



Clothing Purchase Practices of Tweens in Jammu City

KEYWORDS

Tweens, conformity, attributes, gender

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ABSTRACT *The present study was conducted to identify the attributes that affect clothing purchase practices of sample tweens and to determine gender based differences in above attributes. The information was collected by self devised questionnaire from both boy (n= 50) and girl (n= 50) tweens (age gp. 9 -14 yrs). Middle class tweens were selected by lottery method from randomly selected schools of Jammu city. The findings of the study indicate that middle class tweens were influenced by peers and want their clothes to be accepted and to be similar to but not exactly identical. Glitzy media and technology has weakened the influence of parents and peers in tween boys, they are more influenced by internet for collecting information about latest fashion. Fashion, style and fitting were most important attributes for clothing purchase by tween girls whereas boys gave more emphasis to comfort, style and brand.*

INTRODUCTION:

During the middle-grade years, young people undergo many profound physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. Tweens, primarily considered children between the ages of eight and fourteen, have been identified as a new marketing niche for fashion styles marketed directly to them (Cook and Kaiser, 2004). These children are just beginning to sexually mature, however, they are still socially immature and need the guidance of parents and significant others. (Clancy, 2011). Siegel, Coffey, and Livingston (2004) commented: "This age group is markedly different from young kids and older teens in their cognitive, social, and physical development. Cognitively, they are emerging logical thinkers. Socially, they compare themselves to others and are motivated to determine what is wrong, what is in, and what's out. Their friendships begin as mutual support and evolve to greater depth and intimacy. Physically, they grow like weeds – some 10 inches and 30 pounds almost overnight". (p. 27 Siegel et al, 2004)

The present tween generation is very different. Current tweens are empowered with technology and are more connected with the world. They can be considered global citizens (Lindstrom & Seybold, 2003; Siegel et al., 2004) and their purchase decisions are influenced by social environment and clothing attributes. Children work jointly with other people either directly (e.g., discuss clothes with friends) or vicariously (e.g. watch mother negotiating with a salesperson)". Social agents like media, family and friends greatly influence the psychological, emotional and personal development of tweens. Tweens, especially those aspiring to fit in, respond to the standards and norms of a reference group. (Meyer & Anderson, 2000). They are influenced by media and are the first generation to use the internet freely (Simon, 2001) They turn to celebrities for their fashion role models and have an impact on the clothing choices (La Ferla, 2006). They not only make decisions independently, but also influence decisions of their parents. Throughout their lifespan, children are influenced by their family members. Among father, mother, siblings and other family members, mothers usually have the most influence (Abramovitz & Birch, 2000). As children start going to school, peers rather than parents assume greater importance. The influence is seen in areas of style and clothing. (Damhorst, 2005; Simon, 2001). Peers become an important

source of information and influence for clothing purchase, for both genders (Grant & Stephen, 2005; Beaudoin et al, 2003). According to some studies, friends had more influence over clothing purchase decisions made by girls compared to boys. (Chen-Yu & Seock, 2002)

Apparel products are composed of many physical characteristics, which are perceived differently by various consumers. When considering a product purchase, tweens along with reference group also tend to compare and contrast product attributes. Beaudoin et al (2000) identified 12 attributes that correlated with attitudes when purchasing apparel, namely: good fit, durability, ease of care, favourable price, comfort, quality, colour, attractiveness, fashionableness, brand name, appropriateness for occasion, and choice of styles. Dickerson (in Beaudoin et al, 2000) investigated the relative importance that consumers attach to five garment attributes when making purchase decisions, namely: price, care, country of origin, quality and style. The results indicate that tweens were more concerned with brand name, (Koester and May, 1985; Daters, 1990; Forney and Forney, 1995) style, and the latest fashion than were older students. (Taylor & Cosenza, 2002). Another interesting finding was that a higher percentage of tween boys, as compared with tween girls, considered brand names more important. (Koester & May, 1985)

A great deal of research in child development and clothing has focused on tweens, but purchase practices of tweens in Jammu region of J&K state have remained untouched since no such systematic research has been undertaken in this ecological setting along with its socio-cultural variables influencing human behaviour in multifarious ways. Further tweens are considered an interesting group to study because they are in a transitional phase and according to literature, tends to be quite impressible by reference groups. Parents need to show concern over children's fashion and identity, to protect their innocence by keeping a check on over sexualization of clothes. The aim of this research was to identify the attributes that affect the clothing purchase practices and to determine the gender based differences in major influencing factors on clothing purchase practices of sample tweens.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

The study, clothing purchase practices of tweens, was conducted on tweens studying in various schools of Jammu city. For the selection of schools, fee structure of the schools was studied and a list of all private institutions, in Jammu city, with fee structure of Rs. 400 to Rs. 600/month was prepared (to get the tweens from middle class families). Five schools were randomly selected from the prepared list and out of these schools, 100 children in age range 9-14 years (i.e. tweens) were selected by lottery method. This group of tweens was further divided into two groups; 50 girls and 50 boys.

A self devised questionnaire was formulated with guidance of experts in the field. The questionnaire had preference based questions in which respondents had to give the preferences to previously given options. Reliability was determined by test and retest method at the time of pretesting. The data was collected by visiting the schools and younger children were first explained about how to

fill the questionnaire and then were allowed to fill it independently. This method was vital to ensure high reliability and accuracy of the data collected. Weighted score and weighted mean score was calculated to analyze the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The results of the study have been discussed under five categories namely reasons for buying new clothes, sources of information for clothes, companion for shopping, criteria for selection of clothes and attributes affecting clothing purchase.

Background information:

Among the sample group for the study 50% of the respondents were boys and 50% were girls in age group of (9-14yrs). Profile of the tweens reveals that most of the respondents were from nuclear families with majority of parents who were post graduates. All of them were from middle income group.

TABLE 1: Reasons for buying new clothes

(A) BOYS (N = 50)									
Preferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	Weighted score	Weighted mean score	Rank
1. out of style	21 (42)	5 (10)	8 (16)	6 (12)	2 (4)	8 (16)	213	4.26	I
2. When needed	6 (12)	9 (18)	18 (36)	5 (10)	8 (16)	4 (8)	188	3.76	II
3. friends bought new	3 (6)	17 (34)	4 (8)	10 (20)	7 (14)	9 (18)	172	3.44	III
4. worn out	11 (22)	5 (10)	11 (22)	5 (10)	3 (6)	15 (30)	171	3.42	IV
5. internal desire/impulse	7 (14)	7 (14)	4 (8)	9 (18)	17 (34)	6 (12)	160	3.2	V
6. sale	2 (4)	6 (12)	5 (10)	16 (32)	13 (26)	8 (16)	144	2.88	VI
(B)GIRLS (N= 50)									
1. out of style	22 (44)	3 (6)	8 (16)	6 (12)	4 (8)	7 (14)	212	4.24	I
2. friends bought new	3 (6)	18 (36)	4 (8)	13 (26)	10 (20)	2 (4)	187	3.7	II
3. internal desire/impulse	9 (18)	5 (10)	15 (30)	5 (10)	10 (20)	6 (12)	180	3.6	III
4. sale	4 (8)	16 (32)	7 (14)	5 (10)	7 (14)	11 (22)	172	3.44	IV
5. When needed	2 (4)	7 (14)	5 (10)	21 (42)	8 (16)	7 (14)	153	3.06	V
6. worn out	10 (20)	1 (2)	11 (22)	0 (0)	11 (22)	17 (34)	148	2.96	VI

Tweens worry more about their clothing because it is a product of great visibility for self presentation therefore this is the group most attracted towards clothing. Table 1 depicts the reasons leading tweens to buy new clothes and was analyzed that girls and boys both preferred 'clothes out of style' as most important reason for buying new clothes and ranked it 1st. New clothes bought by 'Friends and peers' was ranked 2nd by girls and 3rd by boys shows that friends/ peers act as the stimuli for buying clothes by tweens. Impulse buying was ranked 3rd by girls and 5th by boys shows that boys were less interested and also less impulsive in buying new clothes as compared to girls

whereas new style in the market was the most important reason for purchase of new clothes by both tweens.

Turcinkova(2011) found unsatisfactory clothing as a most important reason for buying new clothes in his study conducted in Czech Republic. By unsatisfactory children it means that clothes were no longer fit and out of fashion. Bhatnagar(2006) conducted her study on tween girls of Ludhiana(India) and found that they considered friends as most important reason for buying new clothes.

TABLE 2: Sources of information for clothes
(A) BOYS N = 50

Preferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Weighted score	Weighted mean score	Rank
1. Market survey	19 (38)	5 (10)	2 (4)	11 (22)	3 (6)	1 (2)	2 (4)	7 (14)	280	5.6	I
2. Internet	6 (12)	5 (10)	15 (30)	4 (8)	9 (18)	5 (10)	3 (6)	3 (6)	277	5.54	II
3. TV programs	9 (18)	13 (26)	5 (10)	3 (6)	2 (4)	11 (22)	5 (10)	2 (4)	261	5.22	III
4. Friends/peers	5 (10)	10 (20)	8 (16)	12 (24)	3 (6)	3 (6)	3 (6)	6 (12)	251	5.02	IV
5. Siblings	1 (2)	7 (14)	12 (24)	9 (18)	5 (10)	9 (18)	2 (4)	5 (10)	230	4.6	V
6. Parents	9 (18)	2 (4)	3 (6)	4 (8)	9 (18)	3 (6)	16 (32)	4 (8)	205	4.1	VI
7. Fashion shows	1 (2)	1 (2)	3 (6)	8 (16)	12 (24)	9 (18)	1 (2)	15 (30)	172	3.44	VII
8. Magazines	- (0)	7 (14)	1 (2)	1 (2)	7 (14)	8 (16)	18 (36)	8 (16)	156	3.12	VIII
(B) GIRLS N=50											
1. Friends/peers	16 (32)	8 (16)	10 (20)	4 (8)	3 (6)	- (0)	5 (10)	4 (8)	290	5.8	I
2. TV programs	11 (22)	4 (8)	2 (4)	7 (14)	15 (30)	5 (10)	5 (10)	1 (2)	249	4.98	II
3. Internet	3 (6)	10 (20)	10 (20)	12 (24)	- (0)	6 (12)	5 (10)	4 (8)	246	4.92	III
4. Market survey	3 (6)	14 (28)	7 (14)	4 (8)	4 (8)	7 (14)	9 (18)	2 (4)	241	4.82	IV
5. Siblings	3 (6)	7 (14)	4 (8)	3 (6)	7 (14)	11 (22)	2 (4)	14 (24)	191	3.82	V
6. Magazines	3 (6)	4 (8)	5 (10)	5 (10)	8 (16)	11 (22)	3 (6)	11 (22)	189	3.78	VI
7. Parents	1 (2)	1 (2)	11 (22)	15 (30)	- (0)	3 (6)	6 (12)	7 (14)	184	3.68	VII
8. Fashion shows	5 (10)	2 (4)	- (0)	3 (6)	11 (22)	7 (14)	15 (30)	7 (14)	171	3.42	VIII

Today's tweens are empowered with technology and are more connected with the world. They can be considered global citizens but still according to the above table internet was ranked 2nd by boys and 3rd by girls as a source of information about new clothes in market. Boys preferred market survey as a most important source when searching information, shows that they preferred to go from shop to shop by actually seeing the clothes before buying them. Friends/ peers were ranked 1st by girls and 4th by boys' shows that girls gave more importance to friends as compared to boys while making clothing decisions. 2nd rank to internet and 3rd to T.V by boys depict the popularity of gadget friends in boys' life as compared to real friends. Boys were less influenced by friends. Both boys and girls ranked siblings at 5th position and parents were ranked 6th and 7th by boys and girls respectively, shows that family is still important for tweens but the importance has decreased with age and served as models of social behaviour.

According to Brar(2008) discussion with friends was the most prevalent mode of knowing about fashion by tweens in Ludhiana(India) whereas Turcinkova(2011) conducted his study in Czech Republic and found shopping centers as the most preferred mode of getting information and friends were second in position.

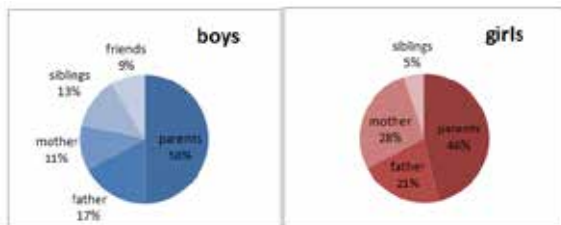


Figure 1: Most preferred companion for shopping

Figure1 shows that almost all tweens prefer to go for shopping with their parents. Boys prefer to go with their fathers and girls with mothers but that is very less percent mostly tweens will go with either or both of them. Only

9% of boys go for shopping with friends and 13%(boys)& 5%(girls) prefer to go with siblings. None of them preferred to go alone. These results reveal that social influences play vital role in buying process. Tweens still prefer their family as compared to friends to go with for shopping. Oswald etal(1993) indicated that teens receive significantly more parental influences during special shopping than ordinary shopping where as Williams etal (2006)found that kids prefer to go with their mothers.

TABLE 3:Criteria for selection of clothes:

Responses *	Boys		Girls		Total	
	f(n=50)	%	f(n=50)	%	f(n=100)	%
1. Different from other people(unique)	12	24	15	30	27	27
2. Acceptable by peer group	30	60	35	70	65	65
3. Acceptable by family	18	36	13	26	31	31
4. Acceptable by culture	16	32	11	22	27	27
Total	76		74		150	

*** Multiple responses**

Peer pressure concerning fashion preferences is strong among younger people, tweens included. They want to be like other tweens of the same group or age (Siegel etal, 2004). Consistent with the study, it was found that majority of the tweens want to wear a dress acceptable by peer group. In a study conducted by Kulshrestha (2007) in Jaipur (India) the adolescents from the middle income group are more susceptible to conformity than individuals from higher income group. Meyer and Anderson (2000) found that although majority of preadolescent purchases occur when they are with their mothers, they use their influence to purchase clothing that their friends think is fashionable or that they are wearing. Dotson and Hyatt(2005) studied affect of peer pressure on boys and girls in relation to clothing choices and found that girls are subject to

peer pressure more than boys.

TABLE 4: Attributes affecting clothing purchase

(A) BOYS N = 50

Preferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Weighted score	Weighted mean score	Rank
1. Comfort	10 (20)	18 (36)	6 (12)	4 (8)	6 (12)	1 (2)	2 (4)	- (0)	2 (4)	342	6.84	I
2. Style	17 (34)	4 (8)	8 (16)	3 (6)	10 (20)	2 (4)	5 (10)	- (0)	2 (4)	329	6.58	II
3. Quality/Brand	8 (16)	6 (12)	1 (2)	16 (32)	8 (16)	- (0)	2 (4)	8 (16)	1 (2)	286	5.72	III
4. Price	1 (2)	1 (2)	11 (22)	5 (10)	8 (16)	12 (24)	8 (16)	4 (8)	4 (8)	260	5.2	IV
5. Fashion	6 (12)	4 (8)	10 (20)	- (0)	4 (8)	10 (20)	4 (8)	3 (6)	9 (18)	243	4.86	V
6. Colour	4 (8)	4 (8)	4 (8)	6 (12)	4 (8)	13 (26)	6 (12)	3 (6)	6 (12)	234	4.68	VI
7. Fitting	4 (8)	4 (8)	2 (4)	8 (16)	4 (8)	- (0)	- (0)	23 (46)	5 (10)	201	4.02	VII
8. Texture	8 (16)	6 (12)	2 (4)	5 (10)	- (0)	- (0)	4 (8)	9 (18)	4 (8)	198	3.96	VIII
9. Easy care	- (0)	- (0)	7 (14)	- (0)	2 (4)	12 (24)	17 (34)	2 (4)	5 (10)	167	3.34	IX

(B) GIRLS N = 50

1. Fashion	10 (20)	7 (14)	2 (4)	14 (28)	9 (18)	- (0)	2 (4)	5 (10)	1 (2)	306	6.12	I
2. Style	11 (22)	12 (24)	2 (4)	1 (2)	11 (22)	- (0)	5 (10)	5 (10)	5 (10)	300	6.00	II
3. Fitting	7 (14)	7 (14)	13 (26)	3 (6)	7 (14)	2 (4)	8 (16)	- (0)	4 (8)	299	5.98	III
4. Quality/Brand	12 (24)	8 (16)	12 (24)	- (0)	- (0)	6 (12)	3 (6)	1 (2)	2 (4)	293	5.86	IV
5. Colour	9 (18)	15 (30)	3 (6)	2 (4)	2 (4)	5 (10)	2 (4)	4 (8)	8 (16)	286	5.72	V
6. Comfort	10 (20)	10 (20)	5 (10)	3 (6)	1 (2)	6 (12)	2 (4)	9 (18)	4 (8)	280	5.6	VI
7. Price	4 (8)	1 (2)	4 (8)	9 (18)	14 (28)	7 (14)	5 (10)	2 (4)	4 (8)	247	4.94	VII
8. Texture	3 (6)	2 (4)	3 (6)	8 (16)	5 (10)	12 (24)	2 (4)	6 (12)	9 (18)	212	4.24	VIII
9. Easy care	2 (4)	1 (2)	5 (10)	3 (6)	4 (8)	8 (16)	6 (12)	11 (22)	10 (20)	181	3.62	IX

While considering a product purchase, tweens tend to compare and contrast alternative products made up of different attribute combinations. Both tween girls and boys rated nine clothing attributes on preference scale. The nine clothing attributes, in descending order of importance to tween girls were: fashion, style, fitting, brand, colour, comfort, price, texture, easy care. Whereas tween boys considered comfort, style, brand, price, fashion, colour, fitting, texture, and easy care as attribute preference in decreasing order. Boys emphasised on clothing comfort (ranked 1) and girls on fashion (ranked III) for fulfillment of their special needs. Turcinkova (2011) depicted price, quality and brand as its three factors affecting clothing purchases. Tweens in present research gave little preference to price (ranked VII by girls and IV by boys) even when they were from middle income group.

CONCLUSION:

The present study reveals that middle class tween girls are influenced by their friends for information and as the motivation for buying clothes. They want their clothes to be accepted by their peer group and want them to be similar but not same to them. Glitzy media and technology has weakened the influence of parents and peers in tween boys, they are more influenced by internet for collecting information about latest fashion though their clothes must be acceptable to their friends. Both tweens prefer to go shopping with their parents; girls with mothers and boys with father. Acceptability of a dress was important for both of them, shows that middle income tweens are more susceptible to conformity. Similar findings were reported by researchers (Meyer and Anderson, 2000; Siegel et al, 2004; Kulshrestha, 2007) according to them majority of apparel

purchases by tweens occur when they are accompanied by their parents but the influence of peers could be seen in their choice and style of clothes they purchase. Further, Dotson and Hyatt (2005) found girls to be more subjected to peer pressure than boys similar to results found in present research. According to the present study fashion, style, and fitting were most important attributes for clothing purchase by tween girls whereas boys gave more emphasis to comfort, style and brand. Importance of style in clothing preference shows that tweens are more fashion conscious with comfort (boys) and fitting (girls) being important for their social and psychological well being. In contrary to this Turcinkova (2011) depicted price, quality and brand as the important attributes while making clothing purchases. The results of the present research exercise point to the important role of parents along with peers and mass media in clothing purchase behaviour of tweens while at the same time suggesting the exertion of authority and assertion by the tweens themselves. The study has practical and theoretical implication for parents, fashion marketers and Human development, Clothing and textiles professionals.

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