

Jan 1st, 12:00 AM

Fashion Change Agent Qualities among Tweens

Renee Baker
Illinois State University

Hae Jin Gam
Illinois State University

Jennifer Banning
Illinois State University

Elisabeth Reed
Illinois State University

Su Kyoung An
Central Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/itaa_proceedings



Part of the [Fashion Business Commons](#), [Fashion Design Commons](#), and the [Fiber, Textile, and Weaving Arts Commons](#)

Baker, Renee; Gam, Hae Jin; Banning, Jennifer; Reed, Elisabeth; and An, Su Kyoung, "Fashion Change Agent Qualities among Tweens" (2013). *International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) Annual Conference Proceedings*. 37.
https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/itaa_proceedings/2013/presentations/37

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences and Symposia at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) Annual Conference Proceedings by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.



Fashion Change Agent Qualities among Tweens

Renee Baker¹, Hae Jin Gam¹, Jennifer Banning¹, Elisabeth Reed¹, Su Kyoung An²
Illinois State University, Normal IL, USA¹
Central Michigan University, Mt Pleasant MI, USA²

Keywords: tweens, fashion change agent, brand commitment

Today, children are socialized as consumers at a younger age than any previous generation (Ekström, 2007). Dual working households and one-parent families can result in parents having less time, which creates a need for the child to play a larger role in household responsibilities, including making consumer decisions (Harper, Dewar, & Diack, 2003). The rapid pace of technological growth often leaves children savvier than their parents. It is becoming common for children to assist the family in making consumer decisions by gathering information and researching products (Ekström, 2007). The market of “sub- or preteens” as new group was first appeared in the 1950s and is referred to as “tweens” (Brock, Ulrich, & Connell, 2009). Definitions of tweens vary in age range, but they are typically children from ages 7 to 12, sometimes as old as 13 or 14 (Brock et al., 2009). While the potential of this market has been undervalued, it has been found that tweens are aware of fashion trends, have money to spend, and feel confident about and enjoy making buying decisions (Grant & Stephen, 2005).

Fashions are adopted and diffused throughout a social system (Sproles, 1979). Based on their role in the adoption and diffusion process, consumer groups can be identified into four groups: fashion opinion leaders, fashion innovators, innovative communicators and fashion followers (Workman & Johnson, 1993). Opinion leaders, innovators and innovative communicators are the groups that encourage the diffusion process and can be referred to as fashion change agents (FCAs) (Workman & Johnson, 1993). A later study by Workman and Kidd (2000) added fashion innovativeness and need for uniqueness as qualities of FCAs.

Despite the media’s interest in and the recognition of tweens as future customers, there is limited research on the experiences and behaviors of tweens in relation to consumption and fashion (Harper et al., 2003; Picher, 2010). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine FCA characteristics among tween girls’ ages 8 to 12 and their brand commitment, interest in design involvement (mass customization) and internet innovativeness.

An instrument was created to measure fashion change agent qualities (Hirschman & Adcock, 1978), internet innovativeness (Park, Burns & Rabolt, 2007), interest in design involvement (Choy & Lokers, 2004), and brand commitment (Mittal & Lee, 1989). Participants were recruited through the local school system, Girl Scout troops and other community programs. With the response rate of 20%, 53 girls participated in the study. Cluster analysis was conducted to test *H1*: Tweens’ can be segmented into distinct groups of fashion change agents and fashion followers, Independent samples t-tests were used to test *H2*: The different consumer groups among tweens’ will differ in brand commitment, *H3*: The different consumer groups among tweens’ will differ in internet innovativeness, and *H4*: The different consumer groups among tweens’ will differ in interest in design involvement (mass customization).

Results revealed that tweens were segmented into two groups in regards to FCA qualities. The first group consisted of 22 (41.5%) participants and showed high levels of FCA qualities, while 31 (58.5%) participants showed low levels of FCA qualities. In addition, the t-tests supported H2 ($t = -2.93$ $P = .00$), H3 ($t = -2.98$ $P = .00$), and H4 ($t = -2.01$ $P = .05$).

This study sought to gain information about tween-agers. The results suggest that there are clearly some tweens that are more interested in fashion than others. Though the sample was limited in size, the percentage of FCAs in this group is higher than several other groups studied (Goldsmith, Flynn & Moore, 1996; Workman & Kidd, 2000; Workman, 2009). Additionally, tween's influence in the market should be reflected with their growing economic power and the percentage of FCAs in the group. Finally, utilizing internet, design involvement, and brand commitment should be considered developing marketing strategies to reach tweens.

References:

- Brock, M., Ulrich, P., & Connell, L. (2009). Exploring the apparel needs and preferences of tween girls and their mothers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 28(2), 95-111.
- Choy, R., & Loker, S. (2004). Mass customization of wedding gowns: Design involvement on the internet. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 22(1/2), 79-87.
- Ekström, K. M. (2007). Parental consumer learning or 'keeping up with the children. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 6(4), 203-217.
- Goldsmith, R. E., Flynn, L. R., & Moore, M. A. (1996). The Self-Concept of Fashion Leaders. *Clothing and Textile Research Journal*, 14(4), 242-248.
- Grant, I., & Stephen, G. (2005). Buying behaviour of "tweenage" girls and key societal communicating factors influencing their purchasing of fashion clothing. *Journal of Fashion Marketing & Management*, 9(4), 450-467.
- Harper, S. Dewar, P., & Diack, B. (2003). The purchase of children's clothing - who has the upper hand? *Journal of Fashion Marketing & Management*, 7(2), 196-206.
- Hirschman, E. C., & Adcock, W. O. (1978). An examination of innovative communicators, opinion leaders and innovators for men's fashion apparel. *Advance in Consumer Research*, 5(1), 308-314.
- Mittal, B., & Lee, M. (1989). A causal model of consumer involvement. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 10, 363-389.
- Park, H., Burns, L. D., & Rabolt, N. J. (2007). Fashion innovativeness, materialism, and attitude toward purchasing foreign fashion goods online across national borders the moderating effect of internet innovativeness. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 11(2), 201-214.
- Pilcher, J. (2010). What not to wear? Girls, clothing and 'showing' the body. *Children & Society*, 24(6), 461-470.
- Sproles, G. (1979). *Fashion: Consumer Behavior toward Dress*, Burgess, Minneapolis.
- Workman, J. E., & Johnson, K. P. (1993). Fashion opinion leadership, fashion innovativeness, and need for variety. *Clothing & Textiles Research Journal*, 11(3), 60-64.
- Workman, J. E., & Kidd, L. K. (2000). Use of the need for uniqueness scale to characterize fashion consumer groups. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 18(4), 227-236.