BODY CATHEXIS, FIT SATISFACTION, AND FIT PREFERENCES AMONG
BLACK AND WHITE PLUS-SIZED WOMEN

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BODY CATHEXIS, FIT SATISFACTION, AND FIT PREFERENCES AMONG BLACK AND WHITE PLUS-SIZED WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preferences of non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White women who reported wearing a size 14 or greater. The purpose of this study was to ascertain if differences arise between the two groups and if these differences are related to ethnicity or another demographic variable. Consistent with past research, the results acquired through a questionnaire were able to show that Black and White women do experience different feelings toward their bodies and the way in which clothing fits their bodies.

Although the Non-Hispanic Black sample was not exempt from body dissatisfaction, the degree of dissatisfaction expressed by the Black sample was less than that reported by the non-Hispanic White sample at all measured body sites. In addition, results showed that plus-sized Black women had greater clothing fit satisfaction at all body site categories than plus-sized White women. Overall, the non-Hispanic Black respondents were more satisfied with their bodies, which led to greater satisfaction with how clothing fits their bodies.

Using a previously tested instrument created by Chattaraman and Rudd in 2001 called the “Aesthetics Attribute Preference Scale,” participants were asked to identify their fit preferences for top length, top silhouette, sleeve length, neckline, bottom silhouette, bottom length, and waist placement. Even though Black women were more satisfied with their bodies and the fit of their clothing, there were only two areas that their
fit preferences differed significantly from the White respondents. Non-Hispanic Black women preferred a less-fitted bottom silhouette and a slightly higher waistline than the non-Hispanic White participants.

Through a series of correlations and a regression model, the impact of all of the demographic variables on the reported body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and fit preference variables was considered. It was found that the body cathexis and fit satisfaction of these women are influenced primarily by their ethnicity, not other demographic variables, such as age, income, or education while fit preferences were influenced by ethnicity, age, and income. The results of this study will allow retailers to provide a better clothing assortment to the non-Hispanic Black or White plus-sized woman.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have analyzed the impact of the accepted feminine ideal on body image and body satisfaction of women. Some researchers have even studied the differences between body image and body satisfaction in women of different races and different body sizes. The results of this research have been varied. Some research has shown that non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White women have the same degree of body satisfaction while other research has found that non-Hispanic Black women have a higher degree of satisfaction with their bodies.

When examining the definition of beauty in Black and White women, the cliché, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” is applicable because research has shown that these women can have opposing viewpoints. Andria Thomas, Ginger Moseley, Rayvelle Stallings, Gloria Nichols-English, and Peggy Wagner determined that although some Black plus-sized women and White plus-sized women share commonalities in their viewpoints regarding feminine beauty, there are also women of each race who hold opposing opinions as to the idyllic body size for women.¹ Several research studies conducted from 1996 to 2002 suggest that Black plus-sized women may be more comfortable with their body shape and receive more familial support about their size,

causing fewer body image issues. In addition, women of all races having a larger body size are more likely to have a lower body image and a higher degree of body dissatisfaction than women with a smaller body size.

No matter the color of her skin or the clothing size that she may wear, clothing is closely tied with body image and body satisfaction of a woman. In studies conducted in 1992, 1994 and 2001, Bloch and Richins and Rudd and Lennon purport that women select clothing that will help them achieve the Western aesthetic ideal by emphasizing positive characteristics and minimizing negative characteristics. Although research has

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3 Sidney M. Jourard and Paul F. Secord, “Body-Cathexis and the Ideal Female Figure,” Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology 50, no. 2 (March 1955): 244.

been conducted on differences in body image and satisfaction among women of varied ethnicities, few studies have focused on clothing fit satisfaction and fit preferences.

According to Eugene Morris in the article, “The Difference in Black and White,” Black and White consumers exhibit vast differences in “language use, tastes, and product preferences.” These preferences include clothing choices and can impact what is to be considered “good fit” when selecting garments. Although the plus-sized market is still growing in importance in today’s marketplace, very little scholarly research has been focused on the clothing preferences of this population. Therefore, this study will not only serve to explore if differences exist between non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White women in terms of clothing fit satisfaction and fit preferences, but will also focus its attention on the plus-sized market. Due to a lack of size standardization, there is no concrete definition of what constitutes a plus-size woman. The current market suggests, however, that the plus-sized market begins at size 14. Plus-size retailers, such as Lane Bryant, The Avenue, Dress Barn, Fashion Bug, Dots, and Old Navy begin their plus-sized assortment at size 14, so for the purpose of this study the term plus-size will refer to a woman who wears a size 14 or greater.

Perception of Ideal Beauty in the United States

Most Western women have been conditioned to adhere to a specific set of beauty standards. Allan Mazur asserted that there is much pressure placed on the appearance of women to “conform to an ideal of beauty.” Yet, there is evidence to support the idea

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that women of different ethnicities and backgrounds have different definitions of what is considered to be the ideal body type. This study will evaluate two different ethnic groups of plus-sized women to see if their racial identity is related to their perceptions of beauty.

Throughout the history of the United States, the definition of ideal beauty has shifted. Albeit difficult to imagine, Mazur posed there was a period of time in the late-nineteenth century when “women worried about being too thin.” Women even used padding to add bulk to their appearance. During the years of World War I, diverse images of feminine beauty decorated the pages of magazines and calendars. According to Mazur, curvaceous women could be found within the “National Police Gazette” and were favorites in burlesque shows. On the other hand, Mazur stated that the first nude model appearing in a calendar was portrayed as a “slender and delicate” woman in 1913.

Throughout the twentieth century, the ideal of beauty continued to shift. According to author Bernard Rudofsky, when the female foot was revealed, it challenged the standards of beauty and piqued male curiosity. Rudofsky contended that during the 1920s “a woman’s physical attractiveness” shifted its focus to the face and exposed legs. During the 1920s, a slim, flattened figure was the dominant silhouette.

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7 Ibid, 285.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
Throughout the 1940s, the bosom became the focus of the feminine ideal “as the leg emphasis diminished.”\textsuperscript{14} Curves emerged as the desired physical attribute during the 1950s. This is also evident when one tracks the Miss America winners over a period from the 1940s to the mid-1960s. During this period, the circumference of the waistline dramatically declined while the hips and bust increased.\textsuperscript{15}

According to Mazur, it was during the 1950s that Hollywood encouraged women to emphasize cleavage, cinch their waists, and walk in such a way to highlight their hips.\textsuperscript{16} Marilyn Monroe, for instance, was a curvaceous beauty and fashion icon of the 1950s, yet Cathy Newman declared in the article, “The Enigma of Beauty,” that if held to today’s standards, she may not have been revered for her beauty.\textsuperscript{17} Emily Kravinsky, medical director at the Renfrew Center in Philadelphia, pointed out that if Marilyn Monroe were to attend Weight Watchers today, there would be no opposition.\textsuperscript{18}

In the mid-1960s, with the arrival of the “Beatles-led British invasion” and supermodel Twiggy, came the mini-skirt, which influenced a more slender physique for women.\textsuperscript{19} Twiggy’s popularity in the United States radically altered the feminine ideal

\textsuperscript{13} Mazur, 288.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 289.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 291.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Mazur, 294.
during the 1960s. She arrived as a 91-pound teenager standing 5 feet 7 inches tall.\textsuperscript{20} Within six weeks of her arrival to New York, she exploded onto the scene as an “unprecedented marketing phenomenon.”\textsuperscript{21} Suddenly, Twiggy’s image was everywhere and mannequins matching her small frame of “31-22-32” appeared in Fifth Avenue storefront windows.\textsuperscript{22}

During this time, Twiggy had a large impact on teenage girls in America. According to Terry Poulton, there were more than thirty million teenage girls who were willing to spend their allowances on anything that “differentiated them from their mothers.”\textsuperscript{23} Poulton attributed the adoption of short skirts, long eyelashes, and dieting to Twiggy’s presence in mainstream culture.\textsuperscript{24} This greatly contributed to the desire to be thin in U.S. culture.

Today, the definition of beauty within the United States is generally centered on the idea of being thin. The way in which individuals present themselves to others can lead to interpretation of one’s life beyond physical attributes. In fact, author Sarah Grogan associated one’s outward appearance with a sense of “order or disorder” in an individual’s life.\textsuperscript{25} This idea is drawn from the fact that most people are not born

\textsuperscript{20} Terry Poulton, \textit{No Fat Chicks: How Big Business Profits by Making Women Hate Their Bodies-And How to Fight Back}. (Secaucus: Carol Publishing Group, 1997): 23.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 24.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 25.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.

naturally thin or toned, and “must continually work to achieve this cultural ideal.”\textsuperscript{26} If an individual does not put forth effort to embody the ideal body type, then others may interpret their lifestyle as disorderly.

In an effort to conform to the Western cultural ideal of beauty, Newman cited that over twenty billion dollars was spent by the American people on products and services to aid dieters at the turn of the millennium.\textsuperscript{27} This figure does not include the billions of dollars spent on health club memberships and cosmetic surgery.\textsuperscript{28} An unidentified 1997 magazine survey, discussed by Newman, found that 15 percent of women and 11 percent of men sampled would “sacrifice more than five years of their life to be at their ideal weight.”\textsuperscript{29} Even in this slim-obsessed culture, however, Newman asserted the population is moving towards obesity.\textsuperscript{30}

Although individuals long to become thin and conform to the ideal body type, the reality is that there is a definite disparity between the feminine archetype and reality. Emily Kravinsky, medical director at the Renfrew Center in Philadelphia, stated that “the distance between the cultural ideal of what we would like to look like and the reality of what we actually look like is becoming wider.”\textsuperscript{31} Studies conducted during the late 1970s and early 1980s by Horvath and another by Beck, Ward-Hull, and McLear

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{27} Newman, 105.  \\
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 113.  \\
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 116.
\end{flushright}
confirmed that women preferred “slender figures, small buttocks, and middle to small size busts.”

Common complaints over the years from women in regards to their bodies included concerns about body weight, having too large hips and buttocks, as well as breasts that were too small. In a study conducted in 2007 to determine the difference between women’s perceived body size as compared to the perceived ideal body size, Tanya Domina, Roschelle Heuberger, and Maureen MacGillivray found that an overwhelming majority, 86 percent, of women studied selected an “ideal figure that was thinner than their current figure” compared to just over 9 percent of the participants who selected their current figure as the ideal body type. This illustrates that as American woman become increasingly larger, the gap between reality and the “Western feminine ideal” continues to grow.


Although the feminine ideal has shifted throughout time, there is a current disparity between the ideal body type and reality. With that in mind, this study focuses its attention to the plus-sized consumer and her feelings towards her body and how clothing fits her body. The United States is consumed with concern that the population is becoming increasingly overweight and obese. In fact, Paul Garfinkel stated that in 1995 one-third of the United States population was considered overweight. Dick Silverman wrote that about 127 million people in the United States are overweight, having a body mass index (BMI) between twenty-five and slightly less than thirty. A study conducted by Cynthia Ogden, Margaret D. Carroll, Lester R. Curtin, Margaret A. McDowell, Carolyn Tabak, and Katherine Flegal, which examined data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), determined that obesity in adults aged twenty and older doubled between the years of 1980 and 2002. In addition, Ogden et al. declared that 32.2 percent of adults aged twenty and over during 2003-2004 were found to be obese having a body mass index greater than thirty. During the time period of 2007-2008 the same data were collected an examined in the NHANES. According to

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39 Ogden et al., 1550.
Katherine Flegal, Margaret D. Carroll, Cynthia Ogden, and Lester R. Curtin, overweight and obesity accounted for 68 percent of the United States population.\textsuperscript{40}

Although Flegal et al. purported that the prevalence of obesity (BMI $\geq 30$) among adults in the United States was 33.9 percent during 2007-2008, the percentage of women is 35.5 percent.\textsuperscript{41} More specifically, non-Hispanic White women account for 33 percent of obese women while non-Hispanic Black women account for 49.6 percent.\textsuperscript{42} In category 2 and 3 obesity, in which the BMI $\geq 35$, non-Hispanic White women accounted for 16.6 percent while non-Hispanic Black women accounted for 27.9 percent.\textsuperscript{43} This difference is significant in the grade 3 level obesity, in which BMI $\geq 40$, and non-Hispanic Black women account for 14.2 percent while non-Hispanic White women comprise 7.2 percent.\textsuperscript{44} The findings, however, also suggest that a significant increase in the prevalence of obesity in women during the decade of 1999-2008 did not occur, but also found little evidence to support the thought that the rate of obesity is declining in women.\textsuperscript{45}

The rates of overweight and obesity are consistent with research completed on the average body measurements by race. According to the \textit{National Health Statistics Reports}
published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2008, data compiled from the U.S. population during the years of 2003 through 2006, Black women had larger measurements overall and weighed more than White women.\textsuperscript{46} Table 1 and Table 2 are information that I have compiled from the data provided by McDowell et al., which illustrates that Black women aged twenty and older had larger body size. For instance, according to the data, the average Black woman weighed over twenty more pounds than the average White woman.\textsuperscript{47} Table 1 illustrates that the average Black woman was just slightly shorter than the average White woman, which resulted in the average Black woman having a 13 percent higher BMI than White women.\textsuperscript{48} 

In Table 2, the measurements show that the average Black woman has a larger circumference in her waist, mid arm, the largest part of the calf, and at mid thigh.\textsuperscript{49} The largest difference is in the mid-thigh measurements. The average circumference of an average Black woman’s mid thigh is over 10 percent larger than the average White woman’s mid-thigh measurement.

In addition to the data provided by McDowell et al., other research also supports the findings that Black woman have a larger body size than White women. Mintel International Group Ltd., a research consulting firm, conducted a study in an effort to


\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 14, 18.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 22, 25, 37, 43.

<table>
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<th>Women &gt; 20 years</th>
<th>Weight (in lbs.)</th>
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<th>BMI</th>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>184.8</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>31.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>163.7</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Women &gt; 20 years</th>
<th>Circumference Measurements (in centimeters)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>99.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>93.7</td>
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market more effectively to U.S. women.\textsuperscript{50} This study found the average body measurements of women in the United States by race/ethnicity in 2004.\textsuperscript{51} The data provided in Table 3 divide Black women and White women into two separate age groups, 18-35 years old and 36-65 years old. Researchers found that Black women had larger measurements in all three areas measured: bust, waist, and hips when evaluating the age eighteen to thirty-five group.\textsuperscript{52} As can be noted in Table 3, Black women had larger measurements in nearly all measurement when comparing two age brackets.\textsuperscript{53} The only exception is that the hip measurement of Black and White women ages 36-65 is the same at 43.9 inches.\textsuperscript{54}

Although the current study will not take measurements of the participants, these data tables will serve as a good point of reference for this study. The research questionnaire will collect data related to age, weight, and height, and these data will lend support for the data collected throughout the current survey.

\textit{Rise of the Plus-Sized Market}

In a 2008 survey conducted by the Mintel International Group Ltd., a research consulting firm, women reported that the most frequently worn size is presently a size


\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
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<th>Waist (in inches)</th>
<th>Hips (in inches)</th>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>41.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>34.3</td>
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<td>35.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>43.9</td>
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Although these findings suggest an urgent need to provide for a larger customer, Christina Binkley reported in *The Wall Street Journal* that most fashion designers have only been offering apparel to women with a maximum size of twelve leaving a significant segment of the population yearning for more options.\(^{56}\)

In a market with very few options to choose, Emili Visilind reported that the NPD Group, a retail research firm, indicated plus-sized women still spent nearly nineteen billion dollars on apparel in stores and online during the time period of December 2007 through November 2008.\(^{57}\) Although this total only amounts to 20 percent of regular-size sales, Visilind wrote the number of plus-sized “brick-and-mortar” retailers accounts for less than 20 percent of the total women’s apparel industry.\(^{58}\)

This illustrates opportunity for an increased number of plus-sized stores. If there were more stores, then the plus-sized market would grow. Recognizing an unmet need and a market full of potential, retailers are slowly surrendering to the growing trend to provide fashion for the plus-sized woman. According to Otieno, Harrow, and Lea-Greenwood, the plus-sized market increased by 22 percent during 2000-2005 while the standard-size market has experienced an increase of only 11 percent.\(^{59}\)

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55 Silverman, 19.


58 Ibid., par. 17.

Paula Kalandiak, a senior retail analyst at New York City-based First Albany Capital, the
plus-sized retail segment is increasing by about 4 to 6 percent each year while the overall
apparel industry experiences a modest increase of only 2 to 4 percent annually. Otieno
et al. declared that as the segment grows, the plus-sized clothing market should remain
appealing to both suppliers and retailers. Retailers will need to continue to overcome
challenges in order to successfully provide for this market.

In addition to offering a variety of sizes and styles, Otieno et al. has identified
other areas of opportunity for the plus-sized fashion retailer, such as exhibiting the plus-
sized fashions in the retail setting, providing the proper fit, and creating an accepting,
positive shopping environment. According to Marshall Cohen, chief industry analyst
for the research firm NPD group, plus-sized women report there are very few offerings in
the market that they like, and the hope of finding items is low. Otieno et al. asserted
women who wear size sixteen and larger have the most difficulty locating well-fitting
clothing. Cohen, in addition, noted that the “longing for style is strong.” Fashion
retailers have the ability to make fashion a priority once again for these women who have
endured disappointing shopping experiences thus far.

61 Otieno et al., 300.
62 Ibid.
63 Visilind, par. 7.
64 Otieno et al., 305.
65 Visilind, par. 7.
66 Ibid.
Marshall Cohen contended that the plus-sized market offers the most growth potential “in all of fashion” stating that he would target this customer “before any other customer” if opening a business today.\textsuperscript{67} Retailers and producers must, however, take into account the fit preferences of plus-sized women in order for the plus-sized market to grow. In addition, retailers and manufacturers must not assume that the clothing and fit preferences of one plus-sized woman are the same for another.

\textsuperscript{67} Silverman, 19.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Racial perception of beauty

Although the feminine ideal portrayed by the media within the United States is a slender and toned body type, the majority of American women, including both Black and White women, do not illustrate this body type. Therefore, research has been completed to discover Black and White women’s viewpoints towards the feminine ideal. Varying opinions were found with respect to the attractiveness of women. In some cases, both Black and White women shared the same viewpoints toward beauty and were disappointed with obesity. In other studies, Black women were found to identify larger body sizes as more attractive than White women and experience less pressure to be thin.


The current study will explore the plus-sized woman’s viewpoint towards beauty by examining her degree of satisfaction with her own body. Then, in an effort to find patterns from past research, analysis will be completed to ascertain if ethnicity impacts her viewpoints on body satisfaction.

In a previous study completed by Thomas et al., both Black and White women were found to agree with the commonly accepted slim body type as the accepted body shape for women, however the degree of slimness could differ by ethnicity. Thomas et al. found that women of both races do share commonalities with respect to women’s perceptions of “body image, social perceptions of obesity, knowledge of health risks, perceived helpfulness of physicians, self-efficacy, and weight loss attitudes and behaviors.” Through the use of a focus group, content analysis researchers determined that both Black and White plus-sized women engaged in “emotional eating” and shared an aversion for the word “obese.” Both groups of women also cited excessive weight as a barrier to everyday activities and the realization that health problems could result from being overweight.

In addition to the NHANES survey, the Centers for Disease Control has also identified the highest prevalence in obesity in the United States to be in Black women.

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3 Thomas et al., 175.
4 Ibid., 177.
5 Ibid.
In previous studies conducted in the late 1990s and early 2000s by Paratakul et al., Flynn and Fitzgibbon, Parnell et al., Striegel-Moore et al., Young-Hyman, Herman, and Schlundt, it has been noted that the Black population recognizes “heavier body size as more attractive.” In addition, numerous researchers in the late 1990s and early 2000s, including Lovejoy, Paratakul et al., Flynn and Fitzgibbon, Parnell et al., Striegel-Moore et al., Young-Hyman, Herman, and Schlundt, and Cash and Henry, have also contended that there is less “social pressure” among the Black populous to maintain a thin stature, which could result in less impetus to lose weight. On the other hand, other research conducted in the late 1990s and throughout the twenty-first century by Caldwell et al., Fitzgibbon et al., and Thomas et al. have also stated that Black women are cognizant of their weight issues and are in fact discontent with being overweight.

In a study conducted by Dawnavan S. Davis, Tracy Sbrocco, Angela Odoms-Young, and Dionne M. Smith, both Black and White women selected the “thin

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7 Thomas et al., 174; Paeratakul et al., 348-349; Flynn and Fitzgibbon, 616, 627; Parnell et al., 115, 117; Striegel-Moore et al., 112, 115; Young-Hyman et al., 245.


“silhouettes” and the African American models to be the most attractive when asked to classify the most attractive female body type from a series of images containing both Black and White models. The idea of attractiveness is subjective and Davis et al. hypothesized that Black and White women have different definitions of attractiveness. According to Davis et al., White women recognized a “lean” body as attractive while Black women define attractiveness as one’s overall appearance, including “shapeliness, the fit of clothing, having hips, and femininity.” Upon first examination, Marci Gluck and Allan Geliebter found that Black women identified the ideal body size to be larger than that identified by White women. After the BMI of the respondents was controlled, however, the significance was lost and the ideal body size chosen by both groups was similar in size.

Thomas et al. discovered that Black plus-sized women “disagreed with the ideals for body weight.” As opposed to White plus-sized women, the Black group of women declared the body weight standards to be “too low and unrealistic.” The study also questioned the reasons for not participating in a weight loss program of some kind,

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11 Ibid., 26.

12 Ibid.


14 Ibid., 149.

15 Thomas et al., 179.

16 Ibid.
whether it is self-initiated or through an organization. In a study by Thomas et al., Black women cited limited access to transportation, not wanting to perspire during physical activity, and their close family and friends’ acceptance of their body weight as barriers to weight loss. In the same study, White women, however, expressed discontent with being overweight or obese and cited lack of empathy as a reason for lack of motivation to lose weight. They stated that they would participate more often if the group leader was overweight or had a history of being overweight.

Although some studies found that Black and White women share similarities in their viewpoints towards feminine beauty, several studies found that differences do exist between these two ethnicities. One of the most interesting concepts is that Black and White women defined attractiveness in different manners. The definition for White women focused solely on being thin, whereas Black women had a more complex definition consisting of several factors, including a woman’s shape, the fit of her clothing, and a woman’s degree of femininity. Because of these differences, it is necessary to further explore racial differences among plus-sized women to see if these differences carry over into fit satisfaction and fit preferences.

Body Image and Body Cathexis

A woman’s perception of beauty can affect her body image and body cathexis. Body image and body cathexis are two closely related concepts. According to author

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Davis et al., 26.
Seymour Fisher, body image is the way in which individuals mentally view their bodies.\textsuperscript{21} Evidence suggests that women identify their ideal body size to be smaller than their actual body size. Domina et al. and other researchers, such as Keetan, Cash and Brown, have found that the difference between a woman’s actual body size and their ideal body size can result in body dissatisfaction.\textsuperscript{22}

Authors Paul Secord and Sidney Jourard define body cathexis as “the degree of feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the various parts or processes of the body.”\textsuperscript{23} In a 2010 study, Hyejeong Kim and Mary Lynn Damhorst found that the greater the discrepancy between a woman’s body and her vision of the ideal body type, the greater level of body dissatisfaction.\textsuperscript{24} In addition, Kim and Damhorst found that women who are more concerned with apparel had a higher degree of body dissatisfaction.\textsuperscript{25}

A study conducted by Cynthia Rand and Albert Stunkard concluded that 41 percent of obese participants avoided viewing themselves in a mirror whereas only 7


\textsuperscript{25} Kim and Damhorst, 249.
percent of the average size participants had such avoidance. This illustrates that individuals with larger body size are more likely to have increased weight dissatisfaction and a lower body image. In addition, Jourard and Secord found a correlation between having a larger body size and negative body cathexis.

Many research studies have found that plus-sized women overall have a negative body cathexis. Some researchers have taken a more specific approach and explored the idea that ethnicity is related to body image and body cathexis. Some researchers have found that ethnicity does not play a role in a plus-sized woman’s body satisfaction while others have found that Black women tend to experience greater body satisfaction than White women.

Several researchers found that differences do not exist between Black and White women’s opinions towards body image. Thomas et al. found no racial differences and determined that both Black and White plus-sized women want to be a smaller body size. These findings are similar to other studies concerning body image and body satisfaction that were conducted by Snooks and Hall in 2002, Cachelin et al. also in 2002, Fitzgibbon et al. in 2000, and Caldwell et al. in 1997. Cachelin et al. reported no difference in perceived body image of Black and White women.

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27 Sidney M. Jourard and Paul F. Secord, “Body-Cathexis and the Ideal Female Figure,” *Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology* 50, no. 2 (March 1955): 244.

28 Thomas et al., 177, 179.

In addition, Melissa Caldwell, Kelly Brownell, and Denise Wilfley determined that both Black and White women had body dissatisfaction when adjusting for BMI, income, and marital status. A study conducted by Fitzgibbon et al. concluded that there was no difference in the proportion of Black and White women who reported body dissatisfaction. White women, however, reported body dissatisfaction at a lower weight than Black women. Another study, conducted by Snooks and Hall, saw no difference in self-esteem among African American, European American, and Mexican American middle class women and concluded that all women had self-esteem within the “normal range.”

Although there is evidence to suggest that Black and White females share the same degree of body dissatisfaction, there is also evidence that Black women are less likely to express dissatisfaction than White women. Research conducted by Miller et al. in 2000, Bottá also in 2000, Gluck and Geliebter in 2002, Paeratakul et al. also in 2002, Story et al. in 1995, Harris in 1994, Wilfley et al. in 1996, Lovejoy in 2001, and Flynn and Fitzgibbon in 1996 has found that Black women are more likely to report a more positive body cathexis than White women. When examining Black and White female adolescents, a study conducted by Mary Story, Simone French, Michael Resnick, and

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31 Fitzgibbon et al., 587.

Robert Blum as well as another by Reneé Bottá, concluded that Black adolescent females had higher body satisfaction as compared to White adolescent females. Although this study focuses on an older demographic, these previous findings could imply that young girls are instilled with viewpoints on the feminine ideal from a young age.

Although Black women have a higher rate of obesity than seen in White women, multiple studies, including those conducted by Wilfley et al., Flynn and Fitzgibbon, and Smith et al. concluded that Black women have a greater degree of satisfaction with their bodies and with their weight when BMI was controlled. Paeratakul et al. found Black women were aware they were overweight, but they reported body dissatisfaction at a higher weight than White women resulting in less dissatisfaction overall. African American participants in a study conducted by Miller et al. indicated they had higher self-esteem in reference to their weight. These results were also concluded in a previous

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35 Paeratakul et al., 349.

research study conducted by Cash and Henry and in a study conducted by Shanette Harris in 1994. In these studies, Black women experienced greater levels of satisfaction in their appearance and overall body satisfaction and also reported less overweight concern than White females.\(^{37}\)

Other researchers have found that men’s perspective on beauty heavily influences a woman’s body image, which may differ by ethnicity. For instance, Beth Molloy and Sharon Herzberger determined that African-American women are under the impression that African-American men favor larger sized women and White women think that White men favor thin women.\(^{38}\) In support of these findings, a study conducted by Cachelin et al. found that White women selected a thinner female figure than Black women when asked to identify the female figure most attractive to men.\(^{39}\) In a study by Miller et al., African American women participants rated themselves higher than European women did on sexual attractiveness.\(^{40}\) Although women’s perception of the male point of view may not accurately depict the male perspective, Molloy and Herzberger as well as Cachelin et al. assert these views may contribute to a lower body image in White women.\(^{41}\)

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39 Cachelin et al., 164.

40 Miller et al., 314.

41 Molloy and Herzberger, 632; Cachelin et al., 164.
Overall, conflicting results have been found when examining women’s body image and body cathexis. Jourard and Secord found that overweight women are discontent with being overweight, thus resulting in a negative body cathexis.\textsuperscript{42} In addition, a study conducted by Fitzgibbon et al. found that there is no difference in the proportion of plus-sized Black and White women that share this discontent and wish to be a smaller body size.\textsuperscript{43} White women, however, may feel dissatisfaction at a lower weight than Black women.\textsuperscript{44} On the contrary, other studies have found that Black women report greater levels of body satisfaction than White women.\textsuperscript{45} These results were also found when researching Black and White adolescent females.\textsuperscript{46} Because of the opposing research on this topic, body cathexis of non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White women will be measured in this study to explore if a difference exists in the Black and White participants. If a difference does exist, this could impact the fit satisfaction and fit preferences of the Black and White participants.

\textit{Fit}

Garment fit plays an integral role in the success of a fashion retailer. There are numerous times, however, that fit is not given the proper attention. Instead, aesthetics prevail, which can prove to have negative consequences when the customer is unable to fit into the garment and decides against the purchase. As defined by Brown and Rice, “fit

\textsuperscript{42} Jourard and Secord, 244.

\textsuperscript{43} Fitzgibbon et al., 587.

\textsuperscript{44} Fitzgibbon et al., 587; Paeratakul et al., 349.

\textsuperscript{45} Miller et al., 314-315; Bottá, 152; Gluck and Geliebter, 147; Paeratakul et al., 349; Story et al., 177; Wilfley et al., 384; Lovejoy, 255; Flynn and Fitzgibbon, 626.

\textsuperscript{46} Story et al., 177; Bottá, 152.
refers to how well the garment conforms to the three-dimensional body." Fit, however, is not strictly about the specific measurements that will cover the body. According to Alexander et al., fit “contributes to the confidence and comfort of the wearer.” In a study on apparel ease, Susan Ashdown and Marilyn DeLong defined fit as both a personal judgment based on how the garment looks on the body and also how comfortable the consumer feels in the garment in terms of visual presentation and tangible qualities.

Because all women are built differently and have assorted body types, Douglas Yu, a biologist from Britain, and Glenn Shepard, an anthropologist at the University of California at Berkeley, stated it is even more important for clothing retailers to “embrace variation.” Learning a target market’s fit preference can drastically reduce the rate of return for retailers. Becoming knowledgeable about the fit preferences of both Black and White plus-sized women will help retailers cater to the wants and needs of these consumers. Better fit not only leads to a reduction in merchandise returns, but as stated by Alexander et al., it also contributes to customer loyalty.

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51 Alexander et al., 53.
According to Brown and Rice, customer satisfaction is dependent upon good fit, but due to the unavailability of good fit, customers will often seek “colors, prices, and styles they like” to meet their satisfaction.\footnote{Brown and Rice, 153.} To illustrate this point, a study conducted by Veena Chattaraman and Nancy Rudd, found the most important factors attracting the consumer to the garment are the “aesthetic attributes,” such as “color/pattern, styling, and fabric.”\footnote{Veena Chattaraman and Nancy Ann Rudd, “Preferences for Aesthetic Attributes in Clothing as a Function of Body Image, Body Cathexis and Body Size,” \textit{Clothing and Textiles Research Journal} 24, no. 1 (2006): 47.} While aesthetic attributes may attract the customer, poor fit may deter the customer from making the purchase. Chattaraman and Rudd found 44 percent of those not purchasing the garment claimed garment gave them the appearance of being larger.\footnote{Ibid.}

The plus-sized clothing market is on the rise, yet there is much to be learned about the desired fit preference for this consumer. It is no longer acceptable for a retailer to offer elastic waistband pants and expect the plus-sized customer to flock to the store. This customer is looking for fashion and expects more offerings. Retailers, designers, and manufacturers should investigate more into clothing fit in order to increase the degree of fit satisfaction among its target audience.

\textit{Fit Satisfaction}

More and more retailers have identified the plus-sized target market as an area of opportunity. Because retailers now need to learn as much about their target market, this study will provide the information needed to provide an appropriate assortment to their target demographic. It is important for retailers to learn that not all garments have the
same degree of fit satisfaction. This knowledge gained from learning about the fit satisfaction of plus-sized non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White women will serve as a report card for retailers’ current selections, and will provide an opportunity to create customer loyalty by increasing fit satisfaction. In addition, plus-sized women have the greatest challenge finding clothing that fits them well. Plus-sized women are looking for clothing that will help them look their best, so it is in the best interest of retailers to learn the fit satisfaction of their customers, so they can alter their assortment, if necessary.

Authors Betty Feather, Sheila Ford, and David Herr define fit satisfaction as “the extent the consumer is satisfied with fit and selection of ready-to-wear in her size.” In a study conducted by Kennita Oldham Kind and Jan Hathcote it was found that larger-sized women in the United States endured the most dissatisfaction in shopping for clothing in terms of available sizes, pricing, styles, and fit. This group of consumers commented that the clothing offered by retailers was often “matronly,” which was perceived by the group as an older-look. Identifying a style as matronly is associated with a loose fit that conceals the body rather than embraces it.

A study by Kurt Salmon Associates discussed in Alexander et al. cited that more than half of the female population in the United States has difficulty finding clothing that


57 Ibid., 317.
fits properly.58 A study conducted by Otieno et al. found the most difficult garments to find for women wearing size sixteen and greater were articles of clothing requiring the most degree of fit, such as lingerie, swimwear, and eveningwear.59 Overall, Otieno et al. reported about 55 percent of women wearing size 16 or larger could not find clothes that fit them, and nearly 66 percent of this group could not find articles of clothing that they considered fitting well.60

Studies conducted throughout the 1990’s and 2000’s by Feather et al., LaBat and DeLong, Kind and Hatchote, and Chattaraman and Rudd have found that plus-sized women are most dissatisfied with their lower bodies.61 In a study conducted by LaBat and DeLong women reported fit dissatisfaction in their lower bodies, which they attribute to the fact that women are becoming broader hipped and are experiencing difficulty wearing garments that have been designed for smaller hipped, more hourglass-figured women.62 Specifically, according to the study conducted by LaBat and DeLong, body sites of fit dissatisfaction included: “pant length, crotch, thigh, buttocks, and hip.”63

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60 Ibid.


62 LaBat and DeLong, 45-46.

63 Ibid., 45.
another study, conducted by Oldham Kind and Hathcote, plus-sized women identified three of the top four most difficult areas to fit garments on the body to be in the lower body citing the thigh, abdomen, bust, and calf. In support of these findings, women reported the greatest degree of body dissatisfaction in their thighs and waist in a study conducted by Chattaraman and Rudd. In addition, Feather et al. researched garment fit and uniform design preferences among female collegiate athletes and learned that, in terms of street clothing, athletes had the least fit satisfaction in the hips.

Studies conducted by Feather et al. and LaBat and DeLong provide evidence to support that women have a greater degree of fit satisfaction in their upper bodies. In a study conducted by LaBat and DeLong, the body sites with the highest rate of fit satisfaction included: “neck, elbow, arm, midriff, and shoulder—upper body sites.” In support of these findings, female athletes also indicated the neckline as the body site with greatest fit satisfaction when wearing street clothing, such as a blouse. Once fit satisfaction is determined, fit preference can be utilized to improve designs and ultimately lead to increased customer loyalty in the retail environment.

Although all women face challenges finding clothing that fits them well, it is especially difficult for plus-sized women. Two-thirds of the plus-sized women

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64 Oldham Kind and Hathcote, 321-322.  
65 Chattaraman and Rudd, 57.  
67 Feather et al., 1996, 26; LaBat and DeLong, 45.  
68 LaBat and DeLong, 45.  
69 Feather et al., 1996, 26.
participants in a study conducted by Otieno et al. reported that they are unable to find clothing that fits them well.\textsuperscript{70} Overall, the greatest area of opportunity is within the bottoms category because most women express more dissatisfaction with their lower body as opposed to their upper body.\textsuperscript{71} It is important for retailers and manufacturers to learn about fit satisfaction of their target consumer, so they are able to make changes. In conjunction with fit preferences, the retailer will be well-positioned to gain market share of the plus-sized market.

\textit{Fit Preference}

There is uncertainty as to the overall fit preferences of women, and because the plus-sized market is still growing in importance, there is still much to learn about this segment’s preferences. In addition, Brown and Rice note that individual fit preferences are influenced by “current fashion trends and cultural influences, age, sex, figure type and life style.”\textsuperscript{72} This illustrates the point that fit preferences are not universal and consumers having different cultural backgrounds may prefer different clothing styles and garment fit. Even two consumers having the same “body measurements, height, and weight” can have very different fit preferences.\textsuperscript{73} For this reason, the current study will segment the plus-sized women’s fit preferences by ethnicity in order to explore if one’s cultural influences truly do impact clothing choices.

\textsuperscript{70} Otieno et al, 304.

\textsuperscript{71} LaBat and DeLong, 45; Oldham Kind and Hathcote, 321-322; Chattaraman and Rudd, 57.

\textsuperscript{72} Brown and Rice, 154.

\textsuperscript{73} Alexander et al., 53.
The current study will focus on the plus-sized consumer because of the importance this group is gaining in the market. The study will reveal the desired fit preferences of plus-sized women. Chattaraman and Rudd found a moderate positive correlation between body size and desired body coverage, meaning that respondents reporting a larger clothing size are more likely to prefer greater body coverage and “less revealing silhouettes.”74 This study also found a positive relationship between upper body size and the length of tops as well as the preferred silhouette of purchased tops.75 Respondents with larger upper body measurements chose tops having a longer length and a less fitted silhouette.76 Chattaraman and Rudd also found that participants reporting larger lower body sizes generally favor less fitted silhouettes and higher waist levels.77 The study indicated that women who wore sizes L through 3X did not prefer low waistlines.78 Chattaraman and Rudd did clarify, however, that the results of the study should not be generalized to all plus-sized women pointing out that larger body size does not always indicate a preference towards “less revealing clothing.”79 It will be interesting to learn if the results of the current study show differences by ethnicity or if all plus-sized women share the same clothing fit preferences.

74 Chattaraman and Rudd, 56.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., 57.
78 Ibid., 59.
79 Ibid., 60.
Chattaraman and Rudd’s findings illustrate the importance of designing garments for more than one body type. For this reason, Chattaraman and Rudd state it may not be appropriate to follow the approach of simply “grading up” styles that were constructed for smaller sizes in order to meet the needs of the larger size consumer.\textsuperscript{80} The results of the study conducted by Chattaraman and Rudd show that a consumer with a larger lower body would prefer a higher waist garment,\textsuperscript{81} so a low-rise pant that is proportionally graded up to a larger size will still maintain the low-rise look, and therefore, be unattractive to the larger size consumer.

\textit{Fit Satisfaction and Fit Preference Differences by Race}

Although not much research has been dedicated to the study of differences between fit satisfaction and fit preferences of Black and White women, two studies conducted by Betty Feather, David Herr, and Sheila Ford during the late 1990s did examine such differences in female athletes. Although these studies were centered on athletes, the participants were asked to rate their fit satisfaction in terms of streetwear in addition to uniforms. Although Black athletes reported a greater body satisfaction than White female athletes, the fit satisfaction did not differ significantly.\textsuperscript{82} Both Black and White athletes who had greater body satisfaction also had greater fit satisfaction in the garments examined, which were slacks and a blouse.\textsuperscript{83}

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\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 59.
\item\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 60.
\item\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 127.
\end{enumerate}
When asked to evaluate fit satisfaction with athletic uniforms, the athletes had differing opinions by ethnicity. Although both Black and White athletes favored jerseys having a deep V-neckline and a straight bottom hem with side vents, Black athletes preferred longer lengths of jerseys. White athletes preferred jerseys that were hip length and also had a preference towards sleeveless jerseys. A larger proportion of the Black athletes preferred baggy shorts as opposed to the baggy or regular shorts identified by the White players. In addition, the Black athletes identified wider waistbands as their preference while the White athletes cited a narrow waistband as their choice for athletic shorts.

Although this information is significant and identifies differences between both Black and White female fit preferences, these clothing fit preferences were specifically in reference to athletic apparel. As suggested by Feather et al., I also agree there is a need to further explore the differences between the fit satisfaction and clothing fit preferences of Black and White female consumers. Although some research has been completed as to the body image among different groups, such as plus-sized women and people of different races, substantial research has yet to be completed as to the impact, if any, that a plus-sized woman’s ethnicity has on her fit satisfaction and fit preferences.

84 Feather et al., 1996, 27.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Purpose of This Study

According to Nancy Ann Rudd and Sharon Lennon, women turn to clothing in an effort to achieve the cultural aesthetic ideal by accentuating positive physical attributes and minimizing negative ones.¹ Much research has taken place on the subject of body image, and it has been noted that possessing “an ideal body does not guarantee that women will be satisfied with their bodies.”² The present study focused on the average U.S. woman who has been deemed imperfect by society and explored how her attitudes toward her body affect her clothing fit satisfaction and fit preferences. This study first determined if a difference existed between the body satisfaction, or body cathexis, of plus-sized Black women and plus-sized White women. Previous studies have found conflicting results on this topic, so this study explored if differences exist in terms of body cathexis among the sample before fit satisfaction and fit preferences were analyzed.


In addition, it has been noted that plus-sized consumers have difficulty finding clothing with good fit. Poor-fitting garments can also contribute to a decrease in body image. According to LaBat and Delong, when a garment does not fit well, many times women blame their own bodies rather than the article of clothing, which contributes to a negative body image.³ Otieno et al. found when plus-sized women are unable to find garments that fit, they are flooded with negative emotions from “blame (the retailer), resentfulness, de-motivations, frustration, anger, disappointment, sadness, embarrassment because of their size, depressed and less feminine.”⁴

From a physical standpoint, women come in all shapes and sizes, and from a psychological perspective, women can have drastically different body images and body satisfaction. Several researchers, including Miller et al. in 2000, Bottá also in 2000, Gluck and Geliebter in 2002, Paratakul et al. in May 2002, Story et al. in 1995, Wilfley et al. in 1996, Lovejoy in April 2001, and Thomas et al. in 2008, found that differences do exist between Black and White plus-sized women’s perceptions of beauty as well as discrepancies between body image and/or body satisfaction.⁵ According to research


conducted by Thomas et al. in 2008, Flynn and Fitzgibbon in 1996, Stiegel-Moore et al. in 1996, and Young-Hyman et al. in 2000, plus-sized Black women believe ideal body weights are impractical, which may be a result of familial support of a larger body size. Therefore, this study investigated how these opposing feelings towards the feminine ideal translated into fit satisfaction and clothing fit preferences.

Although the overweight populace in the United States accounts for a significant portion of the total population, and the number of plus-sized women continues to increase, the fashion industry continues to treat this market as secondary. If a company is able to determine the styles the plus-sized consumer is searching for combined with an exceptional fit, then it would be able to capitalize on this niche market. In addition, if a retailer aims at a specific demographic, learning more about preferences of specific


ethnicity will be imperative. More time needs to be devoted to understanding this consumer. Therefore, the present study which ascertained differences between plus-sized women of different ethnicities provides more accurate information for plus-size retailers targeting specific market segments of the plus-sized population. In effect, this research study explored the following question:

- When evaluating women who wear a size 14 or greater, is there a difference in body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preferences between non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White women?

**Topic of Interest**

This study focused its attention on the plus-sized female population within the non-Hispanic White and the non-Hispanic Black communities. The current study analyzed women who reported wearing size 14 or greater garments, and investigated if their ethnicity impacted body and fit satisfaction. Not only did this study explore body cathexis and fit satisfaction, but it also examined if differences were also present in clothing fit preferences between Black and White plus-sized women.

This study was quantitative in design, and the questionnaire used to gather data was divided into four sections including: 1) Demographics, 2) Body Satisfaction, 3) Fit Satisfaction, and 4) Fit Preferences. The majority of the questionnaire focused on the use of five point Likert Scales. In order to fully analyze body satisfaction (body cathexis), fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preferences, previously tested instruments were utilized throughout the questionnaire. The instruments had been tested by Secord and Jourard in 1953, Feather et al. in 1997, LaBat and DeLong in 1990, and Chattaraman and Rudd in 2001.
Sample

A sample of American women age 18 and older was drawn from an internet-based questionnaire. Participants were reached through the use of social media websites, such as Facebook, blogs, and forums. A link to the questionnaire was published on a fashion retailers’ Facebook page as well as various plus-sized fashion blogs and fashion forums. In addition, a link to the questionnaire was sent to all students at a Midwestern university as well as chapter officers of a nationally recognized sorority. Respondents were categorized into two groups: non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White women who reported their clothing size as 14 or greater.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in order to gain feedback on the format and content of the questionnaire. Four women participated in the pilot study, including three non-Hispanic White females and one non-Hispanic Black female. Two of the participants were in their twenties and two were in their forties. All participants offered suggestions based on a paper-based questionnaire. Two participants offered suggestions for change based on the internet-based questionnaire. Once completed, several changes were made to the questionnaire questions in order to ensure that the wording would be understood by all respondents.

Procedure

In order to access a sample, a short description of my study and a link to the questionnaire website were posted on social media sites for plus size retailers and fashion bloggers were contacted to post the link to their followers. Participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire, and each participant was informed that anonymity
would be honored in regards to answers supplied in the questionnaire. Each participant, however, was offered an opportunity to provide her name and contact information after completing the questionnaire for an opportunity to win a $25 VISA gift card. Participants were informed that this information would not be connected in any way to the answers provided throughout the questionnaire.

**Instrument**

In the first section, participants were asked to provide demographic data. Respondents were asked to supply their age range and other demographic data, including their level of education, income and their ethnicity. Respondents were given the choice to identify themselves as: Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, Asian or Other. The questionnaire items asked the respondents to declare their clothing size worn in both tops and bottoms. Only female participants who identified themselves as Non-Hispanic White or Non-Hispanic Black and also wore a size 14 or greater were able to continue with the questionnaire. After this criterion was met, the respondents were asked to identify the category that best matched their height and weight.

The second portion of the questionnaire measured body cathexis. In order to measure body cathexis, a combination of Body Cathexis Scales were used. In a study conducted by Feather et al. in 1997, a modified version of the Body Cathexis Scale designed by Secord and Jourard in 1953, and Rosen and Ross in 1973 was used to evaluate overall body satisfaction. The current study utilized the Body Cathexis Scale

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from the 1997 Feather et al. study and added some additional components from the scale developed by Secord and Jourard in 1953.

Participants were asked to rate their degree of satisfaction with several body sites utilizing a 5-point Likert scale. The body sites were divided into three categories: lower body, upper body, and total. In terms of lower body, participants were asked to indicate their satisfaction with their: calves, legs, waist, buttocks, thighs, and abdomen. Participants were asked to evaluate upper body sites, including: arms, wrists, shoulders, neck, face, back, and bust. Total satisfaction was examined in terms of appearance, height, body build, body profile, torso, posture, and weight.

Fit satisfaction was measured through the use of a fit satisfaction scale developed by LaBat and DeLong.8 This study defined the plus-sized market as size 14 or larger and the standard size market as being size 12 or smaller. Participants that met this criteria were asked to rate their fit satisfaction at various body sites. Using a five point Likert scale, participants rated their fit satisfaction at 17 body sites, including: pant length, crotch, thigh, buttocks, hip, sleeve length, waist length, waist, abdomen, bust, shoulder, skirt length, arm hole, upper arm, midriff, calf, and neckline.9 Participants were asked to rate their degree of fit satisfaction for each of the fit sites mentioned. Fit satisfaction was measured through the use of a five point Likert Scale with 1 being the highest level of satisfaction and 5 equal to the lowest satisfaction.10

8 LaBat and DeLong, 45.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
The last section of the questionnaire measured clothing fit preferences. In a 2006 study conducted by Chattaraman and Rudd, the “Aesthetic Attribute Preference Scale” was designed to measure clothing fit preferences.\(^1\) The scale, comprised of one visual representation of the upper body and one of the lower body, measured clothing fit preferences of both tops and bottoms at specific fit sites of the body (see Figures 1 and 2).\(^2\) After viewing Figures 1 and 2, respondents were asked to rate their fit preference based on a seven point semantic differential scale for tops and for bottoms.

In the previously conducted study, the fit preference for bottoms was divided into two sets of questions. Participants were first asked to rate their bottoms fit preference when wearing a skirt, and in the other they were asked to rate their preferences when wearing a “bifurcated bottom.”\(^3\) In the current study, however, respondents were asked to answer questions based on their fit preferences of a bifurcated bottom, not a skirt. The seven point scale was “anchored by bipolar objectives,” such as “sleeveless” versus “full length sleeve.”\(^4\)

When assessing tops fit preferences, participants were asked to consider their fit preferences for the neckline, sleeve length, overall top length, and top silhouette.\(^5\) Participants were asked to rate their preferred neckline from “high” to “low” neckline.\(^6\)

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\(^1\) Chattaraman and Rudd, 52.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid., 52-53.

\(^4\) Ibid., 52.

\(^5\) Ibid., 53.

\(^6\) Ibid.
Figure 1. Top Fit Preference Differential Scale. This illustration depicts a 7-point semantic differential scale measuring styling preferences in tops. Chattaraman and Rudd, 2006. Reprinted with permission.
Figure 2. Bottom Fit Preference Differential Scale. This illustration depicts a 7-point differential scale measuring styling preferences in bottoms. Chattaraman and Rudd, 2006. Reprinted with permission.
Sleeve length preferences ranged from “full-length sleeves” to “sleeveless” while the length of top ranges from “long top” to “short top.”17 Lastly, participants identified their preferred top silhouette utilizing a range of “fitted silhouette” to “unfitted silhouette.”

Participants were asked to rate their fit preferences when wearing a bifurcated bottom. Participants were asked to rate their preferences for waist height, length of bottom, and silhouette of bottom. The waist height was measured on a seven point Likert scale ranging from “high waist” to “low waist.”18 The length of bottoms was rated from “long” to “short” while the preference options for the bottom silhouette ranged from “fitted” to “unfitted silhouette.”19

**Limitations of the Study**

There were several limitations pertaining to this study. Because this was an internet-based study, those without access to the internet or did not travel to the websites where the link was posted, did not have the opportunity to participate in the study. Also, it was difficult to gain access to a large sample of the non-Hispanic Black population for this study. Therefore, an e-mail with a link to the survey was sent to chapter officers of a nationally recognized African-American sorority. This method did lead to much participation; however, this method also could have impacted the demographic data because as a member of a sorority, the non-Hispanic Black sample was currently working towards a college degree or had completed their degree, which may not have been the case with the non-Hispanic White sample. Because the non-Hispanic Black sample in

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
this study had higher education levels, this could have also impacted income levels.

Method of Analysis

In order to analyze the data, means were calculated for all individual variables for the total sample as well as for each ethnicity group. Then, some of the individual variables were combined in order to calculate one variable for analysis. For instance, all of the individual upper body sites at which body cathexis was measured were combined into one Total Upper Body Cathexis. This was also completed for the Total Lower Body Cathexis, Overall Body Cathexis, and to compute a Total Fit Satisfaction variable as well. Once these variables were defined, their means were calculated according to ethnicity. Then, in order to identify if the difference in means for each variable was meaningful, a series of t-tests were processed.

It was also noted that a large percentage of the sample was older. In fact, 25 percent of the total sample had an age of 56 years old or greater. The question was asked if age also affected body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and fit preferences, so a series of correlations were produced to determine if age, or any of the other demographic variables, were related to these variables. Once a relationship was established through the use of correlations, a series of regression analyses was produced to explore if any of the demographic variables impacted the body cathexis and fit satisfaction in this study. The regression analysis was utilized to investigate the unique contribution of each demographic variable to the body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preference variables. Also, the regression analysis was also processed in order to express the combined effects of all the demographic variables on the Total Upper Body Cathexis, Total Lower Body Cathexis, Total Overall Body Cathexis, and Total Fit Satisfaction as
well as the Fit Preference variables, including: Top Length, Top Silhouette, Sleeve Length, Bottom Silhouette, Bottom Length, and Waist Placement.

Summary

This study explored an important niche in the women’s clothing market. The plus-sized market is growing in population, but the industry overall has yet to fully take advantage of the opportunity to capitalize on the plus-sized consumer. The study further segmented the plus-sized population in order to explore differences in clothing fit preferences between ethnicities. This approach will allow manufacturers and retailers to be more prepared to design, create, and market to the plus-sized non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White female market.

In order to determine if differences in body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preferences exist between plus-sized women who are either non-Hispanic Black or non-Hispanic White, several previously tested instruments were combined. Body cathexis was measured through the use of Body Cathexis Scales developed and utilized by Secord and Jourard in 1953 as well as Feather et al. in 1997, which incorporated measures from Secord and Jourard in addition to a scale that had been developed by Rosen and Ross in 1973. Next, fit satisfaction was measured through the use of a fit satisfaction scale that had been developed by LaBat and DeLong in 1990. Lastly, clothing fit preferences were measured through the use of the Aesthetic Attribute Preference Scale, which was developed by Chattaraman and Rudd.

An online questionnaire was developed incorporating these measures. Female students at a Midwest university campus as well as members of a nationally recognized Black sorority participated. Fashion bloggers also promoted the survey to their followers.
Through the use of Likert scales and figures, participants were asked to rate their satisfaction and clothing fit preferences. The next chapter reveals the results of any differences in plus-sized women’s body cathexis, fit satisfaction, or clothing fit preferences based on their ethnicity.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In order to establish if a relationship exists between a plus-sized women’s ethnicity and her clothing fit preferences, the body satisfaction and clothing fit satisfaction of the participants was first measured, and then respondents were asked to identify their clothing fit preferences based on two provided figures. Means of body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and fit preferences were calculated based on the answers provided throughout the questionnaire. Then, t-tests were processed to determine if the difference in means was significant. Also, demographic data were utilized to determine if age, or any other demographic variable, impacted the reported body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and fit preferences of the sample.

Demographics of the Sample

Questionnaire participants were recruited through the use of online social media sites, fashion blogs, and e-mails. Recruitment through social media websites proved to be challenging, but the use of direct e-mailing of the questionnaire link to potential respondents was successful. A total of 342 questionnaires were completed by women who reported wearing a size 14 or greater, with 178 non-Hispanic Black (52 percent) and 164 non-Hispanic White (48 percent) responding.
Although all age ranges were represented, the 56 and greater range accounted for the highest percentage of responses, accounting for 25 percent of the total while the mean age was about 46 years old. The level of education of the respondents ranged from less than high school to post-graduate levels with a mean education level of slightly more than a two year associates degree. Average income for the sample was higher than the national average with the majority of respondents choosing between the third and fourth income category (from $30,000 to $69,999 a year in income).\(^1\) The average weight of the participants was 215.5 pounds with a standard deviation of 42.2 pounds while the average height was 65.3 inches (5’5.3”) with a standard deviation of 2.72 inches. The average bottom size ranged from size 14 to 20 while the average top size was slightly less than size 1X.

A review of Table 4 reveals that non-Hispanic Black respondents within this study generally had higher education and income. Black respondents were also older than the White participants. In addition, the Black respondents weighed approximately five pounds more than the White sample and were about one inch shorter in height. These findings are consistent with the 2008 *National Health Statistics Reports*, which found Black women weighed more and were shorter than White women.\(^2\) After reviewing the demographic variables for differences, it must be determined if these differences, however slight, are statistically significant.

\(^1\) 2010 National average per capital income is $40,584. Bureau of Economic Analysis, D-75.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables by Ethnicity</th>
<th>Education</th>
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<th>Weight</th>
<th>Height</th>
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<td>337</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>42.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Demographic Variables by Ethnicity and Total Sample.
The next data table, Table 5, shows the two-tailed t-test results for these variables, which will help determine if the differences are statistically significant. As shown in Table 5, a t-test was completed for each variable that compared the difference in means for education, income, age, weight, and height based on the responses from the non-Hispanic Black women and the non-Hispanic White women. The difference in means was considered to be significant if it resulted in a t value that had a significant difference of .05 or less. The t-test results showed that significance was unaffected when equal variances were assumed and when equal variances were not assumed, so only the data when equal variances were assumed were included in the table.

As illustrated in Table 5, the t-test results for weight of the two samples was not significantly different. The differences in education, however, were significant as were differences in age and height. Income also showed significance with a significance value of .045. Although the income significance is less than .05, we can be more confident in that the two samples differed significantly for the other variables (i.e. education, age, and height).

*Dependent Variable: Body Cathexis*

Participants were asked to evaluate their level of satisfaction with specific body sites on a scale of one to five with one equal to the highest level of satisfaction and five being the lowest level of satisfaction. Body cathexis was analyzed in three sections. Parts of the lower body were evaluated and then sites of the upper body. Lastly, overall measures of body cathexis were evaluated by participants.

The following data tables present the mean responses for each of the body sites and measures. In order to complete further analysis, the individual variables for the
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Variable</th>
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<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
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<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
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<td>.000</td>
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<td>.14</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.045</td>
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<td>.15</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>338</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.15</td>
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<td>.004</td>
<td>-.85</td>
<td>.29</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. T-Test Results for Demographic Variables, by Ethnicity.
lower body sites were summed then divided by the number of contributing variables to compute a total lower body cathexis variable. This resulted in a new variable with a continuous range of scores from 1.00 to 5.00 with 1.00 indicating the greatest level of “cathexis,” or body satisfaction, for the lower body area. The same method was completed for the upper body sites and the overall body cathexis. These three new variables were utilized to determine if the difference in means for body cathexis was statistically significant.

Participants first rated their satisfaction at sites of the lower body, which included: calves, legs, waist, buttocks, thighs, and abdomen. Table 6 shows the mean response of each lower body site by ethnicity and total sample. A casual reading of Table 6 shows that the non-Hispanic Black respondents indicated higher satisfaction with each lower body site. Overall, the sample expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with the abdomen, waist, thighs, and buttocks. Previous research has also found that women are dissatisfied with parts of their lower body. Chattaraman and Rudd found that women had the greatest dissatisfaction with their thighs, weight, and waist while in another study, Cash et al. found that the majority of people asked were discontent with their mid and lower torso.\(^3\) LaBat and DeLong also found women were most dissatisfied with their lower bodies.\(^4\)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Calves</th>
<th>Legs</th>
<th>Waist</th>
<th>Buttocks</th>
<th>Thighs</th>
<th>Abdomen</th>
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<td>Non-Hispanic Black</td>
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<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>4.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
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<td>2.84</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
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<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.16</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Mean Values of Body Satisfaction at Lower Body Sites.
Next, participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with upper body sites. The upper body sites included in the questionnaire were arms, wrists, shoulders, neck, face, back, and bust. Table 7 shows the mean response of each upper body site. A quick review of Table 7 shows that the non-Hispanic Black participants expressed greater satisfaction with each of the upper body sites. Participants expressed the greatest satisfaction with the wrists, face, shoulders, and neck.

Participants were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with overall body sites, including: appearance, height, body build, body profile, torso, posture, and weight. The same scale was given to participants as it was stated in the previous sections. The scale ranged from one to five with one being the highest level of satisfaction and five being the lowest level of satisfaction. Participants were most satisfied with their height and least satisfied with their weight. Nearly 52 percent of respondents rated their satisfaction of their height as a one while almost 50 percent rated their satisfaction with their weight as a five. Previous research, such as studies conducted by Chattaraman and Rudd, Cash et al., and Cash and Henry, also found that women are highly dissatisfied with their weight. Cash et al. found that while women are most dissatisfied with their weight, they are most satisfied with their height.

Table 8 shows the mean response of each overall body satisfaction measure. Consistent with the responses for upper and lower body cathexis, the means for overall body cathexis also indicate that the non-Hispanic Black respondents indicated greater satisfaction in all of the overall body satisfaction measures.

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5 Chattaraman and Rudd, 58; Cash et al., 33-34; Cash and Henry, 25.

6 Cash et al., 33.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arms</th>
<th>Wrist</th>
<th>Shoulders</th>
<th>Neck</th>
<th>Face</th>
<th>Back</th>
<th>Bust</th>
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<td>Non-Hispanic Black</td>
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<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
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<td>1.80</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.73</td>
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<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Mean Values of Body Satisfaction at Upper Body Sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Body Build</th>
<th>Body Profile</th>
<th>Torso</th>
<th>Posture</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic Black</td>
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<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.70</td>
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<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
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<td>1.94</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Mean Values of Overall Body Satisfaction Measures.
Dependent Variable: Fit Satisfaction

Fit plays an important role in the clothing purchase decision process. Women may be attracted to the aesthetics of a garment, but if an item does not fit, then it will not be purchased. From the perspective of a plus-sized woman, shopping for clothing can be extremely disconcerting. When asked how easily the respondent is able to find her size in the styling she prefers, participants were given the option of “always,” “often,” “sometimes,” “seldom,” and “never.” The majority, 51 percent, of participants answered “sometimes.” This leaves the customer feeling disappointed that she was unable to find her size and fit, which could lead to further disappoint with her body.

Participants in this study were also asked to make a choice as to whether price, size availability, appearance, or poor fit make for a difficult clothing purchase decision. Nearly 37 percent of the participants cited that they do not care for the appearance of the garment as the main difficulty when clothing shopping while over 32 percent of the participants cited poor fit. This finding not only illustrates that styling is important to the plus-sized consumer, but also this provides evidence that there is an opportunity to improve size availability and fit satisfaction from the perspective of the retailer and designer. If a designer was able to provide aesthetically pleasing styles in a wide array of sizing and listened to the dissatisfaction that their consumer is having in terms of fit, then the designer could work with a retailer to satisfy the plus-sized clothing market. Plus-sized women would embrace these changes since this group has been eagerly waiting to become loyal customers of a retailer with the ability to fill their closets with excellent-fitting fashion for some time now.
Because fit is an important part of the clothing purchase process, the next section of the questionnaire focused on exploring the degree of fit satisfaction of the sample. Participants were asked to evaluate their level of satisfaction with how clothing fits them at specific body sites. Many of these body sites mirrored those that were evaluated in the body satisfaction section, but respondents were specifically asked to answer in terms of how pleased they are with the way in which clothing fits them at these body sites. As previously used in the body satisfaction section, a scale of one to five was used to express their level of fit satisfaction with one being the highest level of satisfaction and five being the lowest degree of satisfaction.

Table 9 shows the mean fit satisfaction by ethnicity for seventeen specific measures of fit. These sites include: pant length, rise, thigh, buttocks, hip, sleeve length, waist length, waist, abdomen, bust, shoulder, skirt length, arm hole, upper arm, midriff, calf, and neckline. Reading through this chart, it is evident that the non-Hispanic Black respondents experienced greater clothing fit satisfaction than the non-Hispanic White participants. Although the non-Hispanic Black responses indicate some dissatisfaction with clothing fit, it is less than that of the non-Hispanic White respondents. This is consistent with previous research findings, which found that Black females experience greater clothing fit satisfaction than White females.

In a study by Feather et al., Black and White female athletes rated their level of fit satisfaction with basketball uniforms and street wear, which consisted of a blouse and pants. In this study, Black female athletes reported higher mean values for fit

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Calf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shoulder</td>
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<td>Skirt Length</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeve Length</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armhole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thigh</td>
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<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.75</td>
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<td>Waist Length</td>
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<td>2.83</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Abdomen</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.35</td>
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</table>

Table 9. Mean Values of Fit Satisfaction at Specific Body Sites.
satisfaction than White female respondents.\textsuperscript{8} It is important to note that although the Black sample reported higher values of fit satisfaction in the Feather et al. study, these differences in means were not statistically significant. Also, another point to note is that the women in the Feather et al. study were athletes and the women in the current study were average woman, so their perceptions of fit satisfaction may vary.

A short review of this chart also reveals that the three body sites with the greatest level of fit dissatisfaction in this study were the abdomen, waist, and midriff. The top three body sites with the highest fit satisfaction ratings included: the neckline, calf, and shoulder. In this study, the abdomen and waist were categorized as lower-body sites while the midriff was considered an upper-body site. The abdomen and waist had the highest degree of dissatisfaction. The neckline and shoulder were both upper-body sites while the calf was a lower-body site.

Previous research has found consistent findings in terms of fit satisfaction. Previous studies conducted by LaBat and Long and Feather et al. have found that women had greater fit dissatisfaction with lower body sites and more fit satisfaction with upper body sites.\textsuperscript{9} The abdomen and waist having the highest level of fit dissatisfaction and the neckline and shoulders having the highest level of fit satisfaction are congruent with the previous findings of these studies.\textsuperscript{10} Another study conducted by Oldham Kind and Hathcote revealed that women were most dissatisfied with clothing fit at their abdomen,

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{10} Feather et al., 1996, 25-26; LaBat and DeLong, 45.
bust and calf.\textsuperscript{11} While the findings that fit at the abdomen was difficult, the findings that fit at the calf was difficult was not consistent with the findings of this study. In support of the current findings, however, LaBat and DeLong also found that the midriff and calf body sites did receive a high degree of fit satisfaction.\textsuperscript{12} In addition, Chattaraman and Rudd determined that the waist was an area of great fit dissatisfaction for women.\textsuperscript{13} Feather et al. reported that female basketball players rated their highest level of satisfaction in streetwear at the neckline.\textsuperscript{14} LaBat and DeLong also reported that women indicated the greatest fit satisfaction at upper-body sites.\textsuperscript{15} Body sites, such as the neck and shoulder had the greatest fit satisfaction, which supports the findings of this study.\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{Body Cathexis and Fit Satisfaction Statistical Analysis}

The review of literature suggests that there have been varied results when analyzing if differences exist in terms of body cathexis and clothing fit satisfaction. Some research has shown that there is virtually no difference between body cathexis of Black and White women while other researchers suggest there should be measurable differences along ethnicity lines in terms of body satisfaction and satisfaction with clothing fit. These variables serve as the foundation of this study. The relationship


\footnotesize{12} LaBat and DeLong, 45.

\footnotesize{13} Chattaraman and Rudd, 57.

\footnotesize{14} Feather et al., 1996, 26.

\footnotesize{15} LaBat and DeLong, 45.

\footnotesize{16} Ibid.
between ethnicity and body cathexis and fit satisfaction will be analyzed to learn if this study accepts or rejects findings in previous studies. Once these relationships are determined, an analysis will also be conducted to determine if a difference exists in clothing fit preferences.

As previously mentioned, in order to further analyze measures of body cathexis and fit satisfaction, four additional variables were created. Utilizing items from the questionnaire, three measures of body satisfaction and one measure of clothing fit satisfaction were computed for analysis. These included: Total Lower Body Cathexis, Total Upper Body Cathexis, Total Overall Body Satisfaction, and Total Fit Satisfaction. For example, Total Lower Body Cathexis consisted of the summation of six measures that were then divided by the number of measures resulting in a single body satisfaction measure of the lower half of the body. The measures included in this calculation include: calves, legs, waist, buttocks, thighs, and abdomen.

Similar measures were computed for upper half of the body, and the Overall Body Satisfaction measure. In order to calculate the Total Upper Body Cathexis, seven measures from the questionnaire were summed and divided by the number of measures. These measures included: arms, wrists, shoulders, neck, face, back, and bust. In order to measure overall body satisfaction, respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with seven general aspects of their body. These seven measures included: appearance, height, body build, body profile, torso, posture, and weight. The seven measures were summed and divided by the number of measures in order to provide a Total Overall Body Satisfaction measure.
A Total Fit Satisfaction measure was also created. A measure of the respondents’ overall satisfaction with the way clothing fits them at an array of body sites was constructed by summing the level of fit satisfaction at each of the 17 body sites and taking the average satisfaction score. The 17 body sites included in the calculation include: pant length, rise, thigh, buttocks, hip, sleeve length, waist length, waist, abdomen, bust, shoulder, skirt length, arm hole, upper arm, midriff, calf, and neckline.

Table 10 reveals the means for the Total Lower Body Cathexis, Total Upper Body Cathexis, Total Overall Body Cathexis, and Total Fit Satisfaction of the non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White females in addition to the total sample.

A review of Table 10 illustrates that the non-Hispanic Black respondents indicated some dissatisfaction with the lower body sites, upper body sites, and overall indicators of body satisfaction as well as some dissatisfaction with clothing fit. The non-Hispanic Black respondents, however, expressed less dissatisfaction than the non-Hispanic White respondents in all categories. Table 10 indicates that there are differences in the mean values for the Total Lower Body Cathexis, Total Upper Body Cathexis, Total Overall Body Cathexis, and Total Fit Satisfaction measures.

In order to determine if these differences in means were significant, a t-test was processed for each variable. Table 11 shows the results of two-tailed t-test for these variables, which will help determine if the differences are significant. The same method that was used to analyze the demographic variables was applied to the body cathexis and fit satisfaction measures. The difference in means was considered to be significant if p<.05. As with the demographic variable analysis, the t-test results showed that significance was unaffected when equal variances were assumed and when equal variances were not
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Cathexis &amp; Fit Satisfaction Measures, by Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total Lower Body Cathexis</th>
<th>Total Upper Body Cathexis</th>
<th>Total Overall Body Cathexis</th>
<th>Total Fit Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic Black</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Mean Difference in Body/Fit Satisfaction Scores by Ethnicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Body Cathexis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Body Cathexis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Overall Body Cathexis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit Satisfaction Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. T-test Results for Body Cathexis and Fit Satisfaction Variables.
assumed, so only the data when equal variances were assumed were represented in the table. Table 11 shows that the difference in means was significant for all variables: Total Lower Body Cathexis, Total Upper Body Cathexis, Total Overall Body Satisfaction, and Total Fit Satisfaction. The t-test results show strong significance in the difference of means since all four variables were significant at the .000 level.

These results are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Smith et al., which found that African Americans rated their level of satisfaction with appearance and specific body sites higher than European Americans and Latino Americans. Other studies, conducted by Story et al. and Wilfley et al., also support these findings. Story et al. and Wilfley et al., purported that higher rates of body dissatisfaction were found among White females. Although the current study focused on females age eighteen or older, a previous study conducted by Bottá suggested that these differences exist even during adolescence reporting that adolescent Black females were much less dissatisfied with their bodies than their White adolescent peers. This suggests that the influences on body satisfaction are passed on during childhood.

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Contrary to findings by Feather et al., this study found that differences in body cathexis and fit satisfaction, while not of great magnitude, were statistically significant while the previous study found that although body cathexis differences existed between Black and White female athletes, fit satisfaction did not differ. This difference in results could be due to the difference in the samples studied. The study by Feather et al. focused on female athletes who are most likely physically fit and are accustomed to dressing in a standard fitting uniform while the current sample studied the average plus-sized woman. These characteristics and circumstances may have caused the previous sample to experience less fit satisfaction overall.

A recent study conducted by Kim and Damhorst, found that body dissatisfaction is related to concerns with fit. In this study, non-Hispanic White females experienced a greater degree of negative body cathexis and greater fit dissatisfaction than non-Hispanic Black females. This study found that the body sites identified as having the greatest degree of body dissatisfaction were similar to the areas that were identified as having the greatest degree of clothing fit satisfaction. Although the non-Hispanic Black sample indicated less body dissatisfaction and fit dissatisfaction, they still expressed dissatisfaction. Both the waist and the abdomen were major concerns for the overall sample in both body dissatisfaction and fit satisfaction. Even though the overall sample expressed dissatisfaction, the differences in their degree of both body cathexis and

20 Feather et al., 1997, 126-127.

clothing fit satisfaction were shown to be significant. Now that it has been established that ethnicity does impact body cathexis and fit satisfaction, the same analysis will be conducted to determine if ethnicity also plays a role in clothing fit preferences.

**Dependent Variable: Fit Preferences**

This study has shown that plus-sized women are somewhat dissatisfied with their bodies and with aspects of clothing fit. The next section provided the participants an opportunity to express their preferences so that retailers and designers can be better equipped with the knowledge needed to satisfy this market’s needs. Participants were asked to refer to two figures, one of which was an illustration of the top half of a woman’s body while the other was a representation of the lower half of a woman’s body. Within the figures were scales from one to seven at several different preference measures, including: top length, top silhouette, sleeve length, neckline, bottom length, bottom silhouette, and waist.

In order to analyze each fit preference measure, the mean was calculated for the non-Hispanic Black sample and the non-Hispanic White sample. As with the body cathexis and fit satisfaction variables, a t-test was conducted for each clothing fit preference measure in order to determine if the difference in means was significant. The same criterion that was used to analyze the significance in the difference of means for the demographic variables, body cathexis variables, and fit satisfaction variable was also applied for the fit preferences. If the difference in means was significant at p< .05, then the difference was considered significant. Table 12 shows the mean responses for each of the clothing fit preference measures by ethnicity and for the total sample.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Top Length</th>
<th>Top Silhouette</th>
<th>Sleeve Length</th>
<th>Neckline</th>
<th>Bottom Silhouette</th>
<th>Bottom Length</th>
<th>Waist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Hispanic Black</strong></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>6.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Hispanic White</strong></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>6.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>6.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. Clothing Fit Preference Means by Ethnicity.
Table 12 shows the mean responses for each of the clothing fit preference measures. The first measure is top length, and Table 12 shows the mean of the top length to be 3.78 for the entire sample. Using Figure 1 as a guide, a mean of 3.78 indicates that the overall sample prefers a mid-length top that covers the hips. In terms of ethnicity, the mean for the non-Hispanic Black respondents was 3.67 and was slightly less than the non-Hispanic White respondents’ mean of 3.90. Referring to Figure 1, this means that the non-Hispanic White respondents prefer a slightly longer top than the non-Hispanic Black sample.

The next fit preference measure shown in Table 12 illustrates the mean values by ethnicity for the top silhouette fit preference. As shown in the table, there is a nominal difference by ethnicity. Overall, the sample preferred a top silhouette of 3.55. When referring to Figure 1 as a guide, visually this means that the sample preferred a somewhat fitted silhouette. The preferred silhouette would provide shape of the contours of the body but would not cling to the body itself.

The third fit preference measure shown in Table 12 presents the mean values for sleeve length fit preference by ethnicity. Overall, the sample preferred a sleeve length of 4.41. Using Figure 1 as a guide, this means that the sample preferred a sleeve length that was slightly longer than the elbow. The non-Hispanic White respondents had a mean sleeve length preference of 4.51 and the non-Hispanic Black sample had a mean sleeve length preference of 4.33. This illustrates that the White respondents preferred a slightly longer sleeve length than the Black participants.

The last top fit preference measure shown in Table 12 shows the mean for the neckline fit preference of the two groups. Overall, the sample preferred a neckline of
3.88. Using Figure 1 as a guide, this means that participants preferred neither a plunging neckline nor a high neckline. A scoop or a slight v-neck was the preferred neckline. The mean for the Black participants was 4.01 while the mean for the White participants was 3.75. According to Figure 1, Non-Hispanic Black respondents preferred a slightly lower neckline than non-Hispanic White participants. Unfortunately, the differential scale in Figure 1 was transposed in the actual question, so these data will not be included in the overall conclusions of the study.

The next fit preference shown in Table 12 presents the first bottom fit preference measure. It shows by the mean response by ethnicity for the preferred bottom silhouette. The overall sample preferred a silhouette of 3.25. When referring to Figure 2, visually this means that the sample preferred a straight leg silhouette. The preferred bottom is not form fitting, but is also not excessively voluminous. The Black sample preferred a bottom silhouette of 3.46 while the White sample preferred a bottom silhouette of 3.03. Comparing the mean data with the values on Figure 2 shows that the non-Hispanic Black respondents preferred a less-fitted silhouette than the non-Hispanic White respondents’ preferred silhouette. This is consistent with findings in a study conducted by Feather et al., in which Black female basketball players preferred baggy uniform shorts while White female players would wear baggy or regular shorts.\(^22\) The preference for uniform fit was consistent with the street wear selected for analysis in this study. This could mean that fit preferences remain consistent regardless of types of clothing being worn. Further research could be done to explore these data.

\(^{22}\) Feather et al., 1997, 127.
The next bottom fit preference illustrated in Table 12 displays the mean values of the preferred bottom length by ethnicity. The overall sample preferred a bottom length of 6.53. Using Figure 2 as a guide, this means that the sample preferred a bottom that falls slightly above the ankle. The Black sample identified the preferred bottom length as 6.49 while the White sample identified the preferred bottom length as 6.58. According to Figure 2, the non-Hispanic Black respondents preferred a bottom that is slightly shorter than the non-Hispanic White respondents.

The last fit preference measure in Table 12 displays the mean values for the preferred waist placement. The overall sample preferred a waist placement of 4.39. According to Figure 2, this visually means that the sample preferred a waist placement that is mid-height. This preferred waist is slightly beneath the belly button and covers the abdomen. The Black sample identified the preferred waist placement at 4.59 and the White sample indicated the preferred waist placement to be 4.18. Using Figure 2 as a guide, the non-Hispanic White respondents preferred a lower waist placement than the non-Hispanic Black participants.

Fit preferences for the plus-sized sample did show evidence of wanting more coverage. The sample preferred their upper arms to be concealed, opting for a sleeve length slightly shorter than ¾ length and slightly longer than elbow length. The sample also preferred a top that concealed their hips. The group also indicated a preference for a longer length bottom. A flood length bottom was preferred, and nearly 80 percent of the sample studied selected a full length pant as their preferred bottom length. In terms of silhouettes, the sample preferred moderately fitting silhouettes. In both tops and bottoms,
they indicated a preference for a silhouette that would show the contours of their body without hugging the body itself.

There were some differences by ethnicity in fit preferences of both tops and bottoms as indicated by the differences in means for the clothing fit preference measures. Table 13 shows the results of t-tests for each fit preference measure in order to determine if these differences in means are statistically significant. There were no differences in result when equal variances were assumed and when they were not, so this table only consists of the results when equal variances were assumed.

The first four fit preference measures refer to Figure 1, the top fit preferences. The last three fit preference measures refer to Figure 2, the bottom fit preferences. The first fit preference measure in Table 13 shows a t-test for the top length preference variable. Although there was a mean difference of -.24 in the top length preference by ethnicity, this slight difference was not significant because the result showed significance at a level greater than .05.

The next fit preference in the chart is the top silhouette. Table 13 explains that there was a mean difference of .01 between the two groups for the top silhouette preference. The two-tailed t-test showed that the minimal difference in means was not significant. The third fit preference measure in Table 13 is the sleeve length. Table 13 illustrates a mean difference of -.18 between the two groups for their sleeve length preference. The two-tailed t-test revealed that this difference in means was not statistically significant because the value of .333 was greater than the p< .05 criteria used to determine significance for this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Length</td>
<td>-.59</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Silhouette</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>.961</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeve Length</td>
<td>-.97</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>.333</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neckline</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom Silhouette</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom Length</td>
<td>-.69</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waist Placement</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. T-test for fit preference measures by ethnicity when equal variances are assumed.
The last top fit preference measure in Table 13 is the neckline. Table 13 provides results of a two-tailed t-test to determine if the .26 mean difference in neckline preference was statistically significant. The t-test does show that this mean difference was statistically significant; however, these results are not reliable due to the differential scale of Figure 1 not matching the differential scale provided in the questionnaire. Therefore, these results will not be included in the conclusion of this study, and the variable will need to be tested again.

The next set of fit preference measures included in Table 13 refer to bottom fit preferences. The first bottom fit preference in Table 13 is bottom silhouette. Table 13 displays the two-tailed t-test results for the preferred bottom silhouette. There was a mean difference of .43. This mean difference did prove to be statistically significant at .009. The next bottom fit preference measure found in Table 13 is bottom length. Table 13 shows there was a mean difference of -.09 for bottom length, which was not considered to be statistically significant. The last clothing fit preference measure was waist placement. The mean difference of .40 for the waist placement fit preference proved to be statistically significant at the .004 level, which is well below p< .05 criteria to be considered significant.

**Summary of Findings**

Overall, there were fit preferences that proved to be significant. In terms of top fit preferences, only the difference in neckline preferences showed promise of being statistically significant. As previously mentioned, however, the neckline variable is not reliable and will not be used in the data conclusion. In terms of bottom fit preferences, two areas did show significant differences. Non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White
respondents provided different preferences for both bottom silhouette and waist placement. Non-Hispanic Black respondents preferred a less-fitted silhouette with a waistline just beneath the belly button. Non-Hispanic White respondents preferred a slightly more fitted silhouette and a slightly lower waistline than the Black sample.

With the considerable amount of attention being given to bottom fit choices at retailers, these results can help develop a pleasing fit for the plus-sized consumer. Walking through the denim section of a retailer, the consumer is faced with choices ranging from “Curvy” to “Straight” and “Perfect Fit” to “Diva.” Fit’s role in a retailer’s success is growing in importance, and the results of this study provide awareness to plus-sized fashion retailers and designers. The two groups in this study have difference bottom fit preferences, which could lead to the development of two additional fit or modifications to bottom fit choices at the retail level.

Additional Findings

The research question posed for this study was to explore if differences exist in the body cathexis and fit satisfaction of non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White women. Results showed that differences do exist between these two groups, but further analysis could show if these differences exist because of ethnicity alone or if other demographic variables influenced the attitudes plus-sized women possess about their bodies and the clothing in which they dress their bodies. Because a sizeable percentage of the sample identified themselves as being aged 56 or greater (25 percent), the question was asked if age played an integral role in the body cathexis and fit satisfaction in the study. Due to the fact that demographic data had been collected in the questionnaire, it
was possible to utilize these data in order to further explore if age, or any other
demographic factors, impacted a plus-sized woman’s body cathexis and fit satisfaction.

Correlations were processed to explore if each of these independent demographic
variables impacted the dependent variables. The independent variables analyzed were the
demographic variables, including: education, income, age, and ethnicity. The dependent
variables analyzed were the Total Upper Body Cathexis, Total Lower Body Cathexis,
Total Overall Body Cathexis, and Total Fit Satisfaction. Once correlations were
processed and relationships were established between variables, regression analyses were
processed between the demographic variables and the dependent variables.

Table 14 shows the correlations for the total sample, the non-Hispanic Black
group, and the non-Hispanic White group. Table 14 supports the earlier findings of the t-
tests, which illustrated that ethnicity did affect body cathexis and fit satisfaction. A quick
review of the table illustrates that correlations above or below .150 were statistically
significant. For the total sample, the correlations between ethnicity and Total Upper
Body Cathexis, Total Lower Body Cathexis, Total Overall Body Cathexis, and Total Fit
Satisfaction were significant at the .01 level. In terms of fit preferences, correlations
between ethnicity and bottom silhouette and waist placement were also significant at the
.01 level for the total sample. These significant relationships illustrate that ethnicity did
heavily impact the body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and specific fit preferences.

Education correlated negatively with all body cathexis variables as well as fit
satisfaction for the total sample and the non-Hispanic Black respondents. As participants
received more education, they experienced more negative body cathexis. For the non-
Hispanic White sample, all body cathexis variables were also negatively correlated with
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Upper Cathexis</td>
<td>.213 (**)</td>
<td>-.185 (**)</td>
<td>-.114(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Lower Cathexis</td>
<td>.249 (**)</td>
<td>-.177 (**)</td>
<td>-.137(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Body Cathexis Fit</td>
<td>.250 (**)</td>
<td>-.207 (**)</td>
<td>-.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction Total</td>
<td>.199 (**)</td>
<td>-.108</td>
<td>-.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit Preferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Length</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Silhouette</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.367 (**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeve Length</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.253(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom Silhouette</td>
<td>-.144 (**)</td>
<td>.239(**)</td>
<td>.287(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom Length</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waist</td>
<td>-.160 (**)</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.273(**)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 14. Correlations between demographic data and body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and fit preferences by ethnicity.
education, but Total Fit Satisfaction was positively correlated with education for this group, meaning that as education increased, so did the Total Fit Satisfaction.

Correlations between education and all three body cathexis variables were significant at the .01 level for the total sample. Due to the Law of Large Numbers, the correlations between education and the body cathexis variables were statistically significant to the total sample, but as the sample was split into two smaller groups, the weak correlation did not remain statistically significant. The bottom silhouette fit preference variable was also significant at the .01 level for the total sample and the non-Hispanic Black sample, however, the correlation between education and bottom silhouette was not statistically significant for the White sample.

For the total sample, age was negatively correlated with all three body cathexis variables as well as fit satisfaction. This means that as the total sample’s age increased, their degree of body satisfaction and fit satisfaction decreased, but only the Total Upper Body Cathexis and Total Lower Cathexis variables showed significance, which was at the .05 level. The non-Hispanic Black sample also experienced negative correlations between age and the body cathexis and fit satisfaction variables. In the case of the non-Hispanic Black sample, the correlations between age and Total Upper Body Cathexis and Total Fit Satisfaction were significant at the .05 level. The non-Hispanic White sample indicated that age was negatively correlated with Total Lower Body Cathexis only, and none of the correlations between age and body cathexis and fit satisfaction were significant for this sample.

Many of the correlations between age and fit preference variables were significant for the total sample, the non-Hispanic Black sample, and the non-Hispanic White group.
For the total sample, the correlations between age and top silhouette, sleeve length, bottom silhouette, and waist placement were significant at the .01 level. As age increased, the total sample preferred a less fit silhouette in both tops and bottoms. Also, as age increased, the total sample preferred longer sleeves and a higher waist. In terms of fit preference, non-Hispanic Black respondents’ correlation between age and the fit preferences of top silhouette, sleeve length, and bottom silhouette were significant at the .01 level. Unlike the total sample, the correlation between age and waist placement for the non-Hispanic Black group was not significant while the correlation between age and waist was significant at the .01 level for the non-Hispanic White sample. In addition, the correlation between age and top silhouette was also significant for the non-Hispanic White sample at the .01 level for top silhouette and bottom silhouette. The relationship between the White sample’s age was significant at the .05 level for sleeve length.

For the total sample, income did not significantly impact the body cathexis or fit satisfaction variables. For the total sample, income and Total Fit Satisfaction were negatively correlated meaning that as income increased, the degree of clothing fit satisfaction decreased, however, this relationship was not considered to be significant. For the non-Hispanic White sample, income was positively correlated with all three body cathexis variables and fit satisfaction, but none of these relationships were considered to be significant. Both Total Lower Body Cathexis and Total Fit Satisfaction correlated negatively with income within the non-Hispanic Black sample. The correlation between income and Total Fit Satisfaction was significant at the .05 level for the non-Hispanic Black sample.
The total sample also presented some significant relationships between income and specific fit preference variables. The correlation between income and sleeve length was a significant factor at the .01 level while the relationship between income and top silhouette and bottom silhouette were significant at the .05 level. As income increased, the total sample preferred a less fitted top and bottom silhouette as well as a longer sleeve length. When reviewing the non-Hispanic Black sample, the correlation between income and fit preference variables resulted in two significant relationships. The correlations between income and sleeve length as well as bottom length were significant at the .05 level for the Black sample. The White sample indicated a different set of significant relationships between income and fit preference variables. For this group, the correlations between income and top length and sleeve length were significant at the .05 level. In addition, correlations between top silhouette and bottom silhouette were significant at the .01 level.

The relationships between demographic variables and the dependent variables within the study that were established through correlations indicate that ethnicity plays a pivotal role in the body cathexis and fit satisfaction of the total sample. In addition, the more education a plus-sized woman received contributed to a decrease in body satisfaction. Slightly significant relationships emerged as a result of correlations between age and body cathexis variables. Although the Law of Large Numbers caused some of the correlations between demographic variables and the independent variables to show statistical significance at the total sample level but not at the ethnicity level, some of the correlations, especially those between the demographic variables and fit preferences remained significant after being split by ethnicity group.
A Regression Model

In an effort to create a model to predict attitudes towards body cathexis and clothing fit satisfaction, a series of multivariate analyses, or regression analyses, was produced. The regression analysis was utilized in order to explore the individual impact of each demographic variable, including: ethnicity, education, age, and income impacted the results of the Total Upper Body Cathexis, Total Lower Body Cathexis, Total Overall Body Cathexis, and Total Fit Satisfaction. As is the accepted practice when comparing two regression models, each table will include the standardized coefficient, which will illustrate each individual demographic variable’s percentage of the total effect. In addition, the regression analysis also conveyed the combined effects of all the demographic variables on the Total Upper Body Cathexis, Total Lower Body Cathexis, Total Overall Body Cathexis, and Total Fit Satisfaction. The analysis provides a method to predict the attitudes a sample will have towards a dependent variable, which will be illustrated in each table as the R Square value. Tables 15 to 24 reflect the regression analysis for each of the dependent variables: Total Upper Body Cathexis, Total Lower Body Cathexis, Total Overall Body Cathexis, and Total Fit Satisfaction.

Table 15 shows the regression analysis between the demographic variables and Total Upper Body Cathexis for the total sample, the non-Hispanic Black sample, and the non-Hispanic White sample. As illustrated in Table 15, the R Square represents the combined predictive effect of demographic variables ($R^2 = .072$ or 7.2 percent) for the total sample’s Total Upper Body Cathexis variable. When evaluating each individual demographic variables contribution to Total Upper Body Cathexis for the total sample, education, income, and ethnicity were significant at the .05 level. For the non-Hispanic
### Regression Analysis: Total Upper Body Cathexis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White Sample</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.268 (a)</td>
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<td>.060</td>
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</table>

**Standardized Coefficients**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>-1.591</th>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td>-2.288</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>2.056</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>2.306</td>
<td>.022</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>7.997</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-2.288</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>2.056</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>2.306</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-1.591</td>
<td>.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-2.288</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>2.056</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>2.306</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-1.591</td>
<td>.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-2.288</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>2.056</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>2.306</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-1.591</td>
<td>.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-2.288</td>
<td>.023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>2.056</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>2.306</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Regression Analysis: Total Upper Body Cathexis Dependent Variable.
Black sample, Table 15 shows that demographic variables contributed 3.8 percent to the Total Upper Body Cathexis while the demographic information contributed 2.7 percent to the non-Hispanic White sample’s attitudes towards Total Upper Body Cathexis. None of the individual demographic variables contributed significantly to the Total Upper Body Cathexis variable for either subset of the total sample meaning that ethnicity impacted the results more than the other demographic factors.

In Table 16, the regression analysis for Total Lower Body Cathexis illustrates the demographic variables’ influence on the Total Lower Body Cathexis of the sample. Table 16 shows that the combined predictive effect of the demographic variable was 7.7 percent ($R^2 = .077$) for the overall sample’s attitudes toward Total Lower Body Cathexis. In terms of individual demographic factors, only ethnicity proved to be significant. For the total sample, ethnicity was significant at the .01 level. The combined demographic variables contribute 1.6 percent to the non-Hispanic Black samples’ attitude toward Total Lower Body Cathexis while these variables contributed 1.9 percent to the non-Hispanic White sample’s attitude toward Total Lower Body Cathexis. None of the demographic variables’ contribution to Total Lower Body Cathexis were significant for the non-Hispanic Black sample or the non-Hispanic White sample. These results indicate that ethnicity was the only significant demographic factor to influence Total Lower Body Satisfaction.

Table 17 presents a regression analysis to illustrate the demographic variables’ impact on the Total Overall Body Cathexis. The table indicates that the combined demographic variables contribute to 9.8 percent of the total sample’s attitudes toward Total Overall Body Cathexis. Evaluating each demographic variable individually, it is
### Table 16. Regression Analysis: Total Lower Body Cathexis Dependent Variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.277 (a)</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.128 (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.85152</td>
<td>-.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error of</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Estimate</td>
<td>.89339</td>
<td>.810986</td>
<td>.85152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standardized Coefficients</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>9.731</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>10.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.098</td>
<td>-2.539</td>
<td>-.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>1.189</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.076</td>
<td>-1.221</td>
<td>-.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>3.315</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 17. Regression Analysis: Total Overall Body Cathexis Dependent Variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.314 (a)</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.130 (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.82398</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error of</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Estimate</td>
<td>.89222</td>
<td>.85152</td>
<td>.89339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standardized Coefficients</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>9.095</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>-.126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>2.544</td>
<td>.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-0.585</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>3.388</td>
<td>.130</td>
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noted that education, income, and ethnicity were significant to the attitudes toward Overall Body Cathexis. Education and income were significant at the .05 level, and ethnicity was significant at the .01 level. All of the demographic variables combined contribute to 1.7 percent of the non-Hispanic Black respondents’ attitudes toward Overall Body Cathexis and 5.6 percent of the non-Hispanic White sample’s attitudes. None of the individual demographic variables were considered to be significant to the non-Hispanic Black sample’s attitudes; however, education and income were significant at the .05 level for the non-Hispanic White sample’s attitudes toward Overall Body Cathexis. The strongest significance for the total sample was indicated as ethnicity, but the non-Hispanic White sample was influenced by education and income. For the White sample, as education increased, the degree of Overall Body Cathexis decreased, yet as the level of income increased, so did the degree of Overall Body Cathexis.

Now that body cathexis variables have been analyzed, Table 18 illustrates the demographic variables’ influence on clothing fit satisfaction. The combined demographic variables contribute 4.6 percent of the Total Fit Satisfaction for the total sample. A review of the regression analysis for the total sample shows that the only individual demographic variable that significantly contributed to Total Fit Satisfaction was ethnicity. Ethnicity was significant at the .05 level. For the non-Hispanic Black sample, the combine demographic variables contribute 3.5 percent to the degree of Total Fit Satisfaction while these variables contribute 2.7 percent to the Total Fit Satisfaction of the non-Hispanic White sample. None of the individual demographic variables were neither significant to the Total Fit Satisfaction of the non-Hispanic Black nor the non-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.213 (a)</td>
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<td>.032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standardized Coefficients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>10.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>-.278</td>
<td>.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>0.389</td>
<td>.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
<td>.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>2.856</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18. Regression Analysis: Total Fit Satisfaction Dependent Variable.
Hispanic White samples. Ethnicity alone was the significant influence on clothing fit satisfaction for the sample in this study.

Because ethnicity was found to be the primary demographic influence behind the body cathexis and fit satisfaction of plus-sized women, and as discussed earlier, there were difference in fit preferences, a series of regression analyses were processed in order to ascertain if any demographic factors impacted the clothing fit preferences. Tables 19 to 24 present the regression analyses for all fit preference variables. These variables include: Top Length, Top Silhouette, Sleeve Length, Bottom Silhouette, Bottom Length, and Waist Placement.

Table 19 shows the regression analysis for the Top Length Fit Preference variable. As illustrated in Table 19, the R Square represents the combined predictive effect of demographic variables ($R^2 = .029$ or 2.9 percent) for the total sample’s Top Length Fit Preference variable. When evaluating each individual demographic variables contribution to the Top Length Fit Preference variable for the total sample, ethnicity and age were significant at the .05 level. For the non-Hispanic Black sample, Table 19 shows that demographic variables contributed 4.9 percent to the Top Length Fit Preference while the demographic information contributed 3.1 percent to the non-Hispanic White sample’s preference towards Top Length. Both income and age were statistically significant to the non-Hispanic Black sample’s Top Length Fit Preference. None of the individual demographic variables, however, contributed significantly to the Top Length Fit Preference variable for the non-Hispanic Black sample.

In Table 20, the regression analysis shows the demographic variables’ influence on the Top Silhouette Fit Preference of the sample. The value of R Square illustrates the
Table 19. Regression Analysis: Top Length Fit Preference Dependent Variable.

Table 20. Regression Analysis: Top Silhouette Fit Preference Dependent Variable.
combined predictive effect of demographic variables \((R^2 = .154\) or 15.4 percent) for the total sample’s Top Silhouette Fit Preference. When evaluating each individual demographic variables contribution to the Top Silhouette Fit Preference for the total sample, age was the only demographic variable significant at the .01 level.

Table 20 shows that demographic variables contributed 14 percent to the Top Silhouette Fit Preference of the non-Hispanic Black sample, while the demographic information contributed 18.4 percent to the non-Hispanic White sample’s preferences towards Top Silhouette. Age was the only one of the individual demographic variables to contribute significantly to the Top Silhouette Fit Preference variable for both ethnicity groups at the .01 level.

Table 21 presents another fit preference regression analysis to illustrate the demographic variables’ impact on the Sleeve Length Fit Preference of the sample. The \(R^2\) Square value in Table 21 shows the predictive effect of demographic variables when they are combined on the total sample’s Sleeve Length Fit Preference. As shown in Table 21, the combined impact of the demographic variables is 8.9 percent \((R^2=.089)\) on the sample’s Sleeve Length Fit Preference. For the total sample, both ethnicity and age were statistically significant to the sample’s fit preference at the .01 level. Table 21 shows that the demographic variables contributed 13.6 percent \((R2=.136)\) to the preference of the non-Hispanic Black sample with age being statistically significant at the .01 level. For the non-Hispanic White sample, however, the combined predictive effect of the demographic variables only accounted for 4.8 percent or \(R^2=.048\), and none of the individual demographic variables were statistically significant to the Sleeve Length Fit Preference of this group.
### Regression Analysis: Sleeve Length Fit Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.298 (a)</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized Coefficients</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>3.534</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>1.095</td>
<td>.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.183</td>
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<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td>3.497</td>
<td>.001</td>
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</table>

Table 21. Regression Analysis: Sleeve Length Fit Preference Dependent Variable.
Now that the top fit preferences have been analyzed, the next set of regression models will focus on bottom fit preferences. As shown in Table 22, the R Square represents the combined predictive effect of demographic variables ($R^2 = .117$ or 11.7 percent) for the total sample’s Bottom Silhouette Fit Preference. When evaluating each individual demographic variables contribution to the Bottom Silhouette Fit Preference for the total sample, both education and age were statistically significant. Table 22 illustrates that demographic variables contributed 13.5 percent to the Bottom Silhouette Fit Preference while the demographic information contributed 10.5 percent to the non-Hispanic White sample’s preference towards Bottom Silhouette. In terms of the non-Hispanic Black sample, education, income, and age were all statistically significant to the Bottom Silhouette Fit Preference of that group while the only statistically significant demographic variable for the non-Hispanic White sample was age.

The regression analysis for Bottom Length Fit Preference is shown in Table 23. As presented in the table, the R Square value for the total sample is $R^2 = .021$, which means that the combined demographic variables contribute to 2.1 percent of the preferences toward Bottom Length for the sample. For the non-Hispanic Black sample, Table 23 shows that demographic variables contributed 5.2 percent to the Total Upper Body Cathexis while the demographic information contributed .9 percent to the non-Hispanic White sample’s preferences towards Bottom Length. None of the individual demographic variables contributed significantly to the Bottom Length Fit Preference variable for the total sample or either of the ethnicity groups. Because none of the demographic variables were statistically significant for any of the samples in this study.
### Table 22. Regression Analysis: Bottom Silhouette Fit Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Non-Hispanic Black Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White Sample</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>R Square</td>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>.016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>.450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.646</td>
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### Table 23. Regression Analysis: Bottom Length Fit Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.121</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>0.642</td>
<td>.521</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22. Regression Analysis: Bottom Silhouette Fit Preference.

Table 23. Regression Analysis: Bottom Length Fit Preference Dependent Variable.
retailers can focus on the preference of the plus-sized woman rather than having to take into account demographic variables when creating their assortment.

The final regression analysis, Table 24, indicates that the combined demographic variables contribute to 8.6 percent of the total sample’s Waist Placement Fit Preference ($R^2 = .086$). Evaluating each demographic variable individually, it is noted that age was statistically significant to the total sample’s Waist Placement at the .01 level. All of the demographic variables combined contribute to 3.2 percent of the non-Hispanic Black respondents’ preference toward Waist Placement while demographic variables can predict 14.9 percent of the non-Hispanic White sample’s waist preference. None of the individual demographic variables were considered to be significant to the non-Hispanic Black sample’s attitudes; however, age was significant at the .01 level for the non-Hispanic White sample’s preference toward Waist Placement.

*Summary of Additional Findings*

After reviewing the impact of the demographic variables on the body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preferences, there were some keys points to note. Ethnicity was a driving force behind the reported body cathexis and fit satisfaction of the participants within this study. Education was significant at the total level, but due to the Law of Large Numbers as well as preferences by ethnicity, one’s level of education did not impact body cathexis or fit satisfaction for either ethnic group. In terms of fit preferences, though, ethnicity was not the only demographic variable that influenced the reported preferences. In addition to ethnicity, correlations between age as well as income also impacted fit preferences of the total sample as well as both ethnic groups.
### Regression Analysis: Waist Placement Fit Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Black Sample</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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Table 24. Regression Analysis: Waist Placement Fit Preference Dependent Variable.
These results illustrate that retailers and designers must keep their customer in mind at every level of the fashion industry. Designers must be aware of the detailed demographic information of their target market when they conceptualize a new line. Retailers must be acutely aware of their target market and realize that clothing fit preference, such as top silhouette and bottom silhouette are influenced by demographic variables.

This study found that over 15 percent of the total sample’s attitudes towards the preference for the top silhouette could be predicted by the combined demographic variables. This value was even greater for the non-Hispanic White sample, which could predict 18.4 percent of the attitudes toward top silhouette fit preference to the combined demographic variables. Both age and ethnicity significantly impacted these preferences. After reviewing the correlation between age and top silhouette, it is evident that as the age of the sample increased, the sample preferred a less-fitted top silhouette.

In order to incorporate these preferences into everyday use, the retailer would have to communicate the demographic information to the designer who would then be able to design clothing suitable to the target market. If the target market was older, then a less fitted top silhouette should be incorporated into the retailer’s assortment; a younger customer prefers a closer-fitting silhouette than the older customer. Since the top silhouette preference did not differ significantly by ethnicity, as discovered through the use of a t-test, then age would be the major demographic factor to consider when designing and marketing specific top silhouettes to the plus-sized market.

While the combined predictive effect for the overall sample was 8.9 percent for the sleeve length fit preference, the R Square value is equal to 13.6 percent for the non-
Hispanic Black sample. In effect, this means that retailers marketing to the non-Hispanic Black market must take into consideration the age of the market to which they are providing. As the customer gets older, they prefer a longer length sleeve. The same is true for the non-Hispanic White sample, but only 4.8 percent of their attitudes toward sleeve length can be predicted by demographic variables, so this is more impactful for retailers aiming towards the non-Hispanic Black target market.

In terms of bottom fit preferences, 11.7 percent of the total sample’s attitude concerning the bottom silhouette fit preference can be attributed to the combined demographic variables. Ethnicity influenced the total sample’s attitudes about the bottom silhouette fit preference. Both the non-Hispanic Black and the non-Hispanic White samples were influenced by age as well. As the sample’s age increased, a less-fitted bottom silhouette was preferred. Retailers should be cognizant of the age of their target market because they will need to carry different assortments to meet the preferences of the age groups they are servicing. An older customer will prefer a less-fitted bottom silhouette than a younger customer.

Retailers, manufacturers, and designers must be aware of the target market for which they are creating product. Fit preferences differ in terms of ethnicity for bottom silhouette and waist height. A retailer marketing to the plus-sized non-Hispanic Black consumer should provide less-fitted bottom silhouettes with higher waistlines than they would provide to the non-Hispanic White plus-sized woman. In addition, the retailer must know the age of the consumer being targeted because age does influence clothing fit preferences. Retailers should pay special attention to the age of their target market when selecting the appropriate top silhouettes and bottom silhouettes for their assortment. As
age increases, the customer prefers less-fitting garments. Incorporating these preferences into the daily decision making process will allow plus-sized retailers to thrive in a challenging economy.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Summary

The current study served to explore if ethnicity impacts plus-sized women’s body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preferences. As a result of the questionnaire provided to non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White females who wore size 14 or greater, differences in body cathexis and fit satisfaction did arise by ethnicity. Some differences in clothing fit preferences were revealed as a result of the study.

Body cathexis in terms of ethnicity was evaluated in the first section of the study. Responses from the overall sample revealed similarities to previous research of women’s body satisfaction. Consistent with previous findings by Cash and Henry, Chattaraman and Rudd, LaBat and DeLong, Cash et al., and Feather et al., the overall sample expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with their abdomen, weight, waist, buttocks, and thighs.¹ In addition, the overall sample was most satisfied with areas of the upper body,

including wrists and the face. In terms of overall body satisfaction, the variable that the sample was most satisfied with was their height.

Although non-Hispanic Black women who wear size 14 or greater did express some degree of negative body cathectis, they were more satisfied with their bodies than non-Hispanic White plus-sized women. These findings are consistent with those found in a study conducted by Feather et al. in 1997, in which Black female athletes had greater body satisfaction with their upper, lower, and total body. In addition to the Feather et al. study, other studies conducted by Harris, Story et al., Bottá, Miller et al., Wilfley et al., Flynn and Fitzgibbon, Smith et al., Paeratakul et al., and Cash and Henry have determined that Black women hold more positive feelings towards their bodies with less dissatisfaction than White women.\(^2\)

\(^2\) Feather et al., 1997, 126.

Greater body cathexis in the non-Hispanic Black group could be a result of cultural influences. In a study by Thomas et al., Black female participants expressed that their larger body size was accepted by family members and peers.\(^4\) One participant even commented, “Skinny people look unhealthy and obese people don’t.”\(^5\) In the same study, Black women asserted that the ideal body weight standards for women were “too low and unrealistic.”\(^6\) Another study conducted by Parnell et al. found that Black females defined the ideal female body size to be significantly larger than the White female group.\(^7\) Other studies conducted from 1996 to 2002 also suggest that plus-sized Black women and their families are more comfortable with their shape and size, which in turn, causes less decrease in body image.\(^8\) These cultural attitudes did impact body satisfaction scores within this study.

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\(^5\) Ibid.

\(^6\) Ibid.


The second portion of this study focused its attention on fit satisfaction. Fit satisfaction of both groups was evaluated to determine if a difference exists between ethnicity. The overall sample was most dissatisfied with clothing fit at their waist and abdomen. Although both groups expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with clothing fit, the non-Hispanic Black participants expressed greater satisfaction with clothing fit than the non-Hispanic White respondents.

Although little research has been done to explore fit preferences of street wear, Feather et al. explored the fit satisfaction of Black and White female athletes in a 1997 study, which compared the athletes’ fit satisfaction with basketball uniforms and street wear, including a blouse and pant. The current findings that the non-Hispanic Black participants expressed greater clothing satisfaction are consistent with the findings of Feather et al., which found that Black female athletes did not express as much dissatisfaction with their clothing fit as compared to White female athletes. Even though Feather et al. found differences in means of fit satisfaction for the Black and White sample, those findings were not statistically significant. Unlike the Feather et al. study, the current study did not find that these differences were significant by ethnicity.

This study found that non-Hispanic Black plus-sized women were more satisfied with their bodies and the way in which clothing fits their bodies than plus-sized non-Hispanic White women. Once body cathexis and fit satisfaction were analyzed, clothing fit preferences were then examined. In the last section of the study, the “Aesthetic Attribute Preference Scale” developed by Chattaraman and Rudd was utilized in order to

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9 Feather et al., 1997, 127.
measure clothing fit preference. The “Aesthetic Attribute Preference Scale” was used to determine if fit preferences exist between plus-sized non-Hispanic Black women and plus-sized non-Hispanic White women. After finding that body cathexis and fit satisfaction were statistically significant according to ethnicity, it was thought that fit preferences would also be significant.

A total of six dimensions (excluding neckline) were analyzed for differences in fit preference. Although it was thought differences would occur, only two dimensions showed significance. Both dimensions were bottom styling preferences. Both bottom silhouette and waist placement were considered significant differences by ethnicity. Non-Hispanic Black respondents preferred a less-fitted bottom silhouette and a slightly higher waistline than the non-Hispanic White participants. Although research has not been done to explore fit preferences of street wear, a study by Feather et al. concluded that Black female athletes preferred baggy uniform shorts while White female athletes would wear regular or baggy-fitting shorts. Surprisingly, the non-Hispanic Black participants expressed greater body satisfaction than the non-Hispanic White respondents, and yet the White females preferred a more form-fitting silhouette and a lower waistline in bottoms.

Implications

Although research has been previously completed on body satisfaction differences by ethnicity, very little research has focused its attention on fit satisfaction and clothing fit preferences in terms of ethnicity. Furthermore, the plus-sized market continues to

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10 Chattaraman and Rudd, 52.

11 Feather et al., 1997, 127.
grow in importance. This research will contribute to the body of knowledge because it focuses not only on the plus-sized market but also evaluates if there are differences in clothing preferences by ethnicity. In addition, through the additional analysis of demographic variables, it was found that ethnicity is the demographic variable primarily responsible for the plus-sized consumers’ attitudes towards body cathexis and fit satisfaction while age also impacted fit preferences in conjunction with ethnicity. Knowing that ethnicity plays a pivotal role in the plus-sized consumer’s attitudes as well as becoming knowledgeable in their preferences will lead to direct success of clothing manufacturers and retailers directing their efforts at the emerging plus-sized market.

Knowing not only the preference of plus-sized women, but also being aware of different preferences by ethnicity will allow these plus-sized marketers to create an assortment for the specific demographic at which they are aiming. Becoming acutely aware of the target market’s fit preferences will have a dramatic impact on the rate of return for retailers catering to these markets. Better fit will not only lead to a decrease in returns, but as expressed by Alexander et al., better fit will also lead to an increase in customer loyalty.¹²

**Possibilities for Future Research**

This research study focused on the body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preferences of two groups: Non-Hispanic Black and Non-Hispanic White plus-sized females. It would be interesting to apply these same methods to additional plus-sized women of different ethnicities, such as Hispanic women. This segment of the population

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is also growing in importance within the American clothing market and the preferences of this group should also be noted.

In addition, this study focused solely on differences based on ethnicity. Another perspective would be to analyze if clothing size also plays a role in fit preferences. This would allow researchers to determine if clothing preferences are driven by ethnicity or by body size.

The clothing and textiles field could also benefit from more research on clothing fit preferences that explores fit preferences of more than one type of clothing as opposed to only the top and bottom explored within the current study.

This study was quantitative in nature, and did not allow the participants to further explain their feelings towards their clothing purchase decision process. Further qualitative research should be conducted to allow for more diverse opinions to result. Although clothing fit preferences were evaluated, a discussion could also produce thoughts on specific styling and color preferences. All of the findings would benefit retailers by gaining insight into their customers and then having the ability to provide an ongoing, consistent assortment to a loyal customer following.

Conclusion

This study has shown that, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” Through a comparison of body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preferences of plus-sized non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White women, this study was able to show that Black and White women do experience different feelings toward their bodies and the way in which clothing fits their bodies. Black and White women have also expressed different preferences with bottom fit.
Consistent with previous findings, non-Hispanic Black women expressed greater body satisfaction than the non-Hispanic White sample. In this study, non-Hispanic Black women who wore size 14 and greater were more satisfied in all aspects of their body than non-Hispanic White women who also wore size 14 and greater. In addition, the study found that plus-sized non-Hispanic Black women had greater clothing fit satisfaction at all body site categories than plus-sized non-Hispanic White women.

Greater body satisfaction scores are likely a result of greater cultural acceptance of a larger body size within the African-American community. These findings support previous research that suggests a larger body size is perceived as more attractive to the Black population. Other researchers purported that Black women experience less social pressure to be thin. In effect, the non-Hispanic Black respondents were more satisfied with their bodies, which led to greater satisfaction with how clothing fits their bodies.

The findings of this study do not at all suggest that plus-sized Black women escape the feeling of body dissatisfaction. The Black participants did express negative body cathexis and fit dissatisfaction; however, the degree of dissatisfaction was less than that expressed by the White sample. Past research also supports that Black women have concerns about their weight and are discontent with being overweight.

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13 Thomas et al., 174; Paeratakul et al., 348-349; Flynn and Fitzgibbon, 616, 627; Parnell et al., 115, 117; Striegel-Moore et al., 112, 115; Young-Hyman et al., 245.

14 Thomas et al., 174; Paeratakul et al., 349; Flynn and Fitzgibbon, 627; Parnell et al., 115, 117; Striegel-Moore et al., 112, 118; Young-Hyman et al., 245; Meg Lovejoy, “Disturbances in the Social Body: Differences in Body Image and Eating Problems Among African American and White Women,” Gender & Society 15, no. 2 (April 2001): 251; Cash and Henry, 26.

Because differences in body cathexis and fit satisfaction were significant, differences in clothing fit preferences between the non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White plus-sized sample were expected. Even though plus-sized non-Hispanic Black women were more satisfied with their bodies and the fit of their clothing, there were only two areas that their fit preferences differed significantly from the plus-sized non-Hispanic White respondents. Non-Hispanic Black women preferred a less-fitted bottom silhouette and a slightly higher waistline than the non-Hispanic White participants.

This study set out to explore if non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic White plus-sized women experience different body cathexis, fit satisfaction, and clothing fit preferences. It was found that these two groups of women do experience varying degrees of body cathexis and fit satisfaction. In addition, it was found that the body cathexis and fit satisfaction of these women are influenced primarily by their ethnicity, not other demographic variables. The clothing fit preferences of the plus-sized women, however, are impacted by age as well as ethnicity. This knowledge will allow retailers to focus their efforts on the ethnicity of their consumer.

These groups of women also prefer slightly different fits of bottoms. At first glance, the results were surprising. Black women expressed a more positive body cathexis and greater clothing fit satisfaction, and yet they preferred slightly less-fitted bottoms with a higher waist. It was expected that the group with the greater degree of satisfaction would prefer clothing more revealing clothing. However, previous research

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by Chattaraman and Rudd revealed that women having larger body size preferred higher waistlines and less-fitted bottom silhouettes.\textsuperscript{16} Although body measurements were not taken for this study, participants were asked to divulge their clothing sizes as well as height and weight. The non-Hispanic Black sample was slightly shorter and weighed more than the White sample. In addition, the Black sample reported wearing a slightly larger bottom size than the White sample. Utilizing the reported size and weight data of the sample, the findings of the current study are consistent with the conclusions of Chattaraman and Rudd in that the sample with the larger bottom size preferred a higher waistline and a less-fitted silhouette.

In the end, women select clothing that makes them feel better about themselves. All women have some degree of dissatisfaction with their bodies, but they turn to clothing to present themselves at their best. For that reason, retailers, manufacturers, and designers are obligated to provide plus-sized women an assortment that will lead to greater satisfaction. The retailer must be cognizant of the target market’s demographic variables, most importantly the market’s ethnicity and age. A retailer focusing on the non-Hispanic Black demographic should provide less-fitted bottoms with higher waistlines than a retailer concentrating on the non-Hispanic White demographic. Age should be a major focus for retailers, no matter which ethnicity group being targeted. As the age of the target consumer increases, the retailer should opt for less-fitted tops and bottoms as well as longer sleeves. Hopefully, this research study has provided the clothing industry with the knowledge needed to capitalize on the rise of the plus-sized

\textsuperscript{16} Chattaraman and Rudd, 57.
market while also providing the larger-sized consumer the opportunity to experience a greater degree of fit satisfaction and, ultimately, body satisfaction.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Jourard, Sidney M. and Paul F. Secord. “Body-Cathexis and the Ideal Female Figure,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 50, no. 2, (1955): 244.


November 16, 2010

Jessica Plutt
3328 Lennox Village Drive Unit 224
Fairlawn, Ohio 44333

From: Sharon McWhorter, IRB Administrator

Re: IRB Number 20101106 “Body Cathexis, Fit Satisfaction and Fit Preference among Plus-Sized Black and White Women”

Thank you for submitting your Exemption Request for the referenced study. Your request was approved on November 16, 2010. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

☐ Exemption 1 - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.

☒ Exemption 2 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.

☐ Exemption 3 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

☐ Exemption 4 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.

☐ Exemption 5 - Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.

☐ Exemption 6 - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study’s design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact me to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. This office will hold your exemption application for a period of three years from the approval date. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit another Exemption Request. If the research is being conducted for a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Cc: Sandra Buckland- Advisor
Cc: Stephanie Woods - IRB Chair

☒ Approved consent form/s enclosed

Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Akron, OH 44325-2102
330-972-7666 • 330-972-8281 Fax
The University of Akron is an Equal Education and Employment Institution
APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT
Informed Consent

Title of Study: Women’s Body Satisfaction, Fit Satisfaction, and Fit Preferences

Introduction:

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Jessica Plutt, a student in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, at The University of Akron.

Purpose:

This study will serve to determine the degree of body satisfaction, fit satisfaction, and fit preferences of women who respond to an internet survey.

 Procedures:

In order to participate in the research study, you will complete an online survey. You will be asked to provide demographic information, including gender, age, ethnicity, and household income. Also, you will provide your clothing size. Throughout the survey, you will be asked to rate your degree of satisfaction based on a 5-point scale. You will be provided with visual representations of the upper and lower body and will be asked to rate your clothing fit preferences on a 7-point scale. Overall, the researcher would like to obtain 500 completed surveys.

Risks and Discomforts:

There are no known risks for participants involved in this research study.

Benefits:

The benefits to you for participating in this study may be a better understanding of your own clothing fit preferences, which will aid in your shopping experience. However, you may receive no benefit from participating in this study. Your participation may help me to better understand women’s clothing fit satisfaction and fit preferences. The results of this research will allow clothing retailers and manufacturers to better serve their target markets by offering them a resource to learn about their customer’s fit preferences.

Payments to Participants:

After completion of the survey, participants will be given the opportunity to enter into a drawing for one $25 Visa gift card. In order to be eligible for the drawing, the participant must provide their name and method of contact. Only one winner will be chosen. At the end of data

APPROVED

IRB 11/16/12

Date

The University of Akron
collection, the winner will be randomly selected, and will be contacted by the indicated contact preference. Once a mailing address is secured, the gift card will be mailed to the winner.

Right to refuse or withdraw:

Participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. Those who refuse to participate will incur no penalty. You may also decide to withdraw from the research study at any time and without penalty.

Anonymous Data Collection:

Data collected in this research survey will be anonymous. Even though participants are able to participate in a drawing to win a $25 gift card, the website for the drawing is not connected to the survey website. Therefore, all survey data will remain anonymous. Because data is anonymously collected, participants will not be individually identified in any publication or presentation of the research results.

Who to contact with questions:

If you have any questions about this study, you may e-mail Jessica Plutt at jp66@zips.uakron.edu or call Dr. Sandra Buckland at (330) 972-8090. This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the IRB at (330) 972-7666.

Acceptance

I have read the information provided and all of my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. My completion and return of this survey will serve as my consent. I may print a copy of this consent statement for future reference.
APPENDIX C. BODY SATISFACTION, FIT SATISFACTION, AND FIT PREFERENCES QUESTIONNAIRE
BODY SATISFACTION, FIT SATISFACTION, AND FIT PREFERENCES

Background Information

1.) Please indicate your gender.
   ( ) Male
   ( ) Female

2.) What is your highest education degree received?
   ( ) 12th grade or less
   ( ) Graduated high school or equivalent
   ( ) Some college, no degree
   ( ) Associate degree
   ( ) Bachelor’s degree
   ( ) Post-graduate degree

3.) What is your annual household income?
   ( ) 0-$14,999
   ( ) $15,000-$29,999
   ( ) $30,000-$49,999
   ( ) $50,000-$69,999
   ( ) Over $70,000

4.) Do you currently reside in the United States?
   ( ) Yes
   ( ) No

5.) In what state do you live?
   ( ) Alabama
   ( ) Alaska
   ( ) American Samoa
   ( ) Arizona
   ( ) Arkansas
   ( ) California
   ( ) Colorado
   ( ) Connecticut
   ( ) Delaware
   ( ) District of Columbia
   ( ) Federated States of Micronesia
   ( ) Florida
   ( ) Georgia
6.) Please identify your ethnicity.
( ) Non-Hispanic Black
( ) Non-Hispanic White
( ) Hispanic
( ) Asian
( ) Other

7.) Are you at least at 18 years of age?
( ) Yes
( ) No

8.) Which of the following categories includes your age?
( ) 18-25
( ) 26-35
( ) 36-45
( ) 46-55
( ) 56 or greater

9.) What size clothing do you typically purchase and wear?
( ) Smaller than size 14
( ) Size 14 or greater

10.) Please identify the range that is closest to your weight.
( ) 100 lbs. or less
( ) 101-124 lbs.
( ) 125-149 lbs.
( ) 150-174 lbs.
( ) 175-199 lbs.
( ) 200-224 lbs.
( ) 225-249 lbs.
( ) 250-274 lbs.
( ) 275-299 lbs.
( ) 300-324 lbs.
( ) 325-349 lbs.
( ) 350-374 lbs.
( ) 375-399 lbs.
( ) 400 lbs. or more
( ) Prefer not to answer
11.) Please indicate the category that comes closest to your actual height in feet and inches. Round down to the nearest inch if necessary (for example, if your height is 5 feet 2 ½ inches, then you would choose 5 feet 2 inches).

( ) Less than 5 feet tall
( ) 5 ft. to 5 ft. 2 in.
( ) 5 ft. 3 in. to 5 ft. 5 in.
( ) 5 ft. 6 in. to 5 ft. 8 in.
( ) 5 ft. 9 in. to 5 ft. 11 in.
( ) 6 ft. or taller
( ) Prefer not to answer

Clothing Information
12.) Please identify the size range that includes the size pant you typically purchase and wear.

( ) Size 14 – Size 16
( ) Size 18- Size 20
( ) Size 22 – Size 24
( ) Size 26 or greater

13.) Please identify the size range that includes the shirt size you typically purchase and wear.

( ) Size L – Size XL- Size XXL
( ) Size 1X
( ) Size 2X
( ) Size 3X
( ) Greater than Size 3X

14.) Are you able to easily locate your size in the styling you prefer?

( ) Always
( ) Often
( ) Sometimes
( ) Seldom
( ) Never

15.) Out of the choices provided below, which makes it most difficult to make a clothing purchase?

( ) Price
( ) Size Availability
( ) Do not care for the appearance of the garment
( ) Poor Fit
Body Satisfaction

16.) Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the listed lower body sites on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being the highest level of satisfaction and 5 indicating the lowest level of satisfaction.

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17.) Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the listed upper body sites on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being the highest level of satisfaction and 5 indicating the lowest level of satisfaction.

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<td>()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18.) Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the listed overall body sites on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being the highest level of satisfaction and 5 indicating the lowest level of satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Satisfied</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>()</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>()</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Build</td>
<td>()</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Profile</td>
<td>()</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torso</td>
<td>()</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posture</td>
<td>()</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>()</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Clothing Fit Satisfaction

19.) Please indicate your level of satisfaction with how clothing fits your body at the listed body sites on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being the highest level of satisfaction and 5 indicating the lowest level of satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Site</th>
<th>1 Satisfied</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pant Length</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crotch or Rise of Garment</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thigh</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
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<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buttocks</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
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<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeve Length</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waist Length</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waist</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdomen</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
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<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder</td>
<td>()</td>
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<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skirt Length</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arm Hole</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Arm</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
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<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midriff</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calf</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neckline</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
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<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Top Fit Preferences

**Figure 1.**

20.) Using Figure 1 as a guide, please indicate the length of top (short to long) you prefer to wear:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Short Top</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 Long Top</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of Top</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21.) Using Figure 1 as a guide, please indicate the silhouette (fitted to unfitted) you prefer to wear in a top:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Fitted</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 Unfitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silhouette</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22.) Using Figure 1 as a guide, please indicate your sleeve length (sleeveless through long sleeved) preference when wearing a top:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Sleeveless</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 Full Length Sleeve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleeve Length</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23.) Using Figure 1 as a guide, please indicate your neckline preference (high neckline to low neckline) when wearing a top:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neckline</th>
<th>1 High Neckline</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 Low Neckline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Bottom Fit Preferences**

![Figure 2.](image)

24.) Using Figure 2 as a guide, please indicate your silhouette preference (fitted to unfitted) when wearing a pant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Silhouette</th>
<th>1 Fitted</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 Unfitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25.) Using Figure 2 as a guide, please indicate the length of pant (short to long) you prefer to wear:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Bottom</th>
<th>1 Short</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
26.) Using Figure 2 as a guide, please indicate your preferred waist line (low waist to high waist) when wearing a pant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waist</th>
<th>1 Low Waist</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 High Waist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank You!
Thank you for your participation in this research study. Your responses are greatly appreciated!

Please continue to the next page for your chance to win a $25 Visa gift card.
APPENDIX D. PERMISSION TO REPRINT FIGURES 1 AND 2
Title: Preferences for Aesthetic Attributes in Clothing as a Function of Body Image, Body Cathexis and Body Size
Author: Veena Chattaraman, Nancy Ann Rudd
Publication: CLOTHING AND TEXTILES RESEARCH JOURNAL
Publisher: Sage Publications
Date: 01/01/2006
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9/12/2010