

Running Head: "I'm a Princess"

Mount Saint Vincent University

"I'm a Princess": The Gendered Marketing of Children's Clothing

by

Carly MacNaughton

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts in Child and Youth Study

May 2017

Copyright 2017 Carly MacNaughton

Abstract

The focus of this research was to examine the messages conveyed about gender through children’s clothing. Content analysis was used to analyze graphic t-shirts from a popular children’s clothing store, “The Children’s Place.” The graphic t-shirts available on the store’s website were analyzed in terms of colours, decorations, images, text and other points of interest. Data was taken from the girl, baby girl, and boy sections within the graphic t-shirt section of the website. The data was analyzed for similarities and differences that were present within each gendered category, and whether they were congruent or noncurrent with traditional gender stereotypes. The themes that emerged from the data collection were discussed in regards to the messages the clothing sends to children about their gender identity. Another aspect of this research was to study how clothing stores market gender through the clothing, as well as through the set-up of their stores in gendered ways. The physical space of “The Children’s Place” was examined on one subsequent visit to document how the store’s space sets up a divide between the genders making it virtually impossible for adults and children to make non-gendered purchases. The theoretical framework of discourse analysis was used to discuss the pressures adults face to make appropriate clothing choices for their children, as well as the pressures children face to wear gender appropriate clothing.

“I’m a Princess”

Acknowledgments

I would like to first thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Donna Varga. Without her constant support, many hours of editing and passion for my work, I would never have been able to complete one of the most difficult projects of my life. I cannot thank you enough!

To my husband Cobee, you have been a pillar of support for me throughout this journey. You pushed me when I needed pushing, and knew when to make me take a break. You have listened to my passion concerning the messages children’s clothing sends, and even learned a thing or two along the way. I love you!

To my Mom, Dad, brother and friends, thank you for lending your ears to my many complaints, tears, frustration, and joy while doing this project. You have all been open to hearing my ideas, and allowed me to challenge your way of thinking about the discourse of children’s clothing. I am forever grateful.

Many thanks and love,

Carly

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Chapter 1- Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2- Literature Review.....	8
Chapter 3- Method.....	21
Research Focus.....	21
Methodology.....	23
Theoretical Focus.....	27
Chapter 4- Analysis.....	30
Chapter 5- Discussion.....	49
Limitations and Future Directions.....	56
Conclusion.....	57
References.....	59
Appendices.....	66
Appendix A- Baby Girl: Discourse of Appearance.....	66
Appendix B- Girl: Discourse of Appearance.....	71
Appendix C- Baby Girl: Discourse of Love.....	74
Appendix D- Girl: Discourse of Love.....	79
Appendix E- Boy: Discourse of Sports and Aggression.....	81

Chapter 1

Introduction: A Personal Reflection

As a female growing up in a Western culture, I grew up with the belief that gender was obvious. By obvious I mean that gender was something you were born with, not something you decided. I understood that there were certain things that were appropriate for males and females based merely on their gender assignment (clothing, toys, sports, interests, etc.). I never questioned gender stereotypes or how they affected the person I was becoming. It was not until I took a Sociology of Gender course during my undergraduate degree at Saint Francis Xavier University that my eyes were opened to the way the culture I live in has constructed my beliefs about the male and female gender. Through this course I discovered a new truth about gender. This truth being that we grow up in a world that relies on a dichotomy of female/male.

The following discussion is messy. I work through the ways in which I questioned my understanding of gender. The conversation is rough but represents the challenges I faced within myself to change how I understood gender. I do not pretend to know all the answers or necessarily want to change how you feel about your own gender or that of others. I do however, welcome you to read with an open mind and I hope that by the end you may question YOUR TRUTH about gender.

We are taught that there are two types of human beings: female or male. Along with the terms ‘woman’ and ‘man’ come certain ways of “being.” We attribute one or the other to “things;” going outside of this dichotomy disrupts what society has taught us. Before taking the

“I’m a Princess”

course, I did not question my gender identity or what enabled me to see things such as a hair style, clothing, or shoes, in gendered terms. I began to realize that I could look at an individual and determine their sex based solely on their outside appearance. I never understood just how powerful this was. After coming to this realization, I started to ask, *what gave me the right to look at an individual and come to conclusions about their sex based on how they look?* The society I live in gave me that right. In my society, there is a truth about gender, and that truth is produced on our bodies by social expectations. Therefore, gender is not how we feel or what sex we were born with.

Once my ideas about gender were challenged, I began to realize that gender is an act that we are taught and perform. We do this without looking at the true meaning that lies behind what we are being taught. We are trained not to think about gender but then we are further taught rules of gender appropriateness. I began to wonder, *how does this work?* This requires knowledge of gender and what gender is. *Is this knowledge our own?* It is not our own if it exists in rules that we are taught.

The doing of gender is supposed to be automatic; something done every day without thought. However, the doing of anything is meaningful, and this particular doing and meaning need to be thought about. After analyzing this idea, I began to realize that what is guiding my gender identity is my interpreted idea of what gender should be. It was at this point that I became passionate about challenging the discourse of gender.

Although my previous discussion may indicate that I came by this realization easily, this was not the case. Challenging my pre-established truths about the discourses of gender was difficult. It is extremely tough to unlearn truths that have been ingrained in you since birth. I often struggled to believe that my interests, likes, clothing, style and relationships may not be

“I’m a Princess”

intrinsically motivated. I trusted myself to be an educated, smart individual and I was frustrated in myself for never questioning my existence as a woman. It is not easy to challenge ideas about gender. The conversations, analysis and conclusions are messy and confusing. I did find comfort in recognizing that this would be a learning process for me. I have been on this journey for 12 years, setting out on a new path as a female. I see the gendered world I live in differently and I like to believe that this expedition I am on will never end.

After my undergraduate schooling ended, I had this new understanding of gender as a socially constructed entity. However, I had no idea what to do with this knowledge. I kept this awareness with me and attempted to share it with others, but it was not until I became an Early Childhood Educator that I understood the real importance of the issue. When I started working with two and three year olds I quickly realized the struggle they face daily to understand gender. Past studies have found that children can identify male and females around the age of two years (Thompson, 1975). Following this ability, they develop an idea about what is appropriate for each gender (Rubble & Martin, 1998). I have experienced conversations with the children regarding the gender of a character in a book (when the character’s gender was ambiguous).

“Is that person a boy or a girl?”

“I think they are a girl because they have eyelashes.”

“No, they are boy because they are wearing a blue shirt.”

“They like teddy bears, so I think they are a girl.”

The children use their knowledge of gender appropriateness daily to distinguish the gender of others. When an individual’s gender is not obvious, they will use what they know about gender

“I’m a Princess”

to determine a person’s sex. They also use their knowledge to understand what is appropriate for their own gender and that of others.

“I can’t be a Daddy because I am a girl.”

“NO! Boys don’t wear nail polish.”

“I wear a dress because I am a girl. You can’t wear a dress because you are a boy.”

“My Mom says only girls wear purple.”

“I can’t be a princess because I am a boy and boys aren’t princesses.”

“I run faster because I am a boy.”

“Am I pretty? Cinderella is pretty.”

Each day in the classroom I struggle to challenge their pre-established ideas about gender. Instead of using “he” or “she” when reading books, I would use “they” or “them.” I would change “snowman” to “snow person.” I would respond to their debates “a boy can wear a dress if he wants to,” “A girl can run fast too.” The children always responded with strange looks, or with an exaggerated “Noooooo.” I quickly began to realize that, at two years old, these children already have such a strong idea about what it means to be a male or female. Their questions and debates are what generated my interest for this thesis. I recognized that I would have to start with an attribute that is an obvious gender indicator for both children and adults, and I selected that of children’s clothing.

I became interested in children’s clothing because I noticed it as being one of the first indicators children use to determine the gender of a person. I have often observed children talking about clothing selection in gendered terms, and noticed that at an early age they have stereotypical

“I’m a Princess”

ideas about what are appropriate colours and designs of clothing intended for boys compared to that for girls. I have witnessed children exclude other children because of the clothing they were (or were not) wearing. I realized that clothing holds a power over children’s gender identities and their beliefs about what is appropriate for males and females.

Albers (1998) reported that past research done on children’s clothing has focused on three main areas:

- Stern & Karraker (1998) found that children’s clothing can be identified in terms of gender based on colour and style.
- Shakin, Shakin, & Sternglas (1985) found that individuals will use the clothing a child is wearing to determine their sex if the sex of the child is ambiguous.
- Leone & Robertson (1998) found that regardless of the sex of a baby, adults will use the child’s clothing to make personality judgements.

It was difficult to determine how I would add to the past literature in this area. With the help of my thesis supervisor, Dr. Varga, I decided that the messages children’s clothing sends to children about their gender, as well as another’s gender, is where I would begin. I knew this would be a disordering experience. I felt a bit biased as I had already questioned the messages children’s clothing transmits and understood that children’s clothing was dichotomized in regards to gender. However, I had not fully understood the extent of the messages the clothing gave in regards to gender, as well as the implications such messages have on children’s gender identity. These messages and themes are discussed at length in my thesis.

In addition to the messages clothing emits, I wanted to investigate the pressures adults face from society to dress their children in a certain way, and how pre-established ideas about gender are used to market clothing. My experiences as a shopper for children’s clothing have caused me

“I’m a Princess”

to be interested in how store and clothing design reinforce, for adults and children, these ideas of gender appropriate choices.

It is my belief that one of the first ways young children determine whether an individual is male or female is through their appearance. They have already learned that the colour, design and style of clothing tells you whether a person is male or female. Children are searching their environment daily to understand their own gender and where they fit within their society (Martin & Ruble, 1998). It is my belief that the messages of colour, design, images, text, and decoration that are displayed on children’s clothing, contributes to gender stereotypes that exist within their gender identity. It is my hope that my analysis will inspire others to examine the role children’s clothing plays in their understanding of gender, as well as how adults’ pre-established understanding of gender appropriateness contributes to children’s gendered clothing choices.

Current Study

The purpose of this study was to use content analysis to examine the ways in which children’s clothing is marketed in terms of gender, the pressures adults face to purchase gender appropriate clothing, and the messages the clothing give to children regarding their gender identity and that of others. Children in North America are socialized from birth about gender appropriate clothing. By the time they are toddlers they know that pink items are for girls and blue items are for boys (Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcuit & Cossette, 1990). Therefore, the gendering of clothing starts early in one’s life and continues into adulthood. This makes it extremely difficult for shoppers to buy non-stereotypical clothing for children. It seems that the environment of children’s clothing stores and clothing design also contributes to making it difficult for adult and child shoppers to make non-stereotypical choices. While shoppers are not physically forced or prohibited in making their choices, the cultural ideas of appropriate gender

“I’m a Princess”

clothing selections are reinforced by store layouts and clothing design. I therefore have examined how children’s clothing is marketed in terms of gender, and the gendered messages being conveyed by the clothing.

It is important to note that I discuss gender in terms of gender binary. Meaning that I discuss sex, gender and sexuality as interchangeable identities. It is not my belief that one’s biological sex determines their gender identity. However, I do believe that one’s biological sex determines what gender roles are enforced on them by society. I therefore focus on, and discuss, individuals that identify as girl or boy in accordance to their sex characteristics. It is also important to note that I use male and female in relation to gender, as well I use the term “sex” when “gender” may be more appropriate. This is due to my lack of knowledge on gender queer theory, which I discuss in the limitation section of Chapter 5.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The age by which children are capable of distinguishing between sexes is of interest to researchers. Although it is not yet known at what specific age children begin to identify with gender, their knowledge of gendered categories can be found in early infancy (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Cognitive perspectives on gender development indicate that children are constantly searching their environment to make sense of the social world that surrounds them (Martin & Ruble, 2004). They use gendered cues to interpret what they see and hear (gendered labels, gendered clothing/toys/décor), and through their social world develop a gendered identity (Martin & Ruble, 2004).

Kohlberg’s (1996) cognitive theory of gender development was the first cognitive developmental approach on the subject. It stressed the active role of the child in their gender development, and argued that the child's understanding of gender influenced their behaviour. Additionally, gender schema theory was established in the 1970s and is derived from the idea that children form gendered schemas, and these schemas influence their behaviour and how they think (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Both theories are important for considering how children construct a gender identity from their social environment.

Researchers have found that children can identify males and females at approximately the age of two (Thompson, 1975). Once children establish this they begin to develop a basic understanding about what is socially appropriate for each gender. By the time children are five years old they have developed an extraordinary collection of stereotypes about gender that they apply to themselves and others. They use such stereotypes to “form impressions of others, to help guide their own behaviour, to direct their attention and to organize their memories” (Martin

“I’m a Princess”

& Ruble, 2004, p.67). Gender stereotypical knowledge continues to develop into middle childhood (Martin, Wood, & Little, 1990). Such stereotypes typically form in the following stages. First, children learn what society believes are suited for their sex (obvious things such as colour). Second, they realize more complex associations about their own sex (interests they should have and how they should behave). Lastly, they understand the associations also apply to the other sex (Martin et al., 1990).

Gender is generally the first social identity that children discover (Zulus, Ruble, Tamis-LeMonda, Shrout, Bornstein, & Greulich, 2009). This understanding is linked to stereotypes that children use to make conclusions about themselves and others (Zosuls et al., 2009). As children develop cognitively they become experts at understanding social rules of gender as well as applying the ideas to their own behaviour and to the behaviour of others.

Zosuls et al., (2009) investigated the age at which children develop gendered verbal labels and their importance for learning social categories. The authors looked at the point of development when children first use gender labels consistently. A second goal of the researchers was to determine if the ability to gender label predicted the emergence of gender-typed play. Zosuls et al., (2009) argue that “language not only presents evidence of a child having a particular schema or category, but also may function to further influence thoughts and behaviours” (p.690). This study examined if the emergence of gender categories affected early sex differences in play. They found that infants used gender labels 18 and 21 months and by 21 months most used multiple labels. They found that the number of gender labels produced by an infant was a significant predictor of an increase in gender typed play. Therefore, the more gender labels the infant produced, the more likely they were to partake in gender typed play. Children who used both girl and boy labels were significantly more likely to engage in gender

“I’m a Princess”

typed play. Similarly, those who produced gender self-labels were also significantly more likely to engage in gender typed play.

This study indicates that infants were more similar in their play at 18 and 21 months, however there was evidence for gender typed play at both time periods. It was also stated that gender typed preferences increased between 18 and 21 months. Zosuls et al., (2009) found as children are beginning to produce gender labels, they are also beginning to participate in gender typed play. They concluded that as children are beginning to acquire gender labels and figure out their place within the world, certain toys and clothing stand out as being suited for their gender.

As children get older they begin to establish peer connections. The differences children show in regards to preference for gendered toys influences their preference for same sex playmates (Powlishta, Serbin & Moller, 1993). Research in this area suggests that once individuals associate themselves with a group, they see that group in a positive way. Three-year-old children have been found to favour their own sex more than the other (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Powlishta et al., (1993) state that “children are thought to gravitate toward gender appropriate toys and activities, with boys moving away from adults and girls remaining in adult proximity. As a result, they encounter other children who are primarily of their own sex, leading to gender segregation” (p.725). However, how children “do gender” (i.e. gender typing) is an interesting topic. Researchers are interested in the varying differences within the two sexes, as well as the stability of such differences. Understanding from where the differences come will help explain gender typing (Powlishta et al., 1993). Marin and Ruble (2004) suggest that once an emerging idea of gender identity begins and the child develops an understanding that belonging

“I’m a Princess”

to a social group stays consistent, their motivation to learn about gender and to gather information about their gender group increases.

By studying four features of gender typing (gender segregation, use of masculine/feminine gender-typed toys and teacher proximity) it was found that the two to three year olds were in the early stages of gender segregation. Both girls and boys had significantly more peer group contacts with members of their own sex, with girls having a larger percentage of same-sex peers at an earlier age than boys. It was only boys who showed consistent individual differences in same sex preference, ranging from same sex preference, to cross sex preference, to playing similarly often with boys and girls (Powlishta et al., 1993). The authors suggest that “it is possible that the emergence of gender segregation represents a qualitative development, in which the child moves from ignoring to focusing on the sex of potential playmates” (p.733). They conclude that the reason some children have a stronger preference for same sex peers over others is related to situational factors rather than stable individual differences. They note that future studies are needed to confirm this theory.

Trautner, Ruble, Cyphers, Kirsten, Behrendt & Hartmann (2005) found that children learn gender categories and stereotypes at an early age. This is followed by more flexible realistic beliefs by the age of nine years. They report that between the ages of five and seven children reach a peak of rigidity and between the ages of eight and nine could somewhat modify their perceptions of male and female behaviour.

Additionally, it is important to think about social and material culture in relation to increase of gender flexibility. What children play with, and their approach to play, varies depending on cultural influences. Children at this age are receiving pressure socially and emotionally to “fit in” within their culture. Although they might begin to increase their

“I’m a Princess”

flexibility of gendered behaviour, there is a conflict with their need to be accepted by their peers. It is difficult for them to think non-stereotypically when their need to fit in forces them to behave in gender stereotypical ways. This limits their ability to be flexible in their thinking (Trautner et al., 2005).

Robnett & Susskind (2010) found that while children between the ages of eight and eleven years might be increasing their flexibility of gendered behaviour, they still display same-gender favoritism. They found that both boys and girls value traits perceived to be descriptive of their own gender significantly more than the traits perceived to be descriptive of the opposite gender. They argue that children’s gender schemas not only shape their attitudes, but also their behaviour and choices. They reported that when they compared the positive in-group trait ratings of those with a high proportion of same gender friends, to those of participants with a low proportion of same gender friends, there were no significant differences for either gender. However, when they compared the ratings of positive out-group traits between the participants with a low proportion of same gender friends to those with a high proportion of same gender friends, they found a significant difference. They report that female participants with a high proportion of same gender friends rated the positive out-group traits significantly higher than did the male participants with a low proportion of same gender friends (Robnett & Susskind, 2010).

It is at this age that there is a noteworthy difference with the male gender role compared to that of the female gender role. Bussey and Bandura (1999) found that the male gender role is more rigid than that for the female. This would explain Robnett and Susskind’s (2010) finding that boys seem to be more motivated to avoid positive feminine stereotyped traits, because boys who act like girls typically receive more negative criticism than girls who act like boys (Fagot, Rodgers & Leinbach, 2000).

“I’m a Princess”

Pink Versus Blue

Colour is one of the features of “things” that children use to distinguish between whether something is suitable for females or males. One of the first gender stereotypes children learn is which colours are better suited for boys or girls. Children experience colour differently according to their gender. From birth, infants are exposed to colours that are believed appropriate for their ascribed gender (Karniol, 2011). It is within these environments of colour that children learn what is best suited for their gender. In North America, colours of children’s clothing, room décor, and toys easily distinguish the individual’s sex. Colour is a clue that children and adults use to determine whether items are for girls or boys.

Caldera, Huston and O’Brien (1989), conducted a study that looked at child behaviour with sex typed toys. They found that between the age of 18-23 months children showed less interest in toys that were not stereotyped for their own gender. They more often rejected toys that were for the opposite gender than toys stereotyped for their own gender or gender neutral toys. Boys played more with toys that were classified as masculine and girls played more with toys classified as being feminine and neutral.

Wong and Hines (2015) looked at the influence of colour on children’s toy choices. They observed children playing with two gender typical toys in gender typical and a-typical colours (train and doll). They found that between the ages of two and four years boys played more with the train and girls played more with the doll. Both the boys and girls played more with the gender a-typical toy when its colour was typical for their sex. Gender differences in their preference for both toys were greater in the gender typical colour. Their results suggest that their knowledge of gender stereotypical colours influences their toy preferences.

“I’m a Princess”

Early stages of colour segregation also occurs through the clothing in which infants are dressed. Pink and blue became colours for baby clothing in the mid nineteenth century but were not marketed as gender specific until close to World War 1 (Paoletti, 2012). When pink and blue first became popular, pink was common for boys and blue for girls. This belief came from the idea that pink was a stronger colour, and blue was more delicate. Before this, children were typically dressed in neutral white clothing, such as dainty white dresses, typically until the age of six years (Paoletti, 2012). Gender neutral colour for children’s clothing remained the most popular form of children’s clothing until the 1980s, after this time clothing began to be marketed in terms of pink for girls and blue for boys.

Gendering of Clothing

Children in North America are now socialized about gender appropriate clothing from birth. By the time they are toddlers they know that pink items are for girls and blue items are for boys (Pomerleau et al.,1990). Therefore, the gendering of clothing starts early in one’s life and continues into adulthood. Such sex labelling of clothing by colour, images, decoration, and text is one of the ways separate worlds for boys and girls are maintained (Shakin et al., 1985).

As identified in the introduction, Albers (1998) discussed studies that relate to children and gender-typed clothing. Such Studies have found:

1. That clothing can be identified according to gender by its colour and style (Stern & Karraker 1989).
2. That when the sex of a child is unclear, individuals will use clothing to identify the child’s sex (Shakin et al., 1985).

“I’m a Princess”

3. That when individuals were given minimal information about an infant, they would use their clothing to make judgements about their personality, and would treat them in a stereotypical way (Leone & Robertson, 1988).

Therefore, dressing children according to their stereotypical gendered styles reinforces the idea that males and females are distinctly different, with varying interests, capabilities, and personalities.

While colour is typically the first gender identifier applied when children are born, it is not the only way children’s worlds are dichotomized by gender from birth. The images, decoration, and text present on children’s clothing are very different for males and females. Bridges (1993) examined birth congratulation cards for boys and girls. It was found that a variety of visual images and verbal messages were gender specific, and reflected gender stereotypes. The visual images showed boys as being more active than girls, and using toys associated with physical activity. The girls were more often portrayed as sitting or lying down, and presented using toys associated with infancy. There were also differences in the decorations within the cards. The cards for girls had more frills, lace, ribbons, hearts, flowers, and small animals such as rabbits and birds. The cards for boys had fewer decorations overall, and displayed animals of a more aggressive nature (bears and dogs). There was not a significant amount of gender specific messages within the cards, but those that were present reflected gender stereotypical messages.

Such differences in images and text found on boy and girl birth congratulatory cards can also be found on children’s clothing. After reviewing the literature, it can be concluded that it is likely that these differences contribute to children’s gender identity. The clothing available for children adds to their understanding of what interests they should have, and how they should

“I’m a Princess”

behave. It also contributes to how adults interact with them. Gender becomes the main indicator of one’s identity. Children’s identities are formed based on societal rules about what it means to be male and female. It can therefore be argued that one’s identity is not their own, but a collection of learned behaviours based on their biological sex.

It is not a new realization that children’s clothing differs in regards to gender. When entering a clothing store, or browsing a website, the divide between the two sexes is obvious. When you enter the separated worlds of girl and boy clothes, you discover what society believes to be appropriate for each sex. Societal gender stereotypes are exhibited through the set-up of the store, and through the clothing itself. In addition to the explosion of pink or blue, the images, text, and decoration convey what it means to be a boy or a girl.

Marketing Gender

Through an examination of trait desirability, Prentice and Carranza (2002) looked at what traits individuals would associate with themselves, as well as those they thought American society preferred them to possess.

Prentice and Carranza (2002) state that:

The intensified prescriptions and proscriptions for women reflected traditional emphases on interpersonal sensitivity, niceness, modesty, and sociability, whereas the intensified prescriptions and proscriptions for men reflected traditional emphases on strength, drive, assertiveness, and self-reliance. (p.275)

It appears that marketers use their knowledge of what is acceptable for each sex to develop and market children’s clothing. Gendered clothing sells because differences between two sexes are viewed as the norm. The images, text, and decoration found on children’s clothing have an important role in children’s and adults’ ideas regarding boys and girls.

“I’m a Princess”

Research has indicated that when children develop a gender identity, they have a desire to fit in with that same group and they value that group more favourably. As children are realizing they should belong to a specific gender group, they develop an understanding of their gender. It is here that they develop a large constellation of gender stereotypes (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Between two and three years, children are aware of gender labels given to people and things, and they are quick to generalize information pertaining to boys and girls. Bauer & Coyne (1997) found that when three year olds were told that one boy likes a sofa and one girl likes a table, the children used this information to conclude that another girl would also like the table. This study shows that children will use their learned knowledge of gender appropriateness to make conclusions about their gender as well as that of others. This knowledge is used to market children’s clothing in gendered ways. It can be argued that the visual and verbal messages communicated to children through clothing, contributes to their understanding of what is acceptable for their own, and the opposite sex.

There are significant implications to the messages children learn from clothing. It is not difficult to look at a child’s clothing item and determine whether it is intended for a girl or a boy. It is also not difficult to make inferences about the child’s interests from the images, text or decoration on their clothing.

Clothing Messages

Children’s clothing communicates messages about gender. For children, these messages are ingrained in their gender identity. As stated previously, children are exposed to gender stereotypical clothing from birth. These messages become part of the truth they have about gender. In the case of North American society, the truth is that boys and girls are different; they

“I’m a Princess”

should have different interests, personalities, and capabilities. Discourse analysis looks at how such truths are constructed and preserved, by societal support for them.

When gender stereotypical clothing is purchased, these gendered truths about boys and girls are supported. It is through this support that the stereotypes are created. Gendered discourses are established from an early age and maintained into adulthood. By purchasing the clothing, adults are supporting the stereotypes regardless of whether or not they believe the gendered discourse the clothing is portraying. The set-up of clothing stores, both physical and online spaces, makes non-gendered purchases difficult. While adults are not prohibited from making non-gendered purchases, the power of pre-established gendered discourses makes it difficult to do so.

Adults possess a significant amount of power over children’s gender identities. Freeman (2007) conducted a study with three and five-year-old children to see what gender they would apply to a toy, and whether they believed it to be better suited for a particular sex, or if they believed it would be what their parents wanted them to play with. Results from this study indicated that children believed their parents were very supportive of their play with gender typical toys but less accepting of cross-gender choices.

What was even more interesting was that the parents’ attitudes and beliefs about gender appropriate toys and behaviours had inconsistencies. While the parents stated that they were supportive of cross-gender play, and that they had no problem with their children playing with toys or participating in activities that were “geared for” the opposite sex, results from the study indicated otherwise. The proportion of parents who were supportive of cross-gender play hovered around 50%. This suggests that while parents might believe they are fostering their children’s belief that they can play with what they wish, and that their sex should not matter,

“I’m a Princess”

they might not be very successful at breaking down such gender stereotypes. This is important to think about as it shows how entrenched gender stereotypes are.

Caldera et al., (1989) looked at the influence of parents on children’s interest in sex-typed toys. The researchers wanted to look at whether parents encourage sex-typed toy play, what types of parent child interactions were promoted by sex-typed toys, and whether mothers and fathers responded differently to sex-typed toys. Results indicated that boys were more involved with toys that were classified as masculine, and girls were more involved with toys classified as feminine as well as neutrally classified toys. Although parents did not push play with same sex toys, they did play with their children more when the child was involved with same sex toys (Caldera et al., 1989).

Parents face many pressures to do “what is best” for their children. In a society that places extreme importance on appearance, clothing has an important role. Adults, especially parents, face numerous pressures to interact with children in gender specific ways, including in the selection of clothing for them. Similarly, even young children are likely to select clothing based on the perceived gendered appropriateness of the item, including considering how they will be treated when wearing the clothing (Shim, Snyder & Gehrt, 1995). Parents who have decided to rebel against gender stereotypical clothing have faced extreme scrutiny for doing so. Those who have attempted to challenge gender stereotypes have experienced backlash. They have been made to feel like bad parents and pressured to have their child conform to one sex category for fear of them being bullied. The power of gender stereotypes and societal pressures makes it difficult for those who try to challenge them.

There is a significant body of research on the development of children’s gender identities. Researchers have theories about what influences children’s gender identities, as well as gender

“I’m a Princess”

stereotypes that exist within their developed identities. Additionally, they know at what approximate age children develop a gender identity. Researchers have examined many aspects that contribute to children’s gender identity, such as, colour, toys, parental and peer interactions. However, there is a lack of research on children’s clothing, which is one of the first gendered discourses and one of the most important imposed on them.

Chapter 3

Method

Research Focus

For the purpose of investigating the gendered nature in the marketing of children’s clothing, I analyzed the physical environment of: “The Children’s Place” clothing store, and the design of the graphic t-shirts it sells. As of April 30, 2011 the company was operating 1032 stores across North America as well as an online store (“The Children’s Place,” 2011). I investigated the gendered nature of the layout and material environment of one physical store, and of the design and features of the company’s e-store.

The Children’s Place offers clothing, shoes and accessories for children ranging in age from newborn to 10 years. The style of merchandise changes in relation to the season. This store has been selected because of its popularity. Its corporation claims to be “the largest pure-play children's specialty apparel retailer in North America” (“The Children’s Place,” 2011).

Outside of this research, I had visited the store at two different locations on numerous occasions, and have found the physical environment to be the same across location and time. Mounted on the store windows are pictures of children wearing gender stereotypical clothing. Typically, two mannequins frame the store entrance. One is a female form dressed in female stereotypical clothing (dress, skirt, bathing suit all of which were pink or purple). The other mannequin was a male form dressed in male stereotypical clothing (jeans, graphic tees, all of which are dark colours). Store space is organized according to the stereotypical idea of a clear gendered division of clothing, with one side being designated for boys, and the other side for

“I’m a Princess”

girls. Each side is also differentiated by ideas of male/female appropriate colours, with dark colours on the male side and light pastel or brightly hued colours on the female side.

The store’s website is organized primarily by gendered categories and stereotypical gendered features. Four of the eight drop-down menus across the top of the home page are titled by sex: “GIRL”, “BABY GIRL,” “BOY,” “BABY BOY.” Clicking on the GIRL link changes the color of the menu name to pink and opens a page with a pink border. Blue appears in the same ways when clicking on the BOY link. The other four menus are gender neutral in title: “NEWBORN,” “SHOES,” “ACCESSORIES” and “CLEARANCE.” However, clicking on each of these reveals further links categorized by sex. At first glance some neutrality appeared to remain. Within the newborn category there are three without a sex designation (bodysuits, layettes, shoes); within the shoe category there is one (newborn); within the clearance category there are three (newborn, shoes, accessories). However, selecting any of these categories takes the consumer to a page with gendered categories of selections. The exception is that within each category there remains an undifferentiated newborn category. An overview of the selections within the gendered categories suggests that they are highly stereotypical in terms of colour and other features.

This overview of the physical space and e-store has identified some of its gendered characteristics. Both sites provided rich sources of information on how the company uses ideas about gender to market children’s clothing. A more thorough review is discussed in Chapter 4 investigating the features of the physical store and e-store in greater breadth and depth. A systematic examination of the features of the graphic t-shirts The Children’s Place sells was carried out to identify the messages about gender that are being conveyed to children and adults, and to identify gender-neutral characteristics.

Methodology

Data was collected from visits to one physical store and from the store’s website. Content analysis methodology was used to collect information about the design and features of the physical and electronic stores, and the design of the clothing offered through the e-store. Content analysis is a quantitative research approach. It aids the study of messages that contain information regarding gender roles (Neuendorf, 2011). Content analysis examines how social communication is demonstrated through material culture. It uses both manifest and latent content to analyze quantifiable messages, as well as less physically observable messages. Manifest content is referred to as elements that are physically present (Taylor, 2003). Latent content refers to content that has been interpreted by the researcher and analyzed for symbolic meaning (Taylor, 2003). For the purpose of this study, content analysis was used to analyze the obvious messages displayed through the physical space and e-store of The Children’s Place, as well as the obvious messages displayed through the clothing itself. Additionally, this method was used to examine the deeper meaning from the messages that emerged from the store’s set up and design, as well as the deeper meaning from the messages of the clothing.

Content data was collected at the physical store located in Nova Scotia, Canada. The website that was analyzed was www.thechildrensplace.ca.

Data Collection and Analysis of Physical Store Design and Features

The characteristics of the physical store and the e-store’s children’s clothing were identified. The content analysis conducted by Bridges (1993) of birth congratulations cards has been used as a model for identifying key elements of the focus. In that study content analysis was used to examine 122 birth congratulations cards (61 boy cards, 61 girl cards). The investigator examined 60 cards and developed visual and verbal coding categories. The visual categories

“I’m a Princess”

were composed of obvious content only and the verbal categories were composed of underlying content. The investigator recorded the presence or absence of the codes. The visual categories consisted of: colour, images, and decorations. The verbal categories consisted of: words, and physical descriptors (Bridges, 1993).

The following Physical store characteristics were primarily collected on one visit while remaining outside the store:

- a) lay out of the store
- b) wall coverings
- c) displays
- d) signage
- e) other points of interest

Information for each category was described by the presence of primary and secondary colors, images (for eg., human children, animals and their characteristics), presence of toys (indicating type, features, and colour), and decoration (such as frills, ribbons, hearts including colors). The data was presented in the following table:

Physical Store Features

	Primary Colours	Secondary Colours	Images	Toys	Decoration
Store layout					
Wall Coverings					
Displays					
Signage					
Other Points of Interest					

“I’m a Princess”

I used content analysis for the purpose of analyzing the physical store data to identify in what ways they are congruent and/or incongruent with traditional gender codes, and what this represents in terms of adult and child clothing selection.

Data Collection and Analysis of E-Store Clothing

I conducted a detailed analysis of clothing available from the e-store using the following procedures:

- Within the “girl,” “boy,” and “baby girl” categories the clothing item “graphic tees” was analyzed.
- Within each of these categories, all items that are available were analyzed; numbers ranged from 30 to 50, but were fairly equivalent across gender age categories (approximately 30 for girls’ and boys’ graphic tees; approximately 40 for baby girl tees).
- For each item, data was collected on the following six characteristics:
 - Style
 - Primary color
 - Secondary colors
 - Imagery
 - Text
 - Decoration
 - Other points of interest

The data for each gender category was organized in tabular form as follows:

“I’m a Princess”

Example: Girls’ Graphic Tees

	Style	Primary color	Secondary color	Imagery	Text	Decoration	Product Description	Other Points of Interest
ITEM 1:								
ITEM 2								
ITEM 3								

Continued for total number of items.

Thus, there was three tables completed.

Content analysis of the tabular data proceeded as follows:

A. Data for each column of each table was analyzed for dominant and unique characteristics.

B. Gender Category Analysis:

i. Each table for a gender category (girl, baby girl, boy) was analyzed separately to identify dominant and unique characteristics.

ii. Data from the “girl” and “baby girl” categories were analyzed in comparison to the data from the “boy” category to identify dominant and unique characteristics

The analysis was discussed in relation to dominant ideas about gender, and the ways in which the clothing does and does not match with those ideas. The meaning this can have for children and adults’ ideas about clothing selection will also be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

The baby boy category was left out of the analysis. When collecting data of the graphic t-shirts, the baby boy shirts were essentially the same as the boy shirts. It was decided that because of the repetition of data, the baby boy category would be omitted. The significance of this is discussed later in the analysis and discussion chapters.

“I’m a Princess”

Theoretical Focus

Foucauldian discourse analysis was used to examine the marketing of children’s clothing. Discourse analysis “challenges the conventional distinction between data collection and analysis, questions the status of research accounts and encourages us to question taken-for-granted assumptions about distinctions between adults and children” (Alldred & Burman, 2004, p.175). In this case, it allows the assumption that gender is not a biological entity, but rather an idea that is produced through social discourses.

Foucauldian discourse analysis defines knowledge as locally constructed (Moore & Seu, 2010). It focuses on discovering how “truths” are constructed and preserved. In the case of this research the “truth” is the dominant belief within North America (as well as elsewhere) is that certain clothes, and certain features of clothes can only be for boys or girls. An important basis of Foucauldian analysis is the construct of power (Howitt, 2010). This research will look at the power of gender “truths” in marketing and clothing selection.

Foucauldian discourse analysis provides a way of discovering a truth through the conversations and stand points that people exhibit in relation to others. In addition, it focuses on the discursive resources they position themselves in to construct their truth. This does not mean that everyone everywhere agrees or that discourses do not change. However, when discourses are dominant they become engrained and are seen as a truth that individuals do not want to question, or are unable to question. The power that dominant discourses have over individuals is maintained, at least partially, by the support for them (Cox, 1996). This theoretical framework will be used to look at how the dominant beliefs about gender are supported through the design, marketing and selection of children’s clothing.

“I’m a Princess”

Discourse Analysis Procedure

The following steps are used in Foucauldian discourse analysis (Howitt, 2010), and have been applied to the data for the purpose of understanding how children’s clothing, as well as its marketing and its selection acts as a dominant social discourse that constructs children’s gender.

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF WHAT IS BEING CONSTRUCTED

- a) How does the marketing of clothing and its selection via The Children’s Place contribute to the construction of children’s gender identities?
- b) How does the clothing sold through The Children’s Place act as a gendered discourse for children and shoppers?

STEP 2: IDENTIFICATION OF THE DIFFERENT DISCOURSES INVOLVED

- a) Identification and discussion of the gendered discourse presented through the clothing at The Children’s Place and the e–store.
- b) Identification and discussion of the gendered discourse presented through the layout of The Children’s Place physical store.

STEP 3: WHAT IS GAINED FROM USING A PARTICULAR DISCOURSE?

- a) How does The Children’s Place utilize the dominant gendered discourse in its layout and marketing of clothing?
- b) How do shoppers benefit from selecting stereotypical or non-stereotypical clothing choices?
- c) How do children benefit from engaging in stereotypical or non-stereotypical clothing choices?

STEP 4. WHAT ARE THE SUBJECT POSITIONS WITHIN THE DISCOURSE?

- a) Do the subjects conform to gender typical behaviour?

STEP 5: WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DISCOURSE?

“I’m a Princess”

a) What are the implications of the construction of rigid gender discourses and subject positions for child rearing?

b) What are the implications of the construction of rigid gender discourses and subject positions for children?

STEP 6: WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DISCOURSE FOR SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE?

a) What are the broader social consequences of the gendered discourse for child rearing?

b) What are the broader social consequences of the gendered discourse for child development?

Chapter 4

Analysis of The Children’s Place

The layout of both the physical and online stores for The Children’s Place make it difficult for adults and children to make non-stereotypical clothing choices. The Children’s Place physical store is divided in terms of gender. One side is an array of pink, purple and pastel colours, the other of blue and dark shaded colours. Anyone who has grown up in Western culture can identify which side is considered appropriate for girls and for boys. The same type of design is used for the online store. The Children’s Place e-store’s home page is presented with links separated by sex (girl, baby girl, boy, baby boy, newborn, shoes, accessories and clearance). Although the physical store does not have signage such as “girl” or “boy” framing the store’s sections, its use of gendered features in its set-up is essentially achieving the same thing. On the online store, the “newborn,” “shoes,” “accessories,” and “clearance” links are not categorized by sex. However, they have sex-specific categories for drop-down menus (girl, boy).

After choosing to browse the girls’ or boys’ side of the physical store, adults and children further encounter gender stereotypes that exist on the children’s clothing. Table 1 shows the data collected during one visit taken at The Children’s Place physical store.

“I’m a Princess”

Table 1

Store Data

	Primary Colors	Secondary Colors	Images
Store layout	Blue, pink	Yellow, red, purple, white	
Wall Coverings	Blue, yellow	White	
Displays	Blue, white	Orange, pink	Mannequins, four wearing stereotypical girl clothing, four wearing stereotypical boy clothing
Signage	Yellow, red, blue	Green, white	Monsters, surf board, palm trees, sand
Other Points of Interest	Entering the store, the blue is on the left and pink is on the right.	On the left side, the secondary colors are dark; on the right the secondary colors are bright and pastel	Signs say monster sale and total savings up to 50%

The following section will present analyses of the messages the clothing conveys to children about gender.

The Truth about Clothing: Analysis of E-Store Graphic Tees

As discussed in the literature review, from a very young age, children use social and material cues to form their understandings about gender, and their identity as being one of either male or female (Martin & Ruble, 2004). Clothing is one of the environmental features influencing these understandings (Paoletti, 1987). Early on, they come to know that particular clothing colours, styles and images are considered suitable for either females or males, and can identify this for themselves and others (Halim, Ruble, Tamis-LeMonda, Zosuls, Lurye & Greulich, 2014). They learn this from the people, objects, and materials within their environment. Gender is produced on female and male bodies through the performance of clothing (Pollen, 2011). The analysis of The Children’s Place graphic t-shirts reveals that they communicate stereotypical messages about what it means to be a girl or a boy.

“I’m a Princess”

The Truth about Colour

From very early in children’s lives their environments of colour are experienced differently. When a child is born, the clothing, toys and bedroom décor they are exposed to are typically based on their sex. Girls receive pink and purple clothes, and similarly hued bedroom attire. They are given toys stereotyped by their sex, including dolls, and household items such as kitchen and baking materials, typically pink in colour. Boys receive blue or other dark hued clothing and bedroom attire. They too are given toys stereotyped by sex, such as vehicles and sports equipment, which are typically dark in colour (Pomerleau et al., 1990). As children get older they use their knowledge about colour and gender to decide which objects, clothing, dispositions, and activities are appropriate for their sex and that of others (Karniol, 2011). This includes their use of colour cues to decide whether clothing is suited for females or males (Navarro, Martinez, Yubero & Larranaga, 2014).

The Children’s Place e-store draws on prevailing discourses of colour as gender-coded in its marketing of clothing. Table 2 sets out the dominant and accent colours of the baby girl, girl, and boy t-shirts.

Table 2

Frequency of Dominant and Accent Colours

Colour Type	Baby Girl N=46		Girl N=32		Boy N=36	
Dominant	Pink (all hues)	30%	Pink	28%	White	25%
	White	22%	Purple	25%	Blue (all hues)	22%
	Purple	15%	White	25%	Black	14%
	Blue	11%	Grey	9%	Grey	14%
	Grey	7%	Blue	6%	Orange	11%
	Orange	7%	Orange	6%	Red	6%
	Green	4%			Yellow	3%
	Black	4%			Green	3%
					Dark Purple	3%
Accent	Pink (all hues)	33%	Pink	34%	White	42%
	Purple	24%	Purple	22%	Blue (all hues)	17%
	White	13%	Brown	16%	Black	11%
	Black	13%	White	6%	Orange	8%
	Blue	9%	Orange	6%	Red	6%
	Yellow	4%	Blue	3%	Grey	6%
	Brown	4%	Gold	3%	Yellow	6%
			Black	3%	Brown	3%
			Grey	3%	Green	3%
			Red	3%		

Pink (in various hues) was the most frequent dominant and accent colour of the baby girl and girl t-shirts. The next most frequent dominant colour for the baby girl shirts was white (22%), and for the girls it was evenly divided between purple (25%) and white (25%). Purple was the second most common accent colour for both the baby girl (24%) and girl (22%) shirts.

When white was the dominant color, purple or pink was the principal accent colour. Interrupting this pink/purple/white colour prevalence was the appearance of brown as the third most frequent accent colour on the girls’ shirts (16%); it also made an appearance on baby girl shirts (4%). This can seem like a deviation from stereotypical female clothing however brown

“I’m a Princess”

was always used for an animal image – another gendered element of the clothing that is discussed below. A further seeming deviation was the appearance of black as an accent colour on 13% of the baby girl shirts. However, in these cases it (like when white was also an accent colour) was mostly used to outline a figure, or as text. When black was present as an accent colour on the girls’ shirts the same was true.

The other dominant and accent colours present on the baby girl and girl shirts were those typically associated with maleness (blue, grey, orange, green, black). When present as a dominant colour other aspects such as decoration, text, and images were associated with femaleness. The shirts contained sparkles, hearts, flowers, human female images, butterflies, cats, and family and love text references. The shirts were therefore made feminine regardless of their dominant colour. When these were present as accent colours the dominant colour of the shirts was most often pink or purple.

As mentioned earlier, from the later years of the twentieth century pink became the leading colour of materials produced for girls (Pomerleau et al., 1990). Therefore, finding pink to be the most frequent colour of the baby girl and girl shirts was not surprising. Thus, The Children’s Place t-shirts reproduce the idea that pink means “for girls”. However, pink represents more than just colour. It symbolizes for girls the stereotypical female characteristics of love and sweetness, which are discussed below in relation to other characteristics of the shirts.

The top three dominant colours of the boys’ graphic tees were white, blue (all hues), and black and grey. The top three accent colours were white, blue (all hues), and black. These colours are those typically associated with maleness. Purple, which is typically associated with girls, appeared once (4%) as a dominant colour. What is interesting is the shade of purple used was darker than in comparison to that found on the baby girls’ and girls’ shirts. It can be

“I’m a Princess”

assumed it was made a deeper, darker hue as a way to reduce its association with femininity. There is an underlining truth within Western society that boys should not look like, or do things like girls, such as wear stereotypical female clothing, perform household duties, look after children, and show emotions. The fear of appearing feminine becomes ingrained in boys’ minds from a very young age. They tend to have more gender restrictiveness when it comes to things typically associated with the female gender (Karniol, 2011). While the colour selection for girls contained some that are stereotypically male (blue, black, grey, green), only once did a female stereotyped colour appear as dominant feature of boys’ shirts.

There were more dominant colour choices for the boys (10) compared to those available for the baby girls (eight), and girls (six). It could be argued that there are more options for the boys because there are more colours typically associated with maleness, suggesting that there are more colours that are believed to be suited for boys’ clothing.

While both gendered categories contained similar colours (black, white, grey, blue, red, green, yellow, and brown) their use differed. Excluding black, which when present as an accent colour was most often used in text or to outline a figure, the rest of the colours had no similarities. When the colours listed above were used on the baby girl and girl shirts it was done in stereotypical feminine ways, but the opposite occurred for the boy shirts. They were made feminine or masculine through images, text, and decoration, as well as through the shade of the colour used.

Some might consider that those appearing within both gendered categories makes them “gender neutral,” meaning they are colours both genders could wear. However, it can also be argued that the existence of neutral colours further establishes separate gendered discourses of colour because it indicates that there are in fact certain colours most suited for each gender.

“I’m a Princess”

The Truth about Sweetness

Sweetness is a stereotypical personality attribute of femaleness. Demonstrating sweetness becomes a characteristic girls should strive to embody. It is taught to them from birth. Bridges (1993) study of birth celebratory cards, found that the term “sweet” was used four times more often on girl birth congratulation cards compared to those for boys. Adults tend to use the term in discussions about girls. Such as, “she’s so sweet.” It is taught through language, clothing, toys, and gender stereotypical activities available for and presented to girls. In Western society, girls are considered to be sweet when they are polite, quiet, generous, thoughtful, and cute and in regards to their size (little) and appearance. Boys are taught a different message, one of the need to be strong and aggressive, rather than sweet. The discourse of sweetness is present in the clothing The Children’s Place has available for girls.

Table 3 sets out how The Children’s Place communicated the dominant discourse of female sweetness through product descriptors and shirt imagery. As can be seen, the primary way in which this was done was through associations with sweet food, and otherwise by references to stereotypical positive female behaviour. Notably, the references were mostly occurring in relation to the baby girl shirts. There were three colour descriptors (ruffle, crisp pink and sunset ray) that were not directly associated to food or stereotypical female behaviour. However, their connection to sweetness cannot be over looked. “Ruffle” is associated with lace and frills which are stereotypical clothing features for girls. “Crisp pink” is associated with love through its use of the colour pink. “Sunset ray” could be seen as describing girls as sweet and lovely as a sunset. These are descriptors related to appearance, emotion, and personality; all have a connection to the notion of sweetness.

“I’m a Princess”

The boys’ shirts had no colour descriptors, text, product descriptions, or images associated with sweet food. The only time an image of food appeared was in the form of a ketchup and mustard bottle that were engaging in a food fight with a hamburger and a hot dog. The faces on the food appear angry (frown in eye brow, mouth placement, eyes squinted). There was one example of “food” in text on the boys’ shirts. It was an image of a small human figure with the text “Danger! Please do not feed the zombies.” These two forms of food differ greatly from the food images, text, and product descriptions on the girls’ shirts. Any possible form of sweetness on the boys’ shirts was replaced with aggressiveness.

Table 3

Discourse of Sweetness

	Baby Girl N= 46		Girl N=32	
Sweetness through Children’s Place Colour Descriptors	Ruffle	13%	Jam	19%
	Sugar	9%	Ruffle	13%
	Jam	7%	Sugar	9%
	Peachmebla	4%	Plum Sky	6%
	Green Kiwi	4%	Peachmelba	6%
	Pink Fizz	4%	Pink Fizz	6%
	Giggle	4%		
	Plum Tart	2%		
	Gum Drop	2%		
	Crisp Pink	2%		
	Sunset Ray	2%		
Sweetness through Product Descriptions	Sweet Princess	13%		
		13%		
Sweetness through Food Imagery	Cupcakes	13%	Popsicle	3%
	Lollipops	2%		
	Candy	2%		
Sweetness through Text imagery	Princess	9%		
	Sweet	4%		
	Sparkle & Shine	2%		

“I’m a Princess”

This association between sweetness and clothing design speaks to a socially constructed truth about what it means to be female. Of the 19 colour descriptors given for the baby girls’ shirts, 11 (58%) referenced sweetness; of the nine for the girls’ shirts, six (67%) referenced sweetness. The girls’ shirts contained fewer colour descriptors (nine) compared to 19 for the baby girls’, however they had a higher proportion of sweetness references. This could be explained by there being 18 more shirt options within the baby girl category than in the girl category.

There was an interesting association between The Children’s Place colour descriptors and particular colours when there was no sweetness connotation. When the colours were male gendered (white, black, grey or shades of blue), there was no indicator of sweetness. However, those that were female gendered were given names associated with sweetness. Dominant male colours are described according to their colour. In contrast, dominant female colours like pink and purple, because associated with the female gender, were given cutesy names related to sweetness. Such as, sugar, jam, gum drop, giggle, etc.

The primary “sweetness” associations were between the images found on the shirts, their colour descriptors, and product descriptions. Images of sweet food appeared on 17% of the baby girls’ shirts but on only one of the girls’ shirts (an image of a popsicle). There are almost no images of food on the girls’ shirts, with the emphasis of sweetness on the baby girl shirts being replaced by fashion. While young girls are categorized as cute and sweet, as they get older it is their appearance rather than temperament that is highlighted. This is an idea that is discussed later in the chapter.

Associations with sweetness were also made through the text imagery on the baby girls’ shirts and through their product descriptions. "Princess," "sweet," and "sparkle and shine"

“I’m a Princess”

appeared on the shirts and in the descriptions. These messages teach girls from a very young age what it is they should strive to be, and that others should expect such attributes of them.

There was a greater connection made between sweetness on the baby girls’ shirts than on those for girls. While the girls’ shirts still contained connections to sweetness, there was a greater connection with fashion. This was made through product descriptions (A tres fashionable tee for your fashionable girl!), through images (shopping bags, accessorized female figures), and through text (Tres Chic). As girls get older there is an underlying rule in Western society that they should look fashionable and be interested in fashion. Young girls start to understand that they are evaluated in terms of their clothing and that their clothing tells a story about who they are. The message their clothing displays becomes internalized, and they begin to understand that their bodies are judged by others (Goodin, Denburg, Murnen, & Smolak, 2011). The language used in the colour and product descriptions that associates girls with food items (as listed in Table 3) could also be argued to be producing the idea that girls look “good enough to eat” (Nelson, 2000). This association with appearance is discussed below.

The connection between sweetness and fashion has important implications for children’s and adults’ ideas about children’s clothing. It tells a truth about what it means to be a girl, including their appearance affecting how adults interact with girls, and further supports Western gendered discourses.

The Truth about Appearance

From a very young age girls are taught that how they look is important. Movies, television shows, books, and clothes available for females, teach them that their appearance plays a crucial role in how they will be perceived by others. Pretty is defined as “pleasing or attractive to the eye, as by delicacy or gracefulness” (“Dictionary.com,” 2016). Little girls are socialized

“I’m a Princess”

into believing that they are an object to be looked at and evaluated (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Adults contribute to this socialization by commenting about how little girls look, but in contrast comments about little boys are about their capabilities. The clothing available for girls on The Children’s Place website contributes to young girls’ self-objectification. See Appendix A and Appendix B for the data identifying the multiple connections between appearance, prettiness, and fashion.

References to prettiness were made on 57% of the baby girl shirts, and 81% of the girls’ shirts. The images of female figures on the girls’ shirts are demonstrative of the discourse of female appearance. They wore bows, crowns, dresses, and jewelry; had long eye lashes and hair, pink lips, and cheeks; and were decorated with hearts, frills, and sparkles. Such images communicate how girls should look. The importance placed on how girls appear speaks to a truth created by society. This truth being that girls should look a certain way, with an importance placed on looking pretty. The idea that females are to be seen and not heard is not a new idea; however, it has serious implications for girls.

The ethnicity of the females on the tees was of particular interest. Of the five-baby girl and four girl shirts that showed a human figure, all had white skin tone. This has significant implications for both child and adult shoppers. It creates a truth about the desired ethnicity of females in North America. Children and adult shoppers have no other options when buying at The Children’s Place. When doing so they are communicating that being White is preferred. It could be contributing to girls’ future body image issues.

On the boys’ tees, all human images on the shirts were of males. They all had short hair and wore clothing stereotypically considered as appropriate for males. The ethnicity of the males appeared to be White. When human images were present on the boys’ shirts they

“I’m a Princess”

contained fewer details making it difficult to distinguish ethnicity. It is assumed that their ethnicity is White because of the features that were present.

Human images appeared less often on the boys’ tees compared to the baby girl and girl tees. When they were present they appeared to be older. There were no obvious associations to fashion on the boys’ shirts. Human images, which appeared to be male, participated in sports, and played musical instruments. Their appearances differed from those on the girls’ shirts. They were not decorated and when they were present they were engaged in an activity. In contrast, on the girls’ shirts, they were not engaged in any activity.

One boy shirt appeared to look like a tuxedo jacket. Its description read, “The dressy look of a tux in the cool comfort of a tee!” This was the only shirt within the boy category that had an association with fashion. The lack of fashion and need to be aware of one’s appearance on the boys’ shirts communicates to children, as well as adults, that this is something specific to females.

Once again the idea that girls need to put in more effort (make-up, accessories, fancy clothing) compared to that of boys is present. This could also speak to the idea within Western culture that males are not supposed to care about their appearance as females should. It communicates the idea that females want to put on make-up, dress up and wear accessories, whereas males do not, and should not, have such preferences.

Animal imagery on the baby girl and girl shirts, such as butterflies, dogs, cats, monkeys, unicorns, penguins, and horses was another way that the truth about prettiness was communicated. They were shown sporting flowers or bows in their fur/hair, wearing a dress, and having features such as long eye lashes, pink rosy cheeks, and a heart-shaped nose; having eye makeup, a crown on their head, or a necklace around their neck. This differed from the boys’

“I’m a Princess”

shirts that contained animal imagery. Firstly, only two shirts within the boy category contained animal images as compared to 18 within the baby girl, and 16 in the girl category. One was an image of a bull dog and the other a tyrannosaurus rex. They were not decorated with flowers, or wearing accessories. They had facial expressions that indicated anger and were presented as aggressive (showing claws and breaking through walls). The messages conveyed are that girls (even girl animals) are passive beings and it is their appearance that should be valued as important. Boys (even boy animals) are aggressive and strong and it is these qualities that should be valued.

The theme of prettiness was also present in product descriptors. The descriptor most often used to describe the baby girl tees was “cute,” and with the wearer as “cutie.” Other descriptors were “pretty” and “little.” Pretty was used to describe both the wearer and either the image on the shirt or the shirt itself, for example, “She’ll be prima pretty in this dance tee favourite!,” and “A pretty butterfly graphic to add to her collection!” Shirts were given personality characteristics of fun, playful, cool, sweet, and sweet treat, such as, “She’ll tune into this fun graphic made for music lovers!” and “A cute tee for the girl who has a full ‘to do’ list!” The wearer was also described as being a princess and compared to an animal. For example, “For the butterfly who adores her Mommy.”

In the descriptions for girl shirts the most prevalent theme was that of fashion. The descriptions referenced the shirt and wearer as being fashionable, stylish, a fashion diva, tres chic, or as a perfect tee for having to match with other pieces.

The descriptors for the girl and baby girl shirts support the argument that the truth being communicated is that prettiness is important for girls to possess. The Children’s Place shirt descriptions speak to how this is reproduced in social discourse.

“I’m a Princess”

The website utilized dominant beliefs about what it means to be a baby girl compared to girl through descriptors that would suit the different age groups; the expectation is that as girls get older they need to become fashionable. The descriptors for the girls’ shirts communicated the expectation that they should be starting a wardrobe collection. Describing girls as fashionable, stylish and a fashion diva produce and reproduce the belief that this is an endeavor that even young girls should undertake. Pride in one’s clothing and appearance is conveyed as being extremely important. This puts pressure on adult shoppers as well, potentially causing them to believe that dressing a girl fashionably is necessary in order for her to fit in within society.

The Truth about Love

Another dominant discourse that emerged from the graphic t-shirt data was the truth about love. It appeared through shirt imagery and text, and product and colour descriptors on the baby girl and girl shirts. References to love were found in 67% of the baby girl shirts and 72% of the girls’ shirts. There were no references to love found in relation to the boy shirts.

Hearts, which were the most prevalent image on both the girls’ and baby girls’ shirts represent the theme of love. They appeared on 67% of baby girl graphic shirts, and on 56% of girl shirts. References to love were also found on the text, appearing on both the baby girl and girl tees, including alluding to the wearer being lovable (for example, “what’s not to love?”), loving others (“I love my Mom”), and as a stand-alone statement (“Love”). This speaks to a truth about females needing to be seen as lovable and having to show love toward others.

The discourse of love was also conveyed through text referencing family relationships. Family members were named on 12 (26 %) of the baby girl shirts: “Mommy,” “family,” “Grandma,” “Brother,” “Sister,” and “Dad,” emphasizing the social truth of females as being

“I’m a Princess”

natural nurtures with close bonds to family. In contrast, only three of the boys’ shirts contained family text, and these did not directly reference family, for example, “Player 2 is reserved for my bro,” “I’m a rock star big brother,” and “I show my kid brother the ropes.”

The two gendered categories differ in their representation of family on the shirts. When family is present within the girls’ category its underlying message is about love. When present within the boys’ category its underlying message is the child’s skills and how these skills can benefit a family member. These differences speak to a truth about girls needing to exhibit close bonds with multiple family members through emotion, while boys should show their love in active ways, such as through the provision of guidance and inclusion in hobbies. Within its product descriptions, The Children’s Place uses references to family to describe the baby girl.

For example:

- “A cute scribble tee for the girl who loves her family!”
- “A playful tee for the girl who really loves her brother (and puppies!)”
- “For the girl who takes being a sister seriously.”
- “A cute tee for one great sister.”
- “She wants the world to know her Daddy can fix anything.”
- “For the little butterfly who adores her Mommy.”
- “A pretty tee for Papa’s little girl!”

These descriptors relate back to the connection between girls and their family. The Children’s Place uses this certainty about girls to sell this truth not only to the children but to the adults purchasing the clothing.

“I’m a Princess”

The girl shirts had no direct connection to family; however, the message of love was still prominent. Instead of an association to family like in the baby girl shirts, their text and product description communicated how girls’ will demonstrate love. For example,

- Through peace (A rockin’ tee for your peace loving girl!, Love and peace to all)
- Through love for animals (A pretty tee for your butterfly lover!, I love my beautiful horse.)
- Through love in general (Free to run. Be free. Love, Live. Be true. Forever., Lots of Love)
- Through friendship (A fun tee for a girl with a lot of friends, and We stick together)

See Appendix C and Appendix D for the data identifying the multiple ways in which the discourse of love is communicated through the baby girl and girl shirts.

The Truth about Sports

The majority of images, text, and descriptors for the boys’ shirts were associated with sports. Sports included physical activity, sports equipment, and winning. The discourse of sports was present on 72% of the shirts and used in a variety of ways.

The boys’ tees had more imagery and text content on them compared to those for the girls. Information about sports was seen the most on the boys’ tees. It was used through text to describe a specific sport, (Soccer Division, College Surf California, Basketball, etc..) as well as through imagery, (football, baseball, basketball, and items associated with sports such as a whistle, football helmet, and life guard stand). These are stereotypical maleness images. A common gender stereotype is that boys are more active than girls. Therefore, the images associated with physical activity are not surprising (Bridges, 1993).

“I’m a Princess”

A theme of winning was also present, for example, “All Star, Div. Champs,” “Work hard-Win big,” “Champions,” “Undefeated,” etc. The texts on the boys’ tees, along with the images, were more active compared to that of the baby girls’ and girls’ tees.

The theme of sports was present in the product descriptions for the boys’ shirts. A sport was used to describe the wearer, for example, “Your basketball star will love this tee.” They were also used to describe the tee being great for the guy who loves the specific sport, for example, “Made for the guy who loves shooting hoops.”

The boys’ shirts were also described as being “cool” and “comfy.” As stated above boys are considered more active than girls. This connection to comfort could be argued to support the idea that boys need comfy clothes because they are active. In comparison, the girls’ tees were described as fashionable and in regards to how they will look. As previously noted young girls are expected to begin their love of fashion at an early age. In the case of young boys, they are supposed to choose clothing based on its comfort level.

The color descriptors provided on The Children’s Place website differed for the boys’ and girls’ shirts. While those for the girls contained references to sweetness, those describing the boys’ shirts were associated with adventurous places (“Tidal”, “Igloo”, “Blue sea”, “canyon”, “Amazon”), and in one instance to sports (“Varsity”). While food was a common descriptor for the girls’ shirts, it only appeared once for the boys’ and instead of it being an item of sweetness, was “hot chilli.” These findings are not surprising given that stereotypical male activities are those that involve adventure especially outdoors, and are sport related, while those for girls are stereotypically more passive.

“I’m a Princess”

The Truth about Aggression

There is a link between sports and the theme of aggression. To engage in sports, one is expected to be competitive and aggressive in order to play, hit, and be hit by others. Since there is a strong connection between sports and aggression, the two are combined in Appendix E which shows the multiple ways the discourse of sports and aggression are communicated.

The messages communicated through the boys’ tees produces the belief that boys should be strong, tough, active, and without much emotion. From birth boys are given clothing that supports these ideas. They grow up to believe that such ideas are the norm for their gender. This has major implications for boys themselves, as well as how adults perceive them.

Only two of the boys’ shirts included images of animals, and their depictions were very different from those on the girls’. One image was of a sharp-toothed bull dog, wearing a spiked collar, frowning, and baring its teeth, while holding a football in a sharp-nailed paw. The other animal was a t-rex dinosaur that was breaking through a wall with sharp teeth and claws. Smaller, less aggressive animals were found on the girls’ tees compared to the boys’ aggressive, larger animals. Some of the boys’ tees showed sports equipment and food condiments as being alive with faces and body parts. The faces all appeared angry (a frown in the eye brow, throwing food).

Even though the boys’ tees had more images and text than the girls’, there was not much decoration. When decoration was present, block letters and angry faces appeared most often. The writing was also in an aggressive style: it was large, capitalized, and sometimes in 3-D form as if writing from a video game. This was different from the decoration and type of text seen on the baby girls’ and girls’ tees. For those shirts, cursive and block writing were equally present. However, when they were present was interesting. Block writing was used on the girls’ shirts

“I’m a Princess”

when there was an association to maleness (male family members, jobs, guitars). It could be argued that because the images and text were associated with maleness, they were given masculine writing associated with aggression. Cursive writing was seen when the main theme of the shirt was about the wearer, food, love, dancing and princesses. The differences speak to stereotypes with block writing being associated with the male gender.

This chapter explores the many ways The Children’s Place physical store and e-store, as well as the graphic tees available, are congruent with gender stereotypes. The Children’s Place uses its knowledge on what is appropriate in Western culture for boys and girls and uses this understanding to set up its stores in gendered ways. This has major implications in regards to the pressures adults face to make appropriate clothing choices for their children. Additionally, it contributes to children’s gender identities and their belief about what is appropriate for their gender and that of others. Chapter 5 will discuss the implications the gendered set-up of the physical store and e-store space has for children and adult shoppers, as well as the messages the graphic t-shirts send to children about their gender.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study set out to examine the “truth” conveyed about gender through children’s clothing. Using discourse analysis, it investigated how The Children’s Place markets gender through its products, store set-up, and marketing tactics.

There are many pressures adults face to make “appropriate” clothing selections for children. Adults want what is best for their children. They want them to fit in within society, become successful members, as well as be liked by others (George, 2007). Within North American culture there are parents who have rebelled against dressing their children in gender stereotypical ways. These parents have been bashed publically for such a decision. They have been called unfit parents, and have been threatened with having their children taken from them. These parents have been told that they are setting their child up for failure and should be blamed for any bullying their child may endure. The discourse of gender appropriate clothing that exists within North American culture has supported the notion that parents should be chastised for allowing their children to cross gender boundaries with their clothing selection.

I believe that most parents dress their children in gender stereotypical clothing for two reasons. First, that they believe it is what is appropriate and do not question the gendering of clothing; second, they fear the scrutiny they will receive from society. When adults support the gendered clothing offered by The Children’s Place, they further reinforce their children’s developing “truth” about gender. They also give marketers the power they need to continue to market clothing in gendered ways.

“I’m a Princess”

It is adults who first introduce children to the shopping process (Shim et al., 1995). Shim et al. (1995), found that “the more frequently the parents took the children shopping, the more conscious the children were reported being of brand, price, color, peers, and style in buying clothes” (p. 10). This is important to consider when thinking about the gendered process of clothing selection. If adults are continually shopping in gender stereotypical ways, they are teaching children what is appropriate clothing choices based solely on their gender.

The results from this research has shown that the t-shirts found on The Children’s Place website for the baby girl, girl and boy sections are congruent with dominant ideas about gender. It is important to note that the baby boy section was not included in the analysis. While collecting the shirt data, it became obvious that the boy and baby boy data was essentially the same. At first glance I could determine that the themes emerging from the shirts were the same therefore the process of taking data on the boy and baby boy shirts would be redundant. This is important to think about. While there were themes that were the same in the girl and baby girl categories, there were also themes that differed between the two. With the boy and baby boy categories, the themes were the same. It can be argued that this is because the themes that emerge from the boy shirts are those that are expected of boys from baby into boyhood. The themes and their implications are discussed later in the chapter.

The Children’s Place markets its clothing based on gender stereotypical beliefs. These beliefs reinforce a truth about what it means to be female and male. Additionally, such beliefs contribute to adults’ ideas about how to treat each gender. The reinforcing of such truths further gives gender stereotypes their power. Such support for these truths allows them to continue to exist. This has major implications for children’s and adults’ ideas about clothing selection. It also has significant implications for children’s and adults’ ideas about norms for being male and

“I’m a Princess”

female. The children’s clothing, as well as its marketing and selection, act as a dominant social discourse that constructs children’s gender as well as reinforces societal beliefs about gender.

The organization of The Children’s Place website, as well as the store’s physical space, begins communicating gender “truths” to shoppers. The physical space does not have gendered labels stating which side of the store is for male or female clothing. However, there is a clear divide through the use of gendered colour. The left side contains darker coloured clothing (red, blue, black), and the right side contains lighter and brighter coloured clothing (pink, white, purple). It is my conclusion that those who enter the store would have a pre-established idea about gender appropriate colour choices for children’s clothing and would therefore select the area of the store in which to shop according to the area’s dominant colour scheme. Having two gendered sections makes it difficult for shoppers to consider buying clothes from other than the “proper” section. Once adults and children enter the world of pink versus blue at The Children’s Place physical space, they encounter the array of gendered themes that are marketed to them based solely on gender (such themes and their implications are discussed later in this chapter).

The same gender divide exists on The Children’s Place website. The difference between the physical space and the website is the website *does* divide the clothing using gendered terms. When entering the site, and before you can make clothing purchases, you need to determine what gender you are shopping for. All the clothing is categorized as girl, baby girl, boy, baby boy, and newborn. The website directs you to the clothing that is believed to be best suited for each gender. As I have discussed in previous chapters, while shoppers using the website are not prohibited from making non-gender stereotypical clothing purchases, the set-up of the site does make it difficult to consider making non-stereotypical purchases.

“I’m a Princess”

The clothing available at The Children’s Place tells a story about what it means to be boy and girl. The data collected from this research tells us that girls should be shoppers, decorative, sweet (and represent sweetness), and express love for others in their lives. These themes are all related to personality characteristics rather than interests. They suggest that girls should present themselves in a certain manner (be sweet and loving towards others). This has serious implications for how girls perceive themselves, as well as how they believe others will perceive them. In general girls are taught that in order to be well regarded by others they need to possess these qualities of sweetness and lovability. The sweetness imagery and text found on the graphic tees for girls reinforces the belief that they are supposed to exhibit sweetness and are also interested in consuming sweet food. Today, there is an endless struggle for females to attain what is considered to be an attractive weight (Haas, Pawlow, Pettibone & Segrist, 2012). They are constantly being targeted by marketing fad diets (Stice, Schupak-Neuberg, Shaw & Stein, 1994). Those as young as 11 years old are developing unhealthy body images and dieting (Sorensen, 1992), and are more concerned about dieting and more preoccupied with their weight than are boys (Phares, Steinberg, & Thompson, 2004). Females are enticed to consumed sweet food, such as chocolate, at the same time are expected to maintain a thin body.

Another theme that emerged from the girls’ data was that of fashion. Girls are taught the importance of their appearance at an extremely young age. They are taught early on that they will receive attention for how they look rather than what they are capable of. Lamb & Brown’s book “Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing our Daughters from Marketers’ Schemes” discusses the role girls’ clothing plays in their developing gender identity.

Lamb & Brown (2007):

If T’s expressed who a girl is, you’d think she’d be wearing the T she got at the summer

“I’m a Princess”

camp she went to, the music festival she attended or the Humane Society where she volunteers to walk the dogs. But instead they express 'attitude' rather than interests, skills, concerns, and hobbies. (p.41)

Lamb & Brown (2007) speak to the dominant idea about the female gender that exists within Western society. The messages on the Children’s Place girls’ shirts teach them that their main concern should be about how they look. For example:

- Lovely, soar, pretty, flutter, fly, soar
- I sparkle and shine
- Princess
- My favourite things: 1) Puppies 2) Cupcakes 3) Dress up 4) Dancing 5) My Family
- Undeniably absolutely positively cute
- La Princess est arrive

For a full list of the discourse of appearance for baby girls’ and girls’ shirts, see Appendix A and B.

The themes that emerge from girls’ clothing may not be fully understood by young children, however it is my argument that the themes contribute to children’s gender identity as they search their environment for clues about their gender. The attention young girls receive for how they dress as well as the images, decoration, text, and colour of the tees found on The Children’s Place website further contributes to dominant ideas about their gender. The messages communicated to adults and children have significant implications for how females are perceived. The pressures girls face to act and look a certain way contributes to their belief about what is appropriate for their gender. The options present on the girls’ shirts restrict them to a

“I’m a Princess”

concern over how they look and act as opposed to what they are interested in and capable of doing.

While the themes that are present on the girls’ shirts are of extreme concern, those that are absent are just as important to discuss. There are no themes of sports, leadership, competency, strength or varying interests present on the girl shirts. Girls are continually exposed to clothing that confines their identity to the themes discussed previously. The lack of other themes (as present on the boys’ shirts) teaches them that these are qualities they are not supposed to possess or be concerned about developing.

While the gendered differences between the shirts available for girls and boys are not surprising, they are of concern. The data found for the boys’ clothing reveals them to be the opposite from that of the girls’. They contribute to a truth about males getting better with age, being valued for what they can do, as being active, having many interests, and taking on leadership roles. These messages convey a truth that males are more competent than females. They teach boys to feel superior, and to be tough, active, and strong. This communicates to boys that they are supposed to strive for success through their capabilities

As previously stated in regard to the girls’ shirts, themes that are not present on those for boys are just as important to note. The boys’ shirts show no theme of emotion. Further teaching them that they are not supposed to experience, or express, feelings such as love and sweetness as are the girls. The lack of emotional messages on the boys’ shirts further supports the gender stereotype that boys should be strong. Such strength is shown through being tough and not expressing any type of sentiment. I argue that this contributes to the pressures boys face such as it not being okay to cry, or show love for others.

“I’m a Princess”

There was also no fashion theme communicated through the boys’ shirts or in their marketing. It is common knowledge that boys do not face as much pressure as do girls to dress in a fashionable way, therefore this finding is not a surprise. Instead of marketing fashion, the boys’ clothing was discussed in terms of comfort, for example: “a cool and comfy tee for your basketball loving boy.” This contributes to stereotypical gendered discourses that exist within Western culture that while girls should care about how they look, boys should not. They should choose clothing based on its comfort level and its ability to not restrict their movements This again confirms that boys’ main concern should be that they dress to convey what they are good at doing.

After analyzing the data from The Children’s Place, it is hard to deny that the clothing is produced and marketed in gender stereotypical ways. The themes that emerged raise serious concerns about how the design and marketing of children’s clothing has on their developing gender identities. The clothing acts a powerful gendered discourse that teaches children about what is appropriate for their gender. It is my belief that through continuous exposure to gender stereotypical clothing, children will develop beliefs about their gender that will affect various areas of their lives (friendships, interests, capabilities, personality judgements, etc.).

Albers’ (1998) study, “The Effects of Gender-typed Clothing on Children’s Social Judgments” revealed that children based their desirability to play with a peer based on the gender stereotypical clothing worn by them. Meaning, if the child participant was a girl and the peer they were viewing was wearing gender stereotypical girl clothing, they would rank that peer as highly desirable to play with. Children would also use the clothing the peer was wearing to determine activity preference. For example, the participants determined that the girl wearing a dress would like a doll and cooking set, and would dislike a truck and tools. The results from

“I’m a Princess”

this study support my argument that children’s developing gender identities could be affected by their clothing and that of others.

Limitations and Future Directions

Content analysis could be considered a limitation in this study. While manifest content analyzes the obvious themes emerging from the data, latent content allows for my interpretive reading of the results. My discussion of the deeper meaning, as well as the implications for children’s developing gender identities, was elicited by the analysis of the manifest content. I was able to interpret and explore the latent content presented by the graphic t-shirts through reading past research in addition to my own understanding of gender stereotypes that exist. It would be useful for researchers in the future to have more than one individual analyze the data for latent content.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, I felt I had a bias when beginning this research. I already believed that children’s clothing was produced and marketed in gendered ways. I had pre-existing knowledge on The Children’s Place physical space, and online store, and the clothing offered there. Therefore, it could be argued that there were researcher biases within this study. I however feel that the topic of gender typically comes along with a predisposed knowledge on its stereotypes.

This study only looked at the clothing offered at one children’s clothing store. Therefore, a limitation could be that this store does not represent all children’s clothing stores. Future research should be conducted on a variety of children’s clothing stores to check for the gendering of clothing, as well as the gendering set-up of the space.

This study analyzed a small portion of the clothing available at The Children’s Place. The store offers many other pieces of clothing (dresses & rompers, shorts, denim, tops, bottoms,

“I’m a Princess”

matchables, performance active, swim, outerwear, school uniforms, extended sizes, sleepwear, accessories and shoes). It would be interesting to examine whether the other clothing items were also congruent with traditional gender stereotypes. Future research in this area could contribute to the argument that the gendering of children’s clothing affects their gender identity.

This study does not take children’s and shopper’s perspectives into account. It would be valuable for future research to be done in this area. Children and shopper’s perspectives would provide rich information regarding shopping experiences and what pressures, if any, they face to conform to gender appropriate clothing.

As discussed in Chapter 1, my lack of knowledge on gender queer theory should be noted as a limitation in my research. It would be interesting for future research to be done with individuals who identify as gender fluid: Would they experience the same societal pressures? Would the clothing send the same messages? It is an area I look forward to learning more about!

Conclusion

It is obvious that The Children’s Place markets their clothing in gendered ways. This is done through the design of the physical space and online store. The Children’s Place uses its knowledge on gender appropriateness to produce graphic tees that support the gender stereotypes that exist within Western culture. I believe that the gendered discourses of children’s clothing gains its power by the dressing of males and females differently. Adults and children support such power by purchasing the clothing in gendered ways. It is this power that allows The Children’s Place to continue to market its clothing according to gender.

I believe that the content on the graphic tees, as well as the underlying messages present, contribute to children’s gender identities. I feel that the clothing holds a power over children’s developing gender identities. I believe it further confirms the gender stereotypes that children are

“I’m a Princess”

exploring as they search their environment for clues about their own gender, as well as that of others. The gendering of children’s clothing could therefore be said to be one of the factors that contributes to the separate, and different worlds of boys and girls.

There are places where children’s clothing is referred to as “genderless.” Meaning it is not marketed in gender stereotypical ways. In Sweden, this has been done with much success. Children’s clothing has been produced without any gender conforming messages. Such clothing has been marketed in terms of comfort and interests. For example, an online website for a children’s clothing store would be organized in terms of age/size/colour/clothing item instead of gender. Children and adults are free to purchase clothing that suits the **child’s** interests rather than what **society** believes their interests should be. Such alternate truths about children’s clothing is extremely promising. The fact that Sweden has had much success in its transition to genderless clothing tells us that it is in fact possible! I look forward to the day that Western culture stops applying gender to “things” and begins to understand that it is an identity that is produced on us by others.

References

- Albers, S. M. (1998). The Effect of Gender-typed Clothing on Children's Social Judgments. *Child Study Journal*, 28(2), 137.
- Allred, Pam & Burman, Erica. (2010). Analysing Children's accounts using discourse analysis. In S. & H. Greene Diane (Ed.), *Researching children's experience: Approaches and methods* (illustrated, reprint ed., pp. 175-194) SAGE, 2005.
- Bauer, P. J., & Coyne, M. J. (1997). When the name says it all: Preschoolers' Recognition and use of the Gendered Nature of Common Proper Names. *Social Development*, 6(3), 271-291. doi:10.1111/1467-9507.ep11631048
- Bridges, J. S. (1993). Pink or blue: Gender-Stereotypic Perceptions of Infants as Conveyed by Birth Congratulations Cards. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 17(2), 193-205. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.msvu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=fgh&AN=MRB-CDAS0108936&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Bussey, K., & Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation. *Psychological Review*, 106(4), 676. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=2488728&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Caldera, Y. M., Huston, A. C., & O'Brien, M. (1989). Social Interactions and Play Patterns of Parents and Toddlers with Feminine, Masculine, and Neutral toys. *Child Development*, 60(1), 70. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.ep7250687

"I'm a Princess"

Cox, R. (1996). *Shaping childhood: Themes of uncertainty in the history of adult-child relationships* (pp. 6-7). New York: Routledge.

Fagot, B. L., Rodgers, C. S., & Leinbach, M. D. (2000). Theories of gender socialization. In T. Eckes and H. M. Trautner (Eds.), *The developmental social psychology of gender* (pp. 65-89). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Fredrickson, B.L., & Roberts, T. (1997). Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental health risks. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21, 173-206. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00108.x.

Freeman, N. (2007). Preschoolers' perceptions of gender appropriate toys and their parents' beliefs about genderized behaviors: Miscommunication, mixed messages, or hidden truths? *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 34(5), 357-366. doi:10.1007/s10643-006-0123-x

George, L. (2007). Why are we dressing our daughters like this? *Maclean's*, 119(52-53), 36-48. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.msvu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=fgh&AN=MRB-FSD0802-000096&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Goodin, S. M., Denburg, A. V., Murnen, S. K., & Smolak, L. (2011). "Putting on" Sexiness: A Content Analysis of the Presence of Sexualizing Characteristics in Girls' Clothing. *Sex Roles*, 65, 1-12. doi:10.1007/s11199-011-9966-8

“I’m a Princess”

Haas, C.J., Pawlow, L. A., Pettibone, J., & Segrist, D. J. (2012). An intervention for the negative influence of media on body esteem. *College Student Journal*, 46(2), 405-418. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.msvu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=fgh&AN=77698071&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Halim, M. L., Ruble, D. N., Tamis-LeMonda, C., Zosuls, K. M., Lurye, L. E., & Greulich, F. K. (2014). Pink frilly dresses and the avoidance of all things 'girly': Children's appearance rigidity and cognitive theories of gender development. *Developmental Psychology*, 50(4), 1091-1101. doi:10.1037/a0034906; 10.1037/a0034906.supp (Supplemental)

Howitt, D. (2010). Discourse analysis. *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 215-243). England: Pearson Education Limited.

Karniol, R. (2011). The Colour of Children's Gender Stereotypes. *Sex Roles*, 65 (1/2), 119-132. doi: 10.1007/s11199-011-9989-1.

Kohlberg, L. (1996) A Cognitive-Developmental Analysis of Children's Sex-Role Concepts and Attitudes. In E.E. Maccoby (Ed.), *The Development of Sex Differences*, 82-172.

Lamb, Sharon & Brown, Lyn Mikel. (2007). *Packaging girlhood: Rescuing our daughters from marketers' schemes* (1st ed.), St. Martin's Griffin.

Leone, C., & Roberston, K. (1988). Some effects of sex-linked clothing and gender schema on the stereotyping of infants. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 129, 609-619.

“I’m a Princess”

Martin, C. L., & Ruble, D. (2004). Children's search for gender cues: Cognitive perspectives on gender development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science (Wiley-Blackwell)*, *13*(2), 67-70. doi:10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00276.x

Martin, C. L., Wood, C. H., & Little, J. K. (1990). The development of gender stereotype components. *Child Development*, *61*, 1891-1904.

Moore, Lynn & Seu, Bruna. (2010). **‘Doing family therapy’: A foucauldian discourse analysis.** *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling*, *12*(4), 323-343.

Navarro, R., Martínez, V., Yubero, S., & Larrañaga, E. (2014). Impact of Gender and the Stereotyped Nature of Illustrations on Choice of Color: Replica of the study by Karniol (2011) in a Spanish sample. *Gender Issues*, *31*(2), 142-162. doi:10.1007/s12147-014-9122-1

Nelson, A. (2000). The Pink Dragon is Female: Halloween Costumes and Gender Markers. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *24*, 137-144. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2000.tb00194.x.

Neuendorf, K. A. (2010). Content analysis- A Methodological Primer for Gender Research. *Sex Roles*, *64*, 276-289. doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9893-0

Paoletti, J. B. (1987). Clothing and Gender in America: Children's Fashions, 1890-1920. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*, *13*(1), 136-143. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.msvu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=snh&AN=SN022658&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Paoletti, J. B. (2012). *Pink and blue: Telling the boys from the girls in America*. Bloomington,

"I'm a Princess"

Indiana USA: Indiana University Press.

Phares, V., Steinberg, A. R., & Thompson, J. K. (2004). Gender Differences in Peer and Parental Influences: Body Image Disturbance, Self-worth, and Psychological Functioning in Preadolescent Children. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, 33(5), 421-429. Retrieved

from <http://ezproxy.msvu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=fmh&AN=MFS-14421084&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Pollen, A. (2011). Performing Spectacular Girlhood: Mass-Produced Dressing-up Costumes and the Commodification of Imagination. *Textile History*, 42(2), 162-180.

doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1179/174329511X13123634653820>

Pomerleau, A., Bolduc, D., Malcuit, G., & Cossette, L. (1990). Pink or blue: Environmental gender stereotypes in the first two years of life. *Sex Roles*, 22(5), 359-367. Retrieved

from <http://ezproxy.msvu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=snh&AN=23816543&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Powlishta, K. K., Serbin, L. A., & Moller, L. C. (1993). The stability of individual differences in gender typing: Implications for understanding gender segregation. *Sex Roles*, 29(11-12),

723-737. doi:10.1007/BF00289214

Prentice, D. A., & Carranza, E. (2002). What Women and Men Should be, Shouldn't be, are

Allowed to Be, and don't Have to be: The Contents of Prescriptive Gender

Stereotypes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 26, 269-281.

Pretty. (2016). In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/pretty?s=t>

“I’m a Princess”

Robnett, R. D., & Susskind, J. E. (2010). Who Cares About Being Gentle? The Impact of Social Identity and the Gender of One’s Friends on Children’s Display of Same-Gender Favoritism. *Sex Roles, 63*(11-12), 820-832. doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9843-x

Ruble, D.N., & Martin, C.L. (1998). Gender Development. In W. Damon (Series Ed.) & N. Eisenberg (Vol. Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol 3. Socialization, personality, and social development*, (5th ed., pp.933-1016). New York: Wiley.

Shakin, M., Shakin, D., & Sternglaz, S. (1985). Infant clothing: Sex labeling for strangers. *Sex Roles, 12*(9-10), 995-964.

Shim, S., Snyder, L., & Gehrt, K. C. (1995). Parent's Perception Regarding Children's use of Clothing Evaluative Criteria: An Exploratory Study from the Consumer Socialization Process Perspective. *Advance in Consumer Research, 22*, 628-632.

Sorensen, T. (1992). Challenging stereotypes. *Green Left Weekly*, (42) Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.msvu.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=fmh&AN=MRB-WRI0254045&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Stern, M., & Karraker, K. (1989). Sex stereotyping of infants. A review of gender label studies. *Sex Roles, 20*, 501-522.

Stice, E., Schupak-Neuberg, E., Shaw, H. E., & Stein, R. I. (1994). Relation of media exposure to eating disorder symptomatology: An examination of mediating mechanisms. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 103*(4), 836-840.

“I’m a Princess”

Taylor, F. (2003). Content Analysis and Gender Stereotypes in Children's Books. *Teaching Sociology, 31*(3), 300-311.

The Children's Place. (2011). The Children's Place. Retrieved from www.thechildrensplace.ca

Thompson, S.K. (1975). Gender Labels and Early Sex-Role Development. *Child Development, 46*, 339-347.

Trautner, H. M., Ruble, D. N., Cyphers, L., Kirsten, B., Behrendt, R., & Hartmann, P. (2005). Rigidity and flexibility of gender stereotypes in childhood: Developmental or differential? *Infant and Child Development, 14*(4), 365-381. doi:10.1002/icd.399

Wong, W., & Hines, M. (2015). Effects of Gender Color-Coding on Toddlers’ Gender-Typical Toy Play. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 44*(5), 1233-1242. doi:10.1007/s10508-014-0400-5

Zosuls, K. M., Ruble, D. N., Tamis-LeMonda, C., Shrout, P. E., Bornstein, M. H., & Greulich, F. K. (2009). The acquisition of gender labels in infancy: Implications for gender-typed play. *Developmental Psychology, 45*(3), 688-701. doi:10.1037/a0014053

Appendix A

Baby Girl: Discourses of Appearance

Imagery	Text	Decoration	Product Description
Ballet slippers		Bows on shoes and ribbon	She’ll be prima pretty in this dance tee favourite!
Girl with long hair and a bow in it, wearing a crown, dress with a bow around waist, long eyelashes,	P is for princess	Glitter around letter P and girls dress	A super cute tee for your #1 princess!
Mermaid, stars		Mermaids tail is sparkly, she has long pink hair, a seashell in her hair, long eyelashes, pink cheeks, a belly top	A pretty mermaid is perfect on her favourite graphic tee!
Two large butterflies	Lovely, soar, pretty, flutter, fly, sweet	Butterflies are sparkly, have hearts and flowers inside them, some writing is sparkly, cursive writing	A pretty butterfly graphic to add to her collection!
Monkey holding a cupcake		Monkey is wearing a sparkly pink dress, blue bow in hair with blue and purple sneakers, has long eyelashes and pink sparkly cheeks, cupcake is sparkly, hearts around monkey	A sweet tee for your little monkey!
Penguins	My family is cool	Penguins form a heart, some penguins wearing hats, some have bows in their hair, some have hearts on them, some have red cheeks, hearts in the two O’s of cool	She’ll be one cool cutie in this sweet tee!

"I'm a Princess"

Stars	I sparkle and shine!	Stars and shine are sparkly silver, I sparkle and are outlined in silver,	Her super cute tee with plenty of sparkle 'n shine!
Butterfly	Dream big	Butterfly has hearts and flowers on wings, some letters in dream are surrounded by hearts, parts of butterfly are sparkly	A pretty tee for the girl who loves butterflies!
Crown, wand, diamond, mirror, hearts, butterflies, stars	Birthday princess	Crown is sparkly purple, rest of images are in white in the background, writing is written in cursive	Your princess will be ready to blow out the candles in style in this festive tee!
Butterfly wearing headphones	Love the beat	Music notes, butterfly has eyelashes and pink cheeks, writing written in cursive, parts of butterfly are sparkly	She'll tune into this fun graphic made for music lovers!
Purse, music note, heart, check boxes, silly face	To do list: play dress up, dance and sing, be silly, hug mommy, take a nap	Some words are sparkly, purse is by play dress up, music note is by dance and sing, silly face is by be silly, hearts are by hug mommy, various Z's are by take a nap, each box is checked off	A cute tee for the girl who has a full 'to do' list!
Cat holding a cupcake, hearts		Some hearts and top of cupcake are sparkly, cat has eyelashes, a heart for a nose	She'll love this purr-fectly sweet tee!
Dog sitting on chair, crown, hearts	Princess	Dog is wearing a sparkly silver crown and a necklace, heart balloons attached to chair, princess written in sparkly cursive writing	A royally cute tee for your little princess!

"I'm a Princess"

Horse wearing bow and necklace		Bow and necklace are sparkly, horse has long eyelashes	No horsin' around, she'll love this cute tee!
Monkey wearing glasses, clothes, bow in hair, stars		Monkeys glasses, bow and shirt are sparkly pink, wearing blue pants and white sneakers with pink sparkly laces, has eye lashes and pink cheeks, stars are around monkey, monkey has hand on hip	She'll go bananas for this cute tee!
Pumpkin, hearts, candy, witch hat	I (love but is in shape of heart) candy	Pumpkin in sparkly orange, in shape of heart, has eyelashes, pink cheeks, wearing a witch hat, letter I is made up of bones, hearts and candy pieces scattered around letters	Your little candy lover will be hauntingly cute in this festive tee!
Girl		Girl has long hair with a bow in it, eye lashes, pink cheeks, pink heart lips, heart necklace, bracelets, ring, purse, blue skirt	A fashionable tee for your trend-right girl!
Stars, hearts, cupcake, crown, happy face	My favourite things: 1. Puppies 2. cupcakes 3. dress up 4. dancing 5. my family	Cupcakes has a cupcake beside it, dress up has a crown beside it, my family has a happy face beside it, in favourite the letter i has a heart instead of a dot	Count this cute tee among her favourite things!
Butterflies, hearts	My mommy is my bff	Butterflies have eye lashes and pink cheeks with smiling faces, one is larger than the other with hearts in between the two, black outline is sparkly	For the little butterfly who adores her mommy!

“I’m a Princess”

Body wearing a fancy dress, no head, hands holding a bird and a magic wand		Neck goes up to the collar of shirt (assuming that it appears that wearer is wearing the dress), dress has sparkles, hearts, frills, wearing long gloves, bracelet	A royally cute tee for your little princess!
Hearts	Undeniably absolutely positively cute!	Each word written in different writing, first three words outlined in sparkles, cute is entirely in sparkles, hearts below cute	A positively adorable tee for a positively cute girl!
Two eyes, nose, mouth		Eyes, nose and mouth form a face, two eyes are closed with eyelashes, nose is the shape of a triangle, mouth is cut out (all to appear to be a pumpkin)	A cute Halloween tee for your little pumpkin!
Girl wearing witches hat, bats, stars	Daddy’s under my spell	Girl has pig tails, eye lashes, pink cheeks, wearing purple cape, bats flying around, stars scattered around, writing written in cursive black sparkles, hat is sparkly, bats and stars are sparkly	Your little trick-or-treater will be bewitching in this cute tee!
Hearts	La fille a papa	Letters are sparkly, some hearts are sparkly,	A pretty tee for papa's little girl!
Girl, hearts	La princess est arrive	Girl is wearing a sparkly crown, long hair, eye lashes, pink cheeks, fancy dress, sparkly hearts around her, princess is written in sparkles	A royally cool tee for the princess in your household!
Butterfly wearing headphones	Love the beat	Music notes, butterfly has eyelashes and pink	She'll tune into this fun graphic made for music lovers!

“I’m a Princess”

		cheeks, writing written in cursive, parts of butterfly are sparkly	
--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Appendix B

Girl: Discourses of Appearance

Imagery	Text	Decoration	Product Description
Eiffel tower	Paris, Ooo lala	Hearts, swirls, shiny colors	A tres’ fashionable tee for your fashionable girl!
Shopping bags	J’adore magosiner	Hearts	A super cute tee for a girl who loves to shop.
Dog dressed up with a shirt and hat	Bonjour, ma Cherie!		She’ll be top dog when it comes to style in this fun tee!
Camera	Let’s strike a pose!	Hearts, shiny colors	A playful tee for your fashion diva!
Girl wearing dress, holding purse, umbrella in background			She’ll be ready to hit the sand in style in this cute graphic tee!
Butterflies		Flowers	An artsy tee featuring colourful butterflies just for her!
Butterflies		Hearts, flowers	A pretty tee for your butterfly lover!
Butterflies		Peace signs, hearts	A perfect tee to add to her boho skirts and more!
Horse		Feathers, butterfly, flower	A magical graphic that looks great with tiered skirts and denim!
Horse	I love my beautiful horse Make me happy	Hearts, flowers, shiny colors	No horsin’ around, she’ll love this tee!
Horse	Free to run. Be free. Love, live. Be true. Forever.	Swirly writing	She’ll be ready to ride in style with her new pretty horse tee!
Horse wearing glasses, necklace with bow, flower in hair, pink streak in hair			A wise chose for any horse lover!
Large heart on top of large flower	J’adore	Flowers inside of large heart, ombre color effect	She’ll love adding this cute tee to her collection!
Peace sign	Lots of love	Butterflies, hearts, clouds, rainbow,	A fun ‘peace’ to add to her tee collection!

“I’m a Princess”

		flowers, stars within and beside peace sign	
Eyes wearing glasses		Large bow above glasses, low eyelashes, red lips	A cute wink in her favourite shade of pink-it fits her to a tee!
Eyes wearing glasses (one eye winking)	Tres chic	Hearts all around, long eye lashes, pink lips	A tres cute tee for your tres chic girl!
Cat is wearing blue eye shadow with long eye lashes, has a bow in its hair and a heart for a nose	Meowzers!	Cat	She’ll be the cat’s meowzers in this adorable feline tee!
Cat wearing glasses	Meeoow	Hearts	A purr-fectly fashionable tee for your kitty lover!
Cat wearing glasses and bows playing guitar	Lil super star	Starts and lightning bolts	A cute kitty superstar tee for your little superstar!
Cat wearing a party hat and party necklace with balloons beside them	It’s my birthday	Confetti around cat and balloons	A purr-fect tee for your birthday girl!
Cat and dog side by side	Mon meilleur ami	Hearts around writing	A super cute tee for your pet lover!
Cat wearing barie, collar with bow with Eiffel tower in background	Bonjour		Your kitty lover will be tres cute in this adorable tee!
Girl wearing dress, bow in hair, necklace, rosy cheeks, panty hose, flower shoes, holding dog wearing sweater	Girl’s best friend	Hearts, fancy writing	A fun tee for a girl with a lot of friends!
Hearts	Princess	Fancy writing, star for the dot of the ‘I’, hearts below	The perfect tee for the princess in your house!
Crowns	I’m a princess but my sisters a drama queen	Crowns, princess and queen are sparkly	The perfect tee for the princess in your house!

“I’m a Princess”

Crown	Drama queen	Crown is made of hearts with a star in the middle. Queen is shiny purple	She takes the crown when it comes to drama, and cuteness!
-------	-------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------

Appendix C

Baby Girl: Discourses of Love

Imagery	Text	Decoration	Product Description
Fluffy dog with flower in hair	What’s not to love?	Hearts, cursive writing, love is written in sparkles	Because you love everything about her!
	Call my agent her name is mommy!	Block writing, hearts, sparkles on writing	A playful tee mommy’s girl will love to wear!
Cat, dog	I love my mom, dad, uncle, brother, bff, sister, dad, grandma, aunt, grandpa,	Heart, stars, some words written in sparkles, hearts in sparkles	A cute scribble tee for the girl who loves her family!
Butterflies		Butterflies range from small to big, they are sparkly, largest one has hearts inside it, colors are ombre	She’ll love her artsy butterfly graphic tee!
Flowers, hearts	LOVE	Flowers range from small to big, hearts are sparkly, flowers form a heart around LOVE	Add a pretty skirt for a fresh look she’ll love wearing!
Heart, flowers, crown	Princess	Princess is a banner across the heart, crown is on top of heart and is in gold sparkles,	A super cute tee your princess will be stuck on!
Monkey holding a cupcake		Monkey is wearing a sparkly pink dress, blue bow in hair with blue and purple sneakers, has long eyelashes and pink sparkly cheeks, cupcake is sparkly, hearts around monkey	A sweet tee for your little monkey!
Penguins	My family is cool	Penguins form a heart, some penguins wearing	She’ll be one cool cutie in this sweet tee!

“I’m a Princess”

		hats, some have bows in their hair, some have hearts on them, some have red cheeks, hearts in the two O’s of cool	
	My mom thinks I am awesome!	Block letters, outlined in sparkly purple, in awesome the holes in a and o are hearts, exclamation point has a heart instead of a dot	Mommy's little girl will love wearing this tee!
	No means ask Grandma!	No and grandma are written in block letters, no is very large, exclamation points have a heart instead of a dot, grandma outlined in purple sparkles	Grandma's special girl will love her new tee!
	Dream big	Butterfly has hearts and flowers on wings, some letters in dream are surrounded by hearts, parts of butterfly are sparkly	A pretty tee for the girl who loves butterflies!
Butterfly wearing headphones	Love the beat	Music notes, butterfly has eyelashes and pink cheeks, writing written in cursive, parts of butterfly are sparkly	She'll tune into this fun graphic made for music lovers!
Dog head	I wanted a puppy but I got a brother instead!!!	Puppy and brother written in block letters, some letters sparkly in puppy and brother	A playful tee for the girl who really loves her brother (and puppies!)

"I'm a Princess"

Purse, music note, heart, check boxes, silly face	To do list: play dress up, dance and sing, be silly, hug mommy, take a nap	Some words are sparkly, purse is by play dress up, music note is by dance and sing, silly face is by be silly, hearts are by hug mommy, various Z's are by take a nap, each box is checked off	A cute tee for the girl who has a full 'to do' list!
Cat holding a cupcake, hearts		Some hearts and top of cupcake are sparkly, cat has eyelashes, a heart for a nose	She'll love this purr-fectly sweet tee!
Hearts, bow	Lil sister	Hearts in rows from top to bottom, Lil is written in block letters on top of hearts and is sparkly	For the girl who takes being a sister seriously!
Dog sitting on chair, crown, hearts	Princess	Dog is wearing a sparkly silver crown and a necklace, heart balloons attached to chair, princess written in sparkly cursive writing	A royally cute tee for your little princess!
Heart	I'm the best sister	Heart is sparkly pink, writing is on top of it, I'm the sister is in block writing, the dots on I'm and sister are hearts	A cute tee for one great sister!
Horse wearing bow and necklace		Bow and necklace are sparkly, horse has long eyelashes	No horsin' around, she'll love this cute tee!
Pumpkin, hearts, candy, witch hat	I (love but is in shape of heart) candy	Pumpkin in sparkly orange, in shape of heart, has eyelashes, pink cheeks, wearing a	Your little candy lover will be hauntingly cute in this festive tee!

“I’m a Princess”

		witch hat, letter I is made up of bones, hearts and candy pieces scattered around letters	
Cat heads, hearts	Je t’adore	Cat heads form a large heart, small hearts amongst cat heads, a few cat heads and hearts are sparkly pink, letters are sparkly pink	The purr-fect tee for your kitty lover!
Stars, hearts	Une etoile est nee	Letters written in different ways,	Your super star will love her new tee!
Cupcake, hearts	C’est ma fete!	Cupcake is positioned on top of the heart, ma fete is outlined in silver sparkle	The perfect tee for your birthday girl to wear on her special day!
Hearts, band aids	My dad can fix anything!	Dad is written in block blue sparkly letters, fix is written in band aids, exclamation point has heart instead of dot	She wants the world to know, her daddy can fix anything!
Girl		Girl has long hair with a bow in it, eye lashes, pink cheeks, pink heart lips, heart necklace, bracelets, ring, purse, blue skirt	A fashionable tee for your trend-right girl!
Stars, hearts, cupcake, crown, happy face	My favourite things: 1. Puppies 2.cupcakes 3.dress up 4.dancing 5.my family	Cupcakes has a cupcake beside it, dress up has a crown beside it, my family has a happy face beside it, in favourite the letter i has a heart instead of a dot	Count this cute tee among her favourite things!

“I’m a Princess”

Butterflies, hearts	My mommy is my bff	Butterflies have eye lashes and pink cheeks with smiling faces, one is larger than the other with hearts in between the two, black outline is sparkly	For the little butterfly who adores her mommy!
Body wearing a fancy dress, no head, hands holding a bird and a magic wand		Neck goes up to the collar of shirt (assuming that it appears that wearer is wearing the dress), dress has sparkles, hearts, frills, wearing long gloves, bracelet	A royally cute tee for your little princess!
Hearts	Undeniably absolutely positively cute!	Each word written in different writing, first three words outlined in sparkles, cute is entirely in sparkles, hearts below cute	A positively adorable tee for a positively cute girl!
Hearts	La fille a papa	Letters are sparkly, some hearts are sparkly,	A pretty tee for papa's little girl!
Girl, hearts	La princess est arrive	Girl is wearing a sparkly crown, long hair, eye lashes, pink cheeks, fancy dress, sparkly hearts around her, princess is written in sparkles	A royally cool tee for the princess in your household!

Appendix D

Girl: Discourses of Love

Imagery	Text	Decoration	Product Description
Eiffel tower	Paris, Ooo lala	Hearts, swirls, shiny colors	A tres’ fashionable tee for your fashionable girl!
Shopping bags	J’adore magosiner	Hearts	A super cute tee for a girl who loves to shop.
Camera	Let’s strike a pose!	Hearts, shiny colors	A playful tee for your fashion diva!
Guitar	Peace Rock	Peace signs, shiny colors	A rockin’ tee for your peace loving girl!
Butterflies		Hearts	Pretty butterflies on a pretty tee just for her!
Butterflies		Hearts, flowers	A pretty tee for your butterfly lover!
Butterflies		Peace signs, hearts	A perfect tee to add to her boho skirts and more!
Horse	I love my beautiful horse Make me happy	Hearts, flowers, shiny colors	No horsin’ around, she’ll love this tee!
Horse	Free to run. Be free. Love, live. Be true. Forever.	Swirly writing	She’ll be ready to ride in style with her new pretty horse tee!
Horse wearing glasses, necklace with bow, flower in hair, pink streak in hair			A wise chose for any horse lover!
Large heart on top of large flower	J’adore	Flowers inside of large heart, ombre color effect	She’ll love adding this cute tee to her collection!
Large heart	Love and peace to all	Peace sign inside heart, shiny colors	A cool tee with a great message!
Peace sign	Lots of love	Butterflies, hearts, clouds, rainbow, flowers, stars within and beside peace sign	A fun ‘peace’ to add to her tee collection!
Eyes wearing glasses (one eye winking)	Tres chic	Hearts all around, long eye lashes, pink lips	A tres cute tee for your tres chic girl!

“I’m a Princess”

Words	AMOUR written five times down the shirt	Instead of ‘o’ in AMOUR the ‘o’ is a sparkly heart	She’ll love her new tee!
Cat is wearing blue eye shadow with long eye lashes, has a bow in its hair and a heart for a nose	Meowzers!	Cat	She’ll be the cat’s meowzers in this adorable feline tee!
Cat wearing glasses	Meeow	Hearts	A purr-fectly fashionable tee for your kitty lover!
Cat and dog side by side	Mon meilleur ami	Hearts around writing	A super cute tee for your pet lover!
Cat wearing barie, collar with bow with Eiffel tower in background	Bonjour		Your kitty lover will be tres cute in this adorable tee!
Girl wearing dress, bow in hair, necklace, rosy cheeks, panty hose, flower shoes, holding dog wearing sweater	Girl’s best friend	Hearts, fancy writing	A fun tee for a girl with a lot of friends!
hearts	Princess	Fancy writing, star for the dot of the ‘I’, hearts below	The perfect tee for the princess in your house!
Popsicle's with happy faces and arms hugging	We stick together. Written in hearts is BFF’s 4ever	Hearts around popsicles and below wording. Popsicle's are sparkly.	A cool tee to wear with her bff!
Crown	Drama queen	Crown is made of hearts with a star in the middle. Queen is shiny purple	She takes the crown when it comes to drama, and cuteness!

Appendix E

Boys: Discourses of Sports and Aggression

Imagery	Text	Decoration	Product description	Colour Descriptor
	So fast I'm invisible	Invisible is faded at the bottom	Because everyone should know how fast he is!	Color: Fall Turq
Hotdog and hamburger, ketchup and mustard bottles, sun	Hotdog and cheeseburger in.....food fight!!!	Hotdog and hamburger are having a food fight with ketchup and mustard bottles, faces are angry, hotdog has a moustache, words written in block letters	A cool, comfy tee he'll reach for every time!	Color: white
Soccer ball, stars	Kick-off soccer, division east, all-star, club side, NY soccer league, div. Champs, united, MCMXCVI, soccer club, 09, 1999,	Words are written randomly from top to bottom with soccer ball in the middle	Your soccer fan will get a 'kick' out of this cool style.	Color: Hot chilli
Life guard stand, palm tree, person holding surf board	Surf coach, college surf California, est. 89, surf coach, California	College surf California est. 89 surf coach appear on a flag, person has short hair	Your surfer dude will love this beachy style!	Color: Tidal
Whistle on a string, sun glasses, pocket	Life guard on duty	Whistle hangs on a string from the neck of the shirt, sunglasses in pocket on shirt, in the reflection of the glasses is a large wave with a surfer on it	The must-have tee for your lifeguard in training!	Color: white
Baseball		Baseball is wearing a hat, has eyes and a mouth, eyes are appearing angry with angry eye brows, flames come out behind the ball	A must-have tee for your baseball fanatic!	Color: H/T Grey

“I’m a Princess”

Eyes, teeth, tongue		Eyes, teeth and tongue form a face, one eye has an eye brow over top of it that makes it look angry, the teeth are pointy and the tongue is sticking out from the teeth	A silly scribble on a comfy tee he'll love to wear	Color: Igloo
Motor bike, appears that the motor bike has driven through the colors	Racer original	Colors splattered over motor bike	The cool, comfy tee he'll race to wear every time!	Color: Chrocoals ky
Football helmet, two guitars	Champions of 1989 stadium rock	Lightning bolts are coming out of the helmet which is located in the middle of the shirt, the two guitars are situated on either side of the helmet, words are in block letters	He'll be ready to rock in this comfy tee!	Color: black
Bulldog, football	36 iron city bulldogs football “tough as nails”	Bull dog is wearing a spiked collar, is frowning and showing its teeth which are sharp, its holding onto a football with its paw that has sharp nails, writing is block letters	A super-soft tee with a rough, tough dog he'll love!	Color: white
	Dude	Dude is written in block letters appearing to be 3-d, the letters have dots outlining making it appear as though they are metal	A cool graphic tee to pair with his fave jeans!	Color: black
Basketball, soccer ball, baseballs	I am the birthday boy!	The ‘o’ in boy is a basketball, the exclamation point at the end is a soccer ball, the middle of the ‘a’ and ‘r’ in birthday are soccer balls, the writing is block letters	Because everyone should know that he's the birthday boy!	Color: white

“I’m a Princess”

		with dots all over them		
Small human figure	Danger! Please do no feed the zombies	The wording appears to be inside a metal sign, the human figure is beside the word ‘please,’ wording is written in block letters that are all capitalized	He’ll love wearing this silly zombie style!	Color: white
Person playing guitar, drums, guitar, stadium, skull, stars, lightning bolt	Since 89’ live music, Rock & Roller stadium shaker	The person has short hair, it appears to be a flyer for a concert, writing in block letters that are all capitalized	A vintage looking rock poster on a cool graphic he’ll love!	Color: Lacquer red
Football helmet, football, game controller, video image (square with lines horizontal and vertical)	Every day is game day	Images appear 3-d, writing is capitalized and mimics writing from a video game,	His go-to tee to celebrate his game day glory!	Color: Evening Blu
Two footballs	Work hard win big	Writing is large, all capitalized and appears to be squiggly,	Because even he knows that working hard means winning big!	Color: Dk Maize
Basketball and basketball net	I show my kid brother the ropes	Basketball is about to do inside the net, writing is block letters that are all capitalized	The cool tee every big bro needs!	Color: JV Blue
Wheel	Rock & Roll	The word rock looks like rock and are 3-d, the ‘o’ in roll is a wheel, the ‘r’ and last ‘l’ in roll have lines coming off them making them appear to be moving	A cool, comfy tee with a literal take on ‘rock’ and ‘roll’!	Color: Canyon
Wings, steering wheel, car, gas pump,	Raceway championships, moto sports since 1989	The car is an older model car with a large motor on its hood, it is placed in front of what appears to be a stage with a gas pump on it,	A cool, comfy tee he’ll ‘race’ to wear anywhere!	Color: Fall turq

"I'm a Princess"

		above it is two large wings with a circle steering wheel in the middle, some cursive writing and some block writing		
Skeleton bones		Bones form ribs that go almost to the neck of the shirt, when the child wears the shirt it will appear as though the ribs are theirs	He'll show off some skeletal style in this cool glow-in-the-dark tee!	Color: black
Skeleton hand with green slime coming off it	Ghouls for peace, Trick or treat	The skeleton hand is giving the peace sign, capitalized writing, block letters	A ghoulish "peace" of art on a comfy tee he'll love!	Color: Orangeburn
Skeleton driving a bike that is doing a pop-a-wheelie	BMX since 89, Freestyle	The skeleton is wearing a t-shirt, pants, a baseball hat and sneakers, no hair, its arms are reaching up and its mouth is wide open, capitalized block letters	For the guy who's all about freestyle bmx riding!	Color: Varsity
Skull with bones	Game over (an x through over with on written on top)	The skeleton has a circle with a line through it over its face, the writing looks like writing you would see on a video game and it is 3-d and capitalized	A cool, edgy take on 'game on' he'll love!	Color: Hazy
Six people, basketball, basketball net	North coast division, 22, basketball	People are entirely black, wearing shorts, shirts and shoes, no hair, one person is attempting a slam dunk and one is appearing to attempt to block it, others are appearing to run towards them, writing is capitalized	Score points with your basketball fan - get him this tee!	Color: H/T Grey
Basketball, basketball net	Giving lessons every session	Basketball is appearing to fly from above (close to the	Because everyone wants lessons from	Color: Lt Petrol

“I’m a Princess”

		neck) into the net, writing is block letters that are capitalized	your star basketball player!	
Tall buildings, speakers, boom box, music notes	City of boom	Speakers are as tall as the buildings, they are all the same color, writing is 3-d, around the outline of the pictures and words it appears to have been spray painted blue	A cool, comfy tee he'll reach for every time!	Color: Black
Skull with bones wearing a football helmet	All-state, bad to the bone, est. 1989	The skull has an angry face (mouth open, teeth showing, orange googly eyes, all-state and est. are capitalized, all-state is written in 3-d, bad to is on one side of the skeleton head and the bone is on the other side, est. 1989 is written on a banner that is below the skeleton head	A bad-to-the-bone look for your all-state player!	Color: Amazon
Two guitars, person, speaker	I’m a rock star big brother	One guitar and speaker are large, person is small holding onto the top of the large guitar, person has a smaller guitar in hand, person is completely dark green with no hair, writing is all capitalized, the ‘o’ in brother is a speaker, brother has squares around each individual letter	Because everyone should know - he's the rock star big bro!	Color: white
Skeleton riding a skateboard, lightning bolts	I’ve got free style in my bones	Skeleton is wearing a helmet, sweater, shorts, knee pads, elbow pads and sneakers, the mouth is open appearing to	For the guy who has freestyle skating in his bones!	Color: white

"I'm a Princess"

		yell, I've got and style are made out of bones, free in my bones are block letters		
Basketball	Undefeated, national champs, hoop machine, basketball, hm	Basketball has undefeated going half way around the top of it, national champs, hoop, machine and basketball are written on a banner that starts from the middle of the basketball and goes down underneath it, HM is written on the basketball	Made for the guy who loves shooting hoops!	Color: Orangeburn
Two eyes, nose, mouth, piece of paper		The piece of paper is ripped into three pieces, the first piece has two eyes on it with one of them closed with an eyebrow on top of it, the second with a nose and third with a mouth in a smile with a tongue sticking out, the face appears to be giving a mean silly face	If he likes to doodle, he'll love this silly scribble tee!	Color: White
Motorbike, person, stars	National championship, 100 miles of motorcycle flat track race, 23 rd annual, opening ceremonies 6:30 pm, state fair Milwaukee, 1989	Person is driving motor bike, they are wearing a helmet, jacket and pants with no hair, the image and words are inside a rectangle, it appears to be a flyer, writing is all capitalized	A cool, comfy style he'll race to wear every time!	Color: Canyon
Guitar, lightning bolt	Rock legend	Guitar is large with lightning bolt beside it, behind the guitar there appears to be spray painting, writing	Cool and comfy - the must-have tee for your future 'rock legend'!	Color: Mysticplum

“I’m a Princess”

		is block letters that are capitalized		
T-Rex		T-Rex appears to be breaking through a wall, sharp claws with sharp teeth	A 'dino'mite tee that's ready for smashing good fun!	Color: Igloo