel needs, apparel availability, and body image as expressed by tween girls and their mothers. Focus groups were used to collect qualitative data; 3-D body scans and questionnaires were used to collect supplemental data. Data analysis of the focus groups was performed using the emerging theme approach to content analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Questionnaire and body scan data were used to supplement explanations and descriptions of the emergent themes.

The sample consisted of 80 subjects who were recruited by [TC]<sup>2</sup>, an independent contractor. There were 41 tween girls, and 39 mothers who were divided into four groups: younger normal, younger plus, older normal, and older plus based on the age and BMI of the daughters. BMI standards established by the CDC were used to categorize the girls as normal and plus size. Tween girls under or at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile were classified as normal size and tween girls over the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile were classified as plus size. Though ethnicity was not used as a factor of the analysis, self-report of ethnicity was collected. The mothers groups consisted of 56% Caucasian, 22% African-American,

2.5 % Caucasian/Hispanic, 2.5% Native American, and 2.5% other. 14.5% of the mothers did not indicate their ethnicities. For the tween girls, 61% of the sample was Caucasian, 29% African American, 2.5% Caucasian/Hispanic, 2.5% Native American, 2.5% Caucasian/African American, and 2.5% other. The focus groups took place over two non-consecutive days in October of 2004, in Cary, NC, at the offices of [TC]<sup>2</sup>. At the focus groups, mothers and daughters were body scanned, completed questionnaires, and then participated in separate focus groups (i.e. mothers were together and daughters were together). Additionally, the daughters were asked to create a collage from images in teen fashion magazines of an outfit they would like to buy or wear. These collages were used during the introductory phase of the focus groups as the daughters were asked to describe why they chose their collaged outfit and to state how much they would pay for that outfit if they were to purchase it in a store. The data collected from the collages were in the form of focus group dialogue.

The focus group data comprised the largest portion of the data analysis. Themes were identified through the emergent theme method (Marshall & Rossman, 1989) and sorted under the four main categories of apparel preferences, apparel needs, apparel availability, and body image. This was done in accordance with the research questions. Comparisons were made among groups of tween girls, among groups of mothers, and between the mothers and their daughters. Through these comparisons, similarities and differences were discovered. The themes are presented in detail in Chapter IV, along with supporting evidence from the questionnaires and body scans. The following discussion section highlights some of the key similarities and differences among and between the groups.

## Discussion

This research supports the concept that the issues surrounding clothing are complex. The results showed that there are many complicated issues that emerge when tween girls and their mothers talk about tween apparel relationships and body image. These complex issues were manifested in three main categories of findings: overall findings, age-related findings, and size-related findings. Overall findings were findings related to all of the groups, regardless of age or size. Age-related findings were findings that emerged and appeared to be intrinsically linked to the age of the tween girl, whereas size-related findings were more linked to the size (normal or plus) of the tween girls.

### *Overall Findings*

When looking at all of the themes for the tween girls and their mothers, several overall findings emerged. These were problems with fit (particularly with jeans and pants), a strong desire for modest apparel, brand and store recognition, price, and mother/daughter agreement on apparel. Each of these themes emerged as the tween girls and their mothers spoke about their apparel preferences, needs, and availability.

### *Problems with Fit*

Tween girls and their mothers indicated overall that fit was their biggest apparel issue. They talked about their inability to find clothes that fit them, preferences for the fit of garments, problems with fit of specific apparel items (such as jeans or shirts), frustrations with discrepancies of fit of sizes across brands and stores, and features (such as spandex and adjustable waistbands) that enhanced the fitting capacity of apparel. These findings are linked to Tselepis and de Klerk's (2004) work, which laid a conceptual framework for tween girls' expectations of apparel fit. Although their



findings did not address the specific fit expectations of plus size tweens, they are linked to this study because the data showed that tween girls were concerned with fit and had certain preferences and expectations for it. There was not one specific type of desired fit determined for a particular garment, but this research showed that tween girls of all ages and sizes were articulate about concepts related to apparel fit. To more specifically understand fit preferences, further research must be performed.

### *Modest Apparel for Tween Girls*

Tween girls and mothers in all groups voiced needs and desires for more modest apparel for tweens. This theme had the second highest incidence rate, second only to fit. Both tween girls and their mothers talked about needs for modesty with respect to clothing. Both spoke with frustration about trends involving inappropriate words on clothing, as well as addressed issues related to age-appropriateness and compliance with school regulations. Mothers and their daughters expressed that they did not like apparel choices, which showed too much skin or made the girls look more mature than they actually were.

There are many issues that arise when speaking about modesty. Social implications of sexuality and maturity present complex and potentially disturbing issues. As shown in the body scans in Figure 13, tween girls in this sample are already developing mature bodies, with womanly curves and breasts. With such developments and physique changes, these tween girls may feel added pressure from sexual innuendos in their apparel. Mothers spoke of the way men were already beginning to take notice of their daughters and were very uncomfortable with the potential damage this could be doing to their daughters' sense of self-worth and body image. The tween girls and their

mothers both voiced concerns to this effect. Apparel designers and retailers should consider the implications of problems with which tween girls must deal simply because there is a lack of stylish, but modest apparel in the marketplace.

#### *Price*

It was not surprising that price emerged as a topic of conversation when tween girls and their mothers spoke about apparel. Though the older plus size group was more price-conscious, subjects in all groups had price preferences and ranges. There was not a consistent price range for the entire group, but, rather, each individual appeared to have her own personal threshold for spending on apparel. Further research needs to be conducted to see if the price ranges and thresholds are related to socioeconomic status (as one would expect) or to some other factor.

#### *Mother/Daughter Agreement*

Literature suggested that tween girls and their mothers would argue a lot about apparel (Kaiser, 2003; Walis, 2003). Although some tweens and their mothers indicated a strained relationship due to apparel shopping and wearing decisions, both groups appeared to value the other's opinion. Most girls indicated that they would not wear clothes of which their mothers did not approve, nor would they purchase this clothing. Most of this was related to parental control of both behaviors and money. However, some girls and their mothers conceded that they consciously compromised on apparel items and sought to find things on which they could concur. Many of the tweens also spoke about how they valued their mother's opinion and wanted their mother to assist them with apparel decision-making. This supports the findings of Troy and O'Donnell

(2003), who found, through a survey of 800 subjects aged 8-12 years old, that tweens expressed concern with making their parents proud.

### *Age-Related Findings*

This research revealed some age-related results. Brand and store recognition and priority, style preferences, and positive body image were the three major groups of findings that appeared to be related to the age of the tween girl.

#### *Brand and Store Recognition and Priority*

The data in this study suggested that brand and store-specific shopping was more important to older tween girls than to younger ones. The literature suggests that tweens are brand savvy (BUZZBACK, 2004; Paterson, 2003), and that as they age, their awareness and recognition of fashion brands is heightened (Martin & Peters, 2005). Martin and Peters' study showed that as adolescents age, they place more importance on brand-name apparel. The research reported here confirms these findings. There was some indication that plus size tween girls in this sample were more aware of brands and stores than normal size tween girls. This research showed that only 5 retailers met the apparel needs and preferences of all of the groups of tween girls in this sample. Those were: JC Penney, Kohl's, Old Navy, Target, and Wal-mart. In terms of brands, only Gap and Old Navy appeared in all of the tween girl focus groups.

#### *Style Preferences*

Style preferences also appeared to be an age-related theme, as more older tween girls and their mothers expressed specific style preferences for tween girls. Linked conceptually to the ideas of brand and store-specific shopping preferences, the notion that older tween girls are more style conscious is not surprising. Tween girls in the younger

groups expressed style preferences by talking about specific colors that were important to them in apparel, whereas older tween girls verbalized more specific types of styles, like layering shirts in a particular way or talking about how they liked to layer skirts over pants. The shift from more generalized style preferences to more specific style preferences is supported by previous research, which suggests that as tweens develop, they come in to their own in terms of apparel choices and decisions (BUZZBACK, 2004; Martin & Peters, 2005; Paterson, 2003).

### *Positive Body Image*

Another finding that emerged from this exploratory study was that younger tweens seemed more apt to have positive body images than older girls. In both the normal and plus size groups, younger girls and their mothers expressed more positive associations about girls' body image than did older girls. Additionally, girls who indicated that they were active in sports seemed to like more things about their bodies than girls who did not acknowledge sports participation. These girls spoke positively about their health as well as talked about how they liked that they were strong and fit. Neumark-Sztainer, Goeden, Story, and Wall (2004) did a survey to study the effect of physical activity on body satisfaction of adolescents, and their research showed that body image is positively affected by physical activity. Davies and Furnham (1986) showed that body image is related to both age and size. In this study, the younger tweens said more positive things about their bodies than the older tweens. Body image related to size will be further explored in the next section.

### *Size-Related Findings*

Size-related findings emerged in this study. Finding apparel and negative body image were the two major trends that appeared to be related to the size of the tween girl.

#### *Finding Apparel*

Plus size tween girls and their mothers consistently stated that they had difficulty finding apparel. Retailers like Limited Too and Delia\*s specifically target the tween demographic, and Torrid addresses needs of plus size consumers. However, this study's findings indicate that plus size tween girls are still unable to find clothes that they like and that fit them. Data indicated that tween-based stores often did not carry the expanded sizes that fit all the tween girls and that plus size stores like Torrid offered clothing that was more suited for older teenagers and adults, not those between the ages of 9 and 14 years. This gap in the marketplace appeared to cause feelings of clothing deprivation similar to those identified earlier by Kelley, Daigle, LaFleur, and Wilson (1974), and Kelley and Eicher (1970) who studied older teens. Kness (1983) and Francis (1992) found significant effects of deprivation on social participation factors in high school students. Sontag and Lee (2004) found that clothing and self-actualization are somewhat related. Plus size tween girls in this sample expressed more negative body images than the normal size tween girls. Though not specifically addressed in this study, literature suggests that lack of appropriately sized apparel could impact social participation and social development of these tween girls (Smucker & Creekmore, 1972). Also, because these tween girls indicated that they were filling their apparel needs with more mature, adult-like clothing, mothers indicated that they were concerned for their plus size daughters' more developed figures because they were being highlighted by the adult

clothing. These issues of social deprivation and premature sexual development could become more problematic as the tweens age.

### *Negative Body Image*

Comments in both tween girls' and mothers' focus groups indicated that there were more plus size tween girls who expressed negative things about their bodies than normal size tween girls. Data analysis of the questionnaire responses for the group also showed that plus size tween girls had more body dissatisfaction than normal size tween girls. Although tween girls in all groups showed some body dissatisfaction, the degree of body dissatisfaction for the plus size tween girls was significantly more than for the normal size tween girls (Lee, 2006). Davies and Furnham (1986) also found positive body image to be associated with age and negative body image being associated with size.

### Conclusions

This research indicated overall differences among the identified subgroups of age and size status of female tween consumers. These differences were highlighted in the results and discussion portions of this thesis. Among the key differences found, the most striking to the researcher was the tween girls' identification of apparel fit and modesty apparel as overarching themes. The tween girls repeatedly indicated very specific ideas about how they wanted garments to fit their bodies, what they perceived as a comfortable fit, and what they perceived to be an age appropriate or modest fit. In most cases, there were discrepancies between the groups in how the tween girls identified these various aspects of their apparel relationships, which are discussed in detail in Chapter IV, and can be easily seen in Figures 9, 12, and 17. The mothers identified the same two themes (fit

and modesty), yet there were differences in the frequency and distribution (across groups) of these themes when comparing all of the groups. Mothers of plus size tween girls seemed marginally more concerned with fit, whereas mothers of older tween girls were more concerned with the modesty of their daughters' apparel.

Tween girls also showed they were very style conscious. Tween girls in all groups verbalized apparel styles and colors that they liked. Sometimes these ideas were linked to a particular brand or store, and other times the tween girls would talk about things like where they wanted the sleeve length to fall, or how they wanted their pant legs to be styled. Overall, the older tween girls expressed more awareness of branding and styles than the younger tween girls. Store-specific clothing was also important to all tween girls, but the normal size groups had more positive things to say about shopping in certain stores. One cause of this might be that normal size tween girls have more store loyalty than plus size tween girls because they are able to find clothes that they need, whereas the plus size tween girls expressed that they have a harder time finding apparel. The plus size tween girls and their mothers indicated that shopping was often a painful and unpleasant experience for them. The implications of this may manifest in negative brand and store recognition as well as damaged self-images. The identification of so many stores and brands in all groups is evidence that these tweens are not only aware of brands, but also are developing brand loyalties. If this is indeed the case, further research should explore this notion because establishing brand and store loyalty at such a young age could be profitable for industry over the lifetime of the consumer.

Though concentrated more in the plus size groups, tweens and mothers in all groups expressed difficulty finding apparel products to match the tween's specific

apparel desires related to fit and style. The girls and their mothers overwhelmingly expressed the most difficulty in finding jeans/pants. This identified gap in the market implies not only that industry is not supplying apparel for plus size tweens as suggested earlier (J. C. Penney, 2006; Kang, 2004; Old Navy, 2006), but that industry may not be supplying the correct sizing and assortments of apparel for normal size tweens as well. The tweens and their mothers identified problems such as waist and length relationships in jeans; the lack of modest or age-appropriate garments in the market; and the difficulty of finding appropriate or consistent sizes of clothing.

When speaking about body image, neither the girls nor their mothers were apt to say very many things about their bodies. Of interest in this research was the difference between focus group findings and those found in the questionnaire. Analysis of the questionnaire revealed that plus size girls and their mothers indicated high levels of body dissatisfaction as shown in Figure 21. The normal size girls spoke more positively about their bodies, which conformed to their questionnaire responses but the plus size tween girls were reluctant to say anything at all about their bodies. In the focus groups, dissatisfaction did not translate verbally into the dialogue when the subjects were probed with statements like, “tell me something you like about your body” and “tell me something you would like to change about your body.” Even the mothers did not say much when probed about what they thought their daughters felt about their bodies. This could be because the mothers were not willing to talking negatively about their daughters. However, when probed through the questionnaire using Stunkard’s scale (1983) to assess body dissatisfaction, the mothers and the daughters both showed significant levels of body dissatisfaction (Lee, 2006) with the daughter’s body. Though not statistically



significant, it is interesting to note that the mothers had a smaller ideal body size for their daughters than the daughters had for themselves (Lee, 2006). This indicates that the mothers do have opinions about their daughters' bodies but that they are not willing to communicate those opinions verbally, particularly if those opinions are negative. This observation could be linked to the notion that these mothers and daughters both are very sensitive about the daughter's body, particularly if the daughter is plus-sized. Another clue to this phenomenon is the fact that in the plus size focus groups, both mothers and daughters indicated that the tween girls are very sensitive about the size of their garments. The most poignant example of this is that one mother went so far as to cut out the labels of her daughters clothes so that the daughter would not be aware of how big she was in terms of clothing size. One of the plus size tween girls confirmed this notion as well when she said she did not like to shop with her friends, especially for pants, because she did not want her friends to know how big she was. Though tween girls and their mothers in all groups showed sensitivity towards the body image of the tween girl, the plus size groups appeared to much more sensitive about body size, clothing size, and weight than the normal size groups.

#### Limitations

There were several limitations identified in this study. Human error and researcher bias was reduced by the researcher's thorough immersion in the data (the researcher transcribed, coded, and analyzed the focus group data) and by two member checks during the data analysis process. Other limitations were:

- The potential for group think in the focus groups could have skewed the frequency of discussion about a certain topic.

- Errors in segmenting the frequency of certain topics into the correct theme could have been made.
- The large amount of data and labor-intensive task of transcribing, coding, and analyzing the data could have led to oversights or omissions in the frequency counts.
- By using only tween girls from a small geographic area, the research relied heavily on a limited number subjects from a homogeneous geographical area.
- BMI does not account for athleticism when determining whether one is classified as normal or plus size. Some girls could have been classified as plus size when in reality their bodies more closely resembled normal size girls.
- The sample size was too small to differentiate subjects based on ethnicity.
- Only subgroups of age and BMI were used in comparing the emergent themes. Sample size prohibited other potential subgroups, such as race or socioeconomic status, from being considered.

### Implications

This research has many implications for future study of tween consumers. First, it provides a basis for further exploration of apparel preferences, apparel needs, apparel availability, and body image of tween consumers. In addition, identified themes under each of these categories have begun building a conceptual knowledge base with which to further explore this demographic. Findings also offer supporting evidence for the existence of subgroups of tween consumers (in this case, age and size subgroups were identified). Additionally, the method implemented in this study illustrated a conceptual visualization of theme magnitude and subgroup relationships. Though other consumer

groups have been studied in a similar manner, none have been focused specifically on these topics within the tween demographic, nor have they utilized combined 3-D body scan and questionnaire data.

This research study was part of a three-year study benchmarking American female tween consumers. The findings of this study will be utilized in guiding further exploration of this consumer group. It will also assist researchers and industry in understanding the unique needs of tween subgroups, particularly plus size tween girls.

Themes identified in this study give the apparel industry a look into the specific needs and desires of subgroups of female tween consumers. It also gives them insight into the tween girls' mothers, who, for the most part, provide the tween girls with a large portion of their spending power. Discrepancies among the groups illustrate the unique needs of each subgroup as well as show the diversity represented under the umbrella term, *tween*.

The combination of the emerging theme method with the creation of Venn diagrams of each category's theme offers researchers a tool for quickly assimilating information about tweens and their mothers. This technique is applicable across many fields and is useful for communicating relative magnitudes of themes in a visual manner. It is particularly useful when there is not enough data to present meaningful descriptive statistics, or if one is more interested in uncovering potential thematic areas and not in determining statistically significant similarities and differences.

### Recommendations

As shown in the review of literature, there is little information about tween consumers, and even less about subgroups of tween consumers. Future research should

address this informational gap. Recommendations for future research consist of more in depth inquiries into the themes that emerged in these focus groups, and a broader study of tween consumers using a larger, more diverse sample. Specific recommendations include:

- 1) Studies involving a larger sample of tweens and their mothers should be conducted to verify these results as well as determine if the allocated subgroups are the most appropriate.
- 2) Each theme should be further explored in a larger sample to determine if differences noted among the groups are significant.
- 3) Body scan data should be further utilized to understand the sizes and shapes of tween bodies.
- 4) The apparel industry should explore the profitability and feasibility of bridging identified gaps between apparel in the marketplace and the expressed apparel desires and needs of tweens.
- 5) The noted differences between the subgroups of tween consumers and their mothers should be further explored to probe the cause of the differences.
- 6) The apparel industry should explore the profitability and feasibility of meeting the needs of subgroups of tween consumers, specifically plus size tweens.
- 7) Researchers should investigate discrepancies in body image among the subgroups of tween consumers.

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## APPENDICES



APPENDIX A  
FOCUS GROUP SCRIPTS

## GIRLS' FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT

### Preparation for Focus Groups

Collage—Use time while waiting for body scan and questionnaire  
Ask each girl to develop a collage of a favorite new outfit for school or meeting friends that they would want to purchase

Fashion magazines, catalogs, scissors, poster board and double sided tape will be provided.

### Introduction to Focus Group Discussion

Did you have fun deciding on your fashion outfit? Today we want you to talk about the outfits that you have put together and some of your concerns about clothing for your age. We really want to know what you think about clothing. Your moms are in a separate focus group and they will not hear or know what you say. What you say here is confidential. We want you to feel free to tell us what you think about clothing and we are really interested in what you have to say.

Let's begin to get to know each other by going around the room and telling us your first name, showing us your favorite new outfit, and telling us why you like it.

Proceed around the room with introductions and beginning fashion discussion.

The outfits you chose all came from fashion magazines and catalogs. They are all cute, stylish outfits. Now let's think about what it is like when you are actually purchasing the outfits you like.

### Shopping Attitudes and Influences

If you went shopping for an outfit like the one you put together, where would you shop . . . which stores would you go to looking for clothing that you found in the magazines? What do you like about those stores? Are there other stores that you shop for other items?

What about Internet shopping? What clothing items have you shopped for? Why would you shop on the Internet? Are you looking for specific items?

When you go on a shopping trip for clothing, what makes it fun to shop? Of all the people who shop with you, who do you enjoy shopping with the most?

How important is what your parents think about your clothing choices? Do you and your parents ever have different opinions about what looks good on you? What garments to

buy? Can you give me some examples of things you might buy or choose to wear that your parents would not like?

Are there stores where your mother likes to shop in for your clothing, but you don't like to shop at those places? Which stores? Why?

Tell me what you and your friends talk about when you talk about clothing. (Explore how the girls describe: how other people look in clothing, things they wish they could buy, and things they can't afford to purchase.)

Are there any celebrities that you would like to dress like? Do they influence the clothes that you purchase?

We asked you to estimate what you would pay for an outfit like this? Can someone share with us how much you think your outfit would cost? Top/bottom. How much would be too much to spend for your outfit?

### Sizing and Fit

We have been talking about outfits that you like. When you go shopping for an outfit, how easy or hard is it for you to find things that fit you and they that you want to buy while shopping? Is see that several of you are wearing jeans. Let's start with jeans.

Are jeans easy to buy? Hard to buy? Why?

What store/section would you shop in to buy a pair of jeans?

How do you like jeans to fit your body?

What makes them not fit?

Are there any brands of jeans that you think really fit your body?

Are tops easy to buy? Hard to buy? Why?

What store/section would you shop in to buy a top?

How do you like tops to fit your body?

What makes them not fit?

Are there any brands of tops that you think really fit your body?

Are skirts easy to buy? Hard to buy? Why?

What store/section would you shop in to buy a skirt?

How do you like skirts to fit your body?

What makes them not fit?

Are there any brands of skirts that you think really fit your body?

Are dresses easy to buy? Hard to buy? Why?

What store/section would you shop in to buy a dress?

How do you like dresses to fit your body?

What makes them not fit?

Are there any brands of dresses that you think really fit your body?

We have talked about the way that you like your clothing to fit. Let's focus on how you see the fit of clothing on other people. When you are at the mall or school and you see other people, do you see them wearing clothes that you think doesn't fit? What does a garment that doesn't fit look like to you? Please describe what you see.

When you are looking for your size in a garment, how do you find a size that fits your body?

Are there stores that you would like to shop in but can't find a size in that store to fit your body?

Is there any clothing item that you would love to have but can't find it to fit you?

Would you buy clothing if you could find clothing that fits?

### Body Shape and Self-Esteem

We have talked about clothing some. Now let's talk about the body scan that you had done earlier. What did you think about it?

Body scans help us understand body shape; so let's talk about our bodies. Who has something about their body that they love? What is the favorite feature that you like about your body?

What about those "other" parts? Is there anybody here who would like to change how a part of their body looks? What kind of changes would you make?

Tell us about your Moms. What do you like most about their figures? What do you think they would change if they could?

### Wrap Up

We have talked about a lot of things this morning/afternoon. You had your body scanned. There is one last thing I would like for you to discuss. If you could talk to someone from the clothing industry who makes clothing to fit your size . . . is there anything that you would like to tell them about making clothes for you? What would that be?

That finishes us with this part of the day. We hope that you enjoyed the things that we did today. We will be using your body scans and comments to better help the clothing industry fit girls your age.

## MOMS' FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT

### Preparation for Focus Groups

Body scan and questionnaire

### Introduction to Focus Group Discussion

In order for us to remember what you say we are making both video and audio tapes of this discussion; to be able to refer to it later. In this discussion, you will be identified by your first name only. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Let's begin to get to know each other by going around the room and telling us your first name and about a really good experience that you had with your daughter when you were shopping for clothing. When? Where? What?

Proceed around the room with introductions and beginning shopping discussion.

We really want to know about your experiences in finding clothing for your daughters. Your daughters are in a separate focus group and they will not hear or know what you say. What you say here is confidential. We want you to feel free to tell us what you think about clothing and we are really interested in what you have to say.

Today we want you to talk about the clothing for your tween/teen daughters.

### Shopping Attitudes and Influences

Now let's think about your daughter and how she would shop for an outfit. Where would she shop. . . which stores would she go to looking for clothing that she found in the magazines? Are there other stores where she would shop for other items? Do you like to shop for your daughter's clothing in the same stores where your daughter prefers to shop?

What about Internet/Catalog shopping? Do any of you use those to find clothing for your daughters? How do you use the Internet in shopping for clothing for your daughters?

How often do you shop with your daughters? You have already described a fun shopping experience with your daughters. What makes shopping for clothing for your daughters not a fun experience? Describe a shopping experience that was not a fun experience. (Not finding things . . . why/Disagreement)

Do you and your daughters ever have different opinions about what looks good on her? What garments to buy? Can you give me some examples of things she might buy or choose to wear that you would not like or not let her wear?

We asked your daughters to estimate what you would pay for clothing. How much are you willing to pay for clothing? Top/bottom/occasion. How much would be too much to spend for an outfit for school? A special occasion?

### Sizing and Fit

We have been talking about outfits that your daughters would like to buy. When you go shopping for an outfit with them, how easy/difficult is it for you to find things that fit her and that you want to buy while shopping

Let's start with jeans.

Are jeans easy to buy? Hard to buy? Why?

What store/section would you shop in to buy a pair of jeans for your daughter?

How do you like jeans to fit your daughter?

What makes them not fit?

Are there any brands of jeans that you think really fit your daughter's body?

Are tops easy to buy? Hard to buy? Why?

What store/section would you shop in to buy a top for your daughter?

How do you like tops to fit your daughter?

What makes them not fit?

Are there any brands of tops that you think really fit your daughter's body?

Are skirts easy to buy? Hard to buy? Why?

What store/section would you shop in to buy a skirt for your daughter?

How do you like skirts to fit your daughter?

What makes them not fit?

Are there any brands of skirts that you think really fit your daughter's body?

Are dresses easy to buy? Hard to buy? Why?

What store/section would you shop in to buy a dress for your daughter?

How do you like dresses to fit your daughter?

What makes them not fit?

Are there any brands of dresses that you think really fit your daughter's body?

When you are looking for your daughter's size in a garment, how do you find a size that fits her body? Sizing for young girls your daughter's age can be found in a wide range of sizes. We are interested in knowing what sizes you buy for your daughters. Dr. Ulrich is passing out a list of sizes that represent sizes where mothers have told us they shop for girl's clothing. The sizes include Girls, Girl's Plus Sizes, Junior, and Misses sizes. Please indicate on the handout which sizes you shop for in the categories that we have listed. For instance, you might buy a Girls Size 14 top and a Girls size 16 1/2 or plus size

bottom. Or you might buy a Junior Size 7 top and a Misses size 12 bottom. Be as accurate as possible.

Is there any clothing items that you would love to buy for your daughter but you can't find a fit for her?

Would you buy more clothing if you could find clothing that fits?

### Body Shape and Self-Esteem

We have talked about clothing some. Now let's talk about the body scan that you had done earlier. What did you think about it?

Body scans help us understand body shape; so let's talk about our bodies. Who has something about their body that they love? What is the favorite feature that you like about your body?

What about those "other" parts? Is there anybody here who would like to change how a part of their body looks? What kind of changes would you make?

Tell us about your daughters. What do you like most about their figures? What do you think they would change if they could?

### Wrap Up

We have talked about a lot of things this morning/afternoon. You had your body scanned. There is one last thing I would like for you to discuss. If you could talk to someone from the clothing industry who makes clothing to fit your daughter's size . . . is there anything that you would like to tell them about making clothes for your daughter? What would that be?

That finishes us with this part of the day. We hope that you enjoyed the things that we did today. We will be using your body scans and comments to better help the clothing industry fit girls your daughter's age.

APPENDIX B  
QUESTIONNAIRES



DAUGHTER QUESTIONNAIRE

**PART 1: CHOOSING CLOTHES**

Think about the times that you go shopping for clothes. Imagine standing in front of your closet and deciding what to wear to go to school, be with friends, or do other things. We would like to know about the parts of your life when you decide what to buy and what to wear.

*Circle the answer that best describes how often each of the following people go with you when you shop for clothes.*

Mother	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Father	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Sister(s)	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Friend(s)	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
I shop by myself	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>

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*Circle the answer that best describes how often each of the following people help you decide what clothes to buy.*

Mother	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Father	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Sister(s)	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Friend(s)	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
I decide by myself	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>

---

*Circle the answer that best describes how often you decide to buy clothes that are exactly like or similar to the clothes worn by other people.*

Friends	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Popular girls at school	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Celebrities	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes pictured in magazines	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>

Circle the answer that best describes how often you ask the following people to help you decide what clothes to wear.

Mother	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Father	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Sister(s) or Brother(s)	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Friend(s)	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
I decide by myself	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>

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You might think about lots of things when you are getting dressed to go somewhere.

Circle the answer that best describes how often you think about the following things when you decide what clothes to wear.

Clothes that look best on me	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes like those that my friends will be wearing	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes that are comfortable	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes that are my favorite color	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes that are the newest fashion	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes with a popular brand name	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes that fit me well	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>About half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>

Imagine getting dressed to go to school, to see your friends, or to go to some special event. You go to your closet and want to pick out an outfit to wear that you like, that you feel comfortable in, or that you think looks good on you.

*Circle the answer that best describes how often you feel that you don't have or can't get clothes that you would choose to wear.*

Clothes for school      *Never*                      *Almost Never*      *About half of the time*      *Usually*      *Always*

Do you wear a school uniform?      *Yes*      *No*

Clothes for doing things with your friends  
(for example, going to the movies or gathering at a friend's house)

*Never*                      *Almost Never*      *About half of the time*      *Usually*      *Always*

Dress-up clothes (for example, for school dances or for going to a wedding)

*Never*                      *Almost Never*      *About half of the time*      *Usually*      *Always*

## PART 2: FASHION

Here is a list of magazines that some girls read. You might look at these, or you might do other things with your time.

*Circle whether you read each of these regularly, glance through it sometimes, or never read it.*

COSMO girl	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Elle girl	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Lucky	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Seventeen	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Teen	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Teen Vogue	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
YM	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Other (please list)	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Other (please list)	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it

Different things make different people think someone is attractive. We would like to know your opinion.

*Circle a number from 1 to 5 that shows how important you think each of the following is in determining whether a girl your age looks attractive. 1 means you do not think that it is at all important; 5 means that you think it is very important.*

	Not Important at all		Somewhat Important		Very Important
1. Clothes	1	2	3	4	5
2. Make-up	1	2	3	4	5
3. Hair	1	2	3	4	5
4. Being slender	1	2	3	4	5
5. Nails	1	2	3	4	5
6. Curvy body	1	2	3	4	5
7. Looking "fit"	1	2	3	4	5
8. Nice smile	1	2	3	4	5
9. Not being fat	1	2	3	4	5
10. Jewelry	1	2	3	4	5
11. Good, clear skin	1	2	3	4	5
12. Other (please list):	1	2	3	4	5
13. Other (please list):	1	2	3	4	5

### **PART 3: YOUR GIRL FRIENDS**

Think of the girls with whom you spend time and whose friendship or opinions matter at least somewhat to you. If you don't have a lot of friends, think of the girls and groups with whom you would like to be friends. Let's call these girls your friends.

*There are no right or wrong answers to the following questions. We are interested in your opinions and your sense of how things are. For each question, circle the answer that best describes your opinion.*

About how many of your girl friends would like to be thinner?

*None            A few            About half            Most            All*

How many of your girl friends would like to be heavier?

*None            A few            About half            Most            All*

How many of your friends are "on a diet" to try to lose weight or slow down weight gain?

*None            A few            About half            Most            All*

How often do you and your friends talk about weight, weight loss, and dieting?

*Never            Rarely            Sometimes            Often            Very Often*

**PART 4: YOUR FAMILY**

Some of the following questions may not apply to you. For example, your father may not live with you, and you may hardly ever see him.

*If a question does not apply to you, check the space for Not Applicable next to the question. Otherwise, for each question, circle the number that you feel is true for you.*

How often is your mother on a diet to lose weight?

Never      *Rarely*                      *Sometimes*                      *Often*                      *Very Often*                      *All the time*

How concerned is your mother about whether you weigh too much or are too fat or might become too fat?

*Not at all concerned*                      *Concerned*                      *Very Concerned*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How concerned is your father about whether you weigh too much or are too fat or might become too fat?

Not Applicable                      *Not at all concerned*                      *Concerned*                      *Very Concerned*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How important is it to your mother that you be thin?

*Not at all important*                      *Important*                      *Very Important*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How important is it to your father that you be thin?

Not Applicable                      *Not at all important*                      *Important*                      *Very Important*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How important is it to your mother that she be as thin as possible?

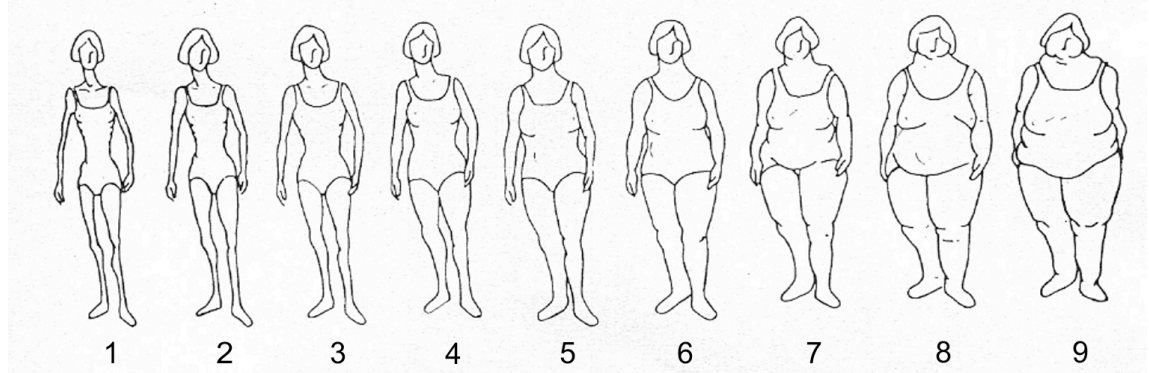
*Not at all important*                      *Important*                      *Very Important*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How important is your mother's physical appearance (shape, weight, clothing) to her?

*Not at all important*                      *Important*                      *Very Important*  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Here are 9 drawings of female figures.

Please answer two questions about your mother.



Which drawing looks most like your mother's figure?  
# \_\_\_\_\_

DRAWING

Which drawing is the ideal figure for adult women?  
# \_\_\_\_\_

DRAWING

Circle the descriptions that best fit your image of your mother.

I think my mother is:

<i>Very Underweight</i>	<i>Somewhat Underweight</i>	<i>Normal Weight</i>	<i>Somewhat Overweight</i>	<i>Very Overweight</i>
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From looking at my mother, most other people would think she is:

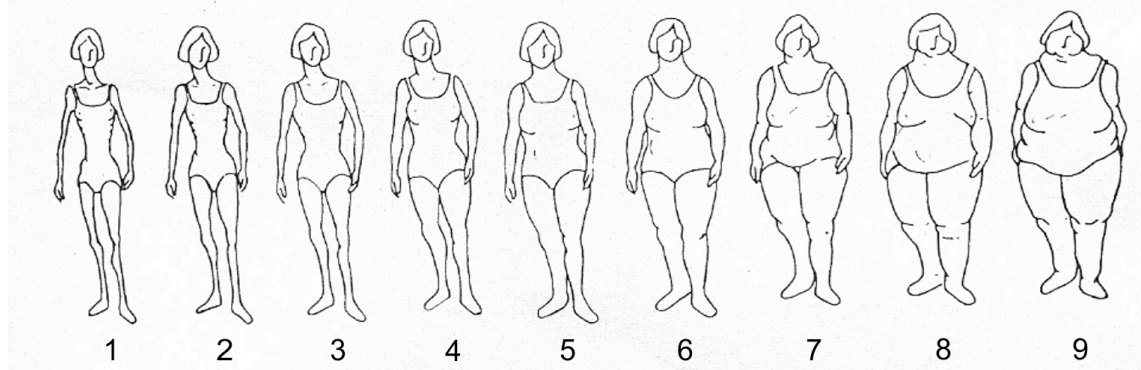
<i>Very Underweight</i>	<i>Somewhat Underweight</i>	<i>Normal Weight</i>	<i>Somewhat Overweight</i>	<i>Very Overweight</i>
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## PART 5: YOURSELF

Here are 9 drawings of female figures.

Please answer two questions about yourself.



Which drawing looks most like your own figure?

DRAWING

# \_\_\_\_\_

Which drawing do you most want to look like now?

DRAWING

# \_\_\_\_\_

You are growing and changing all of the time.

Circle the descriptions that best fit what you feel about yourself right now.

How happy are you with your height?

*Not at all happy*    *Somewhat happy*    *Happy*    *Very Happy*

How happy are you with your weight?

*Not at all happy*    *Somewhat happy*    *Happy*    *Very Happy*

How happy are you with the development of your figure?

*Not at all happy*    *Somewhat happy*    *Happy*    *Very Happy*

How good looking do you think you are?

*Not at all good looking*    *Somewhat good looking*    *Good looking*    *Very good looking*

Have you ever wanted to be thinner?      *Circle*   *Yes*   *or*   *No*

Have you ever wanted to be heavier?      *Circle*   *Yes*   *or*   *No*

Have you ever tried to lose weight?      *Circle*   *Yes*   *or*   *No*

Have you ever tried to gain weight?      *Circle*   *Yes*   *or*   *No*

MOTHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

**PART 1: YOUR DAUGHTER'S CLOTHES**

Here is a list of types of stores.

*Circle the answer for how often you and your daughter buy her clothes at each type.*

How often do your daughter's clothes come from specialized clothing stores like the Limited 2, Gap, Abercrombie, Express, Old Navy, American Eagle, Limited, Abercrombie & Fitch, G & G, or Rave?

*Never                      Almost Never                      Sometimes                      Often*

How often do your daughter's clothes come from department stores like J.C. Penney, Belk's, Macy's, Dillard's, or Sears?

*Never                      Almost Never                      Sometimes                      Often*

How often do your daughter's clothes come from mass merchandise chains like Target, Wal-mart, K-Mart, Kohl's, Sam's Club, or Costco?

*Never                      Almost Never                      Sometimes                      Often*

How often do your daughter's clothes come from off-price chains like T.J. Maxx, Marshall's, Steinmart, or Ross?

*Never                      Almost Never                      Sometimes                      Often*

How often are your daughter's clothes bought from catalogs?

*Never                      Almost Never                      Sometimes                      Often*

How often are your daughter's clothes bought from a website?

*Never                      Almost Never                      Sometimes                      Often*

If you buy from a website, please name which ones:

Currently, what stores satisfy you the most when shopping for clothes for your daughter?

*Who pays for your daughter's clothes?*

You an/or her father	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Always</i>
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Your daughter	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Always</i>
------------------	--------------	---------------------	------------------	-------------------------	---------------

*When you go shopping for your daughter's clothes, how easy do you think it is to find clothes that she likes and that fit her?*

	<i>Always hard to find</i>	<i>Sometimes hard to find</i>	<i>Sometimes easy to find</i>	<i>Always easy to find</i>
Jeans	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Pants (except jeans)	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Skirts	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Tops	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Dresses	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>

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Your daughter might think about lots of things when he is getting dressed to go somewhere.

*Circle the answer that best describes how often you believe she thinks about the following things when he decides what to wear.*

Clothes that look best on her	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes like those that her friends will be wearing	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes that are comfortable	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes that are her favorite color	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes that are the newest fashion	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes with a popular brand name	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Clothes that fit her well	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Half of the time</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>

**Part 2: YOUR DAUGHTER’S DEVELOPMENT**

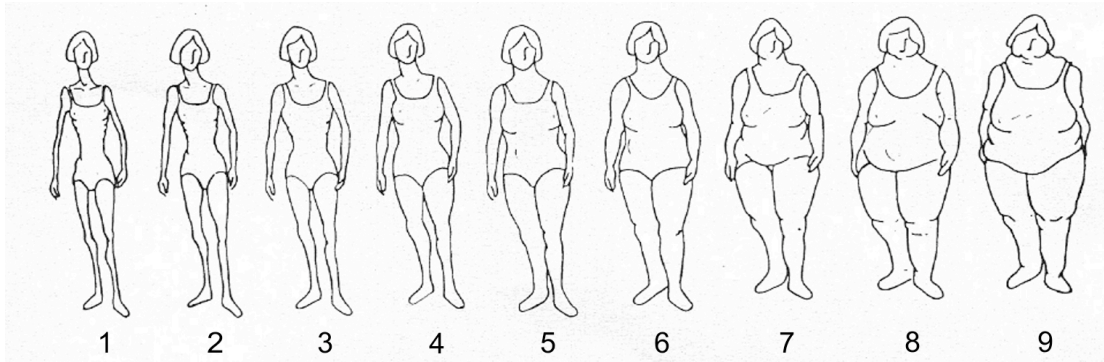
Different things make different people think someone is attractive. We would like to know your opinion of what makes girls your daughter’s age attractive.

*Circle a number from 1 to 5 that shows how important you think each of the following is in determining whether a girl your daughter’s age looks attractive. 1 means you do not think that it is at all important; 5 means that you think it is very important.*

		Not Important at all		Somewhat Important		Very Important
1.	Clothes	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Make-up	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Hair	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Being slender	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Nails	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Curvy body	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Looking “fit”	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Nice smile	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Not being fat	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Jewelry	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Good, clear skin	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Other (please list):	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Other (please list):	1	2	3	4	5

Here are 9 drawings of female figures.

Please answer two questions about your daughter.



Which drawing looks most like your daughter's figure?

DRAWING # \_\_\_\_\_

Which drawing is the best figure for girls your daughter's age to have?

DRAWING # \_\_\_\_\_

Your daughter is growing and changing all of the time.

Circle the descriptions that best fit what you feel about her development right now.

How happy are you with your daughter's height?

*Not at all happy*      *Somewhat happy*      *Happy*      *Very Happy*

How happy are you with your daughter's weight?

*Not at all happy*      *Somewhat happy*      *Happy*      *Very Happy*

How happy are you with the development of your daughter's figure?

*Not at all happy*      *Somewhat happy*      *Happy*      *Very Happy*

How good looking do you think your daughter is?

*Not at all good looking*      *Somewhat good looking*      *Good looking*      *Very good looking*

Has your daughter ever wanted to be thinner? *Yes / No* . . . to be heavier? *Yes / No*

Have you ever wanted your daughter to be thinner? *Yes / No* . . . to be heavier? *Yes / No*

Has your daughter ever tried to lose weight? *Yes / No* . . . to gain weight? *Yes / No*

Have you ever encouraged your daughter to lose weight?*Yes / No*  
 . . . to gain weight?*Yes / No*

### **PART 3: YOURSELF**

The following statements describe an individual's potential feelings about clothes.

*For each statement, circle the number (on the scale of one to five) that represents how well it describes your feelings about your clothes.*

	<i>Does Not Describe</i>				<i>Does Describe</i>
It is very important to me to appear appropriately and fashionably dressed	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
It always gives me pleasure to buy clothes for myself	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Clothes are important to me because they represent me to others	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
I think carefully about the clothes I am buying so that I will be happy with my purchases	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
When I buy clothes, I feel confident that I am making the right choices	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>

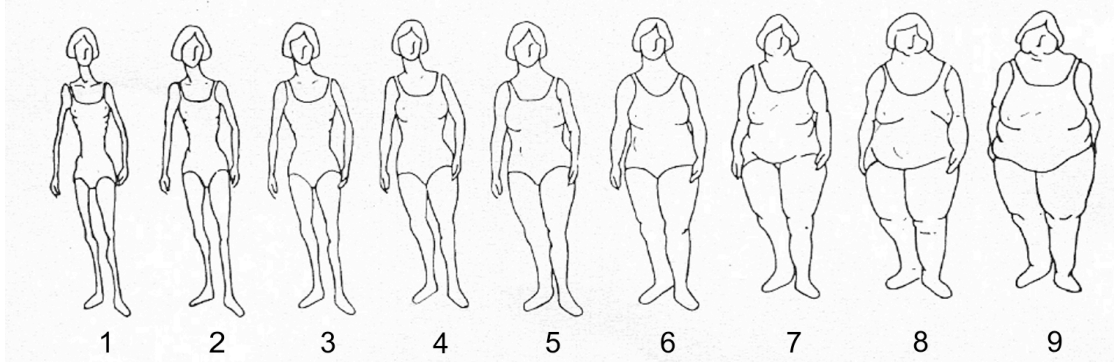


Here is a list of magazines that some women read. *For each of the magazines listed below, circle whether you read it regularly, glance through it sometimes, or never read it.*

Harper's Bazaar	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Elle	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Essence	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
In Style	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Marie Claire	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Vogue	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
W	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Other (please list)	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Other (please list)	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it
Other (please list)	read it regularly	glance through it sometimes	never read it

Here are 9 drawings of female figures.

Please answer two questions about yourself.



Which drawing looks most like your own figure?

DRAWING # \_\_\_\_\_

Which drawing do you most want to look like now?

DRAWING # \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the descriptions that best fit your image of yourself.

I think I am:

*Very Underweight*      *Somewhat Underweight*      *Normal Weight*      *Somewhat Overweight*      *Very Overweight*

From looking at my mother, most other people would think I am:

*Very Underweight*      *Somewhat Underweight*      *Normal Weight*      *Somewhat Overweight*      *Very Overweight*

*Use this 1 to 5 scale to indicate how dissatisfied or satisfied you are with each of the following areas or aspects of your body:*

	Very Dissatisfied	Mostly Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1. Face (facial features, complexion)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Hair (color, thickness, texture)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Lower torso (buttocks, hips, thighs, legs)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Upper torso (breasts, shoulders, arms)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Muscle tone	1	2	3	4	5
6. Weight	1	2	3	4	5
7. Height	1	2	3	4	5
8. Overall appearance	1	2	3	4	5

**PART 4: DEMOGRAPHICS**

Your age \_\_\_\_\_

Your daughter's age \_\_\_\_\_ Your daughter's birth month \_\_\_\_\_

Your daughter's grade in school \_\_\_\_\_

Has your daughter had her first period (menstruation)? YES/NO

If YES, please check her age at onset.

_____ 9	_____ 9.5
_____ 10	_____ 10.5
_____ 11	_____ 11.5
_____ 12	_____ 12.5
_____ 13	_____ 13.5
_____ 14	_____ 14.5

Your marital status: Single \_\_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_ Widowed \_\_\_\_\_

Your daughter's siblings: None \_\_\_\_\_ Number of sisters \_\_\_\_\_ Number of brothers \_\_\_\_\_

Your daughter's ethnicity	Your ethnicity	Your daughter's father's ethnicity
_____ African-American	_____ African-American	_____ African-American
_____ Asian	_____ Asian	_____ Asian
_____ Caucasian	_____ Caucasian	_____ Caucasian
_____ Hispanic	_____ Hispanic	_____ Hispanic
_____ Native American	_____ Native American	_____ Native American

Please indicate your level of education:

_____ Grade school	_____ Bachelor's degree
_____ Some high school, no diploma	_____ Master's degree (e.g., MBA, MS, MFA)
_____ High school diploma/GED	_____ Professional degree (e.g., MD, DDS, LLB)
_____ Some college, no degree	_____ Doctorate degree (e.g., PhD, EdD)
_____ Associates degree	

Check the category that best describes your occupation:

\_\_\_\_\_ Upper management/Proprietor/Owner  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Middle management  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Professional (Lawyer, Accountant, Teacher)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sales  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Service worker  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Student  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Homemaker  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Retired  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Your annual household income

(Check if this is a single or dual income. \_\_\_\_\_ single \_\_\_\_\_ dual)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Under \$24,999
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \_\_\_\_\_ Over \$150,000