

A TWO-ESSAY EXAMINATION OF THE RETAIL  
WORLD OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS

by

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## ABSTRACT

Throughout this dissertation, I focus on the two primary influences in an adolescent girl's shopping experience: her mother and her friends. The adolescent phase of mental development involves a gradual detachment from parents and gravitation towards peers, which results in the formation of an individual, emancipated identity. This dissertation utilizes two essays to demonstrate the different ways in which mothers and friends influence the retail experience for adolescent girls.

The first essay investigates how adolescent girls process store image information and how they choose the stores in which they shop. I conduct both qualitative and quantitative studies to develop and test a model of adolescent store choice and shopping behavior. Qualitative interviews reveal the process of *store stereotyping*, in which adolescents apply the expectations and associations of different peer groups to stores that are associated with each group. Adolescents seem to choose stores the same way they choose friends. They gravitate toward those that appear to be part of their *in-group* and avoid those in *out-groups*. There are some variations between individuals in this process. Therefore, I test consumer need for uniqueness and identification with friends as potential moderating variables.

The second essay explores mother-daughter shopping as daughters struggle to gain independence during this phase of development. In-depth interviews with adolescent girls, their mothers, and retail employees reveal the factors that influence individual shopping situations, general shopping habits, benefits experienced by mothers and daughters, and resulting retail

outcomes. While there is much variety found in the way mother-daughter pairs shop, emotions experienced during the trip seem to be the key drivers of shopping outcomes. Furthermore, from a balance theory perspective, the mother-daughter dyad can often be nonsymmetrical.

Adolescent girls may be content when parents do not like their chosen style, but it is difficult for moms to be satisfied when their daughters' views conflict with their own. This presents an interesting situation for marketers who must attract adolescents to the store while also enticing parents to purchase the merchandise.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

AA	Approach/Avoidance
APP	Approach
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
ASI	Affective Store Image
BEH	Behavior
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CNFU	Consumer Need for Uniqueness
DTW	Desire to Wear
FSI	Functional Store Image
HSI	Holistic Store Image
IDWF	Identification with Friends
NNFI	Non-Normed Fit Index
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SIRS	Social Identification with a Retail Store
SD	Standard Deviation
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
<	Less than
=	Equal to
+	Positive relationship

#	Number
$\alpha$	Cronbach's alpha
$\beta$	Beta
$\chi^2$	Chi-square
$df$	Degrees of freedom
$n$	Sample size
$p$	Probability associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as extreme as or more extreme than the observed value
$t$	Computed value of $t$ test

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the period of development during which girls begin to form their emancipated identities (Gemelli 1996). This developmental phase, which lasts from twelve to nineteen years of age, involves “decreasing involvement with their parents and increasing involvement with their peer group” (Gemelli 1996, p.447). Body awareness increases due to the physical changes that occur during this time, and clothing and appearance gain importance as adolescents judge, and are judged, based on these outwardly visible factors (Wooten 2006).

In addition to the physical and mental changes that occur during adolescence, the shopping situation of teens starts to evolve as well. Shopping becomes a hedonic, social situation in which adolescents are able to bond with and have fun with friends. In contrast, adolescents now view shopping trips with parents as an occasion for making purchases. Thus, a teenage girl’s shopping companion during a trip can influence “everything from which mall was visited, to how long the stay lasted, to what, if anything, was purchased” (Haytko and Baker 2004, p.76).

As adolescents’ views move closer in-line with their peers, this can also move them further away from their parents. Thus, adolescents often face the conflicting influences of parents and peers when making shopping and purchasing decisions. Since parents control what can and cannot be purchased and peers control the social implications of fashion choices, both influences are present in an adolescent’s mind during the decision making process. Throughout this dissertation, I explore these two external influences on the adolescent shopping experience. The first essay looks at how the peer group influences store image perceptions and preferences. The

second essay examines the mother-daughter shopping experience during this period of change.

The overarching research question that guides this dissertation is: In what different ways do both peers and parents influence a girl's shopping experience during the adolescent phase of development?

### **Description of Studies**

Essay 1 is an examination of peer influence on store image evaluations, shopping preferences, and shopping behavior. This essay begins with a pilot study in which I conducted interviews with thirty-seven adolescent girls. I outline and explore the *store stereotyping* process during this portion of the paper. After careful analysis of the qualitative material, I develop a new construct, termed *social identification with a retail store*. This construct ultimately captures whether a store is part of an adolescent's in-group or out-group. Through a quantitative study conducted via mall-intercept surveys (n=257), I test the effects of this construct on store image evaluation and shopping behavior. I also examine two potential moderating variables (consumer need for uniqueness and identification with friends), as part of a model of adolescent shopping behavior.

Essay 2 is an in-depth, exploratory study of mother-daughter shopping. I obtained interviews from sixty-three people, providing multiple perspectives on the shopping experience. The sample consists of thirty-five adolescent girls, twenty mothers of adolescent girls, and eight retail employees working in teen-focused retail stores. Based on these interviews, I developed a model of mother-daughter shopping. The model includes influencers and outcomes of the shopping trip, along with a close look at conflict and conflict resolution. Balance theory (Heider

1958) provides a theoretical framework. There is a possibility of a non-symmetrical relationship between mother and daughter, as the daughter pulls away from parents and towards peers. This adds an interesting twist to the research since a daughter may be content to have a style that conflicts with her mother's preferences, as long as her peers accept her style. In contrast, mothers have a difficult time finding peace when a daughter's choices and opinions are in conflict with her own.

### **Contribution to the Literature**

Marketing researchers have examined adolescent shopping from a few different angles. Haytko and Baker (2004) researched adolescent girls' preferences when it comes to shopping malls along with the influence of companions on shopping trips. Mangleburg, Doney, and Bristol (2004) examined peer influence on shopping enjoyment and shopping frequency. Tootelian and Gaedeke (1992) examined spending habits and sources of information for different shopping categories. Wooten (2006) looked at how adolescents use clothing as a tool for judgment and ridicule. Each of these articles demonstrates peer influence on shopping to some extent, but none has truly captured the magnitude of peer influence and social identity in the overall shopping process or, more specifically, relative to a retail store concept. Peer influence seems to be a difficult concept for adolescents to express. Although most adolescents interviewed claim to be independent thinkers, the new construct, social identification with a retail store, demonstrates an underlying influence that many girls do not readily admit to when interviewed about this topic.

Furthermore, marketing researchers have not yet examined how the adolescent age group develops and processes store image information. This process is likely to be unique during the

adolescent phase of development because of the increasing importance of peers at this time. Social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner 1986) states that people categorize others into groups, compare their own group to out-groups, and generally evaluate their own group more favorably than they do out-groups. In the first essay, I explore store image development among adolescent consumers, specifically as it relates to social identity theory.

The goal of the second essay is to examine what occurs during mother-daughter shopping during the adolescent phase of development. Haytko and Baker (2004) show that shopping with friends is viewed as entertainment while shopping with mom is when purchases are made. However, marketing researchers have not yet examined the true dynamics of the mother-daughter shopping trip during the turbulent adolescent phase. Shopping with mom has the potential to be fun. Kiecker and Hartman (1994) characterize the mother-daughter dyad as *purchase pals* with *close ties*, meaning that they are able to provide each other with moral support and are able to provide advice on appropriateness or suitability of products during a shopping trip. However, the mother-daughter relationship is unique during this phase of development since girls are in the process of separating from parents to form their emancipated identities (Gemelli 1996). Although parents control the money and purchases made, the first essay reveals the strong influence of peers, as they seem to be the primary factor shaping an adolescent's perception of the retail environment. Kiecker and Hartman (1994) state that "strong tie support is likely to depend upon the source's familiarity and understanding of the buyer's individual characteristics and needs" (p. 467). Parents may not have the knowledge of current fashion necessary to be a true *purchase pal* for an adolescent daughter, as they do not shop in the same stores or wear the same styles as their daughters. Therefore, it is important to understand

how the evolution of parent and peer relationships may influence the shopping experience and purchases made for adolescent consumers.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This chapter includes a basic introduction to the topic area and the research completed. I now turn to the remainder of my dissertation to provide a detailed account of adolescent girls' shopping behavior. Chapter 2 presents Essay 1, which is a study of adolescent shopping behavior and store choice, with a focus on social identity. Chapter 3 presents Essay 2, which is an in-depth, exploratory analysis of the mother-daughter shopping trip during the adolescent years. In Chapter 4, I integrate the overall findings from these two essays to explain the significance of this research to marketing theory and provide suggestions for retailers who want to attract adolescent consumers.



## CHAPTER 2: 'GIRLS THAT WEAR ABERCROMBIE & FITCH': STORE STEREOTYPING IN THE WORLD OF ADOLESCENTS

A teenage girl walks casually through the mall passing by stores such as Abercrombie and Fitch, Hollister, and Aeropostale. Other teenage girls seem to be upbeat and excited walking in and out of these stores, but she seems to shy away. Suddenly, you see the excitement in her face. She quickens her pace and turns into a store that other girls seem to ignore. As she walks in, the dark walls, punk-rock sounds, and familiar faces of employees seem to put her at ease. Hot Topic is *her* store. This is where she is comfortable. This is where she fits in.

In this example, it is evident that this girl knew which stores to avoid or approach before entering the mall. She did not stop to analyze each store individually to see whether she might want to go in. The real question though is whether she has *ever* stopped to evaluate each store in person. We might categorize this as the simple use of store image information. She is relying on the store's image to make her decision. However, that brings us to ask: What aspects of store image are really being used, and how are these evaluated in the consumer's mind? Did she go through the process of assessing quality, price, and merchandise selection while shopping within the stores, or did she have a much simpler way of developing her preferences?

Using both qualitative and quantitative research, I investigate the complex minds of adolescent girls as they navigate their way through the world of retailing. There is currently a lack of research on store image perceptions of adolescent consumers, and further, there is a lack of research explaining how store images are processed and stored in consumers' minds (Mitchell 2001). This study attempts to fill both of these gaps by focusing on the adolescent population and

investigating a heuristic-based method of store image evaluation: *store stereotyping*. Two overarching research questions help guide this study: (1) How do adolescents assess store image? (2) How do adolescent social groups influence store perceptions and preferences?

## **Conceptual Background**

### ***Store Image***

Marketing researchers have conducted extensive research on the store image construct, with some variation from study to study. Bloemer and Ruyter (1998) conceptualize store image as “the complex of a consumer's perceptions of a store on different salient attributes”. Hartman and Spiro (2005) define it as the “total impression represented in the memory as a gestalt of perceived attributes associated with the store” (p.1113). Given that store image is a *total* representation of the store, researchers have analyzed several different aspects of store image, including functional, affective, and symbolic store image.

While the exact wording and composition of store image measures vary somewhat in the literature, researchers consistently use attributes such as merchandise, price, quality, assortment, atmosphere, and location to measure the functional aspects of store image (e.g. Darden and Babin 1994; Doyle and Fenwick 1975; Ghosh 1990; Hartman and Spiro 2005). The affective aspects of store image are not as clearly defined and include more intangible attributes such as whether a store is pleasant, exciting, fun, and pleasing (e.g. Darden and Babin 1994; Williams and Burns 2001). Functional and affective components of store image together provide more explanation of a global store image measure than either provides alone (Darden and Babin 1994).

Another aspect of store image, symbolic store image, refers to the stereotypic image of the typical user of a particular retail store (Sirgy and Samli 1985). In its measurement, symbolic store image seems to be in-line with more recent evaluations of store personality (d' Astous and Levesque 2003). Both constructs evaluate stores using attributes that can describe a person. Symbolic store image has been measured by evaluating whether a store is “modern versus traditional, friendly versus formal, classy versus folksy, and casual versus sophisticated” (Sirgy and Samli, p.273). D' Astous and Levesque (2003) include attributes such as sophistication, genuineness, and enthusiasm to measure store personality. These psychological viewpoints of store image help capture the holistic image that consumers possess related to a store more fully and move beyond the basic functional elements of a retail store. In this paper, I investigate all aspects of store image, attempting to assess the role each plays in adolescent store choice.

### *Adolescents as Consumers*

The teen market has an estimated spending power of \$200 billion (EPM Communications, Inc.). With females outspending males in this category, fashion purchases accounted for over 39% of the total teen budget (Piper Jaffray & Co., 2010). The period of adolescence is unique in a person's life because this is when people begin to form individual identities. Adolescence is the transition from childhood to adulthood during which children begin to pull away from parents, while at the same time gravitating towards their peers (Gemelli 1996). It is also when people begin to be able to imagine how other people might view them (Gemelli 1996); thus, they truly begin to worry about how their peers view them. Adolescents place a lot of importance on peer groups and form opinions by what their groups find to be acceptable or not. This strong focus on the peer group gives adolescent consumers a different perspective than your average consumer.

Marketing researchers have investigated adolescent consumers over the past few decades. Research has looked at adolescents' spending habits (Tootelian and Gaedeke 1992), sources of information (Tootelian and Gaedeke 1992; Mangleburg, Doney, and Bristol 2004; Haytko and Baker 2004), and shopping behaviors when with different shopping companions (Haytko and Baker 2004). Researchers have also looked at how clothing can be used as a tool for signaling status and identity to others and reinforcing identity to the self (Piacentini and Mailer 2004).

Marketing researchers have given little attention to perceptions of adolescent consumers in the store image literature. Thus, we do not have a clear understanding of how this population evaluates retail stores. Haytko and Baker (2004) come close to this approach when they investigate adolescent girls' evaluations of malls, but they still did not touch on evaluation of specific stores. They identify comfort, safety, retail mix, accessibility, and atmosphere as important characteristics in evaluating the girls' favorite malls. Since *retail mix* influences the evaluation of a mall, this demonstrates that girls will gravitate toward the specific retail stores in which they prefer to shop. However, we do not have a clear understanding of how they evaluate the individual retail stores to determine which stores they prefer.

### ***Store Image Processing***

Store image research tends to focus on the beliefs held by consumers, but there is not much attention paid to how consumers establish those beliefs. This seems especially relevant in regards to adolescents because they are at a stage in life in which they are reassessing their beliefs as part of their own identity formation process, while also becoming independent consumers. Thus, this is the point in their life when they should also develop their unique perceptions of products and brands. While Mallalieu and Palan (2006) acknowledge that adolescents have clear knowledge of different stores and brands, they do not describe how

adolescents gained this knowledge, which is a gap I aim to fill. Sirgy, Grewal, and Mangleburg (2000) acknowledge that young people will likely choose stores that are congruent with social, rather than private, self-image. Thus, I focus largely on identity formation and social groups as key factors in the store image processing of adolescent consumers.

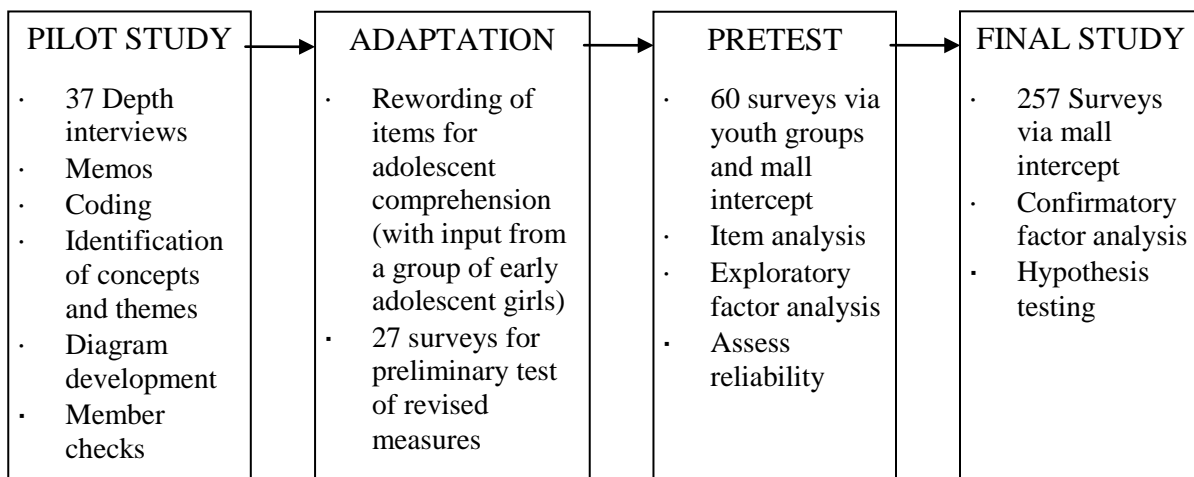
In the area of store image development, Baker et al. (2002) found that perceptions of environmental factors, such as store employees, store design, and music, influenced evaluations of service quality, merchandise quality, store prices, and shopping experience costs. I see two possible interpretations of these findings, as they relate to store image processing. First, they may suggest that the affective image (created by employees, music, and store design) influences the functional evaluations of service, merchandise, and price. Alternatively, consumers may interpret the symbolic store image (represented by the stereotypical retail customer) based on the type of music playing and the characteristics of the retail employee. The symbolic store image then influences the functional store image. Looking at this from a different perspective, Mitchell (2001) outlines a method of processing in which people assess store image through risk perception heuristics. He suggests that each aspect of the store image increases or decreases risk for the consumer, and consumers have positive or negative evaluations of the store based on the perceived level of risk. Keeping these findings in mind, I will add to the store image processing literature by providing a detailed account of how adolescents develop store image perceptions.

### **Pilot Study**

Since the marketing literature to date has not addressed this research area, I was able to approach the study without any preconceived theories in mind. I follow the grounded theory

approach outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2007), in which I derive theoretical constructs from qualitative analysis of data. I worked carefully with my two primary advisors to analyze the pilot study interviews. Together, we identified several theoretical constructs, which I test on a larger scale in the quantitative phase of research. Figure 1 shows the methodological steps of this research.

**Figure 1: Methodological Process**



The primary objectives of this research are to understand how adolescents assess store image and how adolescents’ social identities influence store image perceptions. For this qualitative portion of the study, I conducted in-depth interviews with adolescent girls on the topics of shopping and clothing style. The sample includes representation of middle school (n=14), high school (n = 13), and college (n = 10) girls who identify with a variety of different style groups (e.g. Prep, Punk, Goth, Emo, Hip-Hop). The Appendix provides detailed information on pilot study participants.

***Methodology***

I conducted interviews in a variety of locations that were convenient for research participants. I obtained parental consent for all participants under 19 years of age. Approximately

half of the girls met me in a mall setting with groups of two, three, or four girls for their interview. In one-third of the group interviews, I conducted individual follow-up interviews to confirm that peer pressure from the group setting did not heavily influence responses. Overall, the answers were consistent. Thus, even if peers influenced answers during the group interview, the peer influence is strong enough during adolescence that girls' responses remained the same during individual interviews. These follow-ups also served as member-checks to confirm that the interpretations of the initial interview were accurate.

For approximately half of the interviews, I began by walking through the mall with the adolescent(s). We browsed through stores that girls would normally shop in and talked about their likes and dislikes. This method helped stimulate thoughts about style and store preference and enabled the girls to describe different style groups by pointing out the styles we encountered. The group interviews provided a comfortable setting in which they could converse with a friend and elaborate on each other's responses, rather than just answering interview questions. The incentives were small but appealing to this population. Some girls received ice cream or a snack while being interviewed. Others received \$5-\$10 gift cards to stores within the mall.

I audio taped and then transcribed interviews later. Again, following the guide of Corbin and Strauss (2007), I created memos upon completion of each interview session. In the next phase of the process, my primary advisors and I each read the memos and transcribed interviews to look for concepts and themes, develop diagrams, and guide theoretical sampling. We also held periodic meetings to discuss findings and identify areas that needed further research.

### ***Findings/Themes***

The overarching theme we discovered in the qualitative interviews is that adolescents primarily evaluate stores based on peer group affiliation. They then evaluate other aspects of the

store with the stereotype of that peer group in mind. This is consistent with psychological literature that emphasizes the importance of peers during adolescence. I label this evaluation process *store stereotyping*. I define *store stereotyping* as: applying the cognitive expectancies and associations of a social group to a store that a girl perceives to be associated with the group.

Stereotyping is a form of bias that closely relates to prejudice and discrimination. All three biases involve category-based responses, in which a person evaluates another individual as an interchangeable member of a social group (Fiske 2004). Stereotyping involves applying beliefs about a group to an individual within that group. Prejudice is the affective or emotional reaction a person has to the individual based on category membership. Discrimination involves the actions toward an individual based on category membership. These three forms of bias relate to one another but may exist independently. “People can hold mental stereotypes but not act on them. People can have strong feelings but few supporting beliefs. Thoughts and feelings are not damaging until they are enacted” (Fiske 2004, p.399). Although these three forms of bias can act independently, they all come into play within my description of the store stereotyping process, outlined later in this section.

Several core motives drive people to stereotype. Among these are the needs for understanding, belongingness, and self-enhancement (Fiske 2004). First, stereotypes can aid in the understanding of intergroup interactions and can serve as a resource-saving tool when mental processing capacity is limited due to a person being tired or distracted (e.g. Bodenhausen and Wyer 1985; Bodenhausen and Lichtenstein 1987; Fiske and Taylor 1991). Second, biases toward the out-group and shared goals with the in-group help to strengthen ties and create a sense of belongingness with the in-group (Fiske 2004). Third, in accordance with social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1986), individuals may stereotype their own in-group as superior



to out-groups in order to elevate self-esteem. Therefore, even though people generally perceive stereotyping as a negative behavior, it continues due in part to the needs that it fulfills.

Furthermore, while a person can train one's self to suppress or ignore stereotypes, the stereotypes often surface when an individual has limited capacity for mental processing (e.g. Wegner, Erber, and Zanakos 1993).

Within the adolescent population specifically, research has shown that adolescents rely on stereotypes to assess characteristics of others based on such distinctions as race (e.g. Spencer and Markstrom-Adams 1990; Spencer et al. 2001) and popularity (e.g. deBruyn and Cillessen 2006). Stereotypes also influence the self-concept of an adolescent (e.g. Davison and Schmalz 2006), such that adolescents feel about themselves the way they would feel about the typical member of their group. Thus, it makes sense that adolescents would rely on stereotypes in their evaluation of store image as well. Researchers have linked stereotyping and store image in past studies. Sirgy and Samli (1985) define symbolic store image as the *stereotypic* image of the typical user of a particular retail store. Thus, stereotypes associated with a store's customers create this aspect of store image.

Store stereotyping also ties in with the risk perception heuristics described by Mitchell (2001). He states that, "the simplified structures on which a store is remembered and judged are the four major risk dimensions" (p. 167). These include time, financial, psychosocial, and physical risk. Thus, consumers are not simply evaluating location, quality, and atmosphere when analyzing store image. They also assess how each attribute influences the different types of risk associated with shopping at the store. Rather than focusing on several different types of risk, the girls in this study seem to narrow in on the aspects of store image related to psychosocial risk. Psychosocial risk results from "the social embarrassment and loss of social esteem resulting from

friends or family comparing the store's image with the image they have of you, as well as the internal psychological disappointment at oneself for shopping at a store which is not consistent with one's self-image" (Mitchell and Harris 2005, p.824).

During adolescence, psychosocial risk is particularly important because adolescents must make connections with a group of peers as part of the identity formation process (Gemelli 1996). Adolescents use clothing as a tool for signaling their identity and fitting in with a particular peer group (Piacentini and Mailer 2004). Since the stores they shop at provide the clothing used to express their identity, adolescents seem to organize store image information relative to various peer groups. The social identity influences stereotypes for the peer groups and for stores that are associated with these peer groups.

Social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1986) explains this process. It involves three elements: categorization, identification, and comparison. Categorization is "the basic cognitive process through which intergroup boundaries are formed and sharpened, producing group-distinctive stereotypical and normative attitudes and behaviors" (Thorbjornsen, Pedersen, and Nysveen 2007, p.769). The categorization process separates people into different groups and activates stereotypes about the groups. Identification simply means that a person will see herself as fitting into a particular group. *Identification* with a group is distinct from *membership* in a group. While group membership may be voluntary or imposed, identification with a particular group is a *choice* made by the individual (Brewer 1991). Comparison is often synonymous with in-group favoritism or self-enhancement (e.g. Terry, Hogg, and White 1999; Thorbjornsen, Pedersen, and Nysveen 2007), which involves comparing one's own group to out-groups and showing a preference for the in-group. This parallels what we see going on in regards to adolescent store choice.

Table 1 elaborates upon the specific stages of the store stereotyping process. I identified these stages from a thorough examination of the interviews and memos. The outlined process is linear and flows from one stage to another. However, the fifth stage mentions the cyclical nature of the store stereotyping process. This process can be chaotic. “It can move upward for a while, then turn downward, or it may proceed circularly” (Corbin and Strauss 2007, p.98). The stages shown in Table 1 are the best representation of the general sequence through which adolescent girls form store image evaluations and develop store preferences. However, there may be times when individual adolescents veer from this order. In the next section, I will elaborate on sub-processes that “explain in more detail how the larger process is expressed” (Corbin and Strauss, p.101).

**Table 1: Stages in the Store Stereotyping Process**

Stage #	Title	Description
1	Peer Group Stereotyping	Peer group stereotypes form over the years via interactions with peers and observations made in the media.
2	Store Categorization	Stores become associated with specific peer groups based on the peers seen wearing their clothes and shopping in the store, as well as marketing activities created by the store itself.
3	Stereotype Transfer	Group stereotypes influence evaluations of store image such that adolescents think of a particular store the way they would think of a person associated with that peer group.
4	Discriminatory Behavior	Stores are approached or avoided based primarily on whether or not the store stereotype is congruent with an adolescent’s social identity (part of the in-group)
5	Cyclical Stereotyping	The process is cyclical in that store stereotypes then start to influence evaluations of people associated with the store

*Stage 1: Peer Group Stereotyping.* Adolescent girls, especially those in early adolescence (12 to 15), are able to identify stereotypes of different peer groups. Prep, Punk, Goth, Emo, and Hip-Hop are just a few of the groups that hold very specific stereotypes. Here

are some examples of common stereotypes: Preps are rich, stuck-up, snobby, conformists, and usually make fun of Goths and Emos. Goths and Emos are different, weird, like to cut themselves, and are usually sad and depressed. Hip-Hop girls are typically African-American and wear clothes that are tight and slightly more revealing. Punk adolescents use color in their wardrobe, combine different items that do not match, and do not typically care about what others think. I use the term Casual to describe more of a “normal” style, in which girls do not put much effort into dressing in any particular way but mostly dress in mainstream attire.

Girls do not claim to *believe* that these stereotypes hold true for all members of the group. However, they were able to provide similar descriptions of each group whether they were part of that group or members of a different group. These descriptions are also consistent with literature on the Hip-Hop (Motley and Henderson 2008; Trapp 2005), Goth (Miklas and Arnold 1999), and Punk (Moore 2004) subcultures. The following quotes illustrate some of these peer group stereotypes.

**PREPS:**

“If they are wearing pretty, bright clothes and tight clothes, they are pretty much Prep. And if they’re overly, overly, overly happy, then I’m pretty sure they’re Prep.” – Julie

“That’s the way the preppy people are. That’s the way they think. They have a lot of money and they think that they’re cooler than everybody or they’re better than everybody else.” – Shea

**GOTH/EMO:**

“Well, Emo is a type of music. It’s kind of hard to explain that one. Everyone thinks that Emos cut themselves and are depressed... Everyone thinks that Emo stands for emotional. And Preps usually trash on Emos because apparently we suck... [Goths and Emos] are not as happy, and they’re darker. And automatically when you’re darker, people just stare at you.” – Tara

“My little sister is Emo... You know, like the guys that wear like their hair in their face with the eyeliner and tight skinny jeans and the girls have like fish net stockings... It stands for emotional mood. Like really artsy. It is like they wear art. They will draw hearts on their jeans and will put a skull on their shirts, kind of like they are sad or something.” – Victoria

*Stage 2: Store Categorization.* Adolescents assess group affiliation of a store based on several different factors. Marketers play a large role by creating a store image that reflects a particular segment of the teen culture. Advertisements, pictures within the store, merchandise, atmospherics (e.g. music and lighting), employees, and window displays all do their part to link retail stores with specific peer groups. Adolescents also assess peer group affiliation when they notice people of a certain group wearing shirts with the store's brand name. Similarly, they may witness people that seem to fit-in with an established peer group walking into a store. They then link the store with that style group. Girls in this study consistently mentioned Abercrombie and Hot Topic as stores they link with set peer groups. They associate Abercrombie with the Prep group and Hot Topic with the Goth and Emo groups. The following quotes demonstrate some additional stores that girls linked with specific groups:

“Whoever is walking in and out of Abercrombie, they are probably 95% Prep... If you're like Goth, you're usually going into Journey or Hot Topic.” – Julie

“Preppy, which is Hollister and Abercrombie. Goth is Hot Topic. Then there's like Punk Skaters at Pac Sun.” – Abby

*Stage 3: Stereotype Transfer.* Stereotypes simplify the evaluation process from the consumer's standpoint. Adolescent girls often shop in a distracted state of mind, particularly when with friends. They focus on the social aspect of shopping. They discuss what is going on in their lives or joke about the merchandise or people they encounter. They rarely devote much attention to evaluating stores and merchandise. Haytko and Baker (2004) discuss this issue in their research on adolescent girls; the following quotes illustrate this:

“We never get anything done because we laugh so much. And then we leave the mall, and it's like ‘why didn't we go get that?’” – Jessie

“We mostly look at people in the mall and talk about other people. We'll talk about how goofy they look and what they're wearing.” – Hannah

The cognitive miser perspective of stereotyping focuses on stereotypes as a resource-saving tool used in information processing (Fiske and Taylor 1991). A person in a distracted state is likely to rely on stereotypes to simplify information processing. When we apply this to stores, we see adolescents categorize stores within peer groups and subsequently make judgments without actually familiarizing themselves with the store. For example, they may transfer the “stuck-up” or “conformist” image of the Prep group onto the stores where Preps shop (such as Abercrombie & Fitch, American Eagle, or Aeropostale). They may also transfer these stereotypes onto the people working in these stores. Similarly, adolescents may use words such as “dark”, “weird”, and “scary” to describe Hot Topic, since that is how they describe the Goth style group.

These stereotypes also influence evaluations of merchandise, personnel, quality, price, and other store image attributes. If an adolescent has categorized a store as being part of a specific peer group, she seems to concentrate on the aspects of the store that are consistent with that group’s stereotype. This is where prejudice comes into play. “Prejudice entails reacting emotionally to an individual on the basis of one’s feelings about the group as a whole” (Fiske 2004, p.399). In this sense, girls make store image evaluations based on emotional reactions to the affiliated peer group, not the individual store.

Macrae, Hewstone, and Griffiths (1993) demonstrate how individuals transfer stereotypes and make judgments of others based on category affiliation. They conducted an experiment in which they told one group of participants that a woman was a hairdresser while they told another group that this same woman was a doctor. They found that these groups evaluated the subject differently based on that information. Those who were told that she was a doctor concentrated on the information that was consistent with stereotypes of a doctor, while those who were told she

was a hairdresser concentrated on the stereotypes consistent with hairdressers. If we transfer this idea to adolescents and stores, adolescent girls who view a store as being part of the Prep group concentrate on stereotypes consistent with Preps, while a girl evaluating a perceived Goth store will concentrate on attributes consistent with Goth stereotypes. It is important to note that this phenomenon occurs while participants are in a distracted state, such as girls who are socializing throughout the shopping process. Again, this is the optimal time for reliance on stereotypes as a source of information. This also makes it difficult for stores to change consumers' beliefs about the store once a stereotype is established. The following quotes illustrate how adolescents evaluate store image attributes based on a stereotype:

“If you don't wear something that they like, they actually try to escort you to the door. Their music is way too loud, and their clothes are too expensive, and they're really ugly.”  
– Kacey (talking about Abercrombie)

“In my opinion, the clothes there are plain and cliché. Overall, shopping at Abercrombie is boring.” - Krista

*Stage 4: Discriminatory Behavior.* When I asked adolescent girls which stores they do *not* like to shop in, many responded by describing the peer group association of the store. This is where discrimination comes into the process. “Discrimination entails acting on the basis of one's stereotypes and prejudices, denying equality of treatment that people wish to have” (Fiske 2004, p.399). Adolescent girls tend to deny out-group stores the opportunity to obtain their business. Girls did not explicitly state that they *only* shop in stores that are part of their in-group. However, the stores they shop in are consistent with group categorizations identified across interviews, and the stores they avoid are associated with out-groups described during interviews. In the following examples, girls emphasize peer group affiliation as a reason for disliking certain stores:

“I don’t like Delia’s... It’s just a weird style; kind of Punk.” – Mary

“(I don’t like) Body Shop in the mall... They have some cute shirts in there sometimes but then other times it is like places where Gothic people would shop and people that are like Prep. That is not me.” – Amy

“(Hot Topic) seems kind of Punk/Rock/Goth-like... That isn't me.” – Anna

Although girls choose to shop in in-group stores, this does not mean that girls within a group will all dress exactly the same or even buy from the same stores. With the more alternative style groups, there are not as many choices, so stores are somewhat limited. Hot Topic and Pac Sun seem to be the most popular choices for girls in my study who fall into the Punk, Goth, or Emo style groups. However, those with a more mainstream style (Prep or Casual) have a wider range of stores from which to choose. The following quote illustrates this:

“If I dress nice, I usually buy stuff from BeBe and White House Black Market, but if I just want to wear something like this to go to the mall... (I go to) Hollister or Abercrombie... One of my friends, she’ll wear just t-shirts a lot. She’ll buy nice shirts from BeBe and she’ll wear them every now and then but not a lot. And then, she’ll also get clothes from Abercrombie... She likes that because it is more casual... And then Elizabeth dresses up all the time... We all have similar stores that we go to, but we don’t really wear the same thing.” – Melissa

Although in-group/out-group categorization seems to dominate girls’ retail preferences, some girls do seem more willing than others to veer from the typical in-group stores. While some readily admit to copying popular styles, others pride themselves on being different. In the marketing literature, the consumer need for uniqueness construct (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001) seems useful for determining individual differences. Those with a stronger need for uniqueness may shop in a wider variety of stores, compared to typical group members. In contrast, a girl may be more inclined to follow the group norm when she identifies strongly with her peer group. I expand upon these ideas in a model of adolescent store choice in the next section. Here are examples of contrasting personalities in this area:



“Some people have more guts than others and will just put on whatever they want. And then other people might like it... I don’t like to be a trendsetter... I pretty much wear what everybody wears. I don’t have like my own individual style. I wear what’s in the stores and I don’t care if it’s the same as somebody else.” – Lily

“I am kind of about brands, but if it’s cute enough, I really don’t care what the brand is... One day I’ll wear like something everyone else is wearing. The next day I’ll just wear a really cute top that doesn’t really fit in with anything, but I like it. That’s just me.” – Lisa

*Stage 5: Cyclical Stereotyping.* Girls form an initial stereotype of the store based largely on the people they associate with the store. However, the stereotyping process also works in the opposite direction once the store stereotype is established. For example, girls who classify themselves as Goth will often assume that everyone associated with Abercrombie is “stuck-up”. If they see someone that they do not know wearing Abercrombie, their first instinct is that the person is Prep and is “stuck-up”. Likewise, a Prep will often assume that a girl is Goth or Emo (and therefore weird, scary, and dark) if her clothes appear to be from Hot Topic.

Fennis and Pruyn (2007) explain that the personality traits associated with a brand guide others as they form impressions of people who wear the brand. This also relates to psychosocial risk associated with shopping at a particular store. Adolescents often judge their peers based on appearance, and they know that peers will judge them based on the clothes they wear and the stores in which they shop. Since girls know that peers judge on these factors, it makes sense that they consider the store stereotype when choosing where to shop. These examples show how adolescents stereotype peers who wear clothes that appear to be from out-group stores.

“I wore something like this (black guitar t-shirt) and then this girl who I thought was one of my best friends was like ‘Are you going Emo on me now?... Are you going to start cutting your wrists and all that stuff?’ I was like ‘It’s clothes, I mean seriously, get over it.’ If I don’t dress like her, she thinks it’s wrong... I get made fun of for doing that, but I don’t care. I’m not worried about it.” – Shea

“She looked like such a Prep, and I didn’t want to talk to her. And then, I’m like okay, I’ve got to sit with this girl, I might as well say ‘Hi’. So I said ‘Hi’, and she was nice. And then she stopped wearing Prep clothes, and we were all friendly.” – Cindy

## Conceptual Model

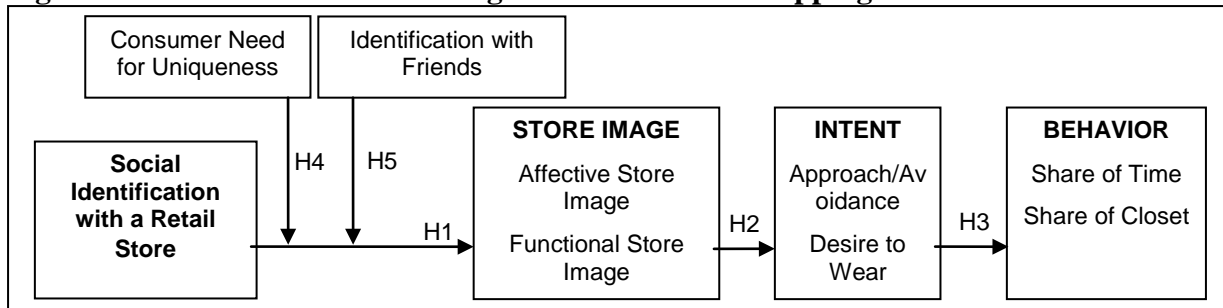
Based on the knowledge I gained from the pilot study, I now move on to the quantitative phase of research. I have developed hypotheses based on theory, findings from past research, and findings from the pilot study. Table 2 identifies the constructs of interest. I have grouped constructs according to the role they serve in the model, and I provide a conceptual definition for each.

**Table 2: Conceptual Definitions of Constructs in the Model**

Type of Variable	Construct	Conceptual Definition
Group Categorization	Social Identification with a Retail Store (SIRS)	The degree to which a store is perceived to be part of and is desirable to a particular peer group.
Individual Differences	Consumer Need for Uniqueness (CNFU)	The pursuit of differentness relative to others that is achieved through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one's identity
	Identification with Friends (IDWF)	The degree to which friends are tied into the self-concept
Attitudinal Assessment	Affective Store Image (ASI)	Evaluation of the emotion-arousing aspects of a retail environment
	Functional Store Image (FSI)	Attitudinal disposition towards the perceived functional/utilitarian images of a particular retail store (e.g. price, personnel, merchandise quality and selection)
Measures of Intent	Approach/Avoidance(AA)	Degree to which a consumer wants to be in a retail environment versus the degree to which they want to leave
	Desire to Wear (DTW)	Degree to which a consumer wants to wear clothing from a particular retail store
Behavioral Assessment	Share of Time	Perceived percent of time spent shopping in this store out of the total time spent shopping for clothes and accessories.
	Share of Closet	Perceived percent of clothes found in a person's closet from this store, relative to the total clothes in her closet.

Figure 2 shows a general model of adolescent store image evaluation and store choice. I predict that in-group/out-group categorization (social identification with a retail store) will influence affective and functional store image evaluations (ASI and FSI), store image evaluations will influence a person’s intent toward the store and the merchandise (AA and DTW), and intent will influence shopping behavior (share of time and closet). Finally, I conceptualize that the two individual difference variables (CNFU and IDWF) will moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and store image evaluations.

**Figure 2: Basic Model of Store Image Evaluation and Shopping Behavior**



***Social Identity Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior***

*Social Identification with a Retail Store.* The key idea we discovered in our analysis of the qualitative interviews is the idea of store stereotyping. For the purpose of this quantitative study, it would be a bit too complex to capture the specific stereotype of each store, analyze what prejudices the stereotype creates, and determine how girls discriminate against a store based on the stereotype. The social identification variable helps simplify the process by focusing on in-group/out-group identification. Social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1986) tells us that people tend to evaluate other in-group members more positively than they evaluate out-group members, as a way of elevating their own self-esteem. People view out-group members very similar to one another but very different from their own group. The comparison aspect of social identity theory also ties in with congruity research in the marketing literature. Adolescent

girls begin by categorizing the store into a specific style group. They then compare whether or not the store's social identity is congruent with their own (i.e. whether the store is part of the in-group or out-group) and evaluate the store based on that comparison.

In a theoretical paper, Sirgy, Grewal, and Mangleburg (2000) express the importance of social self-congruity with a retail store, specifically for young shoppers and publicly visible merchandise. Since my study deals with adolescent shoppers and clothing, I focus on the social aspect of self-congruity. Rather than relying on the difference score measures used in past congruity studies, I have developed a new measure of the social congruity concept, which I term *social identification with a retail store*.

I first turned to the psychology literature on group identification. *Group identification* represents the degree to which a person sees herself as, and desires to be part of, a particular social group. Researchers have examined this construct in several studies of social identity/self-categorization (e.g. Hains et al. 1997, Hogg et al. 2006; Hogg and Hains 1996). I extend the idea of group identification to retail stores and term it social identification to emphasize that this construct assesses whether a retail store is part of a girl's *social* group.

Thus, I conceptualize the term *social identification with a retail store* as the degree to which girls perceive a retail store to be part of and desirable to their particular peer group. This variable essentially asks participants to evaluate whether or not their group of friends is in the same style group as the store's stereotypical in-group. Therefore, in evaluating social identification with a retail store there is also an assessment of symbolic store image (the stereotypic image of the typical user of a particular retail store) (Sirgy and Samli 1985). Based on social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1986), I predict that girls will perceive a

store as part of the in-group and will evaluate the store more favorably when it scores high on social identification with a retail store.

Marketing researchers have shown that self-congruity influences store image evaluations (Sirgy and Samli 1985), perceived value (He and Mukherjee 2007), and loyalty (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; He and Mukherjee 2007; Kressman et al. 2006; Sirgy and Samli 1985). I begin by predicting that social identification with a retail store will directly influence evaluations of store image, with indirect effects on behavioral intent and behavior (demonstrated in the next section).

H1: Social identification with a retail store will relate to (a) affective and (b) functional store image evaluations positively.

*Attitude and Behavior.* In addition to social identity theory, the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1985) help support my hypothesized model. The theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior both predict that attitude influences intent, which influences behavior. Based on this notion, I predict that the attitudinal assessments of affective and functional store image will influence behavioral intent, which will in turn influence an adolescent's retailer-related behaviors.

Store image evaluations are an attitudinal assessment of various aspects of the retail store. Affective store image captures the overall feelings/emotions associated with shopping in the store, while functional store image measures beliefs about tangible aspects of the store (i.e. merchandise, employees, and price). Approach/avoidance and desire to wear measure an adolescent's intent to shop in and wear merchandise from the retail store. Approach/avoidance is an established measure in the marketing literature that assesses the degree to which a consumer wants to be in a retail environment versus her desire to leave the environment (Matilla and Wirtz 2001). I derived a new construct, desire to wear, from the qualitative interviews in the pilot

study. This construct captures the degree to which an adolescent wants to wear the retailer's merchandise. We know that adolescents tend to ridicule peers that wear the "wrong" clothes (Wooten 2006). Therefore, it is important to look beyond the mere desire to shop in a store and focus on a girl's desire to wear the store's merchandise.

- H2(a): Affective store image evaluations will influence approach avoidance positively.
- H2(b): Affective store image evaluations will influence desire to wear positively.
- H2(c): Functional store image evaluations will influence approach/avoidance positively.
- H2(d): Functional store image evaluations will influence desire to wear positively.

I have chosen behavioral measures that adolescents can evaluate on their own. Since parents pay for most of the items purchased for adolescents, I do not ask questions specific to the amount of money spent in a retail store. For this study, I predict that approach/avoidance and desire to wear will have a positive influence on the behavioral measures: share of time and share of closet.

Share of time reflects the percent of total time a girl has spent shopping in a retail store. As we found in the pilot study, adolescents often shop differently when they are with friends, compared to when they are with mom. They may spend a lot of time shopping in a store with friends but just walk in and out for the purchase with mom. For the purpose of this study, I look at total time spent shopping for things to wear. Overall, girls claim to spend time shopping in stores where they enjoy the atmosphere and like the merchandise. This is true whether they are shopping with friends or with mom. Thus, I believe that approach/avoidance and desire to wear will influence shopping behavior. Finally, share of closet relates to actual purchases made and reflects the percentage of clothes in their closet that are from a specific retail store. While parents have the final say in purchases, this construct reflects an adolescent's own preferences because many moms defer to their daughter's opinion when it comes to style, and a girl can push aside clothes she dislikes, even after purchase.

H3: (a) Approach/avoidance and (b) desire to wear will influence shopping behavior positively

### ***Moderating Variables***

In my first hypothesis, I predicted that social identification with a retail store would influence store image evaluations. However, I believe that the degree to which it influences store image will vary based on certain individual difference variables. In this section, I discuss the two potential moderating variables in this study.

*Consumer Need for Uniqueness.* Consumer need for uniqueness is the “pursuit of differentness relative to others that is achieved through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one’s [identities]” (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001, p.50). I conceptualize that consumer need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and store image. The primary reason I address this moderating variable is due to some key areas of variation we identified in the pilot study. First, some girls admitted to relying on friends’ opinions and advice while others claimed to make clothing choices independent of friends’ opinions. Second, we also saw variation in girls’ basic desire to fit-in versus stand-out amongst their peers. Thus, I rely on the consumer need for uniqueness construct as a key individual difference variable that may explain some of this variation.

Marketing researchers have demonstrated that market mavenism and opinion leadership are positively related to consumer need for uniqueness (Clark and Goldsmith 2005; Goldsmith and Clark 2008). Those high in consumer need for uniqueness are the ones who others look to as a source of information. Using that line of thought, girls that set the trend for a social group may not care as much about shopping in stores that are congruent with the social group. Consequently, they may base their evaluation of the store’s image more on congruity with their

individual sense of style than perceptions about the store's congruence with the group as a whole. Thus, I predict that the relationship between social identification with a retail store and store image evaluation will be weaker for these consumers.

H4: Consumer need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and (a) affective and (b) functional store image evaluations, such that the relationships will be weaker for girls scoring high on consumer need for uniqueness than for those with low consumer need for uniqueness.

*Identification with Friends.* Brewer (1991) describes a “fundamental tension between the human needs for validation and similarity to others (on the one hand) and a countervailing need for uniqueness and individuation (on the other hand)” (p.477). My goal with this construct is to provide a contrast to the consumer need for uniqueness variable, with a variable that evaluates the connection with the in-group. Adolescence is a period of social development during which children pull away from parents and begin to form closer relationships with their peers (Gemelli 1996). This variable aims to capture the extent to which an adolescent identifies with her peer group, by assessing the extent to which she incorporates her group of close friends into her extended self (Belk 1988). Keeping this in mind, I predict social identification with a retail store will have a stronger influence on store image evaluation when a girl views close friends as an integral part of her self-concept. These individuals will not want to sacrifice the part of their extended self that is dependent on friends by deviating from the acceptable boundaries of the in-group. Thus, social identification with a retail store should have a stronger influence on store image evaluation for adolescents with strong identification with friends.

H5: Identification with friends will moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and (a) affective and (b) functional store image evaluations, such that the relationship will be stronger for girls scoring high on identification with friends.



## Measure Development and Refinement

### *Method*

Before I developed the questionnaire, it was necessary to refine some measures to accommodate the adolescent population. I started by revisiting some of the younger girls interviewed during the pilot study. I was particularly interested in the consumer need for uniqueness scale since the items are all long and might be confusing for the youngest adolescents. I asked some girls to read items from the established measure and identify words or sentences that did not make sense. I then worked with the girls to reword the items so that they would be comprehensible by the youngest adolescents. I tested the reworded items with a convenience sample of 27 respondents, recruited from a gymnastics club in Birmingham, Alabama. I also did a preliminary test of the established approach/avoidance scale, as well as a new measure for the desire to wear construct. The purpose of this preliminary test is simply to get an initial overview of these measures and work toward adapting them for the adolescent population.

After my preliminary examination of those three measures, I created a questionnaire to test my hypotheses. I then conducted a pretest to refine all measures in the study. Sixty girls between the ages of 12 and 19 completed the pretest. Fifty-seven percent of girls are in the early adolescent age group (ages 12 to 15), with 43% in the late adolescent group (ages 16 to 19). In education cohort, 33% of respondents are middle school girls, 52% are in high school, and 16% are in college. The sample is 70% Caucasian, 17% African-American, 5% Hispanic, and 3% Asian.

I recruited girls through church youth groups as well as in front of a teen-focused retail chain in the local mall. Parents provided consent and participants provided assent for all girls under 19 (as specified by the university's internal review board). Nineteen-year-olds provided their own consent. Girls received a \$10 gift card for completing the questionnaire. This questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete. In order to ensure variance in the responses, approximately half of the sample evaluated stores they have shopped at "several times before", while the other half evaluated stores they have shopped at "only a few times before".

### *Purification of the Measures*

I analyzed pretest data in SPSS. I tested internal consistency through Coefficient alphas (Churchill 1979). I conducted exploratory factor analysis, with principle axis factoring and oblique rotation, to assess the number of dimensions within each construct and reliabilities of individual items (Arnold and Reynolds 2003; Bearden et al. 1989; Hair et al. 1998). I have starred the items I retained for analysis in the main study in the sections that follow.

*Social Identification with a Retail Store.* The first major variable I test is social identification with a retail store. In the marketing literature, self-congruity research typically uses difference scores to assess the level of congruity between a person and the store (e.g. Kressmann et al. 2006; Sirgy and Samli 1985). I have simplified this process by measuring the store's perceived social identification directly, rather than through difference scores. I adapted items from group identification measures in the social psychology literature (e.g. Hains et al. 1997, Hogg et al. 2006; Hogg and Hains 1996) so that they reflect social identification with a retail store. Researchers have used some different items between studies, but they generally measure the same basic areas. They assess how similar one feels to a group. They identify how important the group is to an individual. They ask how well the person fits into the group. They ask how

much a person identifies with the group. They determine how strong ties are with the group. They capture how much a person sees themselves as belonging to the group. Overall, this measure assesses whether or not girls perceive the store as part of the in-group. I list the pretest items for social identification with a retail store below. The starred items meet the criteria to remain for the main study.

<p><b>Social Identification with a Retail Store (SIRS), Pretest Items</b></p> <p>SIRS1: This store is very similar to my group of friends.</p> <p>SIRS2: This store is like my group of friends.*</p> <p>SIRS3: My friends and I fit-in well at this store.*</p> <p>SIRS4: This store is important to my group of friends.*</p> <p>SIRS5: My friends and I identify with this store.*</p> <p>SIRS6: This is a store that belongs with my group of friends.*</p> <p>Note: Items measured on a 5-point scale: Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree</p>
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Exploratory factor analysis shows a one-dimensional construct, with factor loadings ranging from .87 to .91, with the exception of SIRS1. After removing SIRS1, I have a five-item measure with an alpha of .95.

*Consumer Need for Uniqueness.* There are three dimensions to the established consumer need for uniqueness construct (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). The first dimension, *creative choice counterconformity*, identifies consumers who “seek social differentness from most others” but make selections that are “likely to be considered good choices by these others” (p. 52). The second dimension, *unpopular choice counterconformity*, describes consumers who “deviate from group norms and thus risk social disapproval” through their choices (p. 52). The third dimension, *avoidance of similarity*, identifies consumers who stop using products once they become popular or mainstream.

The first and third dimensions describe consumers who need to be different, but may still want to fit-in to some extent. This study does not address the second dimension because it deviates from psychological literature, which states that adolescents place high importance on

being part of a group (e.g. Gemelli 1996). Even those adolescents in the pilot study who are members of nonconformist groups, still seem to wear things that are acceptable within their own group.

With consumer need for uniqueness, I first worked with girls from the pilot study to reword sentences so that even the youngest adolescents could comprehend each question. For example, the original item, which read, “I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands” changed to “I try to be unique by buying special products or brands.” I used Ruvio, Shoham, and Brenčič’s (2008) shortened (4-items per factor) version of the scale as a guide but substituted with some of the original items based on girls’ feedback. I hoped that starting with fewer items would simplify comprehension and limit loss of attention for adolescents. Here is a list of the consumer need for uniqueness (CNFU) pretest items. I retain the starred items for the main study.

#### **Consumer Need for Uniqueness (CNFU), Pretest Items**

##### Creative Choice

CNFU1: I often combine things in such a way that I create a look for myself that others can’t copy.

CNFU2: I try to find a more interesting version of common products because I enjoy being original

CNFU3: I try to be unique by buying special products or brands.\*

CNFU4: Buying products that are interesting and unusual helps me to be different.\*

CNFU5: I’m always looking for new products or brands that will help me be more unique.\*

##### Avoidance of Similarity

CNFU6: When products or brands I like become extremely popular, I lose interest in them.\*

CNFU7: I avoid products or brands that have been accepted and purchased by everyone else.\*

CNFU8: I give up wearing fashions I’ve purchased once they become popular.\*

CNFU9: Products don’t seem to be as valuable when they are purchased regularly by everyone.

CNFU10: When a style of clothing I own becomes too common, I usually quit wearing it.

Note: Items measured on a 5-point scale: Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree

My analysis of this updated measure in the preliminary convenience sample produced alphas of .80 and .87. An exploratory factor analysis showed two distinct factors with a correlation of 0.2. The factor loadings range from .47 to .92. I dropped the lowest loading item

from each factor (CNFU1 and CNFU9), resulting in an 8-item scale with alphas remaining at .80 and .87, two distinct factors correlated .06, and factor loadings ranged from .52 to .94.

I further refine the consumer need for uniqueness measure through the larger pretest. I test an 8-item scale, resulting in alphas equal to .87 and .85. Exploratory factor analysis produced two factors correlated .47, with factor loadings ranging from .56 to .97. CNFU2 and CNFU10 were the lowest loading items at .56. After removing these two items (one from each dimension), six items remain, with two factors correlated .40, factor loadings ranging from .68 to .98, and alphas equal to .89 and .84.

*Identification with Friends.* For the identification with friends measure, I adapt Sivadas and Machleit's (1994) measure of the extent of an object's incorporation into the extended self, using "my friends" as the focus of each item. With these items, I essentially capture the degree to which a girl incorporates her close friends into her self-concept. This measure produced an alpha of .78, with factor loadings ranging from .63 to .82. No adjustments seem necessary based on the pretest, so I use this same measure in the final study. I list the four items that make up the identification with friends measure in the box below.

**Identification with Friends (IDWF), Pretest Items**

IDWF1: My friends are an important part of who I am.\*

IDWF2: My friends make me feel good about myself.

IDWF3: If I was not able to spend time with my friends, I would feel that a part of me is missing.\*

IDWF4: My close friends help me to be who I want to be.\*

Note: Items measured on a 5-point scale: Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree

*Store Image.* As previously noted, functional and affective components of store image provide more explanation of a global store image measure when used together than either can provide alone (Darden and Babin 1994). Thus, I use both in this study. Functional store image includes evaluations of merchandise, employees, and price. I adapted most items from previous

store image studies (Baker et al 2002; Chowdhury, Reardon, and Srivastava 1998; Darden and Babin 1994; Williams and Burns 2001). The affective store image measure consists of positive affect items pulled from past research (Babin and Attaway 2000; Jones and Reynolds 2006). I list the store image items below; starred items remain for the main study.

<p><b>Functional Store Image (FSI)</b></p> <p><i>Merchandise</i></p> <p>FSI1: High quality clothes*</p> <p>FSI2: Easy to find clothes*</p> <p>FSI3: Stylish clothes*</p> <p><i>Employees</i></p> <p>FSI4: Friendly employees*</p> <p>FSI5: Nice employees</p> <p>FSI6: Helpful employees*</p> <p><i>Price</i></p> <p>FSI7: Affordable</p> <p>FSI8: Good sales</p> <p>FSI9: Cheap prices</p> <p><b>Affective Store Image (ASI)</b></p> <p>ASI1: Exciting*</p> <p>ASI2: Fun*</p> <p>ASI3: Energetic*</p> <p>Note: Items measured on a 5-point scale: Does not describe this store at all – Describes this store very well</p>
---

I began by running an exploratory factor analysis with items from all four dimensions. The initial run produced three factors. Price separated out into its own factor. However, the other three dimensions did not separate from one another. The first factor consisted of merchandise and affect items, and the second factor mostly consisted of employee items. Overall, I found a number of cross loadings of individual items, and the two dimensions were correlated .64 with one another. Upon further examination, the price dimension does not correlate with any of the outcome variables or with the other store image dimensions. Therefore, rather than analyzing it separately, I decided to remove it from the remainder of the study. After removing price and the lowest loading employee item, I then ran another exploratory factor analysis. This produced a

single factor, with the eight starred items I will keep for the main study. The factor loadings range from .69 to .91, and an alpha of .92.

Since the store image variable now includes a single dimension that encompasses several different aspects of store image, I will now refer to this variable as *holistic store image*. These measurement results provide support for the idea that broad stereotypes have a large influence on more specific evaluations of the store. If adolescents evaluate store image more holistically, based on stereotypes, it makes sense that evaluations of the different aspects of the store are intertwined, forming one dimension.

*Approach/Avoidance.* I tested the established measure of approach/avoidance (Mattila and Wirtz 2001) with the preliminary convenience sample and further refined this measure through the larger pretest. This list of approach/avoidance (AA) items includes items from both the preliminary sample and pretest sample. The starred items meet the criteria necessary to remain in the main study.

**Approach/Avoidance (AA), Pretest Items**

AA1: I enjoy shopping in this store.\*

AA2: I like the store environment.\*

AA3: I avoid going to this store. (r)

AA4: This is a place in which I feel comfortable talking to other people shopping in the store.

AA5: This is a place where I try to avoid people and avoid talking to them. (r)

AA6: I like to browse around this store.\*

AA7: I want to avoid looking around or exploring the store. (r)

AA8: This is the sort of place where I end up spending more money than I originally set out to spend.

Note: Items measured on a 5-point scale: Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree

An exploratory factor analysis with the first pretest sample shows that the items AA4 and AA5 did not load on the same factor as the rest. These are two of the wordiest items and may have been difficult for younger adolescents to comprehend. Additionally, as I assessed the wording of the items and their appropriateness for adolescents, I decided to remove AA8 because

it crosses over into purchasing behavior rather than representing a mere attitude assessment. Since either parents pay for or make purchases for their adolescent daughters, I want to avoid any discussion of purchasing behavior in our assessment of adolescents' attitudes. The result from this initial run was a 5-item measure with an alpha of .88 and factor loadings ranging from .66 to .97.

Analysis from the second pretest led me to eliminate AA3, since it produced a low factor loading of just .39. I further decided to remove the final remaining avoidance item to simplify the measure and exclusively capture approach, or the consumer's desire to be in the store. This leaves a 3-item measure of approach (AA1, AA2, and AA6) with factor loadings ranging from .73 to .93 and alpha equal to .89.

*Desire to Wear.* I created a new scale for the desire to wear construct and tested it in both pretest samples. Like approach/avoidance, desire to wear is an intent measure. In this case, I assess the consumers' intent toward wearing the merchandise. While approach/avoidance measures a desire to shop in the store, this variable measures how much a girl wants to wear the retailer's merchandise. Here is a list of the desire to wear pretest items.

**Desire to Wear (DTW), Pretest Items**

DTW1: I want to wear things from this store.

DTW2: If I could, I would wear something from this store every day.

DTW3: I feel like myself when I wear things from this store.

DTW4: It usually puts me in a good mood to wear things from this store.

Note: Items measured on a 5-point scale: Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree

The desire to wear measure produced an alpha of .80, with factor loadings ranging from .49 to .93, in the first pretest sample. No changes were made going into the second pretest, where the desire to wear measure produced an alpha of .91, with factor loadings ranging from .83 to .89.



Since desire to wear and approach capture feelings about the merchandise and feelings about the store, I conceptualized that these might be two dimensions of an overarching construct assessing positive affect toward the retailer. However, when I examined the four desire to wear items and the three approach items in an exploratory factor analysis, I found only one dimension, with loadings ranging from .68 to .89. Thus, desire to shop in the store and desire to wear the merchandise do not appear to act independently from one another. Although this does not support the conceptualization of a two-dimensional construct, this does support the idea that adolescents base their attitudes toward the store on broader stereotypes, rather than specific attributes of the store. Based on these results and my discussions with adolescent girls, it is evident that an adolescent would only desire to spend time shopping in a store in which she also wants to wear the merchandise. Therefore, I eliminated the desire to wear variable from the study and use only the approach items from the already established approach/avoidance measure.

*Share of Time and Closet.* Share of time and share of closet are two items that measure behavior. I chose these variables because adolescents may not have knowledge of the amount of money that parents spend on purchases from these stores. Thus, measuring the percent of time spent shopping in a store (much of which may be with friends and will not include purchases), along with the percentage of clothes they own from a particular store, provides a clearer picture of the adolescent's own behavior in regards to the retailer. The items (listed below) are correlated .90 and combine into a two-item measure of shopping behavior.

**Behavior, Pretest Items**

TIME: What percent of the time you spend shopping for things to wear is spent in this store?\*

CLOSET: What percent of all the clothes that you own are from this store?\*

Note: Items measured on an 11-point scale: 1% – 100%

## **Main Study**

### ***Method***

I conducted the main study via mall-intercept surveys in two southern states. Participants received a \$10 gift card to the store or mall where I recruited them, upon returning their survey. Nineteen-year-old girls provided consent, and I obtained participant assent and parental consent for girls under 19 (as required by the university's internal review board). In order to make participation easier for adolescents and parents who do not shop together, I distributed envelopes with consent forms and a survey to adolescents shopping without parents, as well as parents who could take a survey home for their daughters to complete. I mailed gift cards back to participants upon receipt of the survey. A majority of girls completed their survey on-site, but 12 percent mailed-in their survey. In both cases, I informed participants that the survey was part of my dissertation and had nothing to do with the retail store from which I recruited. This helped eliminate bias toward that retail store and encouraged girls to answer questions more honestly.

In order to create variance in the measures, I constructed multiple versions of the survey to administer to participants. I randomly assigned participants to one of the three versions in which they had to identify a store where they shop (1) "least", (2) "most", or (3) "every now and then". They then evaluated the chosen store by completing the remaining items in the survey. Specifically, this helps ensure there will be variation in the store image, attitudinal, and behavioral measures.

The final sample consists of 257 adolescent girls. Although 275 girls submitted surveys, I had to eliminate some due to incomplete data or failure to follow instructions. The sample provides an even split between girls in the early and late phases of adolescence, with 126 girls in

the early adolescent category (ages 12 to 15) and 130 girls in the late adolescent category (ages 16 to 19). Seventeen percent of these girls are in middle school, 59% are in high school, and 24% are in college. In regards to race and ethnicity, the sample is predominantly white, but also includes representation of minority groups. Fifty-seven percent of participants are Caucasian, 32% are African-American, and Asians, Hispanics, and Multi-cultural ethnicities combine for another 9% of the sample.

### ***Measurement Results***

I began by using LISREL 8.8 to conduct confirmatory factor analysis for the constructs in the model. Overall, the constructs hold together well. Social identification with a retail store, approach, and behavior produced acceptable factor loadings and alpha levels (all above .70). I removed one item from the identification with friends measure that had a low loading of just .58. The two-dimensional consumer need for uniqueness construct produced a few problems (cross loading of an item, low item loadings, low alpha). Therefore, I removed the second dimension, avoidance of similarity.

Confirmatory factor analysis of the holistic store image measure shows that the items load on a single construct, as they did in the pretest. However, when I analyzed the measurement model as a whole, the “stylish clothes” item cross-loads with several other constructs, and the “clothes are easy to find” item has a low loading of just .56. If I remove them from the model, only one merchandise item would remain. Rather than sacrificing the holistic aspect of the measure by eliminating these merchandise items, I instead simplified this measure by summing up items within each of the three dimensions, producing three composite items for the overall store image measure. I move forward with a three-item measure of holistic store image that captures merchandise, employees, and affect. The merchandise item is the sum of whether

merchandise is high quality, stylish, and easy to find. The employee item is the sum of how friendly and helpful employees are toward participants. The affect item is the sum of girls' evaluations of how exciting, fun, and energetic the store is. Factor loadings range from .73 to .85 and alpha equals .85. After making these adjustments, I obtain acceptable fit for the overall measurement model ( $\chi^2 = 184$ ,  $df = 137$ ; CFI = .99; NNFI = .99; SRMR = .04; RMSEA = .04).

Table 3 shows correlations of the final constructs. Social identification with a retail store, holistic store image, approach, and behavior all correlate. This is in-line with expectations, as I have predicted positive relationships between these variables in our model. The two moderators, consumer need for uniqueness and identification with friends, do not correlate with any of the predictors but do have a low, positive correlation with one another. While I did not anticipate positive correlation between these variables, the fact that there is a correlation of .30 is consistent with Brewer's (1991) optimal distinctiveness theory that describes a continuous effort to achieve balance between the opposing needs for assimilation and differentiation. If a girl evaluates herself as closely tied to friends in the beginning of the survey, she might describe herself as high in consumer need for uniqueness to increase feelings of differentiation.

I tested discriminant validity by assessing whether the average variance extracted for each construct was greater than the shared variance (squared correlation) between two constructs (Farrell 2009; Fornell and Larcker 1981; Hair et al. 2006). The average variance extracted was greater than shared variance for all constructs except holistic store image. The average variance extracted for holistic store image was .63, while the shared variance between approach and holistic store image was .68. Modification indices did not suggest cross-loadings between items of these two factors, but they did suggest allowing some error terms to correlate.

I allowed two error terms within holistic store image (merchandise and affect) to correlate. While I used self-report scales for all measures in the study, holistic store image is the only one in which some scale items are added together to form composite measures. I calculate merchandise and affect by summing three store image items together for each. This is likely the reason for the correlated error terms. After I made this adjustment, the fit of the model improved slightly ( $\chi^2 = 176.89$ ,  $df = 136$ ; CFI = .99; NNFI = .99; SRMR = .03; RMSEA = .03). The chi-square difference is 6.95 with one degree of freedom (significant at  $p < .01$ ).

All constructs now pass the test for discriminant validity (see Table 3). Table 4 provides means, standard deviations, and alpha levels of the final constructs, as well as factor loadings of individual items. Participants evaluated all items (except for share of time and closet) on a 5-point scale while completing the survey. Although I compute the holistic store image measure differently, I have taken averages of the items that make up each composite item, so that the mean and standard deviation are on a 5-point scale, as participants evaluated them.

**Table 3: Correlations, AVE, and Shared Variance Estimates**

	BEH	SIRS	HSI	APP	CNFU	IDWF
BEH	<b>.78</b>	.54	.36	.46	.00	.00
SIRS	.74	<b>.73</b>	.46	.53	.01	.03
HSI	.60	.68	<b>.69</b>	.60	.01	.01
APP	.68	.73	.78	<b>.76</b>	.00	.01
CNFU	.05	.09	.09	.03	<b>.54</b>	.09
IDWF	-.02	.16	.08	.12	.30	<b>.53</b>

Note: Correlations shown below the diagonal, squared correlations shown above the diagonal, average variance extracted shown in bold font on the diagonal. BEH = Behavior, SIRS = Social Identification with a Retail Store, HSI = Holistic Store Image, APP = Approach, CNFU = Consumer Need for Uniqueness, IDWF = Identification with Friends

**Table 4: Final Measures, Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

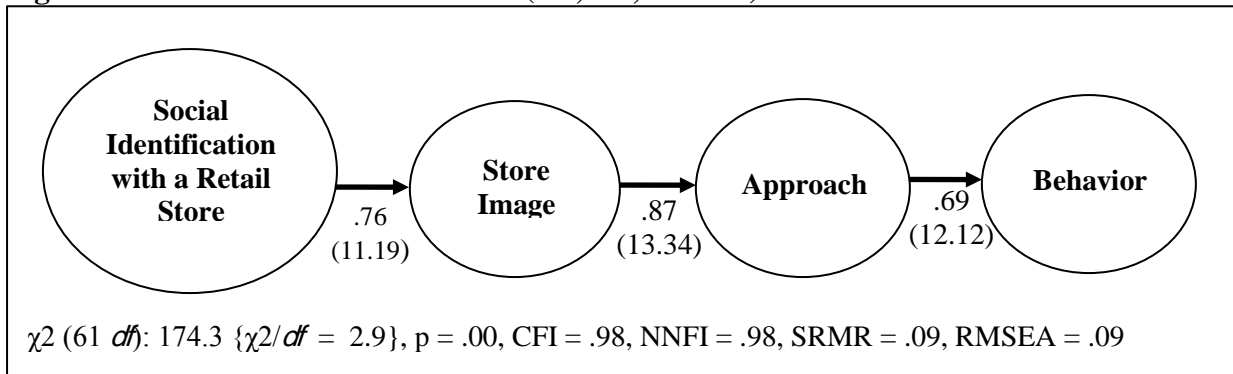
Construct	Mean	S.D.	$\alpha$	Loadings	Items
Social Identification with a Retail Store (SIRS)	2.8	1.2	.93	.82 .85 .86 .89 .87	This store is like my group of friends. My friends and I fit-in well at this store. This store is important to my group of friends. My friends and I identify with this store. This is a store that belongs with my group of friends
Consumer Need for Uniqueness (CNFU)	3.6	1.0	.78	.69 .77 .76	(Creative Choice) I try to be unique by buying special products or brands. Buying products that are interesting and unusual helps me to be different. I'm always looking for new products or brands that will help me be more unique.
Identification with Friends (IDWF)	3.7	.99	.78	.75 .72 .75	My friends are an important part of who I am. If I were not able to spend time with my friends, I would feel that a part of me is missing. My friends help to make me the person I want to be.
Holistic Store Image (HSI)	3.9	.97	.85	.87 .71 .91	Affect (Exciting, Fun, Energetic) Employees (Friendly, Helpful) Merchandise (Quality, Stylish, Easy to find)
Approach (APP)	3.8	1.2	.95	.89 .87 .87	I enjoy shopping in this store. I like the store environment. I like to browse around this store
Behavior (BEH)	37.5	26.4	.79 corr	.91 .87	What percent of the time you spend shopping for things to wear is spent in this store? What percent of all the clothes that you own are from this store?

***Hypothesis Testing***

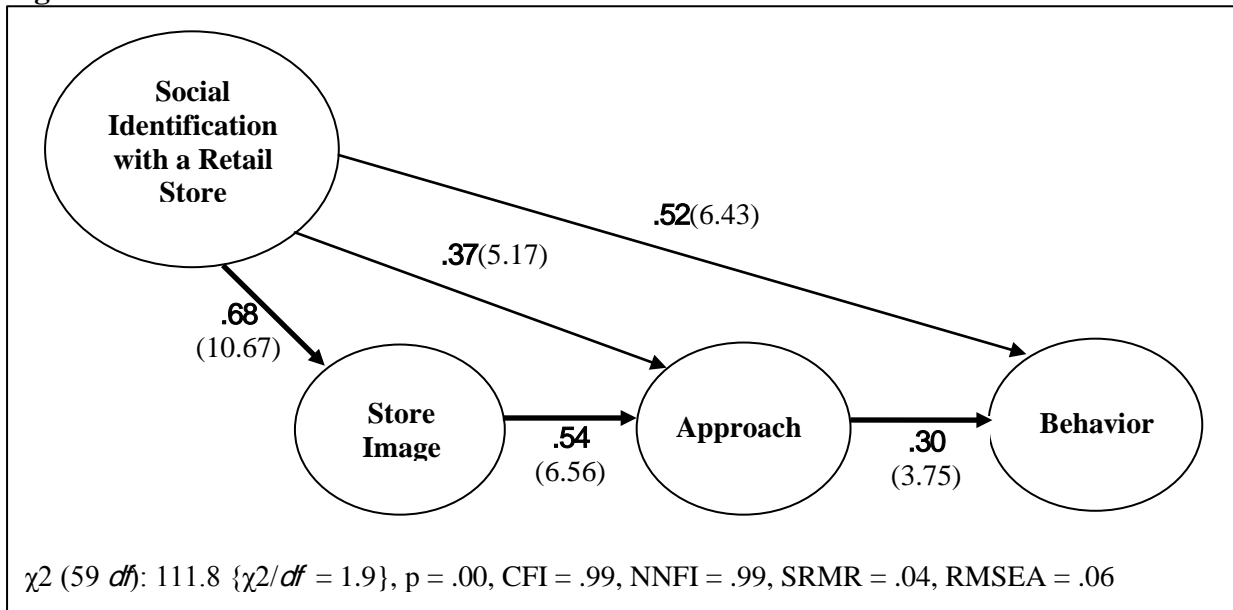
*Structural Model.* I test my hypotheses in LISREL 8.8 using structural equation modeling. I begin by analyzing the basic structural model, excluding moderator variables. This shows support for H1, H2, and H3 with betas equal to .76, .87, and .69, respectively. However, store image and approach only partially mediate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and behavior. Modification indices suggest that direct paths from social

identification with a retail store to approach and behavior should be included in the model. The addition of these two paths improves the fit of the model, with a chi-square difference of 62.5, with two degrees of freedom (significant at  $p < .001$ ). The original and modified structural models appear in Figures 3 and 4.

**Figure 3: Predicted Structural Model (H1, H2, and H3)**



**Figure 4: Modified Structural Model**



The data support my prediction that social identification with a retail store positively influences store image (H1), with a beta equal to .68 ( $t = 10.67$ ). This also shows support for store image having a positive influence on approach (H2), with a beta equal to .54 ( $t = 6.56$ ). Approach has a positive influence on behavior (H3) with a beta equal to .30 ( $t = 3.75$ ). Social

identification with a retail store positively influences both approach ( $b = .37, t = 5.17$ ) and behavior ( $b = .52, t = 6.43$ ), demonstrating the power of this variable in all aspects of adolescent decision-making.

The biggest difference is in the relationship between approach and behavior. Whereas the beta was equal to .69 in the predicted model, that level drops to .30 in the modified model. Social identification with a retail store has a stronger influence on behavior, with a beta of .52. This shows that much of the variance in behavior explained by approach in the predicted model was actually coming from social identification with a retail store in the original model. As demonstrated in Table 5, this model further explains slightly more variance in the behavioral measure, with the squared multiple correlation increasing from .47 in the first model to .58 in the second model.

**Table 5: Squared Multiple Correlations**

	Figure 3 Model	Figure 4 Model
Holistic Store Image	.57	.46
Approach	.76	.69
Behavior	.47	.58

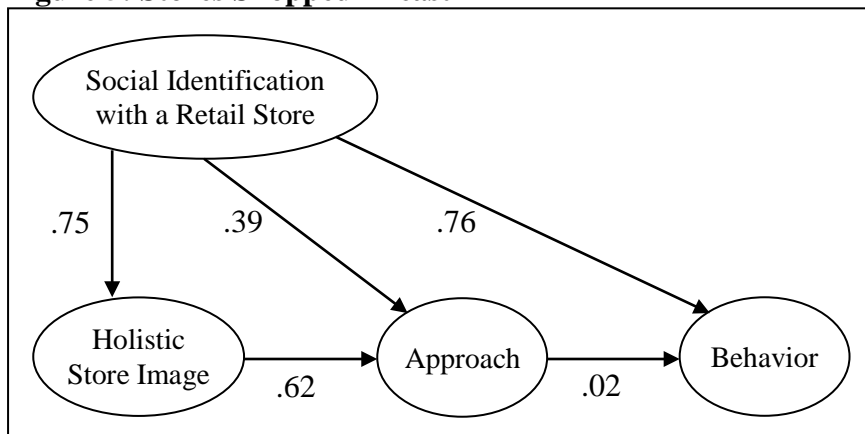
The theoretical viewpoints used in this paper place a strong emphasis on group influence, providing justification for the additional paths in the modified model. The subjective norms portion of the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1985) demonstrates the importance of the opinions of others in the decision making process. Social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner 1986) predicts that people evaluate in-group members more favorably than they evaluate out-group members. Thus, if a store rates high on social identification with a retail store, the store is part of the in-group. Girls would evaluate this more favorably, and would perceive it as an acceptable option to close friends.



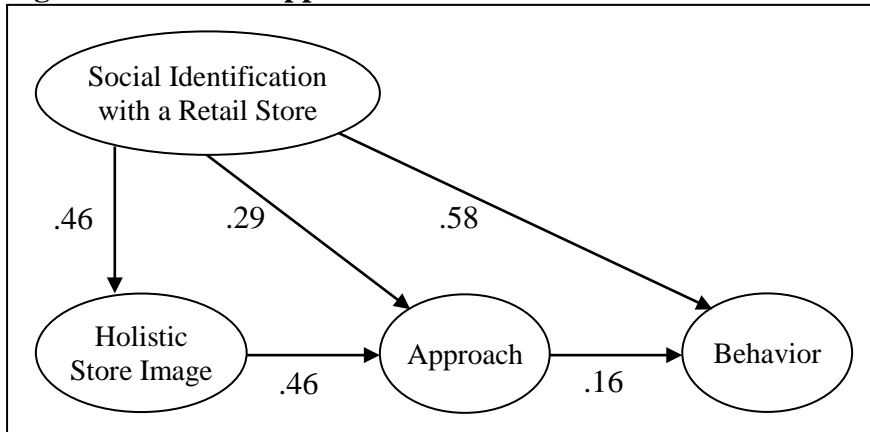
*Three Versions of the Survey.* As discussed in the methods section, I administered three versions of the survey so that some girls would have stores that they view positively and others would evaluate stores that they view negatively. For this manipulation, the three versions of the survey asked girls to evaluate a store where they shop “least,” “most,” or “every now and then.” I administered surveys at random, with 90 girls evaluating the store where they shop least, 86 girls evaluating the store where they shop most, and 81 girls evaluating a store where they shop every now and then. In this section, I compare results across these three samples to see if the relationships differ. Correlations are higher within the pooled data than in the three separate groups, showing that the manipulation did in fact work.

Using LISREL 8.8, I ran a multi-group analysis. I started with the covariance matrix, set the first indicator of each construct equal to one, and constrained lambdas to be equal across the three samples. The findings are significantly different, with a chi-square difference of 19.12 with 10 degrees of freedom (significant at  $p=.04$ ). The main differences that occur across samples are in the relationships between social identification with a retail store and behavior, as well as the relationship between approach and behavior. Figures 5, 6, and 7 show the betas for these three different samples.

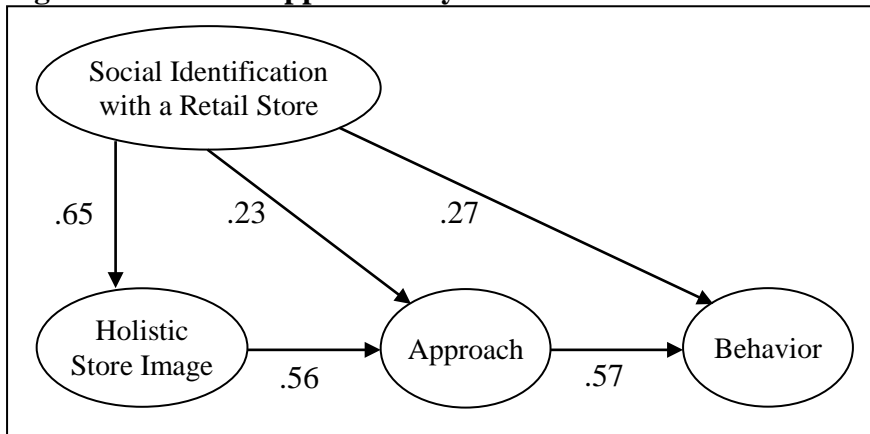
**Figure 5: Stores Shopped “Least”**



**Figure 6: Stores Shopped “Most”**



**Figure 7: Stores Shopped “Every Now and Then”**



The results here are interesting, particularly for the factors that influence behavior. We can see that the relationship between approach and behavior is weak for the “least” and “most” shopped stores (betas equal to .02 and .16), while the relationship between social identification with a retail store and behavior is strong for these groups (betas equal to .76 and .58). In the “every now and then” group, the relationship between approach and behavior is strong, with a beta of .57, whereas the relationship between social identification with a retail store and behavior weakens, with a beta of .27. This tells us that social identification with a retail store has a heavy influence on behavior when it is either very high or very low. However, when social identification is neutral, store image evaluations and a desire to be in the retail environment (approach) have a stronger influence on behavior. If we further analyze the “least” and “most”

groups, we also see that the influence of social identification with the retail store on behavior is strongest for the stores shopped “least”. This demonstrates that store image and approach have almost no influence on behavior when girls evaluate the store as an out-group store. This further demonstrates that the stereotype of the store keeps girls from entering, regardless of the merchandise offered or general atmosphere within the store.

*Moderators.* There are two potential moderators in this study. I use LISREL 8.8 to test these moderators through multi-group analysis. I split the sample at the median based on the predicted moderating variables, providing two samples to test for each hypothesis. For the analysis of both consumer need for uniqueness and identification with friends, I use the covariance matrix, set the first indicator of each construct equal to one, and set the lambdas to be equal across compared samples. See Table 6 for results of the multi-group analysis.

**Table 6: Moderation Analysis**

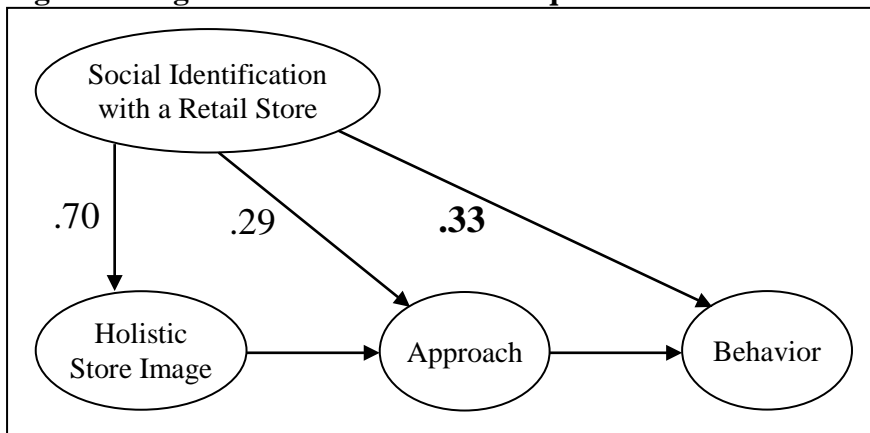
	ALL n=257	Low CNFU n=142	High CNFU n=115	Chi-Square Difference	<i>p</i>	Low IDWF n=123	High IDWF n=134	Chi-Square Difference	<i>p</i>
SIRS → HSI	.68 (10.67)	.66 (8.04)	.70 (8.41)	0.22	.64	.70 (7.10)	.66 (9.17)	0.06	.81
SIRS → APP	.37 (5.17)	.40 (4.24)	.29 (3.08)	1.79	.18	.57 (5.78)	.19 (2.00)	11.01	.00
SIRS → BEH	.52 (6.43)	.67 (6.47)	.33 (2.78)	6.07	.01	.61 (4.12)	.48 (5.40)	0.39	.53

Note: I calculated the chi-square differences for this table individually. When I constrained the three relationships simultaneously, the conclusion was the same, with estimated changes in chi-square equal to .25, .68, and 4.44 (CNFU group) and .03, 9.52, and .49 (IDWF group). SIRS = Social Identification with a Retail Store, HSI = Holistic Store Image, APP = Approach, BEH = Behavior, CNFU = Consumer Need for Uniqueness, IDWF = Identification with Friends

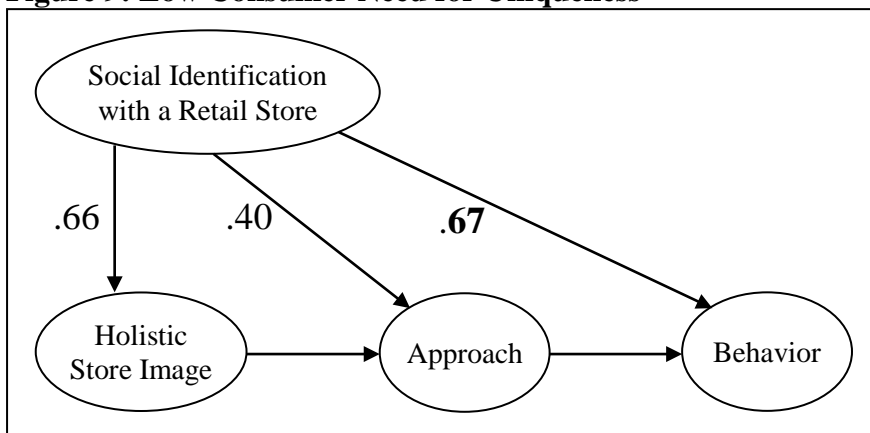
I begin with the consumer need for uniqueness construct. The low CNFU group consists of 142 adolescent girls, while the high CNFU group consists of 115 adolescent girls. H4 predicts that consumer need for uniqueness will moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and holistic store image. Since I have added paths from social identification

with a retail store to both approach and behavior, I tested for moderation of these relationships as well. However, I only found support for moderation of the relationship between social identification with a retail store and behavior, with a chi-square difference of 6.07 ( $p = .01$ ). There is still a positive relationship between social identification with a retail store and behavior for girls with a higher level of consumer need for uniqueness, but the relationship is weaker than it is for girls with low levels of consumer need for uniqueness. This is in-line with expectations. Social identification with a retail store will not influence the shopping behavior of girls with high consumer need for uniqueness as much as it does for girls with low consumer need for uniqueness. Figures 8 and 9 show the different betas for the high and low consumer need for uniqueness samples.

**Figure 8: High Consumer Need for Uniqueness**



**Figure 9: Low Consumer Need for Uniqueness**

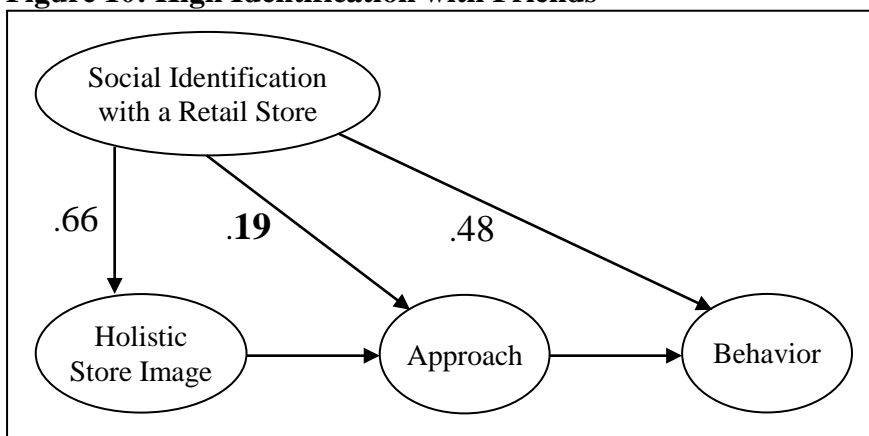


Consumer need for uniqueness does not moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and holistic store image. This tells us that girls with a high need for uniqueness rely on the in-group categorization of a retail store just as much as the rest of the adolescent population in evaluating store image. Similarly, consumer need for uniqueness does not moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and approach, demonstrating that in-group categorization of a store has the same influence on a girl’s desire to shop in a store, regardless of her need for uniqueness.

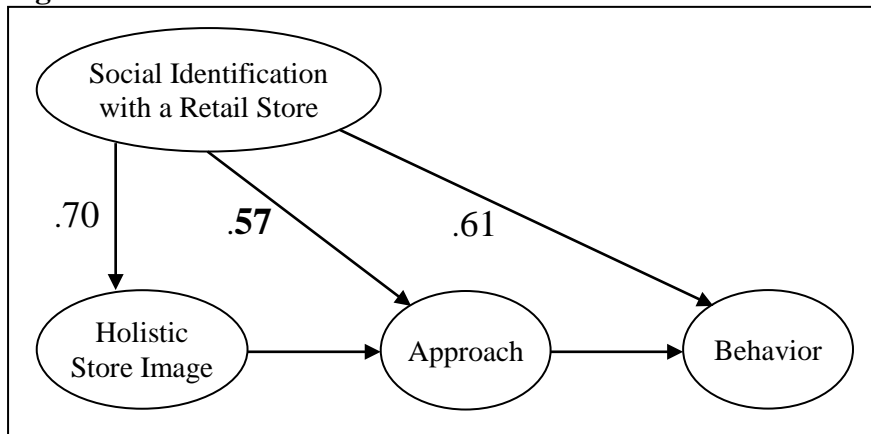
Moving on to H5, I predicted that identification with friends would moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and holistic store image. Again, I am now testing moderation for approach and behavior as well. As with consumer need for uniqueness, identification with friends moderates just one relationship. I find support for moderation of the relationship between social identification with a retail store and approach, with a chi-square difference of 11.01 ( $p < .01$ ). In this case, however, the relationship is stronger for girls with a lower level of identification with friends. This is opposite from my prediction.

Figures 10 and 11 show the betas for the two groups.

**Figure 10: High Identification with Friends**



**Figure 11: Low Identification with Friends**



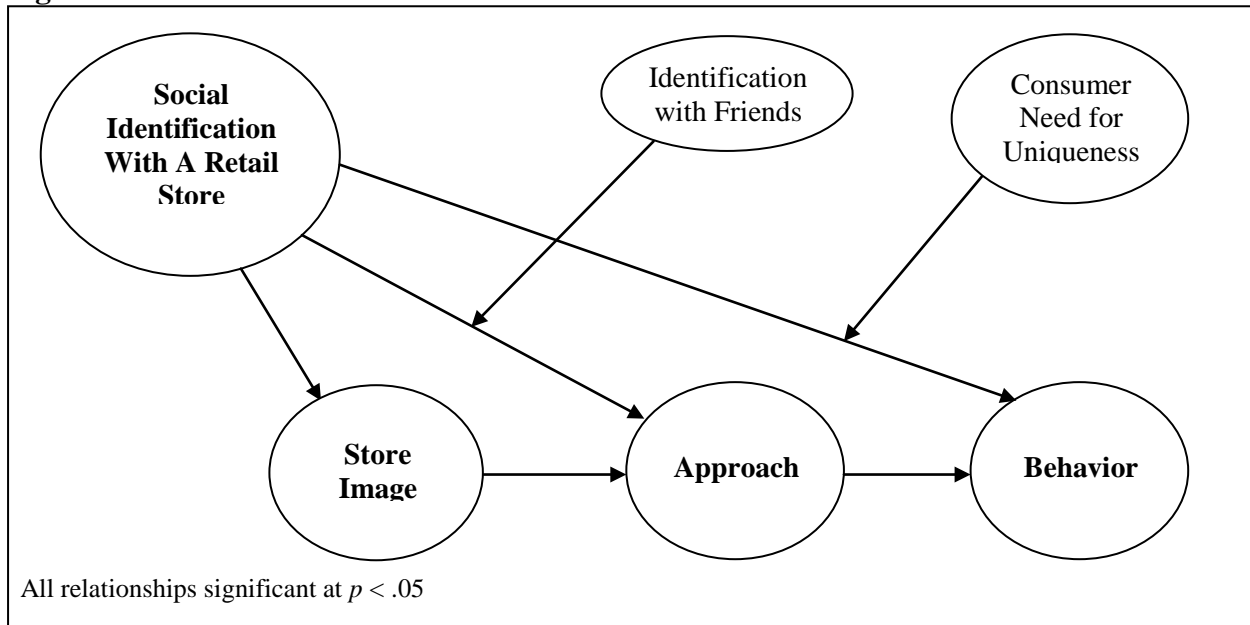
I originally conceptualized that a girl with high identification with friends derives her identity from friends and makes decisions that are similar to their friends. However, if I alter my perspective and view this variable as a representation of security in the relationship with friends, the modification I find in this analysis makes sense. Girls who are low in their identification may feel less secure about the friendships and therefore make decisions that seem in-line with the group as a means for gaining acceptance in the group. In this case, they seem to want to shop in the same stores that friends shop. Girls high in identification with friends are secure in these relationships and may not be as inclined to be in a retail environment simply because their friends approve.

The results do not provide support for moderation of the relationships between social identification with a retail store and holistic store image or behavior. Therefore, social identification with a retail store has the same influence on store image evaluation, whether a girl is high or low on identification with friends. Similarly, social identification with a retail store has the same influence on behavior for girls who are both high and low in identification with friends.

Although the results do not directly support my original hypotheses, it appears that consumer need for uniqueness and identification with friends reduce the influence of social identification with a retail store on behavior and approach, respectively (see Figure 11). Girls

with higher consumer need for uniqueness levels may be more likely to purchase and wear clothes from out-group stores, and girls with higher identification with friends may be more likely to want to shop in out-group stores. I discuss managerial and theoretical implications of these findings in the next section.

**Figure 11: Final Model**



## Discussion and Implications

### *Theoretical Implications*

*Store Image Processing.* One goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of how adolescents develop and use store image evaluations. This paper provides an interesting twist on store image formation and shopping behavior by bringing stereotype-related theory into the discussion. Based on qualitative and quantitative findings, store image evaluations stem from a holistic evaluation of the store based on group stereotypes. The process is in-line with social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner 1986) and involves categorization of the store into

a specific peer group, stereotyping (by transferring beliefs about the group to beliefs about the store), and finally discriminating against stores that are not part of the in-group.

Mitchell (2001) outlines a framework for store image processing in which consumers mentally organize store image data based on the four risk dimensions. The fact that in-group/out-group categorization directly influences store image evaluations lends support to this conceptualization but shows that adolescent girls rely heavily on psychosocial risk as they assess store image. Evaluations of merchandise, employees, and retail store affect were all closely related to each other and actually come together to form a one-dimensional measure of store image. This shows that adolescents do not seem to separate these different aspects of store image in their minds. This supports Mitchell's (2001) statement that "image is a consumer construction which simplifies complex information because consumers have limited motivation and cognitive capacity" (p. 167). This brings us back to the cognitive miser view of stereotyping (Fiske and Taylor 1991), in which people use stereotypes as a resource saving tool that enables them to make quick judgments when resources are low. Girls tend to be in a distracted state when they shop, and they therefore rely on peer group stereotypes to provide a simple way to limit psychosocial risk in the shopping situation.

*Social Identification.* Social identification with a retail store is a new variable that I developed specifically for this study. It captures the in-group/out-group portion of social identity theory in the context of retail stores. I based it on past marketing research examining the congruity between a retail store and an individual consumer (e.g. Parker 2009; Sirgy and Samli 1985). I use the psychological variable group identification (e.g. Hains et al. 1997, Hogg et al. 2006; Hogg and Hains 1996) as a basis for this measure.



Past marketing research demonstrates the importance of image congruity in store evaluation and store choice; however, the simplified measure I created in this study captures this concept in a more straightforward manner. Since this construct directly influences store image evaluations, desire to shop in a retail store, and shopping behavior of adolescent consumers, we can see that the adolescent population places an exaggerated emphasis on *social* identification of the store.

Social identification with a retail store further provides a nice alternative to measuring subjective norms when studying the theory of planned behavior in a retail context. While the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1985) does recognize that attitudes and subjective norms influence one another, qualitative interviews show that in-group/out-group categorization comes before attitude formation for adolescents. We know from these interviews and from past research that the peer group is especially important during adolescence (e.g. Gemelli 1996). We have also seen that girls form opinions about stores using peer group affiliation, even when they have not previously shopped in that store. Further, my qualitative study, along with past research (e.g. Wooten 2006), indicates that adolescents judge and are judged based on their clothing attire. Therefore, since I capture whether the store is part of the in-group or out-group, I essentially receive the same information I would get measuring subjective norms. The advantage is that social identification with a retail store measures at a different level of the process. Qualitative interviews revealed that categorization occurs before store evaluation. The quantitative model also supports this directionality.

*Moderating Variables.* Although I tested two potential moderating variables, neither one proved to moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and holistic store image. However, the data provide support for moderation in regards to approach and

behavior. It is interesting that social identification with a retail store seems to influence store image evaluations for girls high in consumer need for uniqueness just as much as it does for girls with low consumer need for uniqueness. This is consistent with social identity theory's view that people evaluate in-group members more positively than they evaluate out-group members. According to my findings, this is true even for girls who need to be somewhat different from the group. Consumer need for uniqueness only moderates the relationship between social identification with a retail store and behavior, and therefore does not change anything in regards to evaluations of the store. We know from past research that girls who are *fashion opinion leaders* within their group tend to have a higher level of consumer need for uniqueness (Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006; Goldsmith and Clark 2008). Therefore, it makes sense that *fashion opinion leaders* are more likely to shop in and own clothing from stores that could be considered out-group stores. They may not have high evaluations of these out-group stores and may not necessarily want to shop in them, but it is possible that their desire to be fashion leaders drives them to shop and purchase from these stores as a way of staying ahead of current fashions within their group.

In my examination of the second moderator, I find a significantly weaker relationship between social identification with a retail store and approach for girls who are high in identification with friends. I originally conceptualized this to moderate in the opposite direction, such that girls higher in identification with friends would act more similarly to the group. There are a few possible explanations for this finding. First, it is possible that girls with higher levels of identification with friends will likely feel more secure in these relationships and therefore shopping in some out-group stores (or not having a strong desire to shop in in-group stores) will not threaten their status within the group. Another explanation relies on Brewer's (1991) optimal

distinctiveness theory. Girls who have strong identification with the in-group may enjoy shopping in out-group stores (or may have a weaker desire to shop in-group stores) because it increases their feelings of differentiation. The close identification with friends may cause adolescents to feel overly assimilated, and the thought of shopping in some out-group stores may help achieve differentiation. Identification with friends does not moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and behavior; therefore, actual shopping and purchasing habits are not necessarily different from the low identification with friends group.

### ***Managerial Implications***

*The Importance of In-group Categorization.* I began to see interesting managerial implications during the qualitative phase of this study. First is the process of *store stereotyping*. Interviews revealed that girls regularly stereotype stores based on group membership. They go beyond simply choosing stores that seem to match their identity and evaluate all stores based on the stereotype of the affiliated group. Thus, it is very difficult to convince most adolescent girls to shop in a store they link with an undesirable out-group, since the out-group categorization of the store skews their initial evaluation.

The in-group/out-group categorization of a store determines whether girls evaluate a store positively or negatively, whether they perceive the store as a desirable place to shop, the amount of time girls spend in the store, and the amount of clothing girls purchase from the store. For girls who consider the store part of their in-group, this is actually beneficial to retailers. Girls tend to be a bit more forgiving to stores in their own group. They overlook small annoyances, such as unorganized clothes or annoying employees (both of which were discussed in qualitative interviews) and instead evaluate store image in a more holistic manner, which is positive in the

case of in-group shoppers. The downside, however, is that it is very difficult to get out-group members to change their opinion of the retail store.

Of course, these companies often target different groups intentionally (e.g., Hot Topic and Abercrombie market to a certain type of customer). However, with sales down across a good number of these stores, it may be beneficial for some retailers to branch out to different customer groups. For the fourth quarter of 2010, Pac Sun reported a loss of \$35 million, Hot Topic reported a loss of \$600,000, and Aeropostale reported sales down nearly \$13 million compared to one year ago (Poggi 2011). Therefore, even though they target a certain style group, if retailers expand to include other groups, sales may improve. Recent reports indicate that Hot Topic and Pac Sun are both struggling in these economic times. They focus primarily on Punk and Goth style groups rather than mainstream adolescents; therefore, if they can find a way to market these alternative styles to girls in a more mainstream group, they may get a financial boost. In fact, recent reports suggest that Hot Topic is planning to move away from its exclusive focus on Goth and Punk styles to focus more on popular culture (Poggi 2011).

With these issues in mind, I have a few suggestions that might help retailers achieve some diversification. First, from qualitative interviews, it is evident that some stores easily move between different style groups. Stores such as Forever 21 seem to cross group boundaries because they have a wide assortment of fashionable clothing and accessories within a variety of different styles. Once adolescents stereotype a retailer, that image will be difficult to change, but new retail stores can use this strategy to attract a wide customer base.

My research suggests that it is more important to avoid exclusion of desired style groups than to fit perfectly within any certain group. If a retailer wants to expand to include a wider range of styles, they must be careful to avoid alienating the current shoppers. They should avoid

aligning too closely with out-group styles. For example, if Hot Topic wants to expand their target market to include mainstream adolescents, they must make certain that current customers do not feel alienated in the process.

Additionally, only a small number of retail chains currently focus on the alternative style groups. While the mainstream style is present in many well-known retail chains (e.g. Abercrombie, American Eagle, Aeropostale, Hollister), the alternative market is much more limited. Although there are fewer girls in this category, this market can still be a good opportunity for retailers because there are fewer stores catering to the alternative style. The retailer Zumiez is a great example of success using this strategy. Although the company began as a single-store retailer in 1978, it has expanded in recent years, becoming a publicly traded company in 2005. Zumiez focuses primarily on the skater style, selling clothing, accessories, and skating equipment, and has outperformed other teen retailers in the past year (Poggi 2011).

*Fashion Opinion Leaders.* Retailers who want to expand their base should also consider targeting the fashion leaders within out-groups. In the qualitative study, the fashion leaders seemed to stray from strict peer group affiliation a little more than the rest. Therefore, one suggestion is to implement a marketing campaign that targets fashion opinion leaders without targeting a specific style group. This might pull some fashion leaders from out-groups into the store and would eventually trickle down to other out-group members.

Past research has shown that fashion opinion leadership is positively related to consumer need for uniqueness (Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006; Goldsmith and Clark 2008). The data did not support my prediction that consumer need for uniqueness would moderate the relationship between social identification with a retail store and store image evaluation. However, I did find support for moderation when it comes to behavior. This leads us me believe that fashion opinion

leaders (who would score higher on need for uniqueness) rely on in-group/out-group categorization in their evaluation of store image just as much as their peers, but they may choose to be a bit more independent in store patronage and purchasing decisions. Thus, if a retailer wants to expand their demographic, they must implement a change in perceived stereotypes among opinion leaders before it will trickle down to the rest of the style group.

Retailers can start by running ads in fashion magazines where they can target individuals with a high need for uniqueness. Since fashion leaders tend to read fashion magazines more than the average consumer, and have a more favorable opinion of media advertising (Vernette 2004), placing ads in prominent fashion magazines for this age group would be a smart strategy. Likewise, since research has shown that fashion opinion leaders have a higher need for uniqueness than the average consumer does (e.g. Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006; Goldsmith and Clark 2008), targeting that trait in the ad should help capture that specific demographic. Retailers can accomplish this by emphasizing unique aspects of the brand or by demonstrating how the brand might mix with popular styles to create a unique look.

Individual stores or malls could hold fashion shows at the beginning of each season and invite girls from all groups, especially the fashion leaders (and the moms), to preview new merchandise. They might additionally hold "wardrobe nights" to show the girls and moms how just one or two new pieces can mix and match with what they already own, or even with other styles. For example, a shopping mall might hold a fashion show where they demonstrate how clothes from Hot Topic could go with something bought at another store in the mall like Abercrombie or Hollister. These girls want to be in style, so retailers might also show pictures of their merchandise (or similar merchandise) in fashion magazines. Retailers could do this during a fashion show or even by having these magazines available near benches in the fitting area. The

retail boutique Private Gallery, for example, has all of the photos from Lucky and other magazines that feature merchandise sold in their store.

We can also transfer some of the research on stereotype change to a retail setting. One strategy for eliciting stereotype change is through social recategorization (Dovidio et. al, 1997; Gaertner et. al, 1989). The basic premise is that if members of two separate groups can come to view themselves as a single group, intergroup bias will decrease. Thus, retail managers can work to find common ground among differing style groups that they might be able to use to bring shoppers out of their chosen style identity and into a broader identity as they shop. One example of this is Hot Topic's sales of Twilight Saga merchandise. This merchandise appeals to many Goth style customers, but they can also sell it to Twilight fans across other style groups. In this situation, a girl might think of herself as a Twilight fan rather than focusing on her normally Preppy style, and she may shop in Hot Topic for merchandise that supports this part of her identity. Retailers can target *fashion opinion leaders* from various groups to help them stop thinking like a member of their own style group and start thinking like a member of the fashion leader group. This could encourage girls to shop in new stores, since they are thinking of their identity separate from that of their usual style group. Retailers could also promote a local middle school or high school to remind consumers of the common identity they share as schoolmates and potentially attract members of that group into the store who would not otherwise shop there.

On an individual basis, if retail employees see someone walk into the store that seems to be part of a different peer group than the typical customer, they should try to make her feel comfortable in the setting. Interviews showed that employees were sometimes unwelcoming to customers who did not match with the typical style of the store. The employee's behavior seemed to drive these girls out of the store. Once a person experiences something that is

consistent with the stereotype of a store, their perceptions are reinforced and the negative stereotype gains strength. Retailers should train employees how to read customers and adapt their selling approach to the individual. This would be especially helpful for keeping new shoppers once they decide to try shopping in the store. Research has shown that an experience that contradicts the stereotype will cause a person to rethink the situation. In some situations, it may alter their beliefs about the stereotyped group as a whole (e.g. Garcia-Marques and Mackie 1999). If a girl ventures into a store she perceives as an out-group store but receives a welcome that she did not expect, she may then rethink her previous perceptions of the store, and possibly the group as a whole.

### *Limitations*

As with any research project, there are limitations of this study that I must address. First, I found participants for the qualitative portion of the study by asking people that I knew to participate or recommend participants for the study. Thus, the sampling method may have caused some bias. However, I did obtain representation across the adolescent age group and across different style groups in an attempt to capture a broad spectrum of viewpoints. While I have representation from girls of different races and style groups, there is a bias towards white and mainstream adolescents in all samples. One way in which I tried to reach out to the more alternative style groups was by conducting surveys in front of Pac-Sun, which seems to attract more of a Punk style group. I attempted to set-up in front of Hot Topic but the retail store denied me access. I also recruited in front of Forever 21 since they attract a variety of style groups. However, the mere fact that girls in the alternative style groups (e.g. Punk, Emo, Goth) do not conform to the mainstream may have made them less likely to complete the survey in the first place. Many members of these groups seemed to avoid my survey table.



Second, the sample size for the pretest and the main study was small, compared to other studies commonly seen in the marketing literature. This is due largely to the target population and the sampling method. Since I collected surveys in malls and it was necessary to have parental consent for all individuals under 19, many girls who wished to participate could not because a parent was not present. Although I offered a take-home survey to account for this issue, most adolescent girls did not seem motivated enough to take the survey home, obtain consent, fill it out, mail it back, and wait for their gift card. In the future, internet panel data may be a better alternative to obtain a larger sample size across a larger demographic region.

Third, single source and common method bias could also be an issue since girls answered questions related to attitude, intent, and behavior all in the same survey instrument. Obtaining data over a longer period of time or from two different sources (such as linking self-report data with loyalty card transactions) would eliminate this problem. One issue I encountered in attempting to work with the larger retail chains was that they were very reluctant to give away any of their customer information. Therefore, recruiting in these stores would require some connections in the retail world, which I did not have. I could have obtained this type of information from some smaller boutiques; however, this would have limited the type of shopper I was able to examine. Therefore, I feel that capturing all the necessary information in a single survey was worth the trade-off.

### ***Future Research***

Evaluations of social identification with a retail store across different age groups and across both genders would definitely help to advance this research stream. It would be interesting to see if social identification with a retail store would have the same effects among adult shoppers or even among male adolescents. Additionally, it would be interesting to study how

early all of this really begins. Recent articles in the popular press suggest that girls start to care about clothing and brands sometimes at the age of four or five (Diskin 2011; Wellington 2011). Many popular brands such as J.Crew, Ralph Lauren, and Gucci also provide lines for children (Wellington 2011). At that young age, it could simply be parents driving their children to care about this topic, but this area needs further investigation.

It would also be interesting to study price perceptions among adolescent consumers. Although girls are aware of retailers' price points and were able to discuss price issues in the pilot study, the price dimension of store image did not relate to outcome variables in the pretest study. Additional research on this topic would provide a better explanation of how adolescents perceive price, especially since we know that parents often pay for the merchandise bought for adolescents. The outcome variables I measured were share of time and share of closet. It makes sense that price is not necessarily related to time since girls can spend time shopping in a store without having to spend money. However, it seems logical that perceptions of the store's price would have influenced share of closet, such that girls would have fewer clothes from stores that are more expensive. If price does not influence the percentage of clothes that girls own from a particular store, it would be interesting to see why that is. Do girls buy fewer items when they like to shop in stores that are more expensive? Do they disregard price because they are often spending their parents' money? Do girls who cannot afford merchandise from a certain store form negative views of the store because they cannot afford to shop there?

Finally, it would be beneficial to see more examples of adolescents who have actually switched their perceptions of a store from out-group to in-group categorization and vice versa. With greater understanding, researchers could outline steps of stereotype switching or stereotype weakening when it comes to retail stores. Again, the retailer would probably not want to target

an entirely different group but would rather want to be inclusive of more style groups. A system for gradual inclusion of more style groups, without alienating current customers, would be valuable information for retailers and would help overcome some of the negative implications of the store stereotyping process.

### Appendix: Sample Profile from the Pilot Study

<b>Girl</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Education Cohort</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Social Identity</b>
Ashley	12	6	Middle School	White	Prep, Casual
Anna	12	6	Middle School	White	Prep, Casual
Julie	12	6	Middle School	Asian	Goth/Emo
Tara	12	6	Middle School	White	Goth/Emo
Cindy	13	8	Middle School	White	Punk
Kacey	13	8	Middle School	White	Punk
Linda	13	8	Middle School	Black	Punk
Ally	13	8	Middle School	White	Punk
Krista	14	8	Middle School	White	Prep
Jessie	14	8	Middle School	White	Prep
Amy	14	8	Middle School	White	Casual
Hannah	13	8	Middle School	White	Prep
Mary	16	11	High School	White	Prep
Abby	14	8	Middle School	White	Prep
Lisa	14	8	Middle School	White	Prep, Punk
Shea	17	11	High School	White	Prep, Punk
Cally	16	11	High School	White	Casual
Melissa	17	11	High School	White	Prep, Casual
Sarina	17	11	High School	White	Prep, Casual
Lily	17	11	High School	White	Prep, Casual
Beth	17	11	High School	White	Prep
Shanda	17	12	High School	Black	Casual
Jenna	17	12	High School	White	Prep, Casual
Karissa	17	12	High School	White	Prep, Casual
Andrea	17	11	High School	Black	Prep, Hip-hop
Kendra	18	12	High School	Black	Prep, Hip-hop
Victoria	18	12	High School	White	Prep, Casual
Leigh	18	Freshman	College	Black	Prep, Casual
Natalie	19	Freshman	College	White	Prep, Casual
Elise	18	Freshman	College	White	Prep, Punk
Kristen	19	Freshman	College	White	Prep
Shauna	18	Freshman	College	Black	Prep, Casual
Kathryn	19	Freshman	College	White	Prep
Whitney	19	Sophomore	College	White	Casual
Kate	19	Sophomore	College	Hispanic	Hip-hop
Trisha	19	Sophomore	College	Black	Prep, Hip-hop
Michelle	19	Sophomore	College	White	Prep, Casual

- Pseudo-names are used for all interview participants.
- Lines and shading show when girls were interviewed alone or in groups.
- Some girls provide their style group categorization, but I also had to assess some on my own, based on the description of their style they provided. Girls with only one style group listed dress in that style all the time, whereas girls with two style groups listed might dress in some combination of the two styles or alternate between styles depending on her mood or the situation.

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### CHAPTER 3: BONDING, BICKERING, AND BUYING: MOTHER-DAUGHTER SHOPPING IN THE ADOLESCENT YEARS

“It’s torture... It is a chore for me to have to go and shop with her.”  
~Susan, mother of a 13-year-old girl

“It’s fun! We get to spend a lot of quality time together.”  
~Patty, mother of a 14-year-old girl

These two quotes highlight the varying attitudes associated with mother-daughter shopping trips. Some love it; some hate it. It is easy to see both the bonding and the bickering if you observe moms and daughters shopping together. However, the impact of these attitudes and everything that goes along with them is not quite as straightforward.

Research on shopping companions is limited in marketing research, but it has shown that an adolescent’s shopping companion can influence many factors in the shopping experience (Haytko and Baker 2004). While some research has looked closely at how adolescents shop with friends (Haytko and Baker 2004; Mangleburg Doney and Bristol 2004; Tootelian and Gaedeke 1992), researchers have not provided a thorough examination of shopping trips made with their parents. Haytko and Baker (2004) emphasize the importance of the shopping companion during shopping trips. Their interviews revealed that the shopping companion influences everything from the shopping location to the length of the trip and items purchased. They found that adolescent girls view shopping with friends as a fun, social experience while shopping with mom is an opportunity to make a purchase. Kiecker and Hartman’s (1994) research showed that shopping companions could serve as *purchase pals* when they provide knowledge, assistance, and moral support during a shopping trip.

We know that parents and adolescents influence one another when it comes to consumption activities. The consumer socialization literature shows that parents have a role in helping their children learn how to shop (e.g. Moschis and Churchill 1979; Churchill and Moschis 1978). Several studies have also looked at how adolescents influence purchases made for the household, especially those items that are bought for the adolescent's use (e.g. Beatty and Talpade 1994; Wang et al. 2007). There is also research on the strategies both parties use in their attempts to influence one another (e.g. Palan and Wilkes 1997; Shoham and Dalakas 2006), but this literature stream does not describe the outcomes of the negotiation process in regards to the shopping trip itself.

Considering this past research, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to mother-daughter shopping trips and the experience of both parties involved. Although past researchers have investigated parents' role in consumer socialization and adolescents' influence in family decision-making, the discussion related to the shopping trip itself is limited mostly to speculation. We do not know what occurs in the mother-daughter shopping trip or the factors that influence the overall experience and shopping outcomes. In their research, Haytko and Baker (2004) uncovered issues that ultimately influence adolescent girls' shopping behavior, but they do not discuss how the mothers' preferences and opinions affect shopping outcomes. However, they do call for further investigation into the mother-daughter mall trip, noting that this could help retailers more effectively market to both adolescent girls and their moms.

The combination of adolescent and parent is important to marketers because adolescents get to make purchases when shopping with parents, not with friends (Haytko and Baker 2004). In the United States, the adolescent population accounts for about \$200 billion out of the total \$2.3 trillion in annual retail sales (EPM Communications 2010; National Retail Federation, nrf.com).

Analysts estimate that teens spend about \$80 billion of their own money each year, and parents spend another \$110 billion on their teenage children (Packaged Facts, June 2007).

In this study, I focus on shopping for clothing and accessories. These shopping categories came up most often in my initial interviews and are items that teen girls enjoy shopping for most (Tootelian and Gaedeke 1992). Further, teens spend approximately 40 percent of their budget in this merchandise category (PR Newswire 2007). Another interesting aspect of mother-daughter shopping is that when mom is making a purchase for her daughter, she may be giving up something that she could have purchased for herself. The Piper Jaffray & Co. study (PR Newswire 2007) showed an increase in parents' apparel purchases for their teens but a decrease in parents' apparel purchases for themselves, suggesting that parents are spending more money on their teens, rather than themselves. This sacrifice further demonstrates the importance of the adolescent market segment.

Given the impact of this market segment, the intricacies of the mother-daughter dyad, and the fact that we know very little about what actually goes on during their shopping trips, this area of research needs further examination. This paper provides a phenomenological examination of the mother-daughter shopping trip. Phenomenological research "aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (van Manen 1990, p.9). I will examine what the shopping experience is like for mothers and daughters and what it really means to all parties involved. I further identify factors that influence retailing outcomes of the shopping trip.

## Conceptual Background

A few papers in the marketing literature explore the topic of mother-daughter shopping (e.g. Haytko and Baker 2004; Kiecker and Hartman 1994). However, none of them has fully captured what this shopping trip means in the life of an adolescent girl and her mom. This section will cover some of the past work in this area as well as point out the gaps in these literature streams.

### *Adolescence*

It is important to understand some basic aspects of the adolescent stage of development before getting into the specific topic at hand. Adolescence is a period of change through which children ultimately become adults. Although adolescents are still quite dependent on parents, they are very reluctant to admit it during this stage. Adolescents are going through a process of separating themselves from their parents and forming identities of their own (Gemelli 1996). Generational conflict is a normal part of adolescence and identity formation. Adolescents start to question everything parents have told them, and arguments arise as they verbally challenge their parents' ideas and ideals (Gemelli 1996). The peer group also gains importance during this time; they provide advice and help adolescents shape opinions as they develop an identity of their own.

The adolescent-parent relationship changes as a girl progresses through this stage of development. While the exact breakout of early, middle, and late adolescence varies depending on the study, differences can generally be found between those in early adolescence (ages 12 to 15) versus those in late adolescence (ages 16 to 19). Much of the conflict and chaos comes in the early stage of adolescence when the separation process begins (Gemelli 1996; Laursen, Coy, and Collins 1998). Girls still idolize parents during this stage, so disagreements with parents seem devastating to those in early adolescence. Then, in late adolescence as teens start to approach

adulthood, conflicts lessen and lose importance (Gemelli 1996). Adolescents stop idolizing parents, they lower their expectations of their parents, and conflicts are not as much of an issue.

In regards to an adolescent's relationship with her parents, adolescence is a time of alternating intimacy and hate (Riera 2003). As part of the separation process, parent-adolescent conflict is an integral part of identity formation during this developmental stage. Research has shown that conflicts are more common between mothers and daughters than between all other parent-adolescent combinations (e.g. Hill 1988; Montemayor 1986; Paikoff and Brooks-Gunn 1991; Collins and Russell 1991). Furthermore, appearance and financial issues have been shown to be common areas in which conflicts tend to arise (e.g. Galambos and Almeida 1992; Smetana 1989). Renk et al. (2005) found that the sources of conflict between parents and adolescents vary by gender of the parent and gender of the adolescent. In regards to mothers and daughters, household rules and responsibilities were the most frequently reported conflicts, followed by separation-individuation. The adolescent's allowance is one issue that falls into the household rules and responsibilities category. Trying to separate oneself from parents (through their choice in clothes and appearance) falls into the separation-individuation category. Thus, when mother and daughter come together to spend money on items directly tied to an adolescent's appearance, conflicts are likely to occur.

### ***Shopping Companions***

Adolescents do not typically shop alone. Tootelian and Gaedeke (1992) found that only eleven percent of their sample of high school students usually shopped alone. Haytko and Baker (2004) found that college girls were the only cohort within their sample that shopped alone. Thus, a majority of adolescents' shopping trips occur with other people. Haytko and Baker (2004) found that "the shopping companion influenced everything from which mall was visited,

to how long the stay lasted, to what, if anything, was purchased” (p.76). Middle school girls are quite dependent on parents or other family members to get them to the mall, whereas high school and college girls can usually drive themselves or have a friend drive them. Consequently, shopping with a parent was more common for middle school girls than for high school or college girls in the Haytko and Baker (2004) study.

Kiecker and Hartman’s (1994) research on purchase pals identified mothers and daughters as companions who have close ties. *Purchase pals* with *close ties* should be able to provide advice and moral support as a shopper decides what to purchase. Parent-adolescent shopping is different than shopping with other companions because parents are usually paying for the items bought by adolescents. Parents not only suggest items for the adolescent to purchase, but they also must approve of items in order for the purchase to be possible. Haytko and Baker (2004) found that middle school girls in particular made purchases primarily with parents. High school and college girls did make purchases with friends and on their own, but having a parent on the trip increased purchases made for all adolescents. Furthermore, it seems common for adolescent girls to shop with friends in order to find the items they want but wait to make purchases when they bring a parent back to the mall.

### ***Socialization Agents***

Consumer socialization is “the process by which young people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Moschis and Churchill 1978). Several different socialization agents have been studied in the literature, including parents, peers, school, and mass media.

From the parents’ perspective, shopping is a teaching opportunity. “While we shop, we talk to our children about how to discern the differences between products, how to respond to the sales clerks’ deference or disdain, how to weigh alternative choices, and how to live with a



decision” (Zukin 2005, p.30). One qualitative study with adolescents found that six out of ten adolescents learned how to shop at the mall primarily from their parents (Lueg and Ponder 2006). The other four simply could not remember how the learning process occurred. This demonstrates that the learning process probably occurs years before adolescence. A quantitative study on the same subject matter found that current family communication did not have much of an impact on adolescents’ shopping habits (Lueg et al. 2006). While family communication had an influence on an adolescent’s time spent shopping, it does not relate to the money they spent at the mall or their future intentions to shop/make purchases at the mall. Thus, it seems that parents are the ones who initially teach children how to shop, but influence comes largely from peers in the adolescent years.

Noble, Haytko, and Phillips (2009) found that Generation Y consumers are attempting to use the tools and knowledge given to them by parents while at the same time attempting to find their independence through consumption practices. This seems to sum up what is going on during adolescence. While children initially learn from parents, adolescents use information learned in the past and incorporate new things they are learning from friends and other socialization agents.

### ***Adolescent Influence***

In addition to analyzing how family influences the adolescent, research has also examined how the adolescent influences family decision-making. Beatty and Talpade (1994) found that teens had more influence in purchases made for their personal use when the product category was more important to them. The influence of adolescents overall is more prevalent now than in previous decades (Wang et al. 2007).

While adolescents do have an influence in family purchases, it is not necessarily an easy process. Conflict often occurs between parents and their children, stemming from different priorities in the decision making process. To prevent conflicts and deal with conflicts when they arise, adolescents have specific bargaining, persuasion, and emotional strategies they use to try to convince parents to yield to their wishes (Palan and Wilkes 1997). Research has shown that parents yield to adolescents' requests least often when emotional strategies, such as begging, whining, anger, and shouting are used (Palan and Wilkes 1997; Shoham and Dalakas 2006). On the other hand, parents yield more often to rational tactics, such as making direct requests and negotiating with logical arguments compared to emotional strategies. Consequently, adolescents use rational tactics more often in their attempts to persuade parents (Shoham and Dalakas 2006). The same is true for parental influence as well. Parents who use rational tactics are more successful than those who get angry, shout, or even ignore their adolescent children (Palan and Wilkes 1997).

Each of these different literature streams covers a portion of the mother-daughter shopping trip. Haytko and Baker (2004) emphasize the importance of the shopping companion as a key driver of the shopping location, time spent, and purchases made while shopping. They particularly mention that adolescents purchase more when shopping with parents than they do when with friends. Kiecker and Hartman (1994) show us that mothers and daughters can provide moral support and decision-making assistance during a shopping trip. Shoham and Dalakas (2006) show us strategies used by both adolescents and parents in an attempt to influence one another, finding that logical arguments are most effective for both parties. However, we do not know how all of these aspects of shopping might interact during the mother-daughter shopping trip. This study aims to fill that gap by providing a holistic view of the trip.

## Research Objectives

Four primary objectives guide this study. The first is to explore the mother-daughter shopping trip from a phenomenological perspective in order to understand what both parties experience as they shop. Thus, I intend to get at the deeper issues that exist and the underlying reasons why mothers and daughters have positive or negative experiences during the trip.

The second objective is to explore similarities and differences between mothers' and daughters' perceptions of the shopping trip and the benefits they experience from the trip. Although mothers and daughters experience the trip together, it is likely that they have differing views and opinions about what is going on during the trip. This study will attempt to uncover some of those issues.

The third objective is to identify the shopping goals of each party when shopping together as well as strategies used to achieve these goals. I will attempt to understand whether mom and daughter simply have one goal of making purchases or whether there are other things motivating them to shop together. Again, we will look to see if these goals coincide with one another or if they are conflicting, such that one of the shoppers will not be able to achieve her goal.

The final objective is to identify factors during the trip that influence the retailing outcomes of the mother-daughter shopping trip. Specifically, I will look to see how attitudes toward shopping and experiences during the trip influence mothers' and daughters' purchases and satisfaction with retail stores.

## Methodology

Throughout the data collection stage, I worked closely with my two advisors, discussing findings from completed interviews in order to guide the direction of future interviews. We approached this topic from a grounded theory perspective, entering without any preconceived theories in mind and following the methods of Corbin and Strauss (2007). We used snowball sampling to recruit research participants. We obtained interviews with adolescent girls between the ages of 12-19, mothers of adolescent girls, and retail employees working in teen-focused retail stores or teen departments of larger department stores. The use of participants from these three different vantage points in the mother-daughter shopping situation provided a thorough examination of the topic area.

As suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2007), theoretical sampling guided the recruitment of participants. As we went along through the process, we identified sampling areas that needed to be filled and found participants based on these criteria. I first interviewed adolescent girls, to attempt to understand differences between their experiences shopping with friends versus shopping with mom. After talking with them, we came to realize that we needed multiple perspectives on this shopping dyad, and thus moved on to interview mothers of adolescent girls as well as retail employees who work with mother-daughter shoppers. The initial interviews with adolescent girls also lacked representation of late adolescents, particularly college students. Thus, we recruited a few more girls that fit into this age group. Thirty-five adolescent girls, 20 mothers of adolescent girls, and eight retail employees participated in this study. A detailed description of the final sample is available in the Appendix.

Interviews took place in a variety of locations decided upon by the participants and the interviewer. Many of the interviews with adolescent girls took place in mall settings with groups of two, three, or four girls. The setting helped to stimulate the girls' thinking on shopping, while interviewing friends together provided a comfortable situation in which they could talk to each other about shopping. Since this could also create some pressure to answer questions in a way their friends might approve of, I also conducted some interviews in a one-on-one setting.

Eight interviews gained the perspective of both mother and daughter simultaneously. These focused primarily on the mom's point-of-view, with additional insights provided by the daughter. I obtained the perspectives of three more mother-daughter pairs by interviewing mom and daughter separately. This allowed us to compare and contrast interviews in order to see any differences that might have emerged within each pair. Students in a graduate marketing class conducted 15 of the 20 interviews with mothers. These students received training on how to conduct depth interviews prior to the assignment and received certification from the university's internal review board to participate in this research.

Finally, the interviews with retail employees took place primarily within the stores where they worked, while the employee was working, but during a slow point in the day. These interviews were brief compared to interviews with mothers and daughters and lasted approximately 15 minutes. The main goal of the retail employee interviews was to verify the information from mothers and daughters and to make sure mothers and daughters did not omit any major factors in the shopping experience.

Adolescent girls received a small incentive for participation. Many received ice cream or a snack while being interviewed. Others received \$5 to \$10 gift cards to stores located within the mall. Most of the mothers did not receive any type of incentive for participating. Since the

graduate students that assisted were recruiting as part of a class project, they were able to find participants to do the interviews without monetary incentive. A few of the mothers I interviewed received ice cream during the interview, along with their daughters. Retail employees did not receive any incentive for participation.

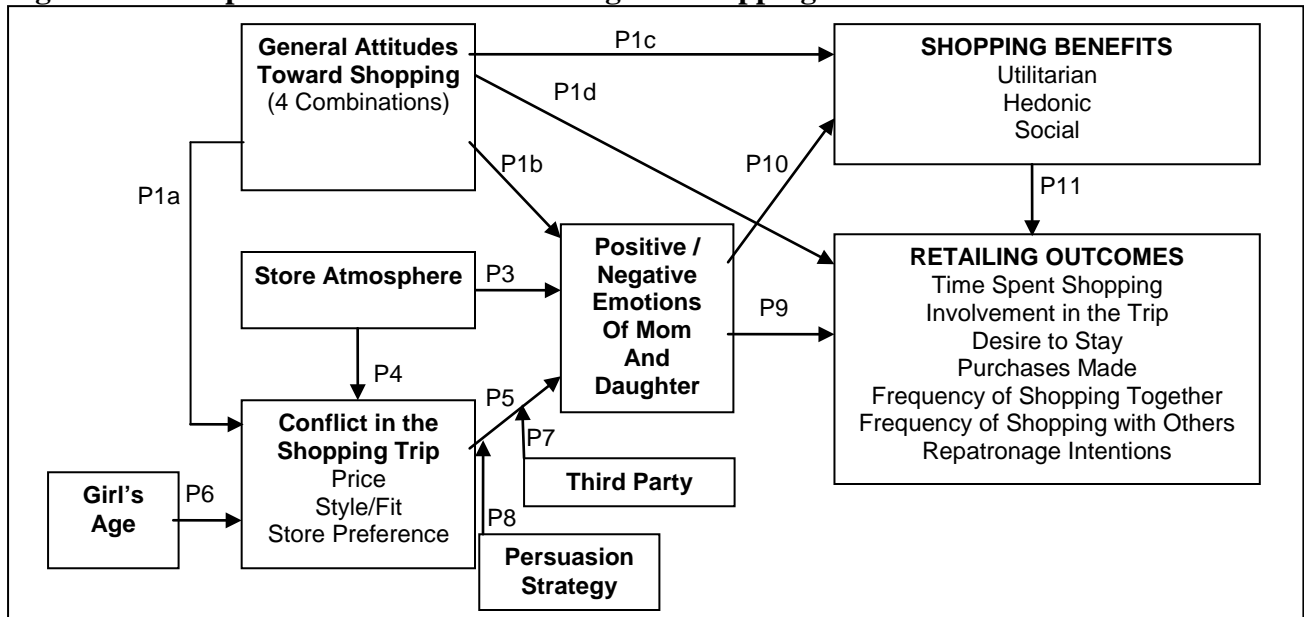
Each interviewer created a memo upon completion of the interview. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed. I read the memos and interviews, along with my two primary advisors, to look for concepts and themes that emerged and to help guide theoretical sampling. We held meetings periodically to discuss findings and identify areas that needed further research. Upon completion of all interviews, we each generated a list of concepts and possible themes. We then met together to discuss these findings, sort through concepts, and group them together to arrive at the themes outlined in the following section.

### **Findings/Themes**

I chose the themes in this section because they appeared frequently in our analysis of the qualitative interviews. Furthermore, at least two of the three researchers identified them independently before we met as a group. These themes also appear to be the most influential areas in regards to retail outcomes of the joint shopping trip. The primary differences among shopping pairs are due to the emotions they experience during the trip. Some mothers love shopping with their daughters and experience excitement and joy when shopping together. Others dread the trip, experiencing both anger and annoyance as they shop. In order to understand why positive or negative emotions occur, I first look at the antecedents of these emotions during the trip.

One of the main findings is that the match-up of mother's and daughter's attitudes toward shopping seems to directly influence conflicts experienced, shopping emotions, benefits perceived by mother and daughter, and retailing outcomes. Store atmosphere and conflict between mother and daughter also influence emotions experienced during the shopping trip, which in turn influence perceived benefits and retailing outcomes. Finally, the type of influence strategy used as well as the inclusion of a third party member such as the girl's father, an older sister, or even a retail employee, often have the ability to minimize negative emotions that stem from mother-daughter conflict, allowing for a more pleasant shopping experience and more positive outcomes for the retailer. I rely on balance theory as the theoretical framework that explains much of what occurs during the joint shopping trip. The proposed conceptual model shown in Figure 1 helps to explain our findings. This model represents an individual shopper's perspective but is applicable to either the mother or daughter on the shopping trip. In some places, we expect relationships to be stronger for mothers than for daughters. I elaborate upon this throughout the discussion.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Mother-Daughter Shopping**



***Match-up of Shopping Attitudes has a Large Influence***

The match-up of mom’s and daughter’s general attitudes toward shopping has a major influence on shopping tendencies as well as shopping enjoyment experienced during a specific shopping trip. Qualitative interviews describe the four combinations related to mom and daughter’s general attitudes toward shopping: (1) mom and daughter both love to shop, (2) mom dislikes shopping but daughter loves it, (3) daughter dislikes shopping but mom loves it, and (4) both dislike shopping. These four combinations seem to have a direct impact on several outcome variables, such as shopping enjoyment during the trip, frequency of shopping together, and purchases made when together versus with other shopping companions. Figure 2 provides an overview of the shopping habits that characterize each group.

**Figure 2: Shopping Scenarios based on Match-up of Shopping Attitudes**

	<b>Mom likes shopping</b>	<b>Mom dislikes shopping</b>
<b>Daughter likes shopping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Frequent shopping together and frequent shopping apart</li> <li>· Long shopping trips</li> <li>· High shopping enjoyment during trips</li> <li>· Mom and daughter bond while shopping</li> <li>· Mom and daughter act as purchase pals, helping one another</li> <li>· Daughter learns to be a competent shopper because she is interested in the activity and has guidance from mom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Infrequent shopping together, daughter shops more with friends or alone if possible.</li> <li>· Neither is likely to enjoy the experience since attitudes towards shopping differ</li> <li>· Daughter learns to shop for herself at a young age out of necessity</li> <li>· Mom gives daughter spending money to go out and make purchases on her own</li> </ul>
<b>Daughter dislikes shopping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Mom is likely to buy things for her daughter when daughter is not on the shopping trip</li> <li>· Neither is likely to enjoy the experience since attitudes towards shopping differ</li> <li>· Mom may have a struggle trying to get her daughter to wear the things she wants her to.</li> <li>· Daughter does not learn to be a competent shopper until later because she doesn’t care to learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Very infrequent shopping trips</li> <li>· Mom and daughter want the trip to be as short as possible</li> <li>· Shopping enjoyment during the trip will be low</li> <li>· Daughter does not gain shopping competence until later due to infrequency of shopping trips, she may also get more guidance from friends than from mom during the learning process.</li> <li>· Bond over their hatred of shopping</li> </ul>



Previous literature has described this general attitude toward shopping as shopping enjoyment, or the pleasure one obtains in the shopping process. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) found that shopping enjoyment leads to positive affect, which ultimately leads to impulse purchases when shopping. Similarly, Wakefield and Baker (1998) found that a consumer's involvement with shopping relates to excitement, repatronage intention, and desire to stay in a mall. Recreational shoppers enjoy the shopping experience and view shopping as a leisure activity (Bellenger and Korgaonker 1980; Westbrook and Black 1985; Guiry, Magi, and Lutz 2006). These people shop because they love to and also shop more frequently and spend more than the average consumer spends. Taking these ideas a step further, research on shopper typologies has examined different types of shoppers, including apathetic shoppers, enthusiasts, destination shoppers, basic shoppers, and bargain seekers (Ganesh, Reynolds, and Lockett 2007).

We now look at how each of these scenarios specifically influences shopping outcomes for the mother-daughter pairs. In the first scenario, both mom and daughter like shopping in general. They shop together frequently and for extended amounts of time. Both have fun and see this as an opportunity to further bond together. The daughter learns a lot from mom since both are very interested and involved in the process. Although conflicts may arise, they do not tend to be due to fundamental differences in shopping style or even store or merchandise preferences. Some participants in this group seemed to think conflicts arise because mom and daughter are so much alike. The following quotes demonstrate Scenario 1:

“I enjoy it very much. It is our time together; we enjoy it... A couple weeks ago, we spent the night at the hotel in the mall, in the Galleria... We shopped all day outside the mall, then all night to 9 p.m. inside the mall. And the next day we went around (town) to the different shops there.”

-Doris, Mother of Alice (14)

“We're big shoppers. My whole family, except for my dad, we're big shoppers... It's usually like an all-day thing.” -Mary (16)

In the second scenario, the daughter likes shopping, but mom does not. This scenario lends itself to a daughter who usually makes some purchases when she is shopping with friends. Compared to girls in the Scenarios 3 and 4, she may also be more self-sufficient and competent as a shopper, even at a young age. The learning process will be different from girls in Scenario 1 since the daughter will learn more by simply taking initiative and making purchases herself, rather than having a lot of guidance from mom. Furthermore, when mom does not like to shop in general, it seems that she is more easily aggravated and more likely to have conflicts with her daughter's clothing and store preferences. When mom does not like to shop but her daughter does, the daughter will often want to spend a lot of time trying on different things and going to different stores, which will conflict with mom's preference to get in and out. The mom in this next quote provides a good example for this scenario.

“I personally don't like to shop much and so a usual shopping trip with them is about thirty minutes. Either we find what we are looking for, or we don't because I get worn out shopping and we go home... With Jordan, the shopping trips are sometimes aggravating because she wants to try on all kinds of things that she knows I am not going to buy anyway... It is just wasting my time, and I don't like to shop”  
-Liz, mother of Jordan (17)

In the third scenario, mom likes to shop but the daughter does not. In this scenario, mom usually drags her daughter along. It is usually a struggle to get the daughter to wear the things mom wants her to wear. Mom may also buy things on her own for her daughter to wear since the daughter does not like to go shopping. Although mom is there to provide a lot of guidance in learning to shop, the daughter will likely not be receptive to her mother's knowledge since she is not interested in shopping. The daughter in this scenario is more likely to cause conflicts since mom is guiding the way and daughter is resisting having to spend time shopping in different stores. This scenario may also be a source of disappointment for the mother, as illustrated in the next quote.

“I always thought it probably would (be a social experience to shop with my daughter) because I’ve been a shopper my whole life - a bargain hunter, shopper, just looking - But she never turned out that way. She was just not really ever that interested in shopping.”  
-Jill, mother of Martha (18)

In the fourth scenario, neither likes shopping. Moms and daughters in this group do not shop often, either together or alone. The daughter is usually not heavily interested in fashion and probably prefers to wear a casual, comfortable clothing style. The daughter may also rely a lot on friends or an older sister when a purchase is necessary, rather than turning to mom. One interesting benefit may stem from this combination. Although mom and daughter both dislike the shopping experience, they may bond over this shared negative attitude toward shopping.

“I pretty much only shop when I have to, when I need to get something for a special occasion... I usually go with my (older) sister, that way she can pick the stuff out and pay for it. (My mom) doesn’t like the same things I like. She gets tired after like ten minutes so there’s really no point since we have to leave right after we get there and she doesn’t really like to spend any money anyway. So I try not to go with her.”  
-Linda (16)

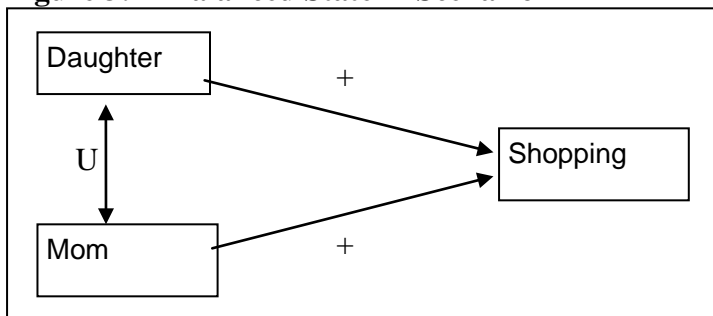
Based on these findings, we propose that the match-up of mother and daughter’s attitudes toward shopping influences almost every aspect of the mother-daughter trip. The number of conflicts experienced during the trip, emotions experienced during the trip, and benefits perceived by both parties will all vary based on this match-up. Retail outcomes such as the frequency of shopping together, shopping enjoyment experienced when shopping together, duration of shopping trips, and purchases made can also be altered by the match-up of shopping attitudes. Thus, it is important to examine the shopping attitudes/enjoyment of both shoppers on a trip to understand how this variable will influence shopping outcomes.

Proposition 1: Match-up of mom and daughter’s attitudes towards shopping will influence (a) conflicts experienced during the trip, (b) emotions experienced during the trip, (c) shopping benefits perceived by mother and daughter, and (d) retailing outcomes

After looking into different psychological theories, Heider's (1958) balance theory provides a good explanation of the variations within these shopping situations. Balance theory examines the relationships between three entities: one person of interest, one other person, and one object. The balance comes from the perspective of the person of interest. That person will have positive or negative sentiment toward the other person, she will have positive or negative sentiment toward an object, and the other person will have either positive or negative sentiment toward the object. Furthermore, when a person perceives that people, actions, or objects belong together, she will categorize that as a unit relationship (U). The unit relationship is treated the same as a positive sign. A person reaches a balanced state when all three relationships are positive or when only one relationship is positive but the other two are negative.

Using an adolescent girl as an example, if she feels positively toward shopping and she believes that her mother (with whom she has a unit relationship) also feels positively toward shopping, she will have an internal sense of balance provided by three positive relationships (Figure 3). This is the case in Scenario 1. Since both mom and daughter feel balance, and both have a positive view of shopping in general, we propose that retailing outcomes should be strongest with this group, as was shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 3: A Balanced State in Scenario 1**



In Scenarios 2 and 3, balance does not exist since mom and daughter have differing attitudes towards shopping. This causes a state of psychological tension for mom and daughter.

This tension creates psychological discomfort during the shopping trip and ultimately leads mom and daughter to want to shop together less frequently and to make the shopping trips as quick as possible. In the fourth scenario, mom and daughter can achieve balance because they both have negative attitudes toward shopping. Even though there is no psychological tension stemming from a lack of balance, the fact that neither enjoys the shopping experience will lead to some negative retail outcomes.

Proposition 2: Mothers and daughters in Scenario 1 will shop together (a) more frequently and (b) for longer amounts of time, (c) experience more enjoyment, and (d) make more purchases during joint shopping trips than in the other three scenarios.

### ***Store Atmosphere of Teen-focused Retailers often has a Negative Influence on Mom***

The store atmosphere of many teen retailers is not welcoming to parents. Moms try to avoid stores that are extremely loud, dark, or have strong scents. Abercrombie is the best example of this. The smells of their colognes overwhelm you as you walk in the store, the music blares, and the lighting is dim. This seems to put moms in a bad mood. They are anxious to leave the store, they do not want to browse through the store or get involved in the shopping process, and they do not want to return to the store. While some mothers tolerate these things since they know it is directed at the teen segment, none of them actually enjoys this type of atmosphere. The mothers who do not enjoy shopping to begin with will go to stores with this type of atmosphere only if necessary and will make the trip as short as possible.

“The only one thing I do not like is that they play the super loud music. The music is kind of annoying, but I feel fine, because you know, mothers are in the teenagers’ stores.”

-Rose, Mother of a 16-year-old girl

“The music is loud and obnoxious in that store and I could not wait to get out of there.”

-Liz, Mother of Jordan (17)

Another related finding is that moms appreciate having a place to sit and wait. This seems to help them endure the experience and puts them in a better mood than they would be if they had to stand and wait.

“I like to have a chair or something. I scope that out when we first go in. But just standing and waiting and watching her look at herself in the mirror, I don’t like that. I have to have a chair.”

-Connie, Mother of Kally (15)

Looking at this from the adolescent girl’s perspective, the music played in stores and the dark, club-like atmosphere can be exciting. This has the potential to stimulate positive emotions for adolescents, creating a fun and enjoyable shopping experience. Adolescent girls in our study mention that they sometimes enjoy the music played in stores and will occasionally sing along while shopping with their friends. In regards to mother-daughter shopping however, loud music does not seem to have any positive outcomes. Mothers and daughters discussed how music is a source of annoyance for many moms. This tells us that while adolescent girls may enjoy things like loud, popular music and dark lighting when shopping with friends; these aspects of the store atmosphere do not have a positive impact when shopping with mom. They ultimately have a negative influence since the mother’s emotions and perceptions change in a negative way.

Research has shown that the music the customer likes leads to excitement and desire to stay in a mall (Wakefield and Baker 1998), while music played that is not liked by the customer can directly influence psychic costs associated with shopping in a store, meaning that the atmosphere is unpleasant and uncomfortable for customers (Baker et al. 2002). Similarly, Cameron et al. (2003) found that music likeability is negatively related to perceived wait time and positively related to mood. Thus, the loud, annoying music (from a mom’s perspective) in teen retail stores will make the mom’s wait seem longer than it actually is while also putting her in a bad mood. In regards to another atmospheric quality, Summers and Herbert (2001) noted

that supplemental lighting on store displays increased time spent at the display and number of items picked up and examined. Thus, the dark lighting found in many teen retail stores likely inhibits mom from looking at merchandise and participating in the shopping process. This is also likely to cause more conflicts during the trip since the mom may want to leave the store her daughter wants to shop in and simply because mom is more irritable due to the unpleasant atmosphere.

Proposition 3: (a) Store atmosphere (music, lighting, scent, and seating) in teen retail stores will influence positive and negative emotions of both mom and daughter, but (b) this relationship will be stronger for moms.

Proposition 4: Store atmosphere will influence conflict experienced during the trip, such that (a) loud music, (b) dark lighting, (c) strong scents, and (d) a lack of seating will lead to more conflict experienced during the trip.

### ***Common Sources of Conflict and Emotional Implications***

While mom and daughter can sometimes shop in peace, conflicts often arise, even with the most amicable pairs. As mentioned before, generational conflict (between parent and child) is a common occurrence in adolescence (Gemelli 1996). Our interviews revealed that conflicts occurring during the shopping trip led to negative emotions for both mom and daughter. Again, Heider's (1958) balance theory explains this relationship: when mom and daughter have conflicting opinions of a store, for example, they will experience psychological tension resulting from an unbalanced state. A few sources of conflict showed up repeatedly in our study. These include the price of clothing, the fit/style of clothing that the girl wanted to buy, and the store preferences of mother and daughter. Again, this is consistent with research showing that financial issues and appearance are two common sources of conflict between parent and adolescent (e.g. Galambos and Almeida 1992; Smetana 1989).

The frequency and intensity of the conflicts experienced during a shopping trip seems to be a key factor that influences emotions and ultimately influences retailing outcomes. A few minor conflicts that do not elicit strong emotional responses may not have a large impact on retailing outcomes. However, more frequent and intense conflicts experienced during the trip ultimately seem to lead to negative retailing outcomes such as low shopping enjoyment, little time spent shopping, few purchases made, and low desire to shop in those stores in the future.

The price issue was one of the most visible sources of conflict reported by retail employees. Mom often uses shopping as an opportunity to educate her daughter on good spending habits. Some have specific strategies for doing this, similar to the bargaining strategies found by Palan and Wilkes (1997). Some moms use money deals, in which they offer to pay for part of a purchase but require their daughters pay for part as well. Mothers usually pay for the essential items for their daughters, but ask their daughters to use their own money when it comes to nonessential items. Many mothers also attempt to reason with their adolescent daughters in an attempt to help them realize that certain items are too expensive. They might give their daughters a specific amount of money to spend on the trip and try to show them the value of buying items on sale rather than full-price merchandise.

“It’s usually a price issue... That’s probably the thing they argue about most. They will kind of complain about how they want something, but it’s usually brief, surprisingly.”

-Candice, Retail Employee

“Every once in a while I come with my mom because she’s like ‘Sale, at JCPenney. Let’s go there!’ And I’m like ‘Yea! Sale, that means I get more stuff... for less!’ Because one time I bought these \$50 pants, and my mom was like ‘Everything you get starting now has got to be on sale; because those are \$50 pants!’”

-Ally (13)

Conflicts based on the clothing style appeared often in our interviews. Parents are often strongly opposed to low-cut, tight-fitting clothes. Moms can also bring school dress codes into



the conversation to help win the argument. However, these arguments stem more from differing opinions of what is *too* tight or *too* revealing than from girls wanting to wear “revealing” clothing. Retail employees mentioned this as being a big issue, especially in stores that sold trendy and often “revealing” merchandise. A similar source of conflict occurs for girls who prefer a nonconformist style. Compared to girls who have a mainstream style, girls with a nonconformist style seem to experience more conflict with moms when it comes to the basic style of clothing that is purchased, not just the fit of the clothing. Some daughters claim that their moms ridicule their style choice, while other parents disagree with the style overall but accept it as part of their daughter’s uniqueness. These issues based on fit and style seem to be more important relative to clothing chosen for public settings in which parent and child would be seen together, such as church, at weddings, or out for a nice dinner. The following two quotes illustrate conflict over both revealing merchandise and nonconformist style:

“It’s mostly risqué items, like our low tops, real short shorts. Most moms don’t like that we have the low-rise and stuff like that.”

-Sarah, Retail Employee

-My mom is very - what’s in right now. I’m very - what’s Ally right now - kind of funky or weird... My mom will just be like, ‘Why are you buying that... You should pay for that yourself because I don’t want you to have it because I don’t like it.’ But I’m like ‘I like it.’”

-Ally (13)

While conflicts often occur over clothing style or fit, it is interesting to note that employees notice a difference in adolescent girls’ preferences when shopping with mom versus shopping with friends. This difference seems to help reduce some of the conflicts from the start. While an adolescent girl might be attracted to something a little more risqué when with friends, she does tend to tone it down and be a bit more conservative when shopping with mom. Thus, it

seems that many adolescent girls adapt their preferences to the shopping companion, possibly in an attempt to minimize conflict during the trip. The following quote shows how girls adapt.

“They’ll come back with their parents and what they thought was cute with their friends or what they liked with their friends, they’ll come back and show it to their mom. And they’ll ask her if she likes it, and their mom won’t like it. And their immediate reaction is ‘Yeah, I guess it’s not that cute.’ Their whole taste changes when they’re around their parents. They tend to pick more conservative outfits when they’re with their family.”  
- John, Retail Employee

The third major source of conflict is over store choice. Again, Haytko and Baker (2004) specifically mention that the shopping companion of an adolescent girl influences where they will shop. Daughters seem to like teen retailers that focus on this demographic exclusively. Moms, on the other hand, typically enjoy shopping in department stores where they are able to find merchandise for both mom and daughter. Store atmosphere may also play a big part in conflict related to store preference, with mom wanting to avoid stores that are too loud and too dark, while her daughter may like this type of atmosphere. The following quote is from a girl who now avoids these stores in order to avoid the conflict that would inevitably occur.

“Sometimes I will go in stores with my friends that I know my mom wouldn’t like - like Hollister and Abercrombie. The music is loud and it is kind of dark in there, and she would say ‘this is obnoxious’ and leave.”  
-Jordan (17)

Finally, all of these different conflict situations ultimately influence the emotions of both mother and daughter during the shopping trip. While the idea that conflicts or disagreements lead to negative emotions is not new, the real contribution here is the investigation of specific sources of conflict that influence the shopping experience and retail outcomes. Price, style/fit, and store choice seem to be the main sources of conflict during the mother-daughter shopping trip. From the previous discussion on balance theory, we know that an unbalanced situation created when

mom and daughter have conflicting views or preferences in any of these areas will produce psychological tension for each person.

Similarly, Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer's (1999) paper on the role of emotions in marketing states that "emotions arise in response to appraisals one makes of something of relevance to one's own well-being" (p. 185). When an individual encounters a particular event or situation, she assesses the situation by comparing her desired state to what she encounters. When the situation is congruent with her desired state, positive emotions occur. When the situation is incongruent, negative emotions arise. With this shopping dyad, when there is a disagreement over the merchandise they will purchase or the place in which the pair will shop, both parties will likely see that their desired states do not match-up with their current states, producing negative emotions. The emotions experienced each time will vary depending on how that particular shopping trip goes. Thus, this study replicates these basic ideas while focusing on the main sources of conflict that lead to negative emotions.

"Sometimes we have differences. Some things I think that she shouldn't wear that she wants to wear and some things I think she should wear that she doesn't want to wear. We don't always agree. That is probably what makes it difficult and not as pleasant as it could be."

-Mary, Mother of a 13-year-old girl

"(Shopping with my daughter is) frustrating at times, pleasant at times, and um, expensive quite often."

-Mary, Mother of a 13-year-old girl

Proposition 5: Conflicts over (a) price, (b) style or fit of clothing, and (c) store preference will elicit negative emotions for both mother and daughter during the joint shopping trip. In contrast, when mother and daughter agree on price, style/fit, and stores to shop in, positive emotions should result for mom and daughter due to the matching of actual and desired states.

### ***The Nonsymmetrical Relationship and Implications for Achieving Balance***

The mother-daughter shopping dyad presents an interesting situation because nonsymmetrical relationships may occur (Woodside and Chebat 2001). Balance theory generally focuses on the parent-child relationship as a union because the two belong together as part of a family (Heider 1958). Heider describes unions as forming between a person and the things that he or she makes or owns. The mother will likely view her relationship with her daughter as a union simply because she created the daughter or because the daughter belongs to her. However, during adolescence, children are struggling to separate themselves from their parents and form their own identities. Since the daughter is trying to separate from her mother, the daughter may not view the relationship between her and her mom as a union. When this happens, the daughter does not reciprocate the perceived union relationship. Interestingly enough, that would then imply that the daughter achieves balance when her mom has a negative evaluation of a store she likes. In contrast, it is difficult for mothers to find balance when their preferences do not align.

Before further developing this idea and the implications in regards to the shopping trip, it is important to distinguish between various terms used to describe a lack of symmetry in relationships. Carley and Krackhard (1996) provide a nice explanation of the terminology. They identify Heider's (1958) description of the *nonsymmetrical* relationship as perceived by an individual person (e.g. person A likes person B but does not believe person B likes her back). Nonsymmetrical relationships produce tension on their own because person A has a positive relationship with person B, a positive view of herself, but she believes that person B views her in a negative way. In contrast, Davis (1968) described *nonreciprocal* relationships as perceived by each person in the dyad (e.g. person A likes person B but person B does not like person A). This does not necessarily have implications for balance unless person A is aware that there is no

reciprocation. The relationships in this study that lacked symmetry seemed to fall into both of these categorizations. However, the focus is not on the perception of liking (sentiment) but rather the perception of a union between mother and daughter. In these cases, mom perceives a union while her daughter is striving to separate herself from her parents, creating disunion and a lack of reciprocity. Since both appear to be aware of the other's views, it is termed nonsymmetrical.

Furthermore, nonsymmetrical and nonreciprocal relationships are different from *asymmetrical* relationships, which deal with the balance of power within the dyad (e.g., person A has power over person B in the relationship) (Fondacaro, Dunkle, and Pathak 1998). While asymmetry does exist in mother-daughter relationships, the discussion on power in the relationship will come later in the paper and does not relate to initial evaluation of balance.

Within nonsymmetrical relationships, the desire to shop in stores or wear clothes that mom does not approve of may sometimes be done to rebel. However, this desire often seems to stem from simple differences of opinion as a child separates from parents, increases reliance on peer groups, and forms of an identity separate from her parents. Again, when you apply balance theory to this situation: if a girl is creating closer bonds with peers, and peers have positive view of a certain store, an unbalanced situation will result if mom does not like the store. So in order to achieve balance, the girl no longer considers herself to be in unity with her mom. In the following quote, the girl does seem to be reacting in a somewhat rebellious way based on the nonsymmetrical relationship. She is angry that her mother's views conflict with her own, but rather than resolve the conflict, she seems to turn her anger toward her mom. This ultimately creates more separation between her and her mom.

“It makes me more mad if she doesn't like it. It makes me want to wear it all the time then.”

-Shauna, 18

In nonsymmetrical relationships, negative emotions still arise based on conflict, but they come about in a different way. Mom experiences imbalance and negative emotions because her daughter's opinions are in conflict with her own. However, the daughter experiences negative emotions because her mother does not allow her to buy the items she wants or is unwilling to go to the stores where she wants to shop. The daughter can achieve balance in this situation through one positive relationship and two negatives (daughter likes the store, mom does not like the store, daughter then does not like mom to achieve balance). Mothers are not easily able to "dislike" their daughters since they feel a strong sense of union in that relationship. When the nonsymmetrical relationship exists, mom may justify her daughter's differing opinion as being caused by a friend's influence, or some other outside source, in an attempt to dismiss her daughter's conflicting opinion. Mom then creates a non-union relationship between her daughter and her daughter's preferred stores or style. For example, if her daughter wants to shop at Abercrombie, but mom does not like the atmosphere, expensive prices, or revealing merchandise, mom may justify her daughter's desire to shop there as being influenced by her friends rather than her own desire for that merchandise. This reduces some of the tension from the mother's perspective.

### ***Conflicts Improve with Age***

Mother-daughter conflicts in our study did seem to decrease with age. As adolescents advance into the latter half of adolescence, conflicts seem to be less of an issue since the daughter has learned what she can and cannot get away with and stays away from conflict issues. These findings are congruent with balance theory's underlying hypothesis that people will ultimately try to achieve balance. These findings also coincide with literature comparing early versus late adolescents. As mentioned before, girls and parents tend to resolve most conflicts by

late adolescence (Gemelli 1996; Laursen, Coy, and Collins 1998; Renk et al. 2005). Again, this is largely because adolescents still idolize parents in the beginning of this stage, and disagreements escalate because they are not used to having differences of opinion. During late adolescence, parents have been de-idealized, and adolescent children view them as advisers or guides. “Parents are no longer viewed as having all the answers and being all wonderful, nor are they viewed as being completely uninformed, old-fashioned, and ‘out of it’” (Gemelli p.517). The following two quotes illustrate how one girl approaching the end of early adolescence and one mother of a girl in late adolescence now experience fewer conflicts than they did during the beginning stages of adolescence:

“I just totally skip the stuff that I would really like to try on or a store that I would like to go in but I know that you don’t want to go in. I don’t even mention it. We skip that argument.”

-Kaelyn (15)

“When she was younger, seventh or eighth grade, it took her a little while to realize. You know, I just had to tell her ‘I don’t want you going anywhere looking bad’ ...I’m for her not against her. She has come to believe that I truly do want her to look nice. So she trusts me.”

-Dana, mother of Chrissy (18)

This next quote given by a retail employee also demonstrates the difference between early adolescent and late adolescent shoppers. While this quote relates to adolescent girls’ general shopping habits (not specifically to the mother-daughter trip), it still shows how adolescents seem to calm down during the later years of this developmental stage, decreasing the level of conflict and the resulting negative emotions that are likely to occur during the trip.

“I’ve noticed a difference with girls that are like 12 to 16. They’re more loud, obnoxious. They say rude things... From 16 to 21, they’re more calm, nonchalant, and focused on shopping.”

-Candace, Retail Employee

Finally, the financial issues that often lead to conflict in early adolescence are not as much of an issue when adolescents have jobs and are able to pay for their own merchandise. Whereas parents have more influence in purchases when they hold the financial resources to make those purchases (Beatty and Talpade 1994; Belch et al. 1985, 2005), conflicts based on financial issues subside when adolescents have the resources to buy those items on their own. In the following example, a daughter avoids conflict by making the purchase on her own.

“She spent her own money that time, because that was really ridiculous. It was like \$80 worth of stuff... \$80 worth of earrings?!”  
-Carly, Mother of Kaelyn (15)

Proposition 6: Shopping in conflict will be more common for girls in early adolescence than those in late adolescence

### ***Third Party Involvement can Minimize Negative Emotions***

When conflicts arise during mother-daughter shopping trips, a third party can help resolve conflicts and ease the tension associated with the conflicting views. Although the adolescent girl's father is not usually on the shopping trip, he often works as a silent presence during the trip. The mother may refer to dad's rules and opinions as rationale for her position in an argument. Both adolescent girls and mothers in our sample mentioned fathers' opinions about the way the girls' clothes fit. They especially do not want their daughters wearing clothes that are too tight or revealing. Thus, a mother can refer to the father's opinions as a way of shifting the blame and easing tension between her and her daughter. The following quote illustrates a minor conflict in which the daughter is interested in an item that she knows her parents would not approve of. This mother and daughter both seem to know that dad is the underlying reason for the conflict; they accept that they cannot compromise with him, so they move past the situation.



“She already knows. There is no more conflict lately, because she knows that we won’t approve. And even if I would approve, her dad won’t approve. She’ll pick something out and she’ll say ‘Do you think Dad would approve of this?’ And I’ll say ‘no’, and she puts it back.”

-Susan, mother of Kacey (13)

Older sisters are also helpful in resolving conflicts. From the purchase pal literature, we know that sisters can form close ties with one another and can provide moral support and decision-making assistance during shopping trips (Kiecker and Hartman 1994). An older sister is particularly helpful because she often provides some middle ground between mom and daughter and is able to connect with each of them in a way that they cannot connect with each other. The older sister is still young and in touch with current styles but she is also somewhat motherly in that she may be protective of her younger sister, and wants to make sure that her younger sister is making good decisions. Moms may also find common ground with older daughters more easily since they have already passed through the adolescent stage of life, and they have learned how to resolve problems with one another.

This coincides with research showing that older siblings provide support for younger siblings when it comes to non-family issues, and there is actually mutual support between siblings when it comes to family issues (Tucker, McHale, and Crouter 2001). Thus, older sisters can give advice by helping choose specific items to purchase. They can also act more like friends by talking about conflicts that the younger sister may have with mom. This gives the older sister the ability to tell the younger one to pick something a little more in-line with what mom wants but do it in a way that is more like a friend than an authority figure.

Sisters can provide immediate assistance if they are on the shopping trip, but they can also help to resolve conflicts in other ways. Camera phones can be helpful during the trip. Mom and daughter might take a picture of an outfit that the girl is trying on and send it to the older

sister to get her opinion. They may also put off a decision until the older sister is there to help. Some of the people we interviewed mentioned that they will buy an outfit during the shopping trip with the intention of having an older sister provide her opinion before deciding whether to keep or return the outfit. The conflict is not resolved during the trip, but the resulting negative emotions are less since they must wait for the sister to help with the final decision.

“I’m not going to force her to wear something that she says is out of style... If in doubt, we bring it home and let (her older sister) see it... If she approves, we’re okay.”  
-Rhonda, Mother of Audrey (15)

Retail employees can also help improve the overall shopping experience for mom and daughter. Retail employees may also be able to provide solutions for mom and daughter that help achieve a compromise. For instance, if a retail employee overhears mom and daughter arguing about the price of an item, she may suggest some similar alternatives that are on sale. Similarly, if mom and daughter are arguing about fit, the retail employee may suggest a way to layer a shirt or an alternative item that may be less revealing but has a similar look. This is congruent with Beatty et al.’s (1996) finding that sales associates “may aid in the improvement of intrafamily relationships” (p. 233). Thus, knowledgeable employees who can provide quick solutions will help reduce negative emotions and resolve conflicts in a shorter amount of time.

“If I’m in the seller room and there’s a fight going on, I’ll be like ‘Well, you know we have this shirt in a different color and it’s on sale’ if there is a price issue... I do what I can to make the atmosphere better.”  
-Sarah, Retail Employee

Beatty et al. (1996) found that the relationship between salesperson and customer could lead to customer loyalty. Arnold et al. (2005) found that friendliness, helpfulness, and ability to solve problems were ways in which employees can provide delightful customer experiences that ultimately lead to purchases and positive word of mouth. From our interviews, it seems that a relationship formed with mom is one way of creating loyal customers. As mentioned before,

moms sometimes dread the shopping experience they face with their daughters. Whether it is because of the store atmosphere or contrasting shopping styles, there are many things for mom to anticipate that can lead to negative emotions even before the trip begins. A friendly retail employee may be able to reduce the negative emotions that occur during the trip without necessarily getting involved in the conflict. The mom in the following quote is the same one who always looks for a place to sit while waiting for her daughter. She seems to get aggravated when having to wait a long time for her daughter to try on lots of different clothes. In one particular store, she is friends with the owner, which limits any negative emotions that might occur. This also seems to create loyalty to the store, bringing the mother-daughter pair into that store more often than other stores.

“They know us well at Sassy Britches. She’s our friend... We’ve become close. We go there a lot. And we do buy. We *do* buy. I spent \$178 that day... If they didn’t have chairs, we would not know the lady. We would not be there. She gets this, this, and this. Then they offer to start a dressing room and before you know it, she has like a million things in there. So I sit and I wait.”

-Carly, Mother of Kaelyn (15)

Proposition 7: The relationship between conflict and negative emotions may be moderated by third party members who are able to ease tension between mom and daughter, such that negative emotions will be lower when the third party member is involved than when he or she is not.

### ***Influence Strategies and their Emotional Consequences***

The type of influence strategy used by the adolescent girl or her mother in an attempt to get what they want in the situation can either intensify or limit the resulting negative outcomes of the conflict. Past research has categorized these strategies as unilateral or bilateral (Bao, Fern, and Sheng 2007; Kim, Lee, and Hall 1991) or as falling into a wider range of categories, including bargaining, persuasion, emotional, and request strategies (Palan and Wilkes 1997; Shoham and Dalakas 2006). Begging, pleading, and other strategies that rely on emotional

appeals fall into the unilateral category. While unilateral strategies require only the participation of one party, “bilateral strategies such as bargaining and reasoning require the target person's cooperation” (Bao, Fern, and Sheng 2007, p. 675). In the case of the adolescent girl’s chosen influence strategy, these bilateral strategies may help make the adolescent appear competent and mature in the eyes of their parents and are thus more effective in getting parents to yield to adolescents’ requests (Kim, Lee, and Hall 1991; Palan and Wilkes 1997). In regards to the strategy used by the mom on the trip, bilateral strategies may make the daughter feel more appreciated or respected in the decision process, minimizing negative emotions.

Similar to findings from these past studies, the qualitative interviews revealed how unilateral, emotional strategies such as begging or whining seem to intensify the conflict and increase negative emotions, whereas bilateral tactics such as reasoning and bargaining can keep mother and daughter in a calmer state, reducing negative emotions that stem from conflict. The following quotes illustrate reasoning and emotional strategies used by adolescents.

“Most teenage girls are sneaky. It’s really funny to watch them. They’re like “Mom, I found this top on sale. We’re getting the full price pants, but we can get this top too?”  
-Sarah, Retail Employee

“Cache’ sells a lot of prom dresses and formals and a lot of them are not suited for 16 and 17 year olds. So, I think that is where I saw more fights than anything. Over the prom dress that is a little too low cut... the mother and the father are like freaking out about to go into cardiac arrest. I have seen some fits.”  
-Britney, Retail Employee

Proposition 8: The influence strategies used by both parties moderate the relationship between conflict and negative emotions, such that unilateral strategies elicit greater negative emotions than bilateral strategies.

### ***The Impact of Emotions on Retail Outcomes***

Mom and daughter experience many different emotions during shopping trips. As mentioned in the preceding discussion, the match-up of general attitudes toward shopping, the

store atmosphere, and the conflicts experienced between mother and daughter during the shopping trip all seem to influence emotions on the trip. These emotions seem to reflect the intensity of the conflict and directly influence retail outcomes. Past marketing literature has shown that emotions influence approach/avoidance behavior (Sherman, Mathur, and Smith 1997), time spent shopping (Donovan et al. 1994), store attitudes (Yoo, Park, and MacInnis 1998), a shopper's urge to buy impulsively (Beatty and Ferrell 1998), unplanned purchases (Donovan et al. 1994), repurchase intentions (Jones et al. 2007), and negative word-of-mouth (Jones et al. 2007). Within this study, it seems that the emotions experienced similarly influence outcomes such as time spent shopping, involvement in the decision-making process, desire to stay in a store, purchases made, frequency with which mom and daughter shop together, frequency of shopping with others, and repatronage intentions.

Interviews with all three types of participants (adolescents, mothers, and retail employees) revealed that emotions seemed to influence these specific outcomes. For example, many mothers reported wanting to cut their trip short before making a purchase due to certain atmospheric qualities or conflicts that occurred during the trip. They also do what they can to avoid those stores in the future and may shop with their daughters less if these are the only stores where their daughters will shop. Girls also mentioned ending the trip without having made a purchase as a negative outcome stemming from conflict and negative emotions. Adolescent girls additionally discussed visiting those stores with friends to avoid dealing with mom in that situation. Further, while retail employees say purchases may still occur when mom and daughter experience negative emotions, they acknowledge that purchases seem fewer among fighting mothers and daughters. The mother's emotions seem to have a stronger influence than the daughter's emotions since she has the money. This is something that was mentioned by several

participants and seems to particularly influence the duration of the shopping trip, purchases made, and repatronage intentions.

“(My mom) won’t buy me anything when she’s mad.”  
-Krista, 14

“I won’t buy things when she is mad... I just feel weird asking (my mom) to buy anything when she’s mad at me.”  
-Jessie, 14

Proposition 9: (a) Positive (negative) emotions of either mom or daughter experienced during the trip will have a positive (negative) influence on time spent shopping, shopping involvement, desire to stay, purchases made, frequency of shopping together, and repatronage intentions. (b) This relationship will be stronger for mothers than daughters.

It is important to acknowledge that positive and negative emotions do not necessarily work as clear opposites of one another. Thus, just because mom and daughter are enjoying the shopping trip, this does not necessarily mean that they will have a long trip with a great number of purchases. Similarly, if mom and daughter are frustrated or angry during the trip, this does not mean that they will not make purchases or that the trip will not last long. In general, however, positive emotions, such as excitement and delight, seem to increase the amount of time and money spent on the trip. Negative emotions, such as anger and frustration, make mother-daughter pairs cut their trip short or leave without making all the desired purchases. Further, previous research has shown that when adolescents use emotional appeals such as getting angry or pouting; they are less likely to get parents to yield to their desires (Palan and Wilkes 1997; Shoham and Dalakas 2006). Purchases can still occur when negative emotions arise, but they will be fewer than if the shoppers experienced positive emotions. Likewise, purchases may not occur when a mother and daughter are just out window-shopping and having a good time, but they will be even less likely to occur if the pair is out window-shopping while they are angry.

### *A Variety of Benefits can be Experienced by Mom and Daughter*

Although mother-daughter shopping is not always perfect, both mom and daughter still perceive many benefits of shopping together. These benefits are a result of the experience of both mom and daughter during a shopping trip and serve as motivation for future shopping intentions. Emotions experienced during the shopping trips as well as the match-up of mom and daughter's attitudes towards shopping also seem to influence benefits of the shopping trip.

The benefits found in this study fit into three categories: functional/utilitarian, hedonic, and social. Functional and social benefits are separate in prior research (e.g. Beatty et al. 1996; Reynolds and Beatty 1999). Time saving, convenience, and advice related to purchase decisions are all functional benefits in these studies of salesperson-customer relationships. Social benefits included enjoying the salesperson's company, spending time with that person and just enjoying the close relationship. Both functional and social benefits led to company satisfaction, which ultimately led to loyalty to the company (Reynolds and Beatty 1999). Similarly, shopping value and shopping motivations have been separated by their utilitarian and hedonic characteristics (e.g. Arnold and Reynolds 2003; Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994; Haytko and Baker 2004). Utilitarian motives are task-related and focus on the pursuit of an intended consequence, whereas hedonic motives encompass the pursuit of things such as fun, fantasy, and social interaction. The specific benefits found in this qualitative study fall along the same lines as past research. However, rather than placing social benefits with the other hedonic benefits, the social benefits experienced seem to fall into their own category.

*Functional/Utilitarian Benefits.* As mentioned before, adolescent girls have a different perspective on a shopping trip taken with friends versus one taken with mom. Shopping with friends is a fun, social experience that does not necessarily involve a lot of purchasing. In

contrast, shopping with mom is all about making purchases. Thus, the primary benefit mentioned by adolescent girls is that their mothers pay for most of the purchases when they shop together. They can actually buy items that are more expensive, as well as more of them, since mom has the money. Therefore, from the daughter's perspective, a functional benefit of shopping with mom is that mom pays for the items they purchase. This also leads to more purchases compared to when girls shop with friends or alone. This finding coincides with Haytko and Baker's (2004) study.

"I think I buy more at one time when I am with my mom than I would if I was with friends because [when I'm on my own] I feel like I really don't need to spend this (money) because it isn't my money."

-Leigh, 18

"When they're with a group of friends, they're not really going to buy. They're in here to try on things, to show off, and to look around, to have fun. When they're with mom, it's like 'Okay, I'm buying. She's got the money. I'm going to get it.'"

-Sarah, Retail Employee

Another functional benefit experienced by adolescent girls is that they get advice about purchases from someone they know has their best interest in mind. While mothers do not always know what is in style, they will be honest about what they think does or does not look good on their daughter. This seems to be something adolescents value, even if they do not always take their mothers' advice. The following quotes exemplify this benefit.

"Positive is that (my mom) gives me true advice. Like if I don't look good in something, she'll say 'you don't look good in that.'"

-Jamie, 17

"With my mom, she'll give me honest opinions. So will my friends, but I feel like hers is more, you know, she wants the best for me."

-Melissa, 17

Mothers seem to use the time that they spend shopping with their daughters as a chance to educate them on how to be smart shoppers. I discussed this in the previous section on mother-daughter conflicts. While price may initially lead to conflict during a trip, moms and daughters



can avoid this conflict if the daughter is educated on how to be a smart shopper during early adolescence. Thus, one utilitarian benefit perceived by mothers is that they get the opportunity to teach their daughters how to shop.

“If I’m with her, she’ll probably ask about it. I can just guide her, ‘Amy, think about it. Why would you pay that for that, when you can get it here or you can get it there?’”  
-Rina, Mother of Anita (12)

Mothers also seem to use their shopping trips with adolescent daughters as an opportunity to educate themselves about the things that are popular or unpopular. This ultimately helps them feel young since they know the kinds of clothes that are in fashion and they become more familiar with the music that young people like. They also sometimes get advice from their daughters about the kinds of clothes they should buy for themselves.

“(Shopping with my daughter) lets me know that I’m not an old fogey that doesn’t like the stuff that she likes... I listen to the music she listens to and try to stay up with her time.” -Deidra, Mother of Sydney (14)

“She’ll help me shop for myself... She’s comfortable with tight clothes and hippy clothes. That is the style of young people, and I’m not that comfortable with it. Once she gets me to put them on, I go ‘Oh, okay, well that looks good’... And she’s right, they fit better.”  
-Carolyn, Mother of Leigh (18)

Finally, the basic benefit of task accomplishment is one that both parties experience simultaneously. Mothers and daughters often shop with a specific goal in mind. This is especially true for mother-daughter pairs that do not match up on attitudes toward shopping or those that dislike shopping. Thus, task fulfillment is both a major goal of the trip and an important benefit when accomplished. Again, match-up of shopping attitudes and positive emotions experienced during the trip help to facilitate task accomplishment for the pair.

“We went to a couple of places - or two or three places - and I was just about worn out... she tried on a bunch of stuff and on the way into the dressing room she saw a dress and said I will just try this one on and see how it looks. And it was really cute, and we bought it. And all God’s children were happy.”  
-Liz, Mother of Jordan (17)

*Hedonic Benefits.* Hedonic benefits arise from a variety of different circumstances.

Looking to Arnold and Reynolds' (2003) study outlining various hedonic shopping motivations, some of these were evident in the mother-daughter shopping situation. First, adventure shopping may be one benefit of mother-daughter shopping. This is when shopping is for "stimulation, adventure, and the feeling of being in another world. The mother quoted here seems to experience this benefit:

"We just enjoy it. I like to shop, and I've always like it. And my sister shops with us... and Alice likes shopping with both of us. And we go on trips to different places. That is what we like to do. She and I like to shop, shop, shop. We're going to Paris. She will be in the ninth grade next year... this is the transition from middle school to high school... so this is a big trip for her."

-Doris, Mother of Alice (14)

Role shopping is another benefit that moms experience in the mother-daughter shopping trip. Arnold and Reynolds (2003) describe role shopping as "the enjoyment that shoppers derive from shopping for others" (p. 81). In this situation, a mother can experience this benefit when she tries to try to find the perfect items for her daughter to wear. This benefit comes out in the following quote:

"I'd rather spend (money) on the kids than on myself... I don't regret a dime I've spent on her clothes. I want her to be in style and in with the times. I think that means a lot to teenagers."

-Deidra, Mother of Sydney (14)

As illustrated in the next quote, adolescent girls may experience some enjoyment from being able to act older and make independent purchases. Thus, if the mother allows her daughter (particularly a daughter in early adolescence) to act like an older teen or adult during the shopping process, this enables the daughter to feel older, more mature, and more independent. This is similar to the feelings of freedom motivation described in Haytko and Baker's (2004) study.

“She likes to carry the purse, the credit card, and the money... And she would just make all the payments... I just stand on the side, and she loves to be responsible and hear all those comments from the salespeople that she’s great and she’s responsible.”

-Maya, Mother of Rylee (12)

*Social Benefits.* One of the main benefits experienced by the mother on the shopping trip is that she gets a chance to bond with her daughter. Mom gets to spend quality time talking with her daughter in a one-on-one setting and gets to find out what is going on in her daughter’s life. Although it is not the primary benefit mentioned by daughters, most of the daughters also value this time together. They see it as a chance to do “girl things” since dads and brothers are usually not involved in the shopping trip. Usually shopping includes mom and daughter, along with sisters or the daughter’s close friends. The benefit of getting to bond with one another is more common for mother-daughter pairs who had positive emotions during the shopping experience than those who had negative emotions.

“I have fun when I shop with her because it is a good time to hang out - mom time. You can get away from dad and sister and just be girls together I guess.”

-Elise (18)

“It’s fun. We get to spend a lot of quality time together. I get to learn the things that she likes. She gets to learn the things that I like and do not like.”

-Patty, Mother of Shannon (14)

As illustrated by the second quote, social benefits experienced in the mother-daughter shopping trip seem to go beyond the mere social interaction that occurs and serve as a way to keep mom up-to-date with everything going on in her daughter’s life. Thus, this social benefit seems to have more of a utilitarian component than hedonic. Mom is excited to talk with her daughter, bond, and get to spend quality time together. However, she also gets to learn about her daughter’s life while they talk. She gets to find out about her daughter’s friends, boyfriends, the classes she is taking, and so on. Thus, in the shopping situation, the social component of shopping seems to be important enough to be its own benefit segment. Social components of

shopping, whether they are hedonic or utilitarian, seem to be the most sought-after benefits for moms during the mother-daughter shopping situation.

Proposition 10: Positive (negative) emotions experienced during the trip will have a positive (negative) influence on functional/utilitarian, hedonic, and social benefits perceived by mother and daughter.

Shopping benefits also seem to influence retailing outcomes that stem from the mother-daughter shopping trip. When an adolescent girl has the benefit of shopping with her mother's money, purchases increase. When mom experiences the benefit of teaching her daughter how to be a good shopper, as well as the social benefit of bonding with her daughter, outcomes such as time spent shopping, frequency of shopping together, and involvement in the trip all increase. There are also long-term implications of these benefits. When mom and daughter accomplish their goals in the trip, positive attitudes towards shopping together, repatronage intentions for the store(s) in which they were able to find the desired merchandise, and frequency of shopping together in the future all increase.

Proposition 11: Shopping benefits experienced by mom and daughter will positively relate to retailing outcomes.

### **Discussion and Implications**

The mother-daughter shopping trip consists of many complexities that can alter shopping outcomes for retailers. This study has attempted to provide some insight into the factors that influence the overall experience of mom and daughter during the trip, shopping benefits perceived by mother and daughter, and the retailing outcomes that stem from the trip. It has shown the importance of the initial match-up of mom and daughter's attitudes towards shopping,

the atmosphere of the retail store, and mother-daughter conflicts experienced during a shopping trip.

The first, second, and third objectives of this study are all met in part through the investigation of the match-up of mother's and daughter's attitudes toward shopping. The first objective in this study was to explore the mother-daughter shopping trip from a phenomenological perspective, uncovering the experiences of both parties involved. The second objective was to explore similarities and differences between mothers and daughters' perceptions of the shopping trip and the benefits they experience from the trip. The third objective was to identify the shopping goals of each party when shopping together, as well as strategies used to achieve these goals. When both mother and daughter love to shop, they tend to view shopping as a bonding opportunity, they both want to spend time looking through different stores and at a variety of products and they both have a fun experience overall. They tend to enter into the trip with similar goals and have similar experiences while shopping. If conflicts do arise, it is due to disagreements over price or style, not fundamental differences in what they want out of the trip. Both shoppers seem to fall into the category of shopping enthusiast (Ganesh, Reynolds, and Luckett 2007) and the hedonic shopping motivations of social shopping and adventure shopping (Arnold and Reynolds 2003) seem to be important during joint shopping trips.

Similarly, when both mom and daughter dislike shopping, they are again able to bond over their dislike of the experience. Neither particularly enjoys it, but they both enter into the shopping trip with the same goals and seem to have a similar experience. They are basic shoppers (Ganesh, Reynolds, and Luckett 2007) who want to get in and out as quickly as possible and their focus is on achieving the task. Negative emotions will always exist to some extent since both view shopping as a negative experience. However, negative emotions that stem

from conflict are mostly basic money or style/fit issues that keep mother and daughter from quickly deciding on merchandise and accomplishing their goals.

In contrast, when one party loves to shop but the other dislikes shopping, mother and daughter have two very different experiences. The person who loves to shop is initially excited about the shopping trip, as she would be excited about any opportunity to shop. In one case (mom loves it, daughter dislikes it) mom may be looking forward to trying to bond with daughter or find good deals, while her daughter is dreading every aspect of the trip. While in the opposite case (daughter loves it, mom dislikes it), the daughter may be excited about the thought of looking at all the new merchandise and getting lots of new clothes, while mom just wants to get in and out as quickly as possible. Thus, conflicts often occur during these trips, emotions tend to be negative, and shopping trips end early, without a pleasant bonding experience and without making the desired purchases.

One of the main differences between mothers and daughters' shopping perceptions is the benefits perceived during the trip. The daughter's primary benefit is simply getting merchandise and having mom pay for it. Mom's primary benefit is often the social experience of getting to spend time with her daughter and getting to learn about what is going on in her daughter's life. Mom may also approach the trip as an opportunity to teach her daughter, while the daughter does not usually go into the trip viewing it as an opportunity to learn. The two parties often have different criteria for evaluating merchandise and thus different goals in regards to purchases. Mom usually wants to save money and find clothing that is not too revealing, while the adolescent daughter focuses on finding something that looks good and is in style. While both parties try to negotiate using reasoning strategies, mothers seem to win more often since they are the ones with the money. Confirming prior research in influence strategies (Palan and Wilkes

1997; Shoham and Dalakas 2006), when either party uses a rational, bargaining strategy in which there is give and take between mom and daughter, negative emotions are kept at a minimum and purchases increase overall. However, when strategies such as whining, begging, yelling, or even just ignoring the other party are used, negative emotions rise, hindering purchases and other retail outcomes.

The fourth objective was to identify factors that come up during the trip that influence the retailing outcomes of the mother-daughter shopping trip. Again, the match-up of each person's attitude toward shopping influences benefits that are typically experienced, conflicts and emotions experienced, and retailing outcomes. Emotions seem to play the biggest part in determining retail outcomes on a specific trip, with attitudes toward shopping, store atmosphere, and conflict all directly influencing the emotions experienced during the trip. The pair generally spends more time shopping, has more fun shopping, and ultimately makes more purchases when emotions are positive. In contrast, intense negative emotions will reduce time spent shopping, shopping enjoyment, and purchases made. Further, negative emotions seem to be more influential than positive emotions. This is consistent with prior research on the impact of consumer emotions (e.g. Jones et al. 2007). Again, the attitudes toward shopping are a major factor influencing emotions, but store atmosphere along with conflicts over store, style or fit of clothing, and price all work to influence different emotions experienced by mother and daughter during the shopping trip.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

This research has focused primarily on the tension experienced due to unbalanced situations and the process through which mom and daughter achieve balance over time. Heider (1958) identified changing a perceived union (U) relationship to disunion (notU) as one way of

restoring balance when imbalance exists. In this study, a third party member (dad) is often able to serve as the reason behind conflicting sentiments, creating disunion between the relationships causing the imbalance. This reduces tension and eventually restores balance in the relationships. Age also seems to be a key factor that restores balance. Disagreements become less devastating for each party, attitudes change to align with one another, and adolescents gain some of the financial capabilities to make their own purchases, as they get older. This again confirms Heider's basic premise that people strive for balance in their relationships and will ultimately shift attitudes over time to achieve that balance.

This paper provides insight into a phenomenon that receives little attention in balance theory research: the nonsymmetrical relationship. This is a complex relationship where the person of interest has positive sentiment toward someone or something that has a negative sentiment toward them. In this case, the adolescent daughter is attempting to separate herself from her mother, while the mother is struggling to maintain a union between them. The adolescent population lends itself to this particular relationship since it is a time when children are trying to separate from parents and form their own identities. Thus, balance is something that is difficult to attain during adolescence because of conflicting views and the separation process.

Though it is somewhat of a temporary fix, each party can achieve balance within a nonsymmetrical relationship when the parties perceive relationships differently. For example, mom may view a union relationship with her daughter, a negative sentiment toward the store, and disunion between her daughter and the store since she attributes her daughter's liking of the store to peer influence. In this same scenario, the adolescent girl may have positive sentiment toward the store while her mom has negative sentiment toward the store, and she may thus try to pull away from her mom, creating disunion between them. While both parties have achieved a



sense of balance, this may still create a problem for retailers since the daughter likes the store but mom still does not. This ultimately inhibits purchases made within that store. Further, while mom and daughter achieve balance, the unbalanced state may still reappear quite often since the underlying opinions are in conflict.

Balance theory predicts that these relationships tend to evolve into symmetrical, balanced relationships (Heider 1958). This is reflected in the fact that older adolescents do not experience as much conflict or as many nonsymmetrical relationships. However, it is important to understand what occurs during the time that this asymmetry exists and how it is ultimately resolved.

This research also adds to the shopping companion literature. Again, this literature stream is limited in scope and to my knowledge has not yet captured the idea of balance or how balance (or the lack of balance) during shopping trips may ultimately influence retailing outcomes. Research related to purchase pals has examined only the benefits of the shopping companion in the sense that they provide information or moral support during the trip (Keicker and Hartman 1994). This study similarly shows that mothers can provide moral support, with an honest opinion during the shopping trip and that daughters can assist in purchases for their moms since they have a better sense of what is in style. However, the shopping trip between mother and daughter is far more complex when balance does not exist. While support and assistance can be a benefit of joint shopping trips, arguments based on conflicting views can also make the shopping companion almost an enemy during the process, increasing negative emotions during the trip and hindering purchases overall.

Research in family decision-making has looked at parent-child interactions in great depth, examining the adolescent's influence in family purchases (e.g. Beatty and Talpade 1994; Wang

et al. 2007), the relative influence of parents versus peers (e.g. Lueg et al. 2006), and the influence strategies used by family members (e.g., Palan and Wilkes 1997; Shoham and Dalakas 2006). Consistent with past research, this study has shown that adolescents have a large influence over purchases made for their own use. However, just because they have a large influence does not mean parents readily accept their opinions. For some pairs, there is a constant struggle during the trip to try to find merchandise, or even a store, that is satisfactory to both mother and daughter. It is not until the daughter has learned what is and is not acceptable to her parents that she really gains control over purchase decisions.

During early adolescence, adolescents seem to have influence over the types of clothes they can purchase, but parents seem to be the real decision makers, approving of all purchases beforehand. Later in adolescence, once parents know that the daughter understands the boundaries, decision-making seems to shift more to the daughter. Many older adolescents also have jobs providing financial resources that reduce conflict related to price issues. Thus, adolescents gain control in the decision stage as they get older. This is actually inconsistent with recent research on adolescent influence at different stages in the decision process that showed adolescents ages 13 to 15 to have an equal influence at the initiation stage as the decision stage but a less significant role in the search stage (Wang et al. 2007). Consistent with the Haytko and Baker (2004) study on adolescent girls' shopping, qualitative interviews show that many girls will shop with friends for ideas and then bring their moms back to the store to make purchases. This suggests that girls do have a large role in initiation and search.

These variations from the Wang et al. (2007) study are consistent with prior research (e.g. Beatty and Talpade 1994) but are also likely due to the nature of clothes shopping. Balance theory also helps explain these results. As mentioned before, conflicts and unbalanced situations

are more common in early adolescence. When this imbalance exists, mom seems to doubt that her daughter will make a 'good' decision and she thus relies on the fact that she is the one with the financial resources and makes the final decision. When balance does exist, mom trusts that her daughter's decisions will be along the same lines as her own and thus lets the daughter have more control at the decision stage.

Since the interaction between shopping companions is something that is largely out of the retailer's control, it is important to try to understand what is going on between the individuals and how that might ultimately impact the shopping trip. Balance theory can also easily apply to couples shopping together or friends shopping together. When there is an underlying conflict and imbalance exists between any shopping companions, the imbalance negatively influences the overall experience and retail outcomes. Knowing this and knowing the common sources of conflict for different types of shopping companions could help retailers restore balance for customers. The most interesting aspect of this in a retail setting is that a third party (possibly a retail employee) can help shopping companions to achieve balance. If retailers develop a better understanding of shopping companion dynamics, employees can gain tools that may help them address these conflicts with customers shopping in their stores. I discuss this further in the next section as it relates to managerial implications.

### ***Managerial Implications***

This research provides several implications for managers of retail stores. One of the most important findings seems to be the issue of store atmosphere. Past research has shown that store music influences mood (Cameron et al. 2003), excitement (Wakefield and Baker 1998), desire to stay (Wakefield and Baker 1998), perceived wait time (Cameron et al. 2003), and the psychic costs (Baker et al. 2002) experienced while shopping. Similarly, lighting can influence time

spent and number of items examined at a store display (Summers and Herbert 2001). Many popular retail stores for the adolescent population continue to play loud music and have a dark atmosphere. These atmospheric qualities obviously target the adolescent population, but adolescents in our study do not claim to love this type of atmosphere. Many adolescent girls actually said that they prefer stores with quieter music and brighter lighting. While this atmosphere does not seem to produce negative emotions for adolescents, it does not produce positive emotions either. Consistent with past research, store atmosphere has a strong influence on mothers' emotions. They experience negative emotions when shopping in dark, loud stores with music they dislike. Thus, given that this type of atmosphere seems to elicit only negative emotions, I do not recommend it for teen retail stores. Furthermore, if a store wants a dark atmosphere to create a certain image, they should at least increase supplemental lighting so that moms might be more inclined to participate in the selection process. Teen-focused stores that maintain a brighter atmosphere and keep music at a more moderate level are much more appealing from a mother's perspective and are more likely to get her money.

Some retailers may still choose to use this type of atmosphere, possibly with the intent of keeping parents out of the store since they are aware that some teens may think it is not 'cool' to wear clothes that a parent actually likes. However, we recommend that they at least provide comfortable seating in a well-lit, quieter area of the store, perhaps near the fitting room. This will prevent mothers from walking around the store but will enable them to wait in the store for their daughters to shop and try on clothing. This would ultimately reduce negative emotions and increase purchases. It would also help satisfy both perspectives of the nonsymmetrical relationship. The mother may have a slightly improved view of the store since it is more accommodating, but the daughter will still view the store as a teen-only store that her mother

does not want to walk around in with her. Retailers must remember that parents have the money and often have a large influence in what teens purchase. Thus, even a store with an anti-parent image must cater to parents to some degree to reduce the tension they experience while shopping with their adolescent children and ultimately increase purchases in the store.

Other managerial implications relate to the retail employees' role in the shopping trip. Confirming findings from Beatty et al. (1996), employees in this study are able to help reduce negative emotions that stem from mother-daughter conflicts. They may be able to suggest merchandise that is a compromise between both parties or they may even be able to assist in the conflict resolution process by talking customers through their conflicts. This area has not received much attention in the marketing literature but can be quite useful for retailers dealing with shopping companions who may be prone to conflicts (e.g. parents and children or husbands and wives). As this research showed, retail employees can help resolve some of the conflict experienced by mother and daughter. This provides implications for training retail employees. Having identified the specific sources of conflict that are most common for mother-daughter pairs during adolescence, retail employees should receive training on how to ease tension between mother and daughter in these specific areas. In regards to the fit of the clothing, they should be prepared with suggestions on how to make the clothes less revealing and thus more appropriate. Employees might suggest layering options for a revealing top to make it school appropriate. They might even direct customers to a store where they can buy undershirts that would serve this purpose or possibly begin stocking items that are more modest.

Retail managers should also work with and train employees on how to form relationships with both mothers and daughters in their stores. As has been shown in past research (e.g. Beatty et al. 1996; Price and Arnould 1999; Reynolds and Beatty 1999), relationships formed with retail

employees seem to simplify the shopping process and create satisfaction and customer loyalty. If employees know the issues to address with parents, they might be able to strike up a conversation that make the parents feel better about the particular store that is being shopped in without having to change the style or atmosphere of a store to accommodate parents. Thus, a parent may not necessarily like other aspects of the store itself, but having an employee that can make the process more enjoyable will keep her coming back to that retail store. Again, this would help satisfy both members of a potentially nonsymmetrical relationship.

### ***Limitations and Future Research***

This study provides an in-depth view of the mother-daughter shopping trip. However, some areas still need additional study. In the sample profile (see Appendix), some age groups received only a few interviews. Specifically, 15 and 16 year olds make up a relatively small portion of the sample, and college students make up only about 15% of the sample. The sample is also predominantly white, and although I did not capture family income level, respondents do seem to be in the middle to upper middle income groups. Interviews were also limited to only a few southern towns and cities. Due to all of these factors, the sample is only representative of a small portion of the U.S. population.

Another issue is that social desirability may have influenced responses from all parties. Moms and daughters interviewed together may have been reluctant to be completely truthful. Similarly, friends that I interviewed in groups may have answered questions in a way that they think their friends would have approved of, rather than being completely honest. Attempts to interview people in a variety of different groups (some alone, some in small groups, some in larger groups, etc.) hopefully helped address some of these issues, but it is difficult to know for sure.

A few other areas related to this topic could benefit from additional research. First, the model and propositions need examination through a quantitative study. This would help show whether the findings are generalizable to a larger portion of the population. It would also help sort through how the specific emotions that are experienced might differentially influence retailing outcomes. For example, it seems that negative emotions have a stronger influence than positive emotions overall. These findings are consistent with prior research. Jones et al. (2007) had similar findings in regards to positive and negative emotions on repurchase intentions and negative word-of-mouth. Mano and Oliver (1993) found negative affect to have a greater impact on satisfaction than positive affect. It would further be beneficial to see if this finding holds for all retail outcomes and all shoppers. For example, someone who is a recreational shopper and simply loves to shop may react differently than someone who hates to shop. A positive shopping experience might be more influential to the shopper who typically hates shopping since it is so unexpected. Thus, it may have a greater impact than the expected negative emotions they experience.

It would also be interesting to examine the remaining parent-child combinations during the shopping trip (mother-son, father-daughter, and father-son) or the sibling-sibling pairing. This would help reveal the entire picture when it comes to shopping during adolescence. Since the mother-daughter relationship has been shown to be the most volatile during the adolescent years, shopping trips with the other dyads may be influenced less by the emotional component of the trip. Further, some research has shown that females tend to have more negative affective reactions than males (e.g. Derbaix and Pham 1991), so negative emotions may not play as large of a role in shopping situations with males. While this study showed the type of atmosphere that

mothers dislike, it did not provide a thorough examination of the type of atmosphere that both parties might enjoy. Future research should identify the ideal atmosphere for teen retail stores.

Another area that could use further investigation is the view of the retail employee. This study used retail employees as a way of validating findings that emerged from interviews with adolescent girls and mothers of adolescent girls. Additional interviews with retail employees could uncover more strategies used to approach girls in this age group, mothers shopping for this age group, and other shopping companions like boyfriends or fathers. A study with retail employees could also go into greater depth in regards to relationships formed with girls or their mothers and the general differences that may exist between male and female employees and between teen and adult employees working in these stores.

Finally, it would be interesting to look at how mother-daughter shopping changes over time. For example, when children are young, the mother-daughter trip may be more about teaching the daughter how to shop. During adolescence, there is a large focus on conflicts experienced since adolescents are in the process of separating themselves from parents. As young adults, mother-daughter shopping may shift to being primarily a bonding experience for both mom and daughter since the daughter is now living away from home. This relationship would continue to change as mom and daughter's ages and positions in life change.



## Appendix: Sample Profile

In this table, names are listed only for those who were interviewed. However, descriptive information is provided for the daughters of all the moms that were interviewed. Girls listed within the same row were interviewed together. Pseudonyms are used throughout.

\*\*Indicates that mom and daughter were interviewed together

\*Indicates that mom and daughter were both interviewed, but separately

### Mothers and Adolescent Girls Interviewed

n = 55

Mother	Mom's Age	Adolescent Girl	Girl's Age	Grade	Education Cohort	Race
n = 20		n = 35	Early Adolescents n = 29 Late Adolescents n = 26		MS: n = 25 HS: n = 22 CLG: n = 8	White: n=45 Non-white: n=10
Maya	35		12	6	Middle School	Asian
Rita	42		12	6	Middle School	Asian
Rina**	52	Anita**	12	6	Middle School	White
June**	47	Tessa**	12	6	Middle School	White
		Ashley	12	6	Middle School	White
		Anna	12	6	Middle School	White
Mary	38		13	7	Middle School	White
Susan*	52	Kacey*	13	8	Middle School	White
		Linda	13	8	Middle School	Black
		Ally	13	8	Middle School	White
		Cindy	13	8	Middle School	White
		Hannah	13	8	Middle School	White
		Mary	16	11	High School	White
Patty	37		14	8	Middle School	White
Sheryl	49		14	8	Middle School	White
Doris	40		14	8	Middle School	White
Anna**	45	Jenny**	14	8	Middle School	White
Deidra**	38	Sydney**	14	8	Middle School	White
		Amy	14	8	Middle School	White
		Krista	14	8	Middle School	White
		Jessie	14	8	Middle School	White
Rhonda**	45	Audrey**	15	9	High School	White
Carly**	56	Kaelyn**	15	11	High School	White

Mother	Mom's Age	Adolescent Girl	Girl's Age	Grade	Education Cohort	Race
		Cally	16	11	High School	White
Rose	42		16	11	High School	Black
Lauryn*	49	Shanda*	16	11	High School	Black
		Jenna	17	12	High School	White
		Karissa	17	12	High School	White
		Melissa	17	11	High School	White
		Sarina	17	11	High School	White
		Lily	17	11	High School	White
		Beth	17	11	High School	White
Ellen	43		17	11	High School	White
Liz**	51	Jordan**	17	12	High School	White
Dana	53		18	12	High School	White
Martha**	47	Jill**	18	12	High School	White
		Victoria	18	12	High School	White
		Natalie	19	Freshman	College	White
Carolyn*		Leigh*	18	Freshman	College	Black
		Elise	18	Freshman	College	White
		Kristen	19	Freshman	College	White
		Shauna	18	Freshman	College	Black
		Kathryn	19	Sophomore	College	White
		Whitney	19	Sophomore	College	White

### Retail Employees Interviewed

n = 8

Employee	Store	Age
Amy	Buckle	21
Britney	Forever21	26
Sarah	Gap	18
Julie	Kohl's	17
Whitney	Rue21	16
Candice	Rue21	24
John	Rue21	22
Mindy	Pac Sun	17

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## CHAPTER 4: OVERALL CONCLUSION

This dissertation provides a detailed examination of adolescent shopping, exploring the issues that seem to be central to adolescent girls' shopping behavior. Parents are important because they have control over the amount of money spent and purchases made for adolescents (Haytko and Baker 2004). Peers are important because adolescents turn to their friends during the identity formation process, as they develop an identity separate from parents (Gemelli 1996). Appearance and clothing become a central focus for adolescents, largely due to the physical changes that occur during the adolescent phase of development.

### Essay 1

Girls in this age group begin using clothing to define their appearance, express their identities, categorize peers, and make judgments about peers (Wooten 2006). In the first essay, we see the influence that peers have in the shopping process. Through a qualitative study, I first outline and discuss the store stereotyping process and show that adolescents evaluate stores the same way they evaluate peers. They categorize stores into different style groups and make judgments of those stores based on group affiliation. I develop a new variable, social identification with a retail store, to capture this process and test it in a quantitative study. Social identification with a retail store has a strong influence on store image evaluations, approach toward the store, time spent shopping in the store, and percent of clothes that come from a retail



store. This reinforces the qualitative finding that group categorization is central to retail outcomes.

I additionally tested two moderating variables. Results show that consumer need for uniqueness (Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001) moderates the relationship between social identification with a retail store and shopping behavior. Identification with friends moderates the relationship between social identification with a retail store and approach. Both moderating variables weaken the relationship between social identification with a retail store and these outcome variables. Since past research has linked consumer need for uniqueness with fashion opinion leadership (e.g. Bertrandias and Goldsmith 2006; Goldsmith and Clark 2008), the moderation provided by consumer need for uniqueness suggests that retailers may be able to get girls from different style groups to shop in and purchase from their stores by appealing to fashion leaders in those groups. This is one way retailers can expand their customer base and potentially increase sales during these difficult economic times.

From a theoretical standpoint, Essay 1 primarily shows how social identity theory guides store evaluations and shopping outcomes for adolescent girls. The strong influence of identification of a retail store ultimately demonstrates the power of social identity theory for this population. In-group/out-group categorization is the key driver of store image evaluations and shopping outcomes. While in-group categorization has a positive influence on store image evaluation and outcome variables for all girls in the study, the moderation results show that the degree to which social identity influences outcome variables changes based on some individual difference variables. These results seem to suggest that optimal distinctiveness theory (which I cover only briefly in this essay) may in fact, be quite applicable to adolescent shopping behavior.

Optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer 1991) states that individuals continuously strive to achieve ideal levels of assimilation and differentiation. Although I did not set out to test this theory, the moderating variables provide an explanation of how some girls might use different aspects of shopping to increase feelings of differentiation and arrive at their optimal level of distinctiveness. The strong influence of social identification across all adolescents shows that the optimal level of distinctiveness is likely much higher for adolescents than it is for the general population. Girls who have a high consumer need for uniqueness may place less importance on social identification with a retail store in shopping behavior than the rest of the group. Therefore, they might spend time shopping in and make purchases from some out-group stores to differentiate themselves from peers. Girls who are strong in their identification with friends placed less emphasis on social identification in their evaluation of how much they want to shop in a retail store. Therefore, they might be more inclined to enjoy shopping in out-group stores as a way of differentiating themselves from peers.

## **Essay 2**

Through a qualitative examination, Essay 2 provides a summary of the key influential factors on the mother-daughter shopping trip: individual attitudes toward shopping, store atmosphere, conflict during the trip, and emotions during the trip. Most moms tend to believe that their daughters have a better sense of what is in fashion than they do, and therefore look to their daughters to tell them where to shop when purchasing adolescents' clothes. This shows that peer group affiliation essentially drives both adolescent girls and their mothers into a store. However, many mothers dislike the atmosphere and clothes in some of these stores. While girls

in this age group do not mind shopping in stores that play loud music, moms seem irritated shopping in this type of atmosphere. This produces negative emotions for mothers during the trip, which negatively influence shopping outcomes. Retailers can accommodate moms by keeping music to a lower volume, retaining reasonably bright lighting within the store, and keeping scents neutral and minimal.

As adolescents gravitate toward peers during this time, they seem to confide less in their moms on a daily basis. Interviews show that many moms want to use shopping as a bonding opportunity in which they can catch-up with what is going on in their daughters' lives. Moms also like to use this time as an opportunity to teach daughters how to be good shoppers. Again, loud retail settings are unattractive to moms because they are not able to communicate in those stores. Retailers can provide seating, magazines, and other accommodations to create an atmosphere for moms where they can talk to their daughters in a comfortable setting as they try on clothes. This would help attract moms to the environment and keep them there as they chat with their daughters during the trip.

The mother-daughter paper incorporates balance theory (Heider 1958), which the shopping companion literature stream does not currently address. Balance theory in itself explains a lot about the emotions that shoppers experience when multiple shoppers are on the trip. This population is unique because adolescents are in the process of separating their identity from parents and gravitate more toward the peer group at this time. The first essay demonstrated the importance of the peer group in an adolescent's store preference. If the adolescent girl's views (which are likely in-line with peers) do not match up with mom's preferences, there is the potential for a nonsymmetrical relationship. The daughter may wish to separate herself even further away from mom to become more like friends in order to create psychological balance

from her perspective. She has a positive relationship with the store that friends like, mom has a negative view of the store or her friends, and therefore she has a negative view of mom or perceives disunion between herself and her mom to create balance. This brings a lot of conflict into the mother-daughter shopping process.

The interviews also reveal that a third party can help restore balance and minimize negative emotions by resolving conflict when it occurs. Money and style are two other areas that seem to cause conflict between mother and daughter. Retailers ultimately have the ability to act as a mediating party between mother and daughter on these topics. Retail employees can offer more affordable alternatives when price becomes an area of conflict. They can provide layering options when revealing clothing is the source of conflict. They can further use their knowledge of fashion to settle any issues that stem from conflicting preferences of parents and peers. Employees cannot settle the large, underlying differences as easily, but they can manage these smaller differences to keep mom and daughter happy during the trip. Thus, if retail employees can neutralize conflicts and reduce the negative emotions that stem from conflicts, they can positively influence retail outcomes for those customers.

### **Key Findings across Studies**

In summary, these two essays provide useful information for retail stores who want to succeed in the adolescent market. This research identifies atmosphere and employees as two areas in which retailers can make alterations that will ultimately increase sales for the store. Established retailers seem to know how to attract specific peer groups, through their use of certain images, music, and merchandise in the store. This is essential since girls primarily shop in

stores that they consider part of their in-group. However, some retail stores are off-putting to moms due to dark lighting, loud noises, and strong scents. Others simply fail to accommodate mothers as they “tag along” for shopping trips with daughters. Retailers can increase the amount of time and money mothers are willing to spend in a store if they provide an atmosphere that is welcoming to the mothers in addition to being attractive to teen style groups.

Both essays show that retail employees have the ability to influence outcomes for individual customers. In the first essay, I show that retail employees may be able to change a perceived store stereotype by welcoming out-group customers who venture into the store. If a girl encounters a welcoming atmosphere that contradicts the perceived stereotype, she may decide to shop in the store regardless of her previous notions. Retail employees can also help mesh mother’s and daughter’s preferences as they shop together by pointing out more affordable alternatives, presenting layering options for revealing clothing, and settling differences using their fashion expertise. Thus, retailers can gain a large advantage by taking the time to train employees in these areas.

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## APPENDIX: IRB APPROVAL

Office for Research

Institutional Review Board for the  
Protection of Human Subjects

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA**  
R E S E A R C H

June 30, 2010

Alexa Martinez Givan  
26920 Pollard Road #717  
Daphne, Alabama 36526

Re: IRB # 08-OR-181-R2 "Adolescent Stores and Style Groups"

Dear Ms. Givan:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your renewal application.

Your protocol has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

*(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.*

Your application will expire on June 29, 2011. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of Continuing Review and Closure Form. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the Continuing Review and Closure Form.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Carpano T. Myles, MSM, CUM  
Director & Research Compliance Officer  
Office of Research Compliance  
The University of Alabama



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