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# ADOLESCENT GIRLS SKIRTS

PART I. MOTHERS' AND  
DAUGHTERS' OPINIONS  
OF SCHOOL SKIRTS

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# Adolescent Girls Skirts

## Part I. Mothers' and Daughters' Opinions of School Skirts

The adolescent consumer is having an increasing impact on family clothing consumption patterns. In recognition of this situation, this study was designed to identify and evaluate criteria associated with the purchase and use of adolescent girls skirts. Relationships considered when evaluating clothing attitudes and behavior patterns of ninth-grade school girls included home location and social and economic situations.<sup>1</sup>

### Sampling Procedure

In 1959 and 1960, classes of ninth-grade girls were interviewed as groups. Girls who did not purchase skirts were eliminated from the final sample; the total working number was 2,422. Then 491 mothers of these girls were randomly selected and interviewed individually.

In order to secure a representative sample, the north-central region was divided into four strata and a state selected from each (selected state is in italics):

Stratum	States
I .....	South Dakota, Minnesota, <i>Wisconsin</i>
II .....	Nebraska, <i>Iowa</i> , Kansas
III .....	<i>Missouri</i> , Illinois, Indiana
IV .....	Michigan, <i>Ohio</i>

Criteria used for classifying states were general factors such as climate, industrialization, urbanization, agricultural similarity, and contiguity. Size of population differed among strata.

If a state had been randomly chosen within each stratum, each ninth-grade girl would not have had an equal opportunity for selection. Therefore, states were assigned a chance of selection proportional to their populations. This procedure assumed that the unknown ninth-grade girl population was proportional to the total known population.

Urban areas within the four states were selected from cities having: (1) between 20,000 and 125,000 population (1950 U. S. Census) and (2) 6-3-3 school system. This school system was considered the most common and sociologically relevant to the study (ninth-graders are at the top level of their peer group). Suburbs of recent origin were excluded except in Missouri where their inclusion was necessary as alternates. Eligible cities were stratified, on the basis of population, into groups of approximately equal size within states. Then cities were selected within

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<sup>1</sup>The relationship of these selective criteria to fabric performance is reported in *Adolescent Girls Skirts, Part II. Laboratory Evaluation of Skirt Fabrics*, Univ. of Minn. Agr. Exp. Sta. Bull. 479, NCR Res. Pub. 170, 1965.

each of these stratum with probability proportional to current junior high enrollment.

The number of classes interviewed in each city was proportional to the total junior high enrollment of the selected city. The random selection of classes of ninth-grade girls was made within schools, given the initially determined sampling rate. Classes of home economics students were not used in order to eliminate an obvious bias.

Questionnaires were developed and revisions made after pretesting (see appendix).<sup>2</sup> These questionnaires were designed for use in a 50-minute school period and a training session for interviewers was held. Where applicable, the chi square test was used with enumeration data and analysis of variance was used with quantitative data.

## Characteristics Of Population Sample

An occupational classification of the girls' fathers revealed:

Professionals .....	9.0 percent
Farmers, managers, proprietors .....	19.0 percent
Clerical workers .....	4.5 percent
Skilled workers .....	19.5 percent
Semiskilled or unskilled workers .....	48.0 percent

About 80 percent of the girls lived inside city limits. Slightly more than a third of the mothers were employed.

Relationships between father's occupation, mother's employment status, place of residence, and size of city were determined. Father's occupation was related to the mother's occupational status and size of city where school was located: wives of white collar workers were more likely to be employed than wives of blue collar workers—more white collar group girls than blue collar group girls attended schools in small cities. The proportion of girls living inside city limits was related to the size of the city where the school was located; girls living outside city limits tended to be enrolled in small city schools.

Replies of the 491 mothers were divided according to the husband's occupation. Farmers, professional men, proprietors, managers, officials, and clerks were considered in the upper occupational or "white collar" group. Skilled workers, foremen, semiskilled workers, truck and bus drivers, mail carriers, farm laborers, and servants were in the lower occupational or "blue collar" group. In this study, 212 women had husbands in the white collar group and 279 in the blue collar group. Since it was hypothesized that these two occupational groups represented different social classes, opinions, preferences, and practices of mothers and daughters from these two groups were compared.

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<sup>2</sup> Important contributions to pretesting were made by:

Frances Marie Magrabi, *Differences Between Parents' and Daughters' Criteria in Selection of Eighth Grade Girls' Clothing*, unpub. M.S. thesis, Iowa State Univ., 1958.

Winifred Elizabeth Diaz, *Instruments for Determining Characteristics of School Clothing Important to Ninth Grade Girls and Their Mothers*, unpub. M.S. thesis, Iowa State Univ., 1959.

Marjorie Elaine Meade, *Disagreements Between Adolescent Girls and Their Mothers Concerning Clothing*, unpub. M.S. thesis, Iowa State Univ., 1957.

# RESPONSES OF SAMPLE

This section analyzes responses given by 2,422 ninth-grade girls and 491 of their mothers to questions about the girls' ownership, acquisition, use, and care of school skirts.

## Clothing Attitudes And Behavior Patterns

Ninety-seven percent of the girls stated that they wore skirts to school during the winter season. When asked what they usually wore to school, 50 percent reported blouses; 78 percent, sweaters; 18 percent, dresses; and 1 percent, jumpers.

The girls reported owning an average of eight and a half skirts; mothers usually reported that their daughters owned five, six, or seven skirts. The girls' questionnaires revealed that daughters of white collar workers, daughters of working mothers, and girls living inside city limits had significantly more skirts than the other girls. The number of skirts owned per girl ranged from 0 to 36 (see table 1).<sup>3</sup>

Not all winter school skirts were new. Every mother reported that her daughter had at least one skirt from the previous year. More than half of the girls had five or more skirts left from the year before. However, the average blue collar girl reported significantly greater numbers of skirts discarded from the previous year. The main reason for discarding skirts was poor fit; other reasons were dislike, outdated style, and wornout condition.

About half of the girls had homemade skirts; 23 percent of the girls made skirts themselves. Daughters in white collar families were more

**Table 1. Number of skirts girls owned as reported by daughters according to father's occupation, mother's occupational status, and place of residence**

Number of skirts owned	White collar group (n = 766)	Blue collar group (n = 1,348)	Working mothers (n = 862)	Non-working mothers (n = 1,430)	Living inside city (n = 1,971)	Living outside city (n = 240)
	.....percent.....					
1-9	61	67	61	67	64	72
10 or more	39	33	39	33	36	28
	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi square	7.79*		6.66*		6.63†	

\* Significant at 0.01 level.

† Significant at 0.05 level.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this report, total number of respondents does not always equal 2,422 daughters or 491 mothers because of no response, unclassified response, or nonapplicable response.

**Table 2. Girls owning homemade skirts as reported by daughters according to father's occupation\***

Possession of homemade skirts	White collar group (n = 766)	Blue collar group (n = 1,348)	Total (n = 2,114)
	. . . . . percent . . . . .		
Yes . . . . .	63	50	51
No . . . . .	35	47	46
No response . . . . .	2	3	3
Total . . . . .	100	100	100

\* Difference significant for 0.05 level.

likely to have homemade skirts and skirts made by themselves than were blue collar group girls (see table 2).

About a third of the winter skirts made at home were of cotton fabrics; about two-thirds were of wool. Most homemade skirts had a slim silhouette, while only a fourth of these skirts were flared or gathered. Many were made to go with a special top. Girls from white collar families more often used wool, made a slim or tailored skirt, and purchased higher-priced fabric than did blue collar group girls.

More than half of the mothers in both occupational groups said that skirts were given to their daughters. Most of these gifts were skirts which someone could no longer use; the donor was frequently a close relative.

### Daughter's Favorite Winter School Skirt

Both mothers and daughters were asked to describe the daughter's favorite winter school skirt. Many mothers in both occupational groups—but more in the white collar group—indicated that their daughters' favorite school skirts were wool. Daughters' answers were similar. Cotton skirts were reported as favorites by more blue collar than white collar families. Preferences for other fabrics differed but not widely.

When asked to describe their favorite skirt, girls usually indicated wool or wool-like skirts with a tailored slim silhouette in either a plaid or plain color. However, responses differed somewhat according to background characteristics. For example, more white collar than blue collar group girls and more girls living inside than girls living outside city limits chose the tailored silhouette (see tables 3 and 4).

When describing their daughters' favorite skirts, more white collar group mothers mentioned plain and plaid designs than did blue collar group mothers. Most mothers stated that their daughters preferred the slim or tailored style.

Most girls said that their favorite skirt was 1 year old or less and that they would wear it for at least another season. These girls usually wore their favorite skirt more often than any other skirt.

**Table 3. Characteristics of favorite skirt as reported by daughters according to selected background variables\***

Skirt characteristics	Background variables								
	White collar group (n = 766)	Blue collar group (n = 1,348)	Working mothers (n = 862)	Non-working mothers (n = 1,430)	Living inside city (n = 1,971)	Living outside city (n = 240)	Small city school (n = 755)	Large city school (n = 675)	Total (n = 2,422)
.....percent.....									
Style:									
Slim, tailored .....	<b>65</b>	<b>55</b>	63	63	<b>64</b>	<b>57</b>	64	62	63
Pleated .....	<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>	30	29	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	30	29	30
Gored, gathered ...	7	<b>9</b>	7	8	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	6	9	7
Design of fabric:									
Plain .....	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	34	34	35	34	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	34
Plaid .....	<b>46</b>	<b>38</b>	41	41	40	41	<b>45</b>	<b>38</b>	41
Other .....	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	25	25	25	25	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>	25
Fiber content:									
Wool .....	<b>78</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>64</b>	76	71	74
Cotton .....	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	6	6	6
Other .....	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>27</b>	18	23	20

\* Boldface numbers indicate where differences are significant at the 0.05 level according to a chi square test.

**Table 4. Characteristics of girl's favorite skirt as reported by mothers according to husband's occupation**

Skirt characteristics	White collar group (n = 212)	Blue collar group (n = 279)	Total (n = 491)
	.....percent.....		
Fiber content:*			
Wool .....	76	64	70
Cotton .....	10	19	15
Other .....	14	17	15
Fabric design:*			
Plain .....	27	23	25
Plaid .....	10	5	7
Other† .....	58	70	65
Style:			
Slim, tailored .....	62	66	65
Pleated .....	33	23	27
Circular, gored, gathered .....	4	5	5
Other .....	0	2	1
No reply .....	1	4	2

\* Differences significant at 0.05 level according to a chi square test.

† Includes tweed, flowered, and striped.

Versatility and good fit were the main reasons for a girl describing a skirt as her favorite. General appearance, color, and comfort were also mentioned frequently. Mothers likewise listed fit, general appearance, and color. Although mothers also included colorfastness and washability, few daughters mentioned such qualities.

Sixty-four percent of the girls reported having skirts that they wore less often than other skirts. White collar group girls more often reported this situation than did blue collar group girls. Poor fit, color, or lack of versatility were reasons given by daughters. However, the most frequent reason reported by mothers was dislike of the fabric. Mothers also stated that their daughters disliked style, fit, length, and required care.

### Special-Occasion Skirts

Almost 50 percent of the girls had special-occasion school skirts. Again, an occupational variation existed. Daughters of white collar workers more often reported owning such a skirt than did daughters of blue collar workers. Of those who owned special-occasion skirts, 50 percent had two or more of them. About half of the mothers said that girls had skirts for special school occasions. Mothers of girls reporting only one special skirt were most often in the blue collar group.



## Practices Related To Purchasing Skirts

Information on buying practices was sought with the following question: How do you decide when to buy a skirt? Answers, in order of frequency of response, were: when I need a skirt, when I see a skirt I like, when money is available, for special occasions, when I'm tired of other skirts, and for more variety. When mothers were asked this question, differences appeared. More white collar group mothers than blue collar group mothers bought skirts because a school year was beginning; more blue collar group mothers than white collar group mothers bought skirts on sale.

Most daughters purchased skirts at large department stores; specialty stores and chain stores were second and third in rank order. Relationships between place of purchase and background variables showed the following significant differences: girls living outside city limits, girls from large city schools, and daughters of blue collar workers were more likely to patronize chain stores than were the other girls.

About 50 percent of the girls reported that they usually bought skirts in subteen or teen departments, about 30 percent in women's or sportswear departments, and nearly 20 percent in junior departments. Girls from blue collar families more often bought skirts in teen departments than did white collar group girls. Mothers' replies differed in that only 40 percent mentioned subteen or teen departments. More blue collar group mothers cited misses, women, or sportswear departments than did white collar group mothers.

Although 90 percent of all girls stated that someone usually shopped with them, white collar group girls reported this practice most often. About 80 percent of all girls said that their mothers shopped with them. However, white collar group girls shopped with their mothers significantly more often than did blue collar group girls.

The usual price paid for readymade school skirts was reported to be the same for both occupational groups—\$6, \$7, or \$8. But differences appeared at extremes of the price range. A significant number of blue collar group mothers usually paid \$5 or less for their daughters' skirts; only half as many of the white collar group mothers reported this price. A third of the white collar group mothers reported that they usually paid \$9 or more—also a significant difference.

Skirts were often bought on sale, according to 80 percent of respondents. In fact, a third of the girls bought at least half of their skirts on sale. A significantly greater proportion of blue collar group girls bought at least half of their skirts on sale (33 percent) than did white collar family girls (25 percent).

Many girls had skirts altered, by themselves or someone else. Slightly larger proportion of these girls were in the white collar than the blue collar group. The most frequent change was in the hem; the next frequent was at the waist.

Mothers and daughters were asked: Where do you get your ideas about the kinds of skirts you want to buy or make? Which of these are important? Girls ranked the following answers as number one: window

shopping (40 percent); mass media such as magazines, newspapers, and television (27 percent); and what others are wearing (22 percent). However, mothers felt that their daughters' major source of ideas was mass media rather than window shopping.

### Criteria For Selecting A Winter School Skirt

The 2,422 ninth-grade girls rated 28 criteria on importance for skirt selection. These criteria related to appearance, care, wear, social aspects, and comfort. Each criterion was listed on a card included with the questionnaire. Respondents sorted these cards into four piles ranging from "very important" to "not important." Each informant selected her own definitions for the two middle categories. She then recorded the number of each criterion in each of the four piles representing relative importance.

Cards were presented in the following order:

Its price

The fabric feels soft

It is warm enough for a winter skirt

I like the color

The color goes with my other clothes

It is what the other girls are wearing

It is suitable for my age

It is the latest style

It fits the way I like

It will hold its shape during wear

The fabric will keep its color

The fabric will not snag

The fabric will wear a long time

The seams are wide enough to be altered

The hem is deep enough to allow for lengthening

The zipper and waist fastener are neat and secure

The stitching will not break

The plaids match

It is machine washable

It requires little ironing after washing

The skirt will keep its original appearance after washing or dry-cleaning

It won't show lint

It doesn't soil readily

It can be drycleaned

It doesn't wrinkle readily or wrinkles hang out

The fabric will not get fuzzy

It makes me look older

My parents will like it (not used in mother's questionnaire)

The criterion most often ranked as very important—by 82 percent of respondents—was, "It fits the way I like" (see table 5). "I like the color" was next with 72 percent of the girls giving it this rating.

**Table 5. Ten criteria for skirt selection ranked highest by daughters according to father's occupation**

Criteria (in descending order)	Percent ranking criterion as very important		
	White collar group (n = 766)	Blue collar group (n = 1,348)	Total (n = 2,114)
	.....percent.....		
It fits the way I like* ..	89	84	82
I like the color* .....	81	72	72
It will hold its shape during wear* .....	58	65	62
The skirt will keep its orig- inal appearance after washing or drycleaning*	58	66	61
Its price .....	60	64	60
It is suitable for my age.	59	59	59
Fabric will keep its color	54	58	57
Color goes with my other clothes* .....	67	57	56
Fabric will wear a long time* .....	47	55	49
It's warm enough for a winter skirt* .....	37	47	42

\* Differences significant at 0.05 level according to a chi square test.

As illustrated in table 5, the two occupational groups ranked these criteria differently. For example, more white collar than blue collar group girls ranked "It fits the way I like," "I like the color," and "Color goes with my other clothes" in high positions. On the other hand, "It will hold its shape during wear," "Fabric will wear a long time," and "It is warm enough for a winter skirt" were ranked significantly higher by blue collar girls than white collar girls. These findings agree with a study of dresses for 10- to 12-year-old girls; white collar informants were again more concerned with appearance factors than were wives of blue collar workers.<sup>4</sup> Form and Stone<sup>5</sup> also pointed out similar appearance values held by white collar workers.

A main objective of this research was to identify criteria considered important by both mothers and daughters in acquisition, use, and care of the daughters' clothing. Therefore, mothers were asked to rank 27 criterion cards. ("My parents will like it" was excluded.) A comparison of tables 5 and 6 shows that 8 of the top 10 criteria ranked by mothers and daughters were identical. However, mothers included "It doesn't wrinkle readily" and "The zipper and waist fastener are neat and secure" instead of "Fabric will wear" and "Warm enough for a winter skirt."

<sup>4</sup> Mary Lou Rosencranz, *Relevance of Occupation and Income to Mothers' Selection of Clothing for Daughters*, Mich. Agr. Exp. Sta. Tech. Bull. 268, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> William H. Form and Gregory P. Stone, *The Social Significance of Clothing in Occupational Life*, Mich. Agr. Exp. Sta. Tech. Bull. 247, p. 23.

**Table 6. Ten criteria for skirt selection ranked highest by mothers according to husband's occupation**

Criteria (in descending order)	Percent ranking criterion as very important		
	White collar group (n = 212)	Blue collar group (n = 279)	Total (n = 491)
.....percent.....			
The skirt will keep its original appearance after washing or drycleaning	78	72	76
It is suitable for her age	73	69	71
It will hold its shape during wear	74	68	70
It fits the way she likes*	74	61	67
She likes the color*	68	58	63
Fabric will keep its color	56	60	58
Color goes well with her other clothes*	65	50	56
Its price	55	57	56
It doesn't wrinkle readily or wrinkles hang out	57	51	53
The zipper and waist fastener are neat and secure	33	26	29

\* Differences significant at 0.05 level according to a chi square test.

Actual rankings of criteria differed; daughters ranked fit highest while mothers chose "The skirt will keep its original appearance." The greatest difference was recorded for "It is suitable for her age;" mothers placed this criterion second but daughters rated it sixth.

Ryan<sup>6</sup> classified criteria of this kind into those relating to: (1) skirt attributes such as fabric, color, and fit; (2) properties resulting from these attributes; and (3) relationship of these attributes and properties to self. In this study, first level attributes were classified into an appearance grouping, second level into care and wear criteria, and third level into social and comfort aspects. Therefore, the 27 criteria (price was excluded) were classified as follows:

### Level I. Appearance

- I like the color
- The color goes with my other clothes
- It fits the way I like
- The plaids match
- The zipper and waist fastener are neat and secure
- It won't show lint

<sup>6</sup> Charlotte Swanson, *Interrelationships Among Factors Related to Satisfaction in Sweaters*, unpub. M.S. thesis, Cornell Univ., 1959, p. 7, quoting Mary Ryan, *Motivation in Clothing Selection*, unpub. rept., Cornell Univ., 1959.

## **Level II. A. Care**

It is machine washable  
It requires little ironing after washing  
It doesn't soil readily  
It can be drycleaned  
It doesn't wrinkle readily or wrinkles hang out

## **B. Wear**

It will hold its shape during wear  
The fabric will keep its color  
The fabric will not snag  
The fabric will wear a long time  
The seams are wide enough to be altered  
The hem is deep enough to allow for lengthening  
The stitching will not break  
The fabric will not get fuzzy  
The skirt will keep its original appearance after washing or dry-cleaning

## **Level III. A. Social**

It is what the other girls are wearing  
It is suitable for my age  
It is the latest style  
It makes me look older  
My parents will like it

## **B. Comfort**

The fabric feels soft  
It is warm enough for a winter skirt

Of the first 10 criteria ranked by the girls, 3 concerned appearance qualities; 4, wear characteristics; 1, social properties; 1, comfort properties; and 1, price. No care qualities were included. White collar group girls more often mentioned appearance qualities than did blue collar group girls. The latter group more often mentioned wear criteria than did white collar group girls (see table 7, page 14).

## **Unstructured Criteria**

Before girls ranked structured criteria, two questions were asked in an attempt to elicit salient, unstructured criteria. The questions were:

1. You are shopping for a school skirt. A saleslady shows a skirt to you and you say "I don't want that skirt." What are some of the reasons you might have?
2. Suzie is wearing a new skirt today. What did you notice first about Suzie's skirt?

Answers to question 1 usually denoted general appearance and style as reasons for rejecting a skirt.

Answers to question 2 revealed that color and style were most frequently noted. Color was the first response of 44 percent of the girls and the second response of 28 percent. Style was the first response of 19 percent and a second response of 33 percent. Fit was noted by a total of 22 percent, compared with 72 percent for color and 52 percent for style (see table 8).

Since color also ranked high among structured criteria, it must be important to ninth-grade girls. Because no style criteria were included in the list of items to be ranked, style responses cannot be compared with results from structured criteria. Style criteria should be included in any further study.

**Table 7. Ranking of criterion groups by daughters according to father's occupation**

Criterion group	Percentage ranking each type as number one		
	White collar group (n = 766)	Blue collar group (n = 1,348)	Total (n = 2,114)
	.....percent.....		
I. Appearance*	77	69	70
II. Care	23	27	24
Wear*	46	51	48
III. Social	28	27	27
Comfort	22	25	23
Price	61	64	62

\* Differences significant at 0.05 level according to a chi square test.

**Table 8. Responses to question 2 for unstructured criteria by daughters**

Suzie is wearing a new skirt today. What did you notice first about Suzie's skirt?	First response	Second response	Total
	.....percent.....		
Color	44	28	72
Style	19	33	52
Miscellaneous	12	17	29
Fit	12	10	22
Appearance in general	9	4	13
No response	4	8	12
Total	100	100	100

**Table 9. Distribution of mother-daughter disagreements over clothing as reported by ninth-grade girls according to father's occupation**

Disagree almost always or often about:	White collar group (n = 766)	Blue collar group (n = 1,348)	Total (n = 2,114)
	..... percent .....		
Number of clothes .....	42	44	43
Care of clothes* .....	32	43	38
Total amount of money wanted* ..	27	35	32
Style of clothes* .....	25	35	31
Fit* .....	26	34	31
Neatness or cleanliness* .....	25	34	30
Cost of individual items* .....	23	31	28
Clothes for different occasions ..	27	29	28
Spending own money for clothes* ..	15	21	19
Combinations of clothing* .....	11	19	16

\* Differences significant at 0.05 level according to a chi square test.

### Mother And Daughter Disagreements

Responses from the 491 mothers showed that they sometimes disagreed with their daughters about clothing. No significant difference existed between occupational groups. But a difference existed in the numbers of mothers who thought that they and their daughters disagreed frequently over various clothing behavior. The largest number of mothers said that they disagreed about how much care clothing needed; the next largest number cited the neatness or cleanliness of the girl's clothing.

The largest number of ninth-grade girls stated that they disagreed with their mothers over the number of clothes wanted. Next in importance were care of clothes and total money wanted for clothes. Thirty-one percent of the girls also reported disagreement with their mothers about style and fit. Between a third and a fourth of the group disagreed about neatness, cost of individual items, and clothes for different occasions.

Table 9 shows that eight of these possible sources of disagreements were viewed differently by daughters in white collar and blue collar groups; blue collar group girls reported these disagreements more often than did the white collar group.

### Other Clothing Behavior Patterns

Two-thirds of the ninth-grade girls said that they changed clothes after school. About a third of the girls washed their own school skirts; three-fourths of the girls ironed or pressed them. However, significantly more blue collar group girls, daughters with working mothers, and girls living outside city limits washed and ironed or pressed their own skirts than did the other girls. Similar responses were given by mothers.

About 30 percent of the mothers reported unfortunate experiences with their daughters' winter school skirts. In order of frequency, causes of trouble were: accidents, shrinkage, failure of slide fastener, and seams pulling apart. Almost half of the mothers reported trouble with size when buying skirts for their daughters. More mothers in the blue collar group reported trouble with waistlines and hiplines while mothers in the white collar group more frequently reported hemline and sizing difficulties.

Of skirts returned to the place of purchase, 60 percent did not fit correctly; another 16 percent were returned because daughters disliked them. More white collar group mothers returned skirts which were not satisfactory than did blue collar group mothers.

The first sign of wear reported by the most mothers was sagging in the skirt back. Other mothers said that wear first appeared at fasteners, then plackets, and then at buttonholes; a few mothers reported seam slippage as the first sign.

### **The Use Of Labels**

More than a third of the mothers saved labels but the two occupational groups did not differ widely. The largest number of mothers said that they saved labels for general care information, the next largest for washing instructions. Mothers who did not save labels reported that they usually checked them before discarding them. Of the mothers who did not keep labels, 9 percent said that they "made no difference."

### **Mothers' Suggestions For Improving School Skirts**

The final question asked gave mothers an opportunity to suggest improvements for school skirts. Most frequent replies included: better proportion and cut, better fasteners, better thread and zippers, wider selection, better price, and easier home care.

## **Quantitative Characteristics**

Analyses of variance were computed for quantitative characteristics on the two questionnaires relating to differences between states, sizes of cities, schools in cities, classes in schools, and individuals in classes. Relatively few significant differences were found. Most significant differences concerned classes in schools; these items were: cost of ready-made skirt; importance of comfort, care, aesthetic, social, wear, and price criteria as well as specific criteria; and "The color goes with my other clothes." These findings may result from differences in class composition, time of day, physical surroundings, interviewers, etc.

Although a few other significant differences existed, they did not form any pattern. Only two differences appeared to relate to schools within cities and only one to the comparison between states. With only one significant difference between states, generalizations may therefore be made about the region as a whole.



# PAIRED COMPARISONS

Of 2,422 ninth-grade girls who completed questionnaires, mothers of 482 completed questionnaires which included similar questions about the girls skirts (482 of the 491 mothers answered all questions that could be directly compared to daughters' answers). It was hypothesized that these mother and daughter pairs might give conflicting or inconsistent answers to certain questions. Furthermore, it was believed that these conflicts or inconsistencies would be seen more clearly by comparing answers of each girl with those of her mother than by comparing summarized answers of all girls and all mothers.

For questions requiring numerical answers, the quantitative difference between the girl's reply and that of her mother was measured. Also, the numbers of mothers quoting figures larger than, the same as, and smaller than their daughters quoted were counted. For "yes" or "no" or multiple-choice questions, criterion of disagreement was the proportion of pairs in which mother and daughter responded differently. For pairs which were not consistent, answers were examined to discover if certain responses were chosen more often by mothers or by daughters. For both quantitative and nonquantitative responses, replies were analyzed with respect to father's occupation, mother's employment, and, for a few items, certain other factors.

Because the questionnaires administered to mothers and daughters were not designed primarily for making paired comparisons, some questions were not worded in precisely the same form for both. Even on almost identical items, occasional differences in interpretation were indicated. Mothers were able to ask interviewers to clarify questions; daughters, filling out questionnaires at school, may not have had this opportunity.

Selected comparisons were made for items for which it was hypothesized that mother-daughter differences might exist and for questions which were similar enough to compare, which received enough responses to justify analysis, and for which coding permitted comparison.

## Number Of Skirts Owned

Mothers and daughters responded similarly when asked: how many school skirts the girl owned, how many of these skirts were readymade, how many skirts had been constructed at home during the year, and how many school skirts from the previous year were still worn. Answers varied significantly on two points: the number of school skirts the girl owned which she no longer wore and the number of special-occasion school skirts possessed.

When asked how many school skirts the girl had that she no longer wore, mothers reported about one-half skirt more than did their daughters (table 10, page 18). When asked how many special-occasion school skirts

**Table 10. Number of skirts no longer worn to school as reported in paired comparisons of mothers and daughters**

	White collar group		Blue collar group		Total	
Mother's report minus daughter's report-average . . .	0.16		0.83		0.56	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Number of positive differences* . . . . .	72	44	128	54	200	50
Number of negative differences . . . . .	57	35	68	29	125	31
Number of agreements . . . . .	<u>35</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>19</u>
Total . . . . .	164	100	239	101†	403	100
Chi square . . . . .	1.52		17.76‡		12.94‡	

\* Positive differences are when mothers estimated more skirts than did daughters; negative differences are when mothers estimated fewer skirts than did daughters.  
 † Percentages add up to 101 due to rounding.  
 ‡ Differences significant at the 0.01 level.

**Table 11. Number of special-occasion skirts owned as reported in paired comparisons of mothers and daughters**

	White collar group		Blue collar group		Total	
Mother's report minus daughter's report-average . . . . .	-0.68		-0.35		-0.48	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Number of positive differences* . . . . .	18	19	36	25	54	23
Number of negative differences . . . . .	44	47	59	41	103	43
Number of agreements . . . . .	<u>32</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>34</u>
Total! . . . . .	94	100	144	100	238	100
Chi square . . . . .	10.08†		5.09‡		14.68†	

\* Positive differences are when mothers estimated more skirts than did daughters; negative differences are when mothers estimated fewer skirts than did daughters.  
 † Differences significant at 0.01 level.  
 ‡ Differences significant at the 0.05 level.

were owned, daughters reported one-half skirt more than did mothers (see table 11). Both differences were statistically significant. These differences might represent a conflict in definitions. Perhaps both mothers and daughters thought of the same skirts. However, there was no evidence that white collar group mothers and daughters differed about inactive skirts. But, significant disparity existed on this point in

the blue collar group. Girls in both groups reported higher numbers of special-occasion skirts than did their mothers, but the discrepancy was greater in the white collar group.

When mothers and daughters were asked if daughters possessed special-occasion skirts, over one-third of the mother-daughter pairs gave conflicting answers. Among pairs in which mothers and daughters agreed, about two-thirds in the white collar group reported owning such skirts. Fewer than half the pairs in the blue collar group reported owning special-occasion school skirts—a significant difference. Blue collar group daughters outnumbered their mothers in reporting ownership of special-occasion school skirts. In the white collar group, mothers and daughters were fairly evenly divided about whether such skirts were owned.

When asked for what occasions these skirts were worn, 86 percent of the mother-daughter pairs failed to respond. Possibly, they were not certain what was meant by a special-occasion school skirt.

It was hypothesized that discrepancy on number of special-occasion skirts owned might be associated with income level or organizational membership; no clear pattern emerged with respect to either.

### Characteristics Of Skirts Owned

Mothers and daughters were asked detailed questions about particular skirts that the girls owned, including:

- the girl's favorite skirt.
- the skirt worn most often.
- the skirt worn almost as often.
- the skirt worn least often.

Two possibilities for difference arose: (1) mothers and daughters might have a different skirt in mind, and (2) they might disagree about the same skirt. Coding used in analysis did not permit separation of these two factors.

Findings indicated that mothers and daughters frequently thought of different skirts. For example, one question asked if the school skirt worn most often was the same as the favorite skirt. Of the mother-daughter pairs responding, about two-thirds agreed that these two skirts either were or were not the same. Of those giving conflicting answers, more mothers than daughters reported that the two skirts were the same. This imbalance was significantly greater in the white collar group. Mothers may have assumed incorrectly that the skirts worn most often were the favorites.

To the question concerning the girl's reasons for wearing one particular skirt most often, one member of the pair failed to reply in 29 percent of the cases. Most nonrespondents were mothers. Of the daughters who replied, 24 percent reported that they "just liked it best." Perhaps lack of response or indefinite reasons indicate an inability to explain or a lack of conscious awareness of why one skirt is worn most. When both mothers and daughters gave specific reasons why a particular skirt was worn most, they agreed more often than they disagreed.

**Table 12. Agreement of mother-daughter pairs concerning fiber content of daughter's favorite school skirt**

Fiber content	Both yes	Both no	Mother yes, daughter no	Mother no, daughter yes
<b>White collar group</b>				
Cotton . . . . .	1	167	10	1
Wool . . . . .	106	16	34	23
Other fibers and blends (specific) ..	0-3	163-77	0-6	0-9
Don't know or no reply . . . .	0	166-69	2-4	8-9
Total . . . . .		179		
<b>Blue collar group</b>				
Cotton . . . . .	2	206	28	10
Wool . . . . .	113	46	47	40
Other fibers and blends (specific) ..	0-1	223-45	0-6	0-16
Total . . . . .		246		

Answers were similar on suitability or flattery of the design for the girl's figure, ease of care, warmth, and liking for the fabric. Girls mentioned a liking for the color more frequently than did mothers; current style was cited more often by nonworking mothers than by their daughters. In 27 percent of the cases, only one member of a pair responded that the skirt coordinated well with blouses and sweaters.

About one-third of the mother-daughter pairs chose different specific reasons for abandoning a skirt no longer worn. Mothers tended to choose the response "outgrown" while daughters chose "generally too small" or "too short." Mothers and daughters showed little disagreement on such reasons as wearing out of the skirt, appearance, or obsolescence.

Differences were numerous concerning specific characteristics of fabrics. Most mother-daughter pairs stated that the girl's favorite skirt was of wool; few pairs named other fibers or blends (see table 12). Also, as expected, the most disagreements concerned whether the skirt was of wool. Significantly more discrepancy existed in the white collar than the blue collar group.

Responses were few to questions concerning fabric names of skirts. For example, in only 10 percent of the mother-daughter pairs did both state a fabric name for the skirt most often worn to school. Of these pairs, not one agreed on the fabric name.<sup>7</sup> To questions about fabric design and color, responses were most numerous for the favorite skirt.

<sup>7</sup> These findings appear to agree with Roberts' report that mothers of ninth-grade girls cited fabric names only about 21 percent of the time when describing fabrics used in girls skirts. Mary Diane Roberts, *Comparison of Fabric Descriptions by Consumers and Home Economists*, unpub. M.S. thesis, Iowa State Univ., 1963, pp. 44-45.

Mothers and daughters generally agreed that the favorite skirt was not printed, checked, or striped; they disagreed on whether it was plain, plaid, or tweed. Numerous differences existed on its color type.

Both design and color terminology might have been unclear. For example, a rough, yarn-dyed fabric might be plain to one person but tweed to another; some fabrics might be both pastel and grayed. A plaid or tweed fabric might be bright, dark, grayed, and/or pastel. Approximately four times as many mother-daughter pairs agreed that the favorite skirt was "multicolor" when asked to name its specific color as had so stated when asked its general color type. This fact may indicate that they found it difficult to describe multicolor or patterned skirts.

Approximately half of the mother-daughter pairs agreed that the favorite school skirt was slim and tailored. Only 10 percent of the pairs—the second largest number of responses—agreed on the style with pressed pleats. Mothers did not tend to name a particular style more often than did daughters. However, a significantly higher proportion of cases in the blue collar group had either the mother or the daughter reporting that the favorite skirt was circular.

### **Skirts No Longer Worn**

Mother and daughter pairs gave many conflicting answers as to what had been done or would be done with skirts the girls no longer wore. Possibly, they were not talking about the same skirt. And, daughters might have been unaware of what became of skirts they no longer wore.

Relatively high numbers of mothers and daughters differed about whether abandoned skirts were given away or just left in the closet. Daughters replied significantly more often than mothers that "nothing" had been done with the skirt. In the blue collar group, mothers replied that the skirt was given to a relative other than a sister significantly more often than did their daughters.

### **Criteria For Selecting School Skirts**

As mentioned previously, mothers and daughters were asked to classify criteria for selecting school skirts into four categories ranging from "very important" to "not important." In the analysis of their replies, disagreement was recorded if mother and daughter ranked a particular criterion two or three steps apart on the four-point scale.

In general, mothers and daughters similarly ranked factors related to original appearance and ability to maintain appearance. Many mothers and daughters differed on the importance of ease of alteration and care. "What other girls are wearing" was also valued differently by mothers and daughters. Discrepancy was moderate on criteria concerning newness of style, fabric performance, construction features, and fasteners.

### **Buying Practices**

To questions about how they decided when to buy a new skirt and at what kind of store skirts were usually purchased, mothers and daugh-

ters gave numerous differing answers. However, these answers generally did not form a clear pattern. For example, if a mother stated that a skirt was purchased when others were outgrown, and a daughter said that a skirt was purchased "when needed," a conflict might not necessarily exist.

Where mothers and daughters disagreed on the type of store, one of the pair did not mention a particular type more often than did the other. Mothers more frequently stated specific department names when asked in which store department the skirts were usually purchased. More daughters chose indefinite answers such as "clothing department" or gave no response.

Nonresponses were high to questions about the specific person who usually shopped for a skirt with the daughter and the number of skirts purchased at sales. No statistically significant numerical difference existed between prices quoted by mothers and daughters. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of mothers quoted higher prices than did their daughters. This inconsistency was highest among nonworking mothers and those who shopped with their daughters.

### **Other Sources Of Skirts**

Girls and their mothers were asked if any skirts were made for their daughters and, if so, by whom. In the group with working mothers, little disagreement existed between mothers and daughters. In the group with nonworking mothers, many daughters failed to reply and several inconsistencies were in the data. About one-third of the mother-daughter pairs gave conflicting answers when asked if girls owned any skirts received as gifts. Daughters reported gift skirts significantly more often than did mothers.

### **Disagreements About Daughter's Clothing**

As reported earlier, mothers and daughters were asked specifically how often they disagreed on certain matters relating to the daughter's clothing. They responded on a four-point scale varying from "almost always" to "never." A conflict was recorded when responses of a mother-daughter pair were two or three points apart on the four-point scale. In both the white collar and blue collar groups, numbers of conflicting answers given by mothers and daughters on the eight points fell into a narrow range. In other words, for each item, fairly similar numbers of mothers and daughters differed about how often they disagreed.

In general, daughters reported more frequent conflicts about the eight specific matters than did their mothers, particularly about clothing worn for special occasions. More discrepancy was in the blue collar group than in the white collar group on the amount of disagreement over how much care clothing needed, styles daughters wanted to wear, and fit of clothing. Also, blue collar daughters reported more frequent conflicts than did their mothers over the combination of clothes to be worn.

# Appendix: Questionnaires Used

## Schedule For Girls

Name of interviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time begun \_\_\_\_\_ Closed \_\_\_\_\_

We are doing a study on how girls feel about their clothing. We want you to give us the best answers you can. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. What kinds of clothes do you usually wear to school during the winter season?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. a. Do you wear winter skirts to school? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b. About how many winter skirts do you have that you wear to school? \_\_\_\_\_

c. How many of these skirts were readymade? \_\_\_\_\_

d. How many of these winter school skirts did you have last year? \_\_\_\_\_

e. How many winter school skirts did you have last year that you no longer wear to school? \_\_\_\_\_

f. Why did you stop wearing them? \_\_\_\_\_

g. What did you do with them? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Describe your favorite winter school skirt by checking the list below:

a. Material: Cotton \_\_\_\_\_ Wool \_\_\_\_\_ Nylon \_\_\_\_\_ Dacron \_\_\_\_\_ Rayon \_\_\_\_\_

Acrilan \_\_\_\_\_ Acrilan and wool \_\_\_\_\_ Dacron and cotton \_\_\_\_\_

Dacron and wool \_\_\_\_\_ Nylon and cotton \_\_\_\_\_ Nylon and wool \_\_\_\_\_

Orlon and wool \_\_\_\_\_ Felt \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

b. If you checked material, how did you know the kind it was? \_\_\_\_\_

c. Design of material: Plain \_\_\_\_\_ Plaid \_\_\_\_\_ Print \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_

Stripe \_\_\_\_\_ Tweed \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

d. Color(s): Name of color(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (It is pastel \_\_\_\_\_

Grayed \_\_\_\_\_ Dark \_\_\_\_\_ Multicolor \_\_\_\_\_ Bright \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_)

e. Style: Slim, tailored \_\_\_\_\_ Pressed pleats \_\_\_\_\_ Unpressed pleats \_\_\_\_\_

Circular \_\_\_\_\_ Gored \_\_\_\_\_ Gathered \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

f. Brand name: \_\_\_\_\_ Brand name unknown \_\_\_\_\_

Made at home \_\_\_\_\_

g. How long have you had it? \_\_\_\_\_

h. How much longer do you expect to wear it? \_\_\_\_\_

4. a. Which winter school skirt do you wear most often: (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

c. How often do you wear this skirt? \_\_\_\_\_

d. Do you wear any other winter skirt about as often? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

e. (If yes) what kind of skirt is this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. a. Do you have a winter school skirt that you wear less often than others?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b. If yes, describe the features which keep you from wearing it more often.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. a. Do you have any winter skirts that you wear for special school occasions?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b. If yes, will you describe them? (Color, material, style) \_\_\_\_\_

c. How many special occasion school skirts do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

7. a. Do you have any skirts that were given to you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Are these skirts that someone else could no longer use? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Who gave them to you? \_\_\_\_\_
8. a. Do you or does anyone else make winter skirts for you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If you or anyone else makes skirts for you, answer questions 8, 9, and 10. If you do not have any skirts made at home, do *not* answer questions 9 and 10, but go on to question 11.)  
 b. Do you make any winter skirts? \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. If anyone else makes your skirts, who? \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. (If yes) what is the total number made for you last year? \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. What kind of skirts? (Style, other details) \_\_\_\_\_

9. a. At which store or stores are skirt materials purchased? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. What kind of store is this? \_\_\_\_\_
10. a. About how much did the last piece of skirt material cost per yard? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do not know \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. How many yards did you buy? \_\_\_\_\_ Do not know \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. How wide was the fabric? \_\_\_\_\_ Do not know \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. What kind of material? \_\_\_\_\_ Do not know \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. For what style of skirt? \_\_\_\_\_ Do not know \_\_\_\_\_

*ANSWER THE NEXT SIX QUESTIONS (11-16) ONLY IF YOU HAVE READY-MADE SKIRTS IN YOUR WARDROBE. IF ALL YOUR SKIRTS ARE MADE AT HOME, GO ON TO QUESTION 16.*

11. How do you decide when to buy a skirt? \_\_\_\_\_
12. a. At which store do you usually buy your skirts? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. What kind of store is this? Mail order (catalog) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Montgomery Ward, retail store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sears Roebuck, retail store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Large department store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Small department store \_\_\_\_\_  
 J. C. Penney Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clothing Specialty Shop \_\_\_\_\_  
 Five and dime store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know \_\_\_\_\_
- c. If a department store, in which department do you usually buy skirts? \_\_\_\_\_

13. a. Does someone else usually shop with you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. If yes, who usually shops with you? (Relationship, not name) \_\_\_\_\_
14. a. How much did your last school skirt cost? \_\_\_\_\_ Is this usual? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Of what kind of material was this skirt made? \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. What was the style? \_\_\_\_\_
15. a. Are any of your skirts ever bought on sale? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. If yes, would you say: all of them \_\_\_\_\_ most of them \_\_\_\_\_  
 about half of them \_\_\_\_\_ or very few of them? \_\_\_\_\_
16. You are shopping for a school skirt. A saleslady shows a skirt to you and you say, "I don't want that skirt." What are some of the reasons you might have?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

17. Suzie is wearing a new skirt today. What did you notice first about Suzie's skirt?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



18. Suppose you have just purchased a new school skirt. We would like to know why you bought that particular skirt. You have been given a packet of cards; as you read the cards over, you will probably decide that some of them are important to you, and some are not at all important. Would you sort these cards into *FOUR PILES*, ranging from *VERY IMPORTANT* to *NOT IMPORTANT* and record the number on each card in the appropriate space below?

PILE 1 (Very Important)	PILE 2	PILE 3	PILE 4 (Not Important)

19. Where do you get your ideas about the kind of skirt you want to buy or make? Which of these are more important? (Place a number "1" in front of the one that is most important, number "2" in front of the one that is next in importance, and number "3" in front of the one that is third in importance. You only need to rank 1 to 3.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. magazines
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. newspapers
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. television
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. window shopping or looking in stores
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. watching what others wear
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. from your best friend
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. mother or father
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. don't know

20. Mothers and daughters sometimes disagree about the daughter's clothing. How often do you disagree over the following points?

- |  | Almost<br>Always | Often | Seldom | Never |
|--|------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| a. The number of clothes you want to have              | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| b. The total money you want for clothing               | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| c. Spending your own money for clothing                | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| d. The cost of individual clothing items               | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| e. How much care the clothing needs                    | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| f. The neatness or cleanliness of your clothing        | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| g. The style you want to wear                          | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| h. The fit of your clothing                            | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| i. The clothes you want to wear on different occasions | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| j. The combination of clothes you want to wear         | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
| k. Other (specify) _____                               | _____            | _____ | _____  | _____ |
21. If you wear a skirt to school, do you usually change into something else after school? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_
22. a. Does anyone alter skirts for you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. (If yes) what kind of altering? \_\_\_\_\_
23. Do you ever wash your own school skirts? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
24. Do you ever iron or press your own school skirts? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
25. a. Do you earn any of your spending money? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. If yes, do you spend any of it on clothing?  
 Most of it \_\_\_\_\_ Some of it \_\_\_\_\_ None of it \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your cooperation. Before closing, will you please fill in this form below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Height Ft. \_\_\_\_\_ In. \_\_\_\_\_ Weight (lbs.) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' names \_\_\_\_\_  
What kind of work does your father do? (Describe in as much detail as you can)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does your mother work outside the home? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, when  
is she usually away from home? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you live *within* the city limits? \_\_\_\_\_  
Outside the city limits? \_\_\_\_\_  
On a farm? \_\_\_\_\_

## Schedule For Mothers

Name of interviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Time begun \_\_\_\_\_ Closed \_\_\_\_\_

Comments in parentheses are instructions to interviewer.

### INTERVIEWER SAYS:

"We are interested in finding out what you think about school clothing for your ninth-grade daughter. If we knew more about it, we think that perhaps manufacturers could do a better job of meeting your needs. I might say that we chose your name by chance. Anything you say to us is strictly confidential. We never use the names of people in our studies—just what they say." The first question is:

1. Does your daughter wear skirts to school? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
2. a. (If yes) will you tell me a little about what kinds of skirts she wears to school during the winter months? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
b. About how many winter skirts does she have that she wears to school? \_\_\_\_\_  
c. How many of these skirts were readymade? \_\_\_\_\_  
d. How many of these winter school skirts did she have last year? \_\_\_\_\_  
e. How many winter school skirts did she have last year that she no longer wears to school? \_\_\_\_\_  
f. Why did she stop wearing them? \_\_\_\_\_  
g. (If yes) what did you do with them after she stopped wearing them? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Would you please describe the winter skirt which you think is your daughter's favorite to wear to school?
  - a. What kind of material is it made of?  
Cotton \_\_\_\_\_ Wool \_\_\_\_\_ Nylon \_\_\_\_\_ Dacron \_\_\_\_\_ Rayon \_\_\_\_\_ Acrilan \_\_\_\_\_  
Acrilan and wool \_\_\_\_\_ Dacron and cotton \_\_\_\_\_ Dacron and wool \_\_\_\_\_  
Nylon and cotton \_\_\_\_\_ Nylon and wool \_\_\_\_\_ Orlon and wool \_\_\_\_\_ Felt \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What is the design of the material?  
Plain \_\_\_\_\_ Plaid \_\_\_\_\_ Print \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ Stripe \_\_\_\_\_ Tweed \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. What color(s): Name of color(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
It is: Pastel \_\_\_\_\_ Grayed \_\_\_\_\_ Dark \_\_\_\_\_ Multicolor \_\_\_\_\_ Bright \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Describe style:  
Slim, tailored \_\_\_\_\_ Pressed pleats \_\_\_\_\_ Unpressed pleats \_\_\_\_\_  
Circular \_\_\_\_\_ Gored \_\_\_\_\_ Gathered \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Brand name: \_\_\_\_\_ Brand name unknown \_\_\_\_\_ Made at home \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Why do you think she likes this skirt best? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. a. Which winter school skirt does she wear most often? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
b. Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
c. How often does she wear this skirt? \_\_\_\_\_  
d. Does she wear any other winter skirt about as often? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

- e. (If yes) What kind of skirt is this? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. a. Does your daughter have a winter skirt that she wears less often than others?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b. (If yes) what features of the skirt keep her from wearing it more often? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. a. Does your daughter have any winter skirts that she wears for special school occasions? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b. (If yes) will you describe them? (Probe for specific things such as color, style, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- c. How many special occasion school skirts does she have? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How do you decide it is time to buy a skirt for your daughter? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
8. a. At which store or stores are your daughter's skirts usually purchased?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What kind of store is this? Mail order (catalog) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Montgomery Ward, retail store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sears Roebuck, retail store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Large department store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Small department store \_\_\_\_\_  
 J. C. Penney Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clothing specialty store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Five and dime store \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know \_\_\_\_\_
- c. (If a department store) in which department are your daughter's skirts usually purchased? \_\_\_\_\_
9. a. Do you usually shop with your daughter? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b. (If no) who usually shops with her? (Relationship, not name) \_\_\_\_\_
10. a. How much did the last readymade school skirt cost? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is this price usual? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Of what kind of material was this skirt made? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What was the style? \_\_\_\_\_
11. a. Are any of your daughter's skirts bought on sale? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b. (If yes) would you say: All of them \_\_\_\_\_ Most of them \_\_\_\_\_  
 About half \_\_\_\_\_ Very few of them \_\_\_\_\_
12. a. Do you or does anyone make skirts for your daughter? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b. (If yes) who? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. (If yes) how many did she make for your daughter last year? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. (If yes) what kinds of skirts did she make? (style, material) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
13. a. Does anyone alter skirts for your daughter at any time? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b. (If yes) what kind of altering? (Waistline \_\_\_\_\_ Hem \_\_\_\_\_)
14. a. Does your daughter have any skirts that were given to her? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Are these skirts that someone else could no longer use? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Who gave them to her? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Suppose your daughter is out shopping for a winter skirt and she is standing in front of a rack of skirts, what are the things she is probably looking for? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Anything else?) \_\_\_\_\_
16. You and your daughter are shopping for a winter skirt. You pick out one that you like and show it to your daughter and she says, "No, I don't want that skirt."

What sort of reasons might she give for saying this? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Let us suppose you have bought a new school skirt for your daughter. What are the things you were looking for? Would you answer this by sorting the cards in this envelope? (HAND HER THE PACK OF CRITERION CARDS.) As you see, there is a reason printed on each card. As you read them over, you will probably decide that some of them are important and some are not important at all. Would you sort them into four piles ranging from *VERY IMPORTANT* to *NOT IMPORTANT*. Feel free to change them around if you change your mind as you go along. (AFTER SHE IS FINISHED, TAKE THE PILES AND RECORD THE NUMBERS IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMNS BELOW.)

1	2	3	4
VERY IMPORTANT			NOT IMPORTANT

18. Where do you suppose your daughter usually gets ideas about the kind of skirt that she wants to buy or make? \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following do you think has the most effect on your daughter's choice of skirt? (Hand the mother Card I.)

(Rank only the first three mentioned.)

- a. magazines \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. newspapers \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. television \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. window shopping or looking in stores \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. watching what others wear \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. from her best friend \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. her mother and/or father \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. don't know \_\_\_\_\_
19. Mothers and daughters sometimes disagree about clothing. We are interested in knowing how often you and your ninth-grade daughter disagree about the following points:

	Almost Always	Often	Seldom	Never
a. The number of garments she wants to have	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. The total money she wants for clothing	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Spending her own money for clothing	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Cost of individual clothing items	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. How much care the clothing needs	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. The neatness or cleanliness of her clothing	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. The styles she wants to wear	_____	_____	_____	_____
Why? _____				
h. The fit of her clothing	_____	_____	_____	_____
Why? _____				
i. The clothes she wants to wear on different occasions	_____	_____	_____	_____
Why? _____				
j. The combinations of clothes she wants to wear	_____	_____	_____	_____
Why? _____				

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

20. Does your daughter have winter school skirts that you don't like to have her wear? a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

b. If yes, describe the skirt \_\_\_\_\_

c. Why don't you like her to wear it? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Have you ever had an unfortunate experience with your daughter's skirts?

a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

b. If yes, what kind of experience? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Have you ever returned a skirt that you bought for your daughter?

a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

b. If yes, why? \_\_\_\_\_

23. When buying a skirt for your daughter, do you have trouble with the size?

a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

b. If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_

24. a. Which of these fabrics has your daughter had in winter skirts?

(Hand the mother Card II)

Cotton

Nylon

Dacron

Wool

Rayon

Orlon

Acrilan

Nylon and cotton

Dacron and cotton

Wool and Orlon

Wool and nylon

Wool and rayon

Wool and Dacron

Other\_\_\_\_\_

Don't know

b. Which did you like best for a winter skirt? (While mother still has card, interviewer try to record first and second choices.)

Cotton

Nylon

Dacron

Wool

Orlon

Rayon

Acrilan

Nylon and cotton

Dacron and cotton

Wool and Orlon

Wool and nylon

Wool and Dacron

Wool and rayon

Other\_\_\_\_\_

Don't know

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

25. Where do first signs of wear appear on your daughter's winter school skirts?

26. Regarding the last winter skirt she discarded, how many seasons was it worn?

27. Why did she stop wearing it? (Record open end responses on the left. Ask the remaining list and record on the right.)

(Open)

(Closed)

\_\_\_\_\_ Outgrown generally \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Too short \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Too small around the body \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Fabric worn or "washed out" \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Buttons, buttonholes, zippers gone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tired of garment \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Out of fashion \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

28. a. Do you usually save labels? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If yes) why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If no) why not? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Here is a label from a winter skirt. How would you care for this skirt? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of wear would you expect? \_\_\_\_\_

29. Which of the following does your daughter do and which do you perform in relation to care of winter skirts?

Task	Mother	Daughter	Both	Neither
Hanging it up	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pressing	_____	_____	_____	_____
Washing	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ironing	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mending	_____	_____	_____	_____

30. Can you offer any suggestions for improving school skirts? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Background

Now that you have given me such good information on your clothing practices, will you give me a few more facts about the size and ages of your family? These things help us in analyzing our data. Needless-to-say, this is for our files and remains strictly confidential.

1. Will you help me fill in this family census?

Relationship to head	Age last birthday	Years of school completed	Occupation (describe as exactly as possible)	Check here if job is part-time
Husband	_____	_____	_____	_____
Wife	_____	_____	_____	_____
Children				
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Into which of these listed income groups would you say your family falls?

Less than \$2,999	_____	\$7,000 to \$7,999	_____
\$3,000 to \$3,999	_____	\$8,000 to \$8,999	_____
\$4,000 to \$4,999	_____	\$9,000 to \$9,999	_____
\$5,000 to \$5,999	_____	\$10,000 to \$10,999	_____
\$6,000 to \$6,999	_____	\$11,000 and over	_____

3. To how many clubs or organizations does your daughter belong?  
 In school? \_\_\_\_\_ Out of school? \_\_\_\_\_ Do not know \_\_\_\_\_

4. Have you had any home economics education? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If yes) was it in high school \_\_\_\_\_ College \_\_\_\_\_ Adult night class \_\_\_\_\_  
 Extension \_\_\_\_\_ 4-H Club \_\_\_\_\_? (not answered) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If yes) was it a great deal of education \_\_\_\_\_ some education \_\_\_\_\_  
 or little education \_\_\_\_\_ in home economics?

Now we have come to the end of our questions but before finishing, do you have anything you would like to contribute to this study regarding experiences or opinions about your daughter's clothing which we have not already discussed? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT WAS FOUND

Replies of the 491 mothers and 2,422 ninth-grade daughters indicated that they had many similar opinions, preferences, and practices concerning girls school skirts. However, family members of the two occupational groups showed many differences. Some significant differences appeared in inventories of skirts. The number of skirts left from the previous year and the number discarded were different, indicating an economic advantage for white collar group girls.

Both mothers and daughters preferred slim styles and wool fabrics for winter school skirts. But there were occupational differences in preferences related to fabric design and color. Mothers' replies indicated that the girls in the two occupational groups may have had different reasons for considering one skirt a favorite.

When purchasing winter school skirts, the two occupational groups reported different reasons for deciding when to buy, purchased in different kinds of stores and departments, and paid different prices. Proportionally more white collar group girls had skirts made at home, but the numbers of such skirts per girl were similar in both occupational groups. The sources of ideas about skirts likewise differed according to occupational background. The most important criteria to both mothers and daughters mainly concerned appearance. Mothers in the two occupational groups agreed on most criteria. However, fit, color, and harmony with other garments concerned white collar group mothers more than blue collar group mothers. Seven of the top 10 criteria ranked by daughters showed significant differences when related to father's occupation.

More mothers in the white collar group returned skirts because they were not satisfied, but this situation may have resulted from poor purchasing rather than performance failure. Mothers in the two groups differed in reporting dissatisfactions with size. Similar suggestions for improving school skirts were made by mothers from both occupational groups; these findings should help manufacturers and retailers as well as consumers.

Although responses from the 2,422 girls and the 491 mothers generally coincided, a few differences existed. Girls reported a somewhat higher average number of skirts than did mothers. Over half of the girls said that they wore their favorite skirts to school while only a third of the mothers reported this behavior pattern. For skirts that were worn less often, girls stated that they disliked the "fit" and "color;" mothers felt that their daughters disliked "fabric" and "style."

More girls than mothers said they purchased skirts in subteen departments; more mothers than girls said they shopped with their daughters. A greater percentage of daughters than mothers reported that skirts were made at home and that daughters made skirts for themselves. Daughters also mentioned gifts of skirts more frequently than did mothers. Eight of the top 10 criteria ranked by mothers and daughters were identical. However, mothers also included "It doesn't wrinkle

readily” and “The zipper and waist fastener are neat and secure.” Daughters mentioned “Fabric will wear a long time” and “It is warm enough for a winter skirt.”

Daughters more often than mothers reported disagreements with mothers about the number of clothes and the amount of money for clothing wanted. On the other hand, mothers stated that they disagreed with daughters about care and cleanliness of clothing more frequently than daughters reported this difficulty.

Daughters felt that window shopping most frequently gave them ideas for clothing; mothers believed that mass media were the usual sources of ideas.

Finally, more significant differences between occupational groups showed up in data gathered from the ninth-grade girls than in data secured from mothers.

The analysis of mother-daughter pairs focused on certain possible areas of disagreement between mothers and daughters and on items adaptable to paired comparison. In general, responses of mothers and daughters to equivalent questions conflicted sharply on relatively few points. Furthermore, relatively few differences were found when respondents were classified according to the father’s occupational group, whether mother was employed, or certain other factors.

Numerous apparent conflicts and possible concealment of other conflicts resulted because mothers and daughters did not necessarily agree on which skirt was: the “favorite,” the one worn most often, and the special-occasion skirt. Overlapping terminology on multiple choice items and opportunities for differences in understanding terms made results difficult to interpret and may have decreased the number of responses. The paired comparison technique may reveal such problems more clearly than separate analysis of mother and daughter responses. Therefore, it is useful for interpreting findings from the separately analyzed data and for suggesting possible revisions in instruments and data collection techniques. Furthermore, it can be used for examining certain hypotheses which could not be tested in separate analysis of data from mothers and daughters.

Use of commercial names does not endorse those mentioned nor criticize those not named.