

Method

This study of the APA prompted the research conducted by S.M. Goodin et al (2011). In this study titled *“Putting on” Sexiness...*, researchers examine the prevalence of “sexualizing clothing” available for young girls on 15 different websites in the United States. They found a “substantial, if not overwhelming, presence of sexualization in girls’ clothing,” almost 30% (Goodin et al, 2011, p. 7). This study was done in June of 2011 when summer clothes were being sold, so I decided to do a similar study in November on winter clothes to see how they compared.

Based on the study *“Putting on” Sexiness...* (2011), I did a content analysis of “sexualized” clothing on 12 different U.S. websites. In order for my study to be comparable, I surveyed most of the same stores used in the above study. I excluded Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, and Saks simply due to time constraints. I also used fewer categories for the same reason. A big limitation in my study is that only my opinion was used. Items that I would find inappropriate might be perfectly acceptable to someone else. I tried to be as consistent as possible but I may have fluctuated in what I would call ambiguously sexualizing or definitely sexualizing.

If I found an item sexualizing it was marked as either ambiguously sexualizing (AS) or definitely sexualizing (DS). I looked at clothes in the size range of 4 (XS) to 16 (XL). For the most part, pants were considered sexualizing if they were “super skinny

jeans” or “jeggings” because of how tight the fit is. I probably should have but I did not count regular skinny jeans or leggings. Nor did I count jeans that had decorations on the back pockets as did they did in the Goodin et al study (2011, p. 5). Shirts were considered sexualizing depending on how revealing they were at the neckline, if they were meant to accentuate a sexualized body part, and depending on what was on the shirt such as words, characters or print (animal print or lace). Skirts were judged mainly on length which was almost impossible to judge unless it was shown on a model or the length was given in the description. If the company felt shorts needed to be attached to the skirt for modesty, it was automatically counted. I tried to judge by the style of the skirt whether or not it would be too short, again very difficult. Dresses were judged in much the same way, also paying attention to the neckline and whether it had sleeves or spaghetti straps. I did find quite a few shorts which were also judged according to length; anything under a 3-3 ½ inch inseam was counted. Underwear was counted if they were “boy shorts”. Bras were counted if they had padding (meant to enhance the chest), lace or animal print. I went back and forth for a while trying to decide whether to include the swimsuits I found because not all stores had them but ultimately I decided to keep them simply for the sake of having an honest report.

There were also some categories that I grouped together as opposed to counting them separately, such as skirts and dresses, bras and underwear and all pants were grouped together regardless of style.