Clothing Interest and Its Relationship with Self-Esteem among Tweens in Jammu City.

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Abstract: Tweens (9-14yrs) have a special need as they are in transitional phase and they want goods specially targeted for them. Also, physical changes and shifting ideas during this developmental period create a vacuum, which tweens may try to fill with material items. Thus clothing interest is highest in tweens, which wins for them the recognition, which they earnestly desire. As a tween builds self-esteem and use clothing for its enhancement, it becomes an important aspect of his/her development. This study sought to (1) determine clothing interest and self-esteem of tweens (across gender and age) belonging to urban middle income families of Jammu city and (2) to determine if there was a relationship between the dimensions of clothing interest and self-esteem. Clothing interest was measured through self devised questionnaire and self-esteem was measured using Indian adapted Battle’s self-esteem inventory. Eight hundred tweens of class 3rd to 9th from schools of Jammu city were randomly selected. Statistically significant interactions were found between different dimensions of clothing interest (personal appearance, clothing awareness, enhancement of personal security, individuality, experimentation with clothes) and self-esteem. Clothing interest was observed to be more important for girl and older tweens for creating a socially desirable figure for maintaining the group icon. No significant differences were portrayed among self-esteem scores across gender, while younger tweens were found to be significantly higher in self-esteem score.

Keywords: Tweens, Age, Gender, Clothing Interest, Self-esteem

Introduction:
Self-esteem is a psychological concept that develops in the decisive years. It is the attitude and feelings of an individual towards oneself (Baron & Byrne, [1]) Self-esteem is an evaluative component, which is based on that part of the self that is responsible for judging, evaluating and responding to the self as an object. Clothing, too, is a personal component that communicates information and helps in the establishment of self-identity (Daters, [3]). Michener et al. [15] listed four techniques to protect and enhance self-esteem. These were: manipulating appraisals, selective information processing, selective social comparison, and selective commitment to identities. Clothing then, as a part of individual’s individuality and a non-verbal communication symbol, could be related to self-esteem. Terms such as visible self (Roach and Eicher, [17]) and second skin (Horn & Gurel, [7]) refers the closeness of clothing to the self. Clothes are not only contiguous to body in the physical sense but they are also close to the self in psychological sense (Sontag & Lee, [22]). Clothing interest gives pleasure and enjoyment and is the means of self expression (Zara, [27]). Interest in clothing and the felt need for clothing varies immensely with the general feeling of adequacy or self-confidence of the individuals. Clothing interest is the extent to which an individual is favorably predisposed towards clothes (Kaiser, [9]). Gurel and Gurel [6] identified five distinct dimensions of interest in clothing i.e Personal appearance; (spend great deal of time, money and energy); Experimentation with appearance: (aesthetic stimulation and creative expression); Heightened awareness of clothing: (care and precautions to structural details of clothes); Enhancement of personal security: (to enhance their sense of security in social situations); Enhancement of individuality: (Distinctiveness and uniqueness)

Tweens (9-14yrs) have a special need as they are in transitional phase and they want goods specially targeted to them. Also, physical changes and shifting ideas during this developmental period create a vacuum, which tweens may try to fill with material items. Thus clothing interest is highest in tweens which wins for them the recognition that they earnestly desire. (Siegel et al.,[19]). Tweens spend great deal of time, money and energy on activities related to appearance and is greatly interest in altering the appearance of the body through diet, exercise and clothing choices. Kulshrestha & Kashyap, [10]. One dresses according to ones’ concept of the body. The
external appearance of body is a relatively fixed aspect of self and certainly influences how the individual thinks of himself and how others respond to him. Through clothing choices, tweens reveal a set of beliefs about themselves that they want others to believe about them. According to population census 2011, 25.6% of total population of the state (J & K) is under 14 yrs of age. This is a large enough group, to be ignored. Despite the acknowledgement of these tween statistics, India has little research on tweens. Specific features of tweens clothing interest in relation to self esteem have been examined internationally in numerous researches. None of the latest studies used all of the dimensions of clothing interest in relation to self esteem of tweens. We miss a research study that would deal with most attractive segment of the clothing i.e Tweens clothing interest in relationship to self esteem, in Jammu region of J & K state, which provides gender based interdisciplinary theoretical knowledge in two disciplines i.e (Human development and Clothing & textiles). The study is conducted on aspects which have practical implications not only to fashion marketers, Human development, Clothing and textiles professionals but parents themselves. This study will further help children and their parents to make better choices in selection of clothing. The primary research objective of the study is to determine clothing interest of tweens (across gender and age) belonging to urban middle income families of Jammu city and to relate it to their self esteem.

**Methodology**

The study, Effect of self-esteem on clothing interest 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). Ten schools were randomly selected from the prepared list and out of these schools, 800 children in age range 9-14 years (i.e. tweens) were selected by lottery method. This group of tweens was further divided into four groups; 400 girls (9-11yrs=200, 12-14yrs= 200) and 400 boys (9-11yrs=200, 12-14yrs= 200)

A self devised questionnaire was formulated with guidance of experts in the field. The questionnaire included the questions regarding all five dimensions of clothing interest (Personal appearance; Experimentation with appearance; heightened awareness of clothing; Enhancement of personal security; Enhancement of individuality) and was the combination of closed and open type questions. Reliability was determined by test and retest method at the time of pretesting. Indian adaptation of Battle’s self esteem Inventory for children (SEIC) by Dr. Anand Kumar [11] was used to find self esteem of sample tweens. SEIC consisted of 50 items, which included dimensions of 4 subscales: General self- esteem (20 items), Social self-esteem (10 items), Academic self-esteem (10 items) and parental self-esteem (10 items). The items in the instrument are divided into two groups: those which indicate high self-esteem, and those which indicate low self-esteem. The individual checks each item either “yes” or “no”. The self-esteem score is the total number of items checked which indicates high self-esteem.

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 the tools independently. This method was vital to ensure high reliability and accuracy of the data collected. Different statistical measures were applied on the data obtained. Means and percentages were calculated. T-test and Correlation were also applied on the data to obtain significant results.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**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.

The data furnished in table 1 depicted distribution of tweens’ self-esteem across age and gender. Data unfolds that on the whole, tweens had moderate level of self-esteem scores. The findings revealed social and parental self to be weak areas while general and academic self emerged as strong contributors of self-esteem of entire sample. It is evident from table 4.3.2 that there was no significant difference (t=0.68, p> 0.05) between total self esteem of boys (M =35.60) and girls (M =35.27) tweens. Previous researches have often found that men tend to have higher self esteem at teen age and adolescence (Young & Mroczek, [25]). However, due to societal changes in the developing India, the trend appears to have changed which revealed a bright side of developing India where girls becoming more independent in their personal and career choices resulted in risen of their levels of self esteem (Jain and Dixit, [8]). A little mean score difference observed might be due to developmental changes like onset of puberty and emergence of formal operations thought (Dhal, et.al, [5]). Insignificant differences were observed.
in academic and general self-esteem whereas significant differences were found in social (more for girls) and parental (more for boys) self-esteem of boys and girls. This revealed that middle income parents still have restrictive and instructive behavior towards older girl tweens (Menon-Sen & Kumar, [14]). As this is the age of onset of puberty among most of the girls, psychological and physical changes along with more restrictive and instructive behavior must be the cause of little lower self esteem among older girl tweens. Social self is completely dependent on peer influence, which has become much important in tweenage (Thorne & Michaelieu,[23]). Social acceptance brings about self confidence and helps to produce high self-esteem in them (Leary & Baumeister, [13]).

On probing the data of self-esteem across age, it was disclosed that significant differences were discovered in self-esteem (t=2.09, p<0.05), which revealed that younger tweens (M=35.94±6.7) had significantly higher self-esteem than older tweens (34.94±6.78). Mean scores for all the dimensions were found to be higher for younger tweens expect social self which was found to be higher for older tweens. Tweens become more social with increase in age to develop a successful peer relationship which is very important for the development of self-esteem in children. Social acceptance brings about self confidence and thus constructed high self-esteem in them (Leary & Baumeister, [13]). Higher pressure of studies, responsibilities and expectations of parents and society might have resulted in decrease of self esteem among older sample tweens.

Tweenage is the age when, tweens have their own personal interests, and clothes are one of the categories they mostly focus upon. The respondents in the current study exhibited a relatively high interest in clothes as measured by one’s overall clothing interest in fig.1Personal appearance, enhancement of personal security and experimenting with appearance were the most contributing dimensions for higher level of clothing interest in middle income tweens of Jammu city. Tweens spend time, energy and money on personal adornment and experimentation with their clothes to make them look attractive in social group and for self expression. They had higher level of desire for social integration with their peers, which was shown by their clothing interest. This desire to conform, identify and be accepted by a social group can conflict with the desire to express individuality (Prasad, [16]), which explained a moderate level of individuality in present study. Adornment and personal attractiveness is greatest in post menarche period, when groups are matched to the chronological age (Simon, [20]). The results further depict that selected middle income tweens of Jammu city showed moderate awareness while buying and wearing of clothes, some care and attention was though observed for structural details i.e. darts, pleats, accessories etc. This moderate

Table 1: Mean, S.D, t-ratio between gender and age of dimensions of self esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of self-esteem</th>
<th>9-11yrs(Y)</th>
<th>12-14yrs(O)</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys总</td>
<td>Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>t-ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls总</td>
<td>Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>t-ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total young(Y)</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>14.72</td>
<td>15.04</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>±3.11</td>
<td>±2.73</td>
<td>±2.94</td>
<td>(1.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>±3.02</td>
<td>±2.93</td>
<td>±2.93</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>±1.69</td>
<td>±1.73</td>
<td>±1.88</td>
<td>3.67**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>±1.78</td>
<td>±1.85</td>
<td>±1.85</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35.27</td>
<td>35.44</td>
<td>35.60</td>
<td>4.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys(B) Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>±2.19</td>
<td>±2.11</td>
<td>±2.18</td>
<td>(0.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls(G) Mean ± S.D</td>
<td>±2.06</td>
<td>±2.11</td>
<td>±2.19</td>
<td>(0.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35.41</td>
<td>35.60</td>
<td>35.71</td>
<td>4.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05; ** p < .01

![Overall Clothing Interest](image)

**Fig. 1: Mean score for Clothing Interest in sample tweens**

![Image of Overall Clothing Interest](image)
level of interest in care may be because they still dependent upon their parents for it.

The data furnished in Figure 2 further depicted t score distribution of clothing interest across gender and age. When compared across gender, girls depicted significantly higher level of clothing interest than boys in all the dimensions except enhancement of individuality, which was reverse in this case. Mean score for experimentation with appearance was found to be more in case of girls, though individuality in clothing selection was expressed more by boys. The possible explanation of this could be, individualistic behavior was shown by designing a unique style, whereas conformist behavior was shown by creating socially desirable figure (may be through simple experimentation or coping through friends) for maintaining the group icon. Further, comparing between age groups, older tweens expressed significantly higher clothing interest as compared to their younger counterparts in most the dimensions of clothing interest except enhancement of personal security and individuality. Thus it could be concluded that tweens, on overall basis, had higher level of clothing interest, which was at most expressed through using clothes for social security. Girls and older tweens had significantly higher clothing interest than boys and younger tweens.

The data under table 3 establishes the correlation self-esteem with dimensions of clothing interest among sample tweens. Spearman correlation analyses showed that clothing interest had a highly significant and a negative correlation (r=-.24, p< .01) with self-esteem. Negative correlation suggested that clothing interest of middle income tweens of Jammu city increased with decrease in self- esteem among them. A person with higher self esteem scores are surer within themselves and hence does not rely on materialistic things like clothing, therefore resulting in low clothing interest. According to Chowdhary, [3] appearance first comes across as a physical self; it has critical impact on the formation of self-concept. Rosenberg [18] revealed that the individual who had high self-esteem were self accepting of their appearance and were self tolerant, they liked themselves and had respect for self worth. In contrast, low self esteem is associated with unhappiness and anxiety, according to Kwon [12]. He further explained that to overcome these feeling, individuals used clothes. Clothing made adolescents feel good about themselves (Kulshrestha & Kashyap, [10] ) and when one feels positive about the clothes he or she is wearing, self-esteem may be increased. Hence tweens with low self-esteem were greatly interested in clothing. Similarily Kwon [12] observed that morale and attitude of an individual could be lifted up when an article of clothing elicits a positive reaction from others. Bearden et al. [2] in their study on adolescents found that individuals with high self-esteem tend to think good about themselves and were less concerned about social rejection from others. The results of a study on adolescents found that those with high level of self-esteem were satisfied with their appearance and were not afraid to draw attention to themselves through their use of clothing, whereas teens with low self-esteem have been said to have negative development outcomes, and felt insecure about their appearance. Thus they compensated by expressing their self through clothing to cope with peer groups (Solomon,[21]). Vikkraman & Sumathi, [24] contradicting above results suggested a direct relation of self concept and clothing interest .The significant influence of self concept on need for uniqueness and conformity (dimensions of clothing interest)indicates that the Indian consumers with high self concept neither wish to be different from other nor wish to fit in with others.
Conclusion:
Understanding how clothing interest can influence an individual’s sense of self is of great interest, as one’s sense of self can determine how he/she behave and interact with environment. The present study concludes that middle income tweens of Jammu city have moderate self-esteem, insignificant differences were observed between genders whereas younger tweens had comparatively higher self esteem than their older counterparts. However, insignificant gender differences revealed a bright side of developing India as girls becoming more independent in their personal and career choices have risen in their levels of self esteem (Jain and Dixit, [8]).

The respondents in the current study exhibited a relatively higher level of clothing interest, which was further found to be significantly higher for girl and older tweens. The significant negative influence of self-esteem on clothing interest indicates that tweens with lower self-esteem were higher in clothing interest. In the tween years, they start to have their own personal interests, and fashion is one of the categories they focus upon. Maximum desire for social integration with their peers, observed in tween years, led lower self-esteem tweens to be highly interest in clothes, which is shown by their conventional or unconventional clothing interest. A person with higher self esteem scores are surer in them and hence does not rely on materialistic things like clothing therefore had low clothing interest. Clothing made sample tweens feel good about them and when one feels positive about the clothes he or she is wearing, self-esteem may be increased.

References:


