

# Design preferences of adolescent girls (12-18 years) for skirts

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■ **ABSTRACT :** Apparels, one of the basic needs of mankind, represent a major industry in the entire world where customer is important. The cut and sew industry (apparel) is one of the largest global fashion industry. If fashion industry has to grow meaningfully, there should be coordination between research, commercialization of designs, establishing close working relationship with garment industry and the retailers. Moreover, it is possible to source the whole spectrum of fashion garments for people. Present investigation is an exhaustive study of the preferences of school going girls for skirts. Considering the fashion, style as well as the outlook of girls towards clothing, market is flooded with a variety of designs and styles of dresses including skirts. The current trends showed skirts as one of the most preferred dress among the school going girls.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Adolescent, Silhouette, Fashion, Accessories

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The evolution of clothing has been closely interlinked with the social, economic and industrial progress of each period in the history of mankind. The compelling demands of the environment, along with the dictates of fashion and the driving compulsions of the human personality have had immense influence on clothing styles. Clothing is an intimate part of the person since time immortal. Awareness of clothing and personal appearance is a matter of an individual's sensitivity and is influenced by environment of the person. Clothing has a bearing on personal success in daily living and is associated with the sense of well being and jubilation.

The clothing standards and habits is a fascinating subject. Clothes reflect our personality and at the same time they reflect environment. Personal and social factors are too closely interwoven to be separated. Even today infinite possibilities are reflected in personal preference particularly in matter of selection of clothing.

Adolescence is the period between childhood and adulthood that characterized by continual changes in the physical and emotional development of a girl. Almost all of these changes take places between the ages of eleven and fifteen. During this period, suitable and attractive clothing

is the most important for the girl's physical, emotional and social well being. School going girls are in the adolescent age and are involved in many activities so require clothes for home, school, play, picnic, party etc. A thoughtful planning helps in maintaining a useful wardrobe that can be mixed in different ways to be well dressed for all occasions.

Parihar *et al.* (2010) reported that teenagers are considering young adults. It is called accelerated adolescence and its changing the notion of childhood. Appearance is important for both girls and boys. They begin to take few decisions by themselves in like the clothes and too much time and money is being spent on grooming products. It is where girls experiment with makeup and boys discover deodorants, where skirts hems go up and trousers waist go down. Pre-teen girls have moved on to adorning themselves. Their emerging body becomes the site for adornment.

On discussing adolescent orientation to clothing, Vener and Hoffer (1965) opined that clothing behaviour of the adolescent nevertheless is often a source of much misgiving and puzzlement to parents. The action of their children, in this respect is sometimes seen inconsistent if not unreasonable. It is usually related to certain social and psychological influences which affect their behaviour.

Kim *et al.* (2008) reported that Fashion-process networks were found to be more centralized and polarized than friendship networks. Clothing acceptance was related to peer acceptance and was found to occur within and across friendship links. Clothing leaders were not necessarily the most popular subjects.

Ulrich *et al.* (2003) opined that consumers wanted individual needs met and that companies could work towards customizing products while still mass producing them. Co-design, a consumer-producer collaborative design endeavor, was one way to accomplish both. Application of clothing involvement and innovativeness measures suggested possible characteristics of subjects who were more or less comfortable with co-design and those who found it easier to make decisions.

Tait (2001) reported that children were getting more and more fashion conscious all the time, no doubt they were enhanced by parental demand for designer wear. Although safety and functionality have to be key, look is also paramount. Designers and manufacturers are under enormous pressure to get right first time, the right look, the right fit, the right feel as well as the right price and hitting the market place at the right time which demands the best and most appropriate fabrics, accessories and manufacturing practices.

**Aims and objectives:**

Keeping in view their preferences for skirts, different designs of skirts were developed using CAD for school going girls. Specific objectives of this study were as follows:

- To study the different styles of skirts available in the market.
- To study the preferences of girls for the various styles of skirts.
- To develop designs for different styles of skirt through CAD on the basis of their preferences and prevailing fashion scenario.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

The nature of information required in this study was very personal and hence, it would have been essential to establish rapport with each respondent of the study area. On the basis of purposive random sampling, a sample of 200 schools going girls in five schools of district Budaun (U.P.) were selected. To assess the suitability, the required

information was collected on preferential design features for skirts from school going girls in the age group of 12-18 years. A pre-coded interview schedule was used as a tool to conduct the survey to collect the data. The acquired information was used for designing of skirts in various styles through CAD.

**Selection of tool:**

To find out the preferences of the school going girls, a pre-coded interview schedule was developed according to the selected variables and objectives set forth the study. Appropriate research tools were developed to collect the information pertaining to study as under different schedules:

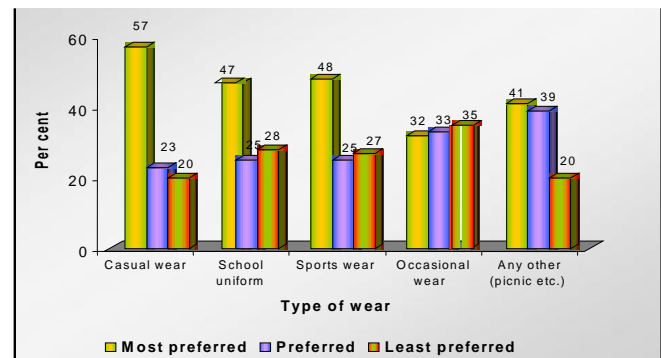
Schedule I - General information proforma.

Schedule II - Specific information proforma designed to collect preferential design features for skirts.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Skirts of different style were available in the market and were preferred by girls of this age group. Majority of girls preferred skirts for casual, school and sportswear because they found it comfortable and due to its style statement. School going girls who are in the period of adolescent age and are involved in many activities require clothes for home, school, play, picnic, party etc. Skirts are popular item of dress for this age and being used for different wear. The findings related to specific information are given as under:

From the perusal of Table1 and Fig. 1, it can be observed that most of the respondents 114 (57%) had high preference



**Fig. 1: Distribution of respondents according to the preferences of skirt**

Sr. No.	Type of wear	Most preferred		Preferred		Least preferred	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Casual wear	114	57	46	23	40	20
2.	School uniform	94	47	50	25	56	28
3.	Sports wear	96	48	50	25	54	27
4.	Occasional wear (party/ formal)	64	32	66	33	70	35
5.	Any other (picnic etc.)	82	41	78	39	40	20

for skirt as casual wear. For school wear, 47 per cent and for sports 48 per cent of subjects had preferences. For dressing on formal occasion like party, only 32 per cent of girls preferred skirt as dress. Out of total subjects, 20 per cent had expressed least preference for skirts as casual wear. It was also clear from the observation that skirts as school uniform were most preferred by 94 girls (47%).

Sportswear skirt was found to be the most preferred by 96 respondents (48%) and preferred by 25 per cent and least preferred by 27 per cent where as for occasional wear that if for party and formal functions 70 respondents (35%) expressed least preferences for skirts as dress, whereas 64 (32%) gave most preferences and for other occasion like picnic, only 82 respondents (41%) had given maximum preference (Fig.1).

It is evident from Table 2 that majority of respondents 128 (64%) found skirts comfortable to wear while 108 (54%) respondents observed skirts as preferred style statement of dressing and found to be fashionable by 100 respondents (50%), ninety two (46%) subjects preferred skirts because of its smart look. Respondents expressed their preferences on features for this dress (Fig.2).

Features	No. of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
Comfortable	128	64
Smart look	92	46
Fashion	100	50
Style statement	108	54

**Aesthetic attribute:**

Different styles of skirts were popular and available in the market, which were designed using variety of fabric and treatment to present different look. So as the preference of



**Fig. 2: Distribution of respondents on preferences for feature**

respondents varied for the style and its suitability for different occasion. The basic silhouette or outline was considered to be the basis for style line along with its treatment.

From Table 3 it is evident that, for casual wear, 39 per cent of respondents expressed preference for wraparound, 37 per cent for gathered, 28 per cent for pleated and 18 per cent each for tunic style and circular fullness *i.e.* for bias cut skirts, whereas for sportswear majority (67%) preferred culottes or divided skirt, 38 per cent preferred tunic style and 27 per cent preferred skirts with pleats. For school uniform, 60 per cent respondents had expressed preference for pleated skirts whereas 57 per cent girls preferred tunic style and only 20 per cent had given preference for culottes.

For occasional wear majority of respondents (59%) had preferences for circular fullness, 43 per cent for gathered fullness and 13 per cent for straight and gored skirts. It was also revealed that 27 per cent of respondents had shown preference for pleated and 23 per cent for circular fullness and 21 per cent for wraparound (Fig.3). Thus, the results of the study revealed that majority of respondents expressed preferences for wraparound, gathered and pleated for casual wear, culottes for sports and pleated skirts for school wear. Skirts for formal wear, they showed preference for bias cut

Styles	Type of wear/occasion (in percentage)				
	Casual	Sports	School	Party	Picnic
Straight	08	-	-	13	10
A -line	07	-	-	07	08
Circular fullness	18	-	-	59	23
Culottes	-	67	20	-	05
Gathered	37	-	-	43	12
Pleated	28	27	60	-	27
Tunic	18	38	57	-	15
Wraparound	39	-	-	05	21
Gored	17	-	-	13	07

(circular fullness) and gathered flare.

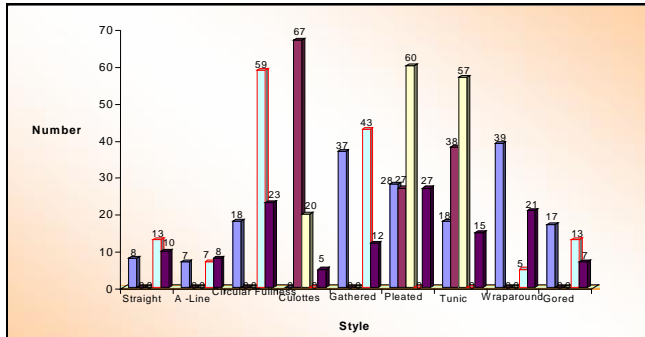


Fig. 3: Distribution of respondents on preferences of skirt for different style and occasion

**Preference for silhouette:**

From the observation of Table 4, the preferences of subjects for the silhouette of the skirt, it is clear that the most preferred style was found to be bouffant (57 %) and circular (54%) respectively where as A-line and straight silhouette were least preferred by the respondents (Fig.4).

Silhouette	Most preferred		Preferred		Least preferred	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
A-line	58	29	86	43	56	28
Straight	78	34	72	36	60	30
Bouffant	114	57	54	27	32	16
Circular	108	54	78	34	24	12

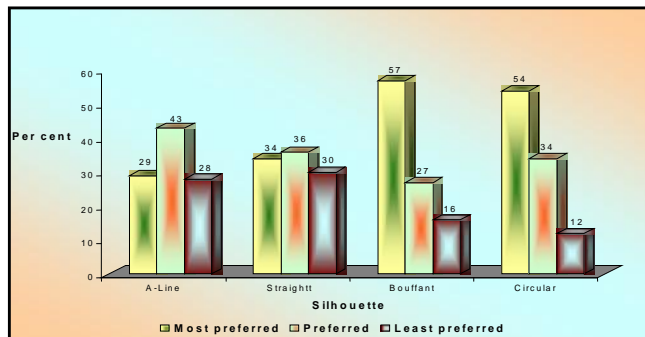


Fig. 4: Distribution of respondents for preference for the silhouette of the skirt

**Preferences on different style features of skirts:**

The preferences of respondents for design, details for skirt are presented in Table 5. On studying the design detail or style features, preferences in terms of length, fullness, placket opening, pocket, fasteners etc. were taken into consideration. It was found that the majority of respondents (62%) had

expressed preference for knee length and 21 per cent for calf length. It was also revealed that 59 per cent of girls had shown preference for gathers and 54 per cent for inverted box and 49 per cent for box pleats and 48 per cent of subjects expressed preference for circular fullness (bias-cut). Majority of subject (74%) had expressed strong preferences for side placket opening and only 25 per cent for centre front opening. It was also observed that most preferred type of pocket was side pocket by 53 per cent of the subject and 25 per cent had given preference for inseam pocket. Seventy two per cent of subjects found to prefer zipper as fasteners and 24 per cent for button as fasteners. Majority of respondents (85%) had preference for waist sashes (Fig. 5).

Table 5 : Distribution of respondents for preference for style features of the skirts

Features	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondent
<b>Length</b>		
Short skirt (above knee)	26	13
Knee length	124	62
Calf length	42	21
Ankle length	26	13
<b>Fullness features</b>		
Gathers	118	59
Pleats	78	34
Knife	78	34
Box	98	49
Accordion	14	07
Inverted box	108	54
Circular (bias cut)	96	48
<b>Placket opening</b>		
Side opening	148	74
Center front opening	50	25
Center back opening	42	21
<b>Pocket</b>		
Patch	44	22
Inseam	50	25
Side pocket	106	53
<b>Fasteners</b>		
Zipper	144	72
Button	48	24
Hook	08	04
<b>Sashes</b>		
Criss cross shoulder	30	15
Waist	170	85

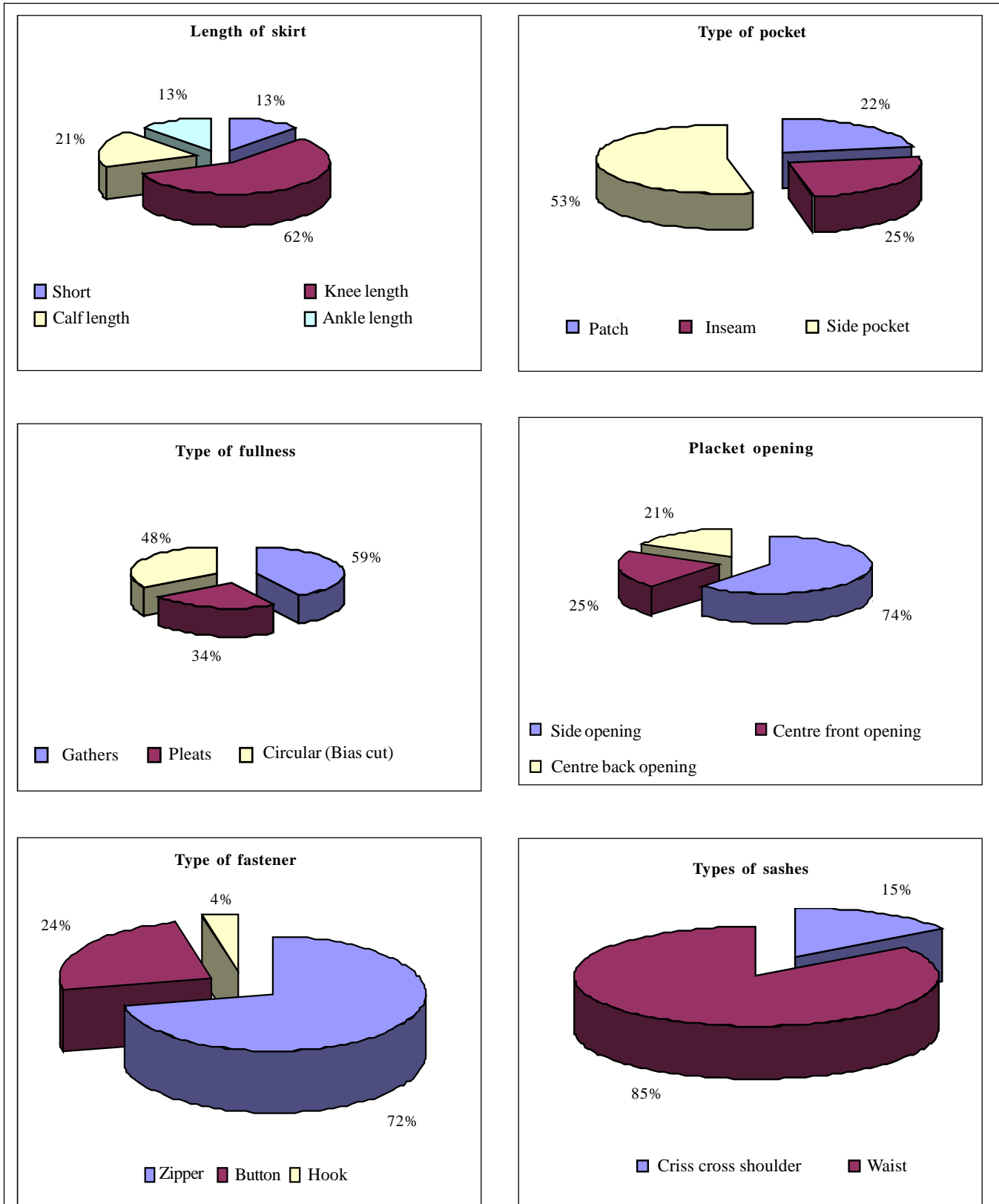


Fig. 5 :Distribution of respondents for preference for style features of the skirt

**Preferences for decorative details:**

For adding decorative design details on any item of dress, various treatments are used. These surface decorations are used to enrich the basic structural design. Respondents had definite preferences in details like embroidery, quilting, appliqué, frills and laces etc. The observations of Table 6 revealed that 76 respondents (38%) had preference for embroidery, 28 per cent for appliqué where as frills and laces and sequins on skirts as applied decoration were least

preferred by majority of respondents that were 73 and 78 per cent, respectively (Fig. 6).

**Selection of readymade skirts:**

Clothing choice and preferences are forced by clothing selection criteria during selection of readymade skirts. Respondents considered many factors while making selection from readymade skirts. Fit and quality of fabric was the most considered factor followed by 57 per cent and

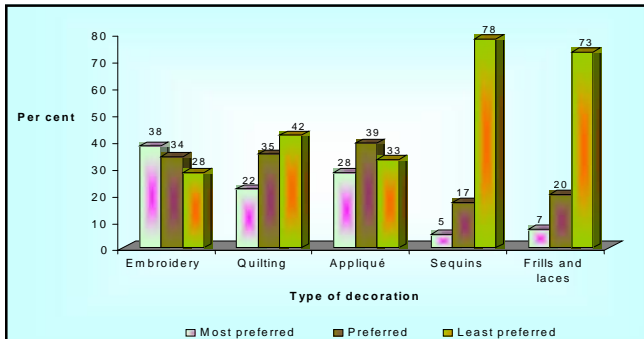


Fig. 6: Distribution of respondents on preference for type of decoration and trimmings

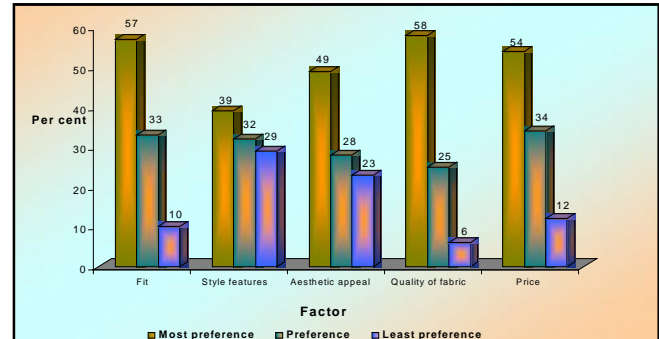


Fig. 7: Distribution of subjects on consideration of factor in selection of skirts

**Table 6: Distribution of respondents on preference for type of decoration and trimmings**

Sr. No.	Type of decoration	Most preferred		Preferred		Least preferred	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Embroidery	76	38	68	34	56	28
2.	Quilting	44	22	70	35	86	42
3.	Appliqué	56	28	78	39	66	33
4.	Sequins	10	05	34	17	156	78
5.	Frills and laces	14	07	40	20	146	73

**Table 7: Distribution of subjects on consideration of factors during selection of skirts**

Sr. No.	Factors	Most preference		Preference		Least preferred	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Fit	114	57	66	33	20	10
2.	Style features	78	39	64	32	58	29
3.	Aesthetic appeal	98	49	56	28	46	23
4.	Quality of fabric	126	58	50	25	12	06
5.	Price	108	54	68	34	24	12

**Table 8: Distribution of respondents with regard to pairing skirt with upper garment**

Sr. No.	Type of garments	Most preference		Preference		Least preference	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	T-shirt	20	10	38	19	142	71
2.	Skirt-blouses	130	65	46	23	24	12
3.	Top	94	47	60	30	46	23
4.	Jacket	16	08	48	24	136	68
5.	Coat	08	04	46	23	146	73

58 per cent of the subjects, respectively. Out of total subjects, 54 per cent and 49 per cent of the respondents were found to be influenced by the price and aesthetic appeal of the garment. It had also revealed that styles features were least considered by the respondents Table 7 (Fig.7).

#### Pairing skirt:

Skirt is one of the basic styles of dress which had to be paired with suitable upper garment. From the observation of Table 8, it is clear that majority of respondents (65%) preferred to pair skirt with blouses (skirts), whereas 47 per cent preferred to match it with top. The least preference was shown by the subjects toward coats (73%), jackets (68%) and T-shirt (71%).

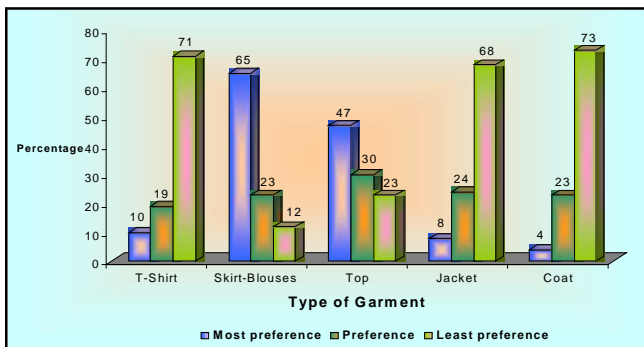


Fig. 8: Distribution of respondent with regard to preferences on pairing skirt with upper garment

#### Conclusion and recommendation:

Today garment industry is a serious business negotiation amongst the designers, manufacturers, retailers and to follow the basic rules of offering innovative product lines, market driven, prices, consistent quality and willing to adapt

to the changed market structure.

This investigation would provide helpful suggestions to manufacturers and designers with flair and imagination using these preferences for designing skirts for girls. With the use of CAD technology ready to use patterns (interactive garment module) of skirts can be produced for adolescent girls, which can be easily used by home makers, students, designers etc.

The present study was limited to school going girls, further research may be conducted for the clothing of subjects of other age groups like adolescent boys, pre-schoolers, toddlers etc. for different garments viz., trousers, shirts etc.

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