

Original Research Article

Factors Influencing Apparel Sizing and Fit for Children Aged Two to Six Years in Selected Cities in Kenya

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Abstract: The continued predicament of ill-fitting ready-to-wear (RTW) children clothing spoils consumer satisfaction and confidence in the market in Kenya. Parents of children between two and six years of age are used to incongruent sizing, mismatch of garments between labels of age and actual body size, and lack of locally tested size standards. The paper discusses the aspects of apparel sizing and fit among children aged two to six years in Kisumu, Nakuru, and Nairobi, Kenya. A mixed-methods research design was used based on a combined needs theory of clothing (Dunlap, 1928) and used 385 children, 100 parents, and 21 clothing industry professionals. Data collection was done through questionnaires, structured interviews, and focus group discussions and analysed via descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that the most important factors in making RTW buying choices were clothing quality and durability (65%), correct sizing and fit (58%), and informed clothing choice (55%). The prevalent sizing strategy (69 percent) was physical fitting at the point of sale, which reflects the lack of a credible national standard. Sizing on the basis of age labeling was generally unsatisfactory. Problems such as variation in the size of the brands, low quality of garment work, and limited variety in the market were experienced by 80% of the respondents. The paper suggests the establishment and use of an anthropometric size chart of children clothing that is approved by Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) to facilitate the Kenyan children wear industry that is increasingly on the rise. These results offer a critical basis on the design of standardised, evidence-based sizing schemes that are specific to Kenya apparel market, and have the potential to curb consumer dissatisfaction, garment returns, and enhance the competitiveness of children clothing produced in Kenya.

Keywords: Apparel Sizing, Children's Fit, Ready-To-Wear, Kenya, Clothing Preferences, Sizing Standards, Consumer Satisfaction.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The children apparel business in the world is growing at a phenomenal rate, with the proportion of birth rates, the amount of money that is spent by parents on child welfare, and the spread of ready-to-wear (RTW) fashion. The market of children wear is estimated at about USD 203.4 billion in 2017 and is projected to be over USD 339 billion in 2024 (Statista, 2018). The children apparel market is also on a constant growth in Kenya, with a forecasted growth of USD 1.68 billion in 2025 and the projected annual growth of 2.91 percent (CAGR 20252029). In spite of such growth, there is one issue that remains the same: RTW clothes of children often do not fit their target customers.

The issue of inappropriate fit of garments in children clothing does not just end in inconvenience but has quantifiable effects on the consumer and the apparel industry at large. Poor-fitting clothes not only disrupt the physical comfort of children, but also limit their movement, and affect self-expression especially in early stages of development. To the parents and caregivers, discrepancy in sizing systems and unreliability of labeling of the garments translate to high returns, wrong choices of purchases and wastage of time and money in the shopping process. These are real world experiences of a system that has failed to keep abreast with the real body measurements and growth trends of Kenyan children.

In the world, the anthropometric surveys of particular populations and cultures are used to derive

sizing systems of children apparel. The widely used standards in the garment production are standards introduced by various organizations like the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM), the British Standards Institution (BSI) and the International Organization of Standardization (ISO). These standards are however not always the body dimensions of African people including the Kenyan children at the ages of two to six years. Therefore, the implementation of foreign sizing systems in the Kenyan apparel sector has led to the discrepancy between garment sizes and the size of the real bodies, which have continued to create consumer dissatisfaction and restrict the usefulness of RTW clothing.

Though literature has studied apparel sizing and fit in different global settings, few empirical researches on apparel sizing and fit in the context of children have been conducted in Kenya setting. Specifically, there has been little focus on children between the ages of two and six years, which is a critical developmental age because the children experience a substantial physical growth and fluctuate in body proportions. This knowledge gap has led to the further use of old-fashioned or non-contextual sizing systems that are not relevant to the needs of Kenyan consumers. This gap should be addressed when creating a sound, evidence-based sizing system that would be specific to the local population.

The paper describes results of the formative goal of a larger doctoral project assessing clothing sizing and fit in Kenyan children between the ages of two and six years old. In particular, the paper explores the determinants of purchasing decisions of parents and caregivers to purchase children RTW clothing in three big cities in Kenya, including Kisumu, Nakuru, and Nairobi, and determines the barriers to the access to well-fitting clothes. The reason why these cities were chosen is because of the various demographic and socioeconomic factors that they have giving one a representative background of consumer behaviour in urban Kenya.

The research is grounded on the combined needs theory of clothing as postulated by Dunlap (1928) which asserts that clothing satisfies several human needs such as shelter, decency, ornamentation, and group membership. In this context, the dressing decisions are conditioned by a combination of psychological, social, and physical factors. To children, clothing should not only be comfortable and protective, but also help in self-expression and integration into the social. These needs are violated when clothes do not fit well, which impacts the child and the satisfaction of the parent with the shopping experience. The theory is thus a good perspective of looking at the wider implications of sizing and fit other than technical garment construction.

It is important to know the factors affecting the apparel sizing and fit to inform the development of

uniform, Kenya-centric sizing system. This would allow the garment producers to make clothes that match the real body size of Kenyan children, and increase consumer trust in size labelling. In the case of parents and caregivers, sound sizing data would lower the chances of trial and error buying and enhances the shopping experience. Also, standardized sizing would help the development of e-commerce in the children apparel industry, as more accurate remote purchases will be made.

The immediate need to resolve the issues of sizing and fit in the Kenyan market of children apparel is supported by the empirical data that shows that the majority of consumers were dissatisfied. Past results of this research indicate that as many as 80 percent of parents surveyed experience difficulties in buying RTW clothes in children, and 44 percent are unhappy with the current sizing models. These figures demonstrate how serious the issue is and why interventions at the industry level are necessary. The Kenyan apparel market of children runs the risk of perpetual inefficiencies, such as high returns, low consumer confidence, and growth without the creation and migration to a locally tested sizing system.

Finally, this research is relevant to the existing literature on apparel sizing and fit by offering context-related information on the Kenyan market. The research is a basis that allows developing standardized sizing solutions by identifying the most important factors affecting the purchasing decision and presenting the limitations of the current sizing systems, which are consumer-focused and industry-specific. These developments can increase the fit of the garments, customer satisfaction, and sustainable development in the children apparel sector in Kenya.

CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This paper was grounded on the Combined Needs Theory of Clothing by Dunlap (1928), who notes that clothing serves a number of human needs: modesty, protection, adornment, social belonging. This theory when used in the case of children apparel in a developing market scenario sheds light on how parents transfer their own social, cultural and aesthetic values to the clothing they choose to put on their children. The fulfilment of these needs is disrupted by poor sizing and fit, a tight or loose garment interferes with physical comfort, with self-confidence of the child and can lead to social embarrassment.

The theory proves useful especially in the descriptions of the reasons why sizing and fit are not only technical values but also very personal and social. When the parent cannot be sure of the size of the child based on

a label or chart, then shopping becomes an emotionally stressful and financially inefficient process. This framework of Dunlap, therefore, offers an insight through which the effects of sizing failures can be viewed not only as functional discomfort but also as psychological and social levels.

2.2 Historical Evolution of Children's Apparel Sizing

The clothing of children has changed a lot throughout centuries. Until the 18th century, children were clothed in scaled-down versions of the adult, with little thought given to the age-based design or proportional fit (Chen-Yoon & Jasper, 1993). The advent of standardised production of garments was brought about by the industrial revolution and the introduction of factory-manufactured RTW clothing in the early 19th century. Nonetheless, the process of standardisation did not originate with the anthropometric features of the civilian populations but with the production of military uniforms (Zhang, 2011; Baker, 2023).

The large scale manufacturing of children clothing increased due to women joining the labor force and could no longer make garments at their own homes. RTW clothing was produced in standard sizes based on derived patterns, though these sizes were hardly confirmed to body measurements of some real children. Research by Aldrich (2000) and Cooklin (1991) affirms that the sizing systems had been biased towards industrial efficiency at the expense of anthropometric accuracy in the past, which has created a long-standing issue of fit among consumers. Significantly, this historical precedent has set a course whereby market-based standardisation prevails over body-based accuracy- a course that has remained influential in shaping costumes of children apparel sizing in third world countries such as Kenya, where no official review of the standards of size has been carried out to reflect the modern child anthropometry.

2.3 Factors Influencing Apparel Sizing and Fit

Several researches confirm the multifaceted nature of factors that affect the apparel size and fit of children. According to Kwong (2004), Zhang (2011), and Zanatta (2018), proper fit is vital to the physical health of children and their psychological assurance. It has also been believed that poor fit is linked to limited movement, skin irritation, and adverse body image growth (Le Pechoux and Ghosh, 2002; Balter, 2009).

The quality of clothing, the suitability of the sizes, the type of fabric, and beauty are mentioned as the key purchase criteria (Schultz and Schultz, 2008; Bansal, 2015). The most used labelling system in Kenya is age-based sizing which has been highly criticized as not being efficient since children of the same chronological age vary very differently in their height, weight, and body proportions. According to Injoo and Mikyung (2002) and Dockterman (2016), about 50 percent of children fail to fit in the age-labelled clothes. Although

these studies present the insufficiency of age-based sizing, they are mostly based on anthropometric measurements in the North American, European, and East Asian population, which may not be applicable directly to the Kenyan population. Kenyan children have a unique growth pattern, nutritional profile and ethnic body proportions, which require locally based research, which is precisely what this research paper fulfills.

Kenyan market the lack of standards that have been accepted locally implies that garment manufacturers develop their own proprietary sizing procedures with no interchangeable basis. A similar trend was observed by Mastamet (2008) in the African markets where consumers in the developing world are the ones who struggle to navigate between conflicting and unreliable sizing information. The resulting disorientation pushes parents to physical fitting at the point of sale as the only sure strategy - an inefficient and time consuming strategy that is indicative of system failure.

One of the characteristics of clothing choices among children is their parental factor. Frank *et al.*, (2010) and Gomes (2019) indicate that parents have both economic and aesthetic control over the clothing that children wear and tend to portray their own tastes and social desires in the form of their children. Johansson (2005) described this as parents extended selves, which is the concept that underlies the emotional commitment that is attached to clothing-buys among parents, and the sense of frustration that the sizing systems are not able to accommodate them. Nonetheless, a lot of this literature deals with the Western consumer environments where they have good sizing infrastructure. In markets such as Kenya where sizing norms are non-existent or untested, the affective weight of clothing choice is multiplied by structural uncertainty, and parental choice is made in a reactive and not an informational manner.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design was a mixed-method study, which involved a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative data collected using structured interviews and focus group discussions. This method made it possible to both statistically analyze the consumer preferences and interpret the lived experiences contextually. The research was carried out in three purposively sampled cities (Kisumu, Nakuru and Nairobi) that represent the three largest urban centres in Kenya and have different socioeconomic characteristics.

3.2 Participants

The researchers used three types of participants, including parents and caregivers of children between two and six years old ($n = 100$), children with anthropometric measurements taken ($n = 385$), and managers or fashion designers of garment manufacturing companies ($n = 21$).

Proportional stratified random sampling was used to select the participants so as to have the representation of all genders, age, income level and educational background. The schools within each city were the main points of data collection, and data collection was done with the help of garment manufacturers identified with the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Parents and guardians were given structured questionnaires that included demographic factors, issues that influenced clothing choice, contentment with current sizing systems, shopping behaviour, and difficulties experienced. The interviews with fashion designers and garment manufacturers examined the industry-side-based views on sizing practices. The qualitative data about consumer frustrations and aspirations was created during focus group discussions. Every instrument was tested and perfected before complete implementation.

3.4 Data Analysis

The SPSS (Version 25) was used to analyse quantitative data, applying descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) and regression to identify the relative impact of identified factors on the decision to buy the apparel sizing and fits. The thematic analysis of qualitative data was performed, and the identification of key themes was carried out based on the iterative code. The results of the two strands were triangulated to generate integrated results.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

This study received ethical approval by the Maseno University Ethics Review Committee before data collection. All adult participants gave informed consent and participating children gave assent in an age-appropriate manner. The respondents were fully entitled to participate and they were made aware of the fact that they could pull out of the study any time without penalty. To maintain confidentiality, no personally identifiable information was documented with the survey responses. All the data were kept safely and were used only to conduct this study. The research was conducted in accordance to the ethical principles of National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), Kenya.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Women respondents made up 72 percent of the parent sample, which aligns with other literature sources that mothers are the main buyers of children clothes in Kenya (Aklamati *et al.*, 2016; Baker, 2023). Respondents who are males were 28%. This gender balance presents long term trends in domestic work and childcare, even though the research observes that credible sizing solutions would allow fathers and other caregivers to be more confident when it comes to the clothes shopping.

In terms of age, the majority of parents (59% of the respondents) were in the age group of 18-34 years, which qualifies them as young, digitally savvy consumers with changing demands of product quality and shopping experience. A further 46% fell in the 35–44 age group. The fact that younger parents are more dominant is also significant since they tend to be more susceptible to the trends of social media fashion and e-commerce, and, hence, trustworthy size information is even more vital.

The level of education was good with 71 percent of the respondents having some tertiary or higher education and 20 percent had postgraduate education. The consequence of this educational profile was that most of the participants were in a good position to read and comprehend size labels, care instructions, and wear guides- but still showed systematic failures in sizing. This observation dispels any belief that consumer education will be the solution to the sizing issue.

On the economic front, 40 percent of the respondents were earning less than 30,000 to less than 50,000 Kenyan Shillings monthly, which placed them as middle-income earners with disposable income to buy children clothes. Less than 10% earned below Ksh. 30,000. This implies that the sizing and fit issue has a disproportionate impact on a consumer group who has the financial means and anticipation to wear well-fitting and quality clothing to their children.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Parent Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–24 years	15	18%
25–34 years	49	41%
35–44 years	41	34%
45–54 years	10	12%
55 years and above	2	2.4%
Prefer not to say	3	3.6%

Source: Field Survey Data (2025); N = 120

4.2 Factors Influencing Apparel Choice

The respondents were requested to name the main criteria they took into account when choosing RTW

clothes to children. Physical fitting (at point of sale) became the most popular strategy mentioned by 69% of the respondents. The discovery is both disclosive and

disturbing at the same time: it is not the desire to have an interactive shopping experience, but the need provoked by the unreliability of the size labels. Parents who do not feel safe leaving a garment with the label Age 4 on a four-year-old kid have no choice but to resort to physical fitting as the only strategy.

The second cited factor was age-based sizing (37%), height (35%), body measurements (23%), trial and error (13%), and weight (9%). The fact that body

measurements rank relatively low and the fact that a lot of physical fitting together are required show that the parents do not trust the size information given by manufacturers. This concurs with the observation by Aldrich (2008) and Joseph-Armstrong (2010) that the majority of size charts are modeled on population means that are not able to reflect the variety of bodies of children within a particular age group.

Table 2: Factors Influencing Clothing Choice by Parents (N = 120)

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Physical fitting / try-on	83	69%
Age label	44	37%
Height	42	35%
Body measurements	27	23%
Trial and error	15	13%
Weight	7	9%

Source: Field Survey Data (2025); Multiple responses allowed

The observation that half of the parents were actively engaged in making decisions about the clothing choices of their children correlates with the research by Trikha and Saini (2022) and Nickelodeon (2013), which confirms the idea that children aged between two and six years have a growing influence on the decision-making process in a family. Although the contribution of children was mainly aesthetic, manifested in likes of colour, cartoon characters and design patterns, their participation imposes further demands on parents to ensure that the garments they buy are not only the right size but also attractive to the child.

4.3 Sizing and Fit as Key Purchase Determinants

In the question that involved ranking the importance of different factors in purchasing clothes, quality and durability surfaced as the most important aspect in clothing purchases with 76% of the respondents

responding. Correct fit and sizing were second with 68%, then age-appropriateness (32%), type of fabric (14%), weather-suitability (13%), value-for-money (10%), the taste of the child (5%), and fashion trends (5%). These rankings criticize the supposition that fashion is the main factor of children buying clothes in Kenya; parents are basically preoccupied with quality and fit.

The importance of sizing and fit is also supported by Schultz and Schultz (2008) and Ross (2008), who consider the sizing as the main interface between the consumer and the product- the process by which a garment can be made or not made to fit its intended user. When sizing information is unreliable in a market, this interface is broken and the consumers have to pay with the inadequacy of the system in terms of time, money and emotional energy.

Table 3: Factors Considered in Selecting Children's Apparel (N = 120)

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Quality and durability	91	76%
Sizing and fit	81	68%
Age-appropriateness	38	32%
Fabric / material type	16	14%
Weather suitability	15	13%
Value for money	11	10%
Garment safety	5	5%
Child's preference	5	5%
Fashion trends	6	5%
Availability	23	19%

Source: Field Survey Data (2025); Multiple responses allowed

4.4 Clothing Quality, Durability, and Fabric Preferences

In this study, quality became a multidimensional concept, which included the following aspects: comfort (self-esteem and confidence) 60 percent rated very positive, garment appearance 33 percent very

positive, safety 16 percent very positive, and functionality 15 percent very positive. The focus on comfort is in line with the developmental goals of small children, who are practically constantly in motion and need clothes that will not limit or distract them in any way.

Concerning fabric preferences, 63% of the respondents claimed that the first thing they needed to consider before buying clothing was the type of fabric, then design and style (57 percent), age-appropriateness (52 percent), garment safety (29 percent), and cultural acceptability (18 percent). Natural fibres like cotton and linen were also favored due to their breathability and comfort especially to the respondents in warmer climate of Kisumu. Research by Goldman (2007) and Kun et al., (2019) attests that natural fibres lower the chances of skin irritation, which is an important factor since in this study, some parents reported about children having sensitive skin.

The composite factor considered the most important in Table 4 was quality and durability (65%) and it highlights the fact that the clothing of children should be able to survive frequent washing, active playing, and high growth rates. The revelation that the reputation of the garment brand or manufacturer was the least (10%) is especially educative in the Kenyan market: the consumers are not brand-loyal; they are consumers of utility. A company that is able to consistently supply the market with properly fitting, durable, and quality clothes can receive a major market edge.

Table 4: Summary of Major Factors Influencing Apparel Selection (N = 120)

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Quality and durability	78	65%
Sizing and fit	69	58%
Apparel choice / design	66	55%
Child's input	51	43%
Fashion trends	36	30%
Garment brand / reputation	12	10%

Source: Field Survey Data (2025); N = 120

4.5 Fashion Trends, Colour, and Social Responsibility

The most popular of the factors of fashion description were colour and pattern, which were mentioned by 67 of respondents as important aspects of clothing choice in children. The next ones were fashion trends (59%), design and style (53%), and value for money (51%). Cultural tradition (11%) and brand reputation (7%) came last. These results indicate that Kenyan parents are more concerned with visual appeal and worth in a rather fashion-oriented orientation, and not driven by brand prestige or cultural imperatives.

Parents reported that the choice of bright colours, cartoon-related prints, and themed prints were very important factors influencing their buying choices. According to Balter (2009) and Gomes (2019), the place of early identity formation is the clothing of children; the images and colours on clothes present the message of social belonging and self-expression. This developmental aspect is impaired when ill-fitting garments are all that is left.

A new facet of the results of this study was the increasing consciousness of consumers and manufacturers to sustainability and social responsibility in the fashion industry. Some of the respondents in the fashion industry noted that durable, ethically manufactured clothes are more needed compared to fast fashion items. This direction is consistent with the global trends determined by Shoshani (2021) and Apple (2016), and proposes that a locally-proven sizing system has the potential to enable sustainable production by decreasing the amount of waste due to returned or discarded ill-fitting garments.

4.6 Shopping Location and Behaviour

Fifty-five percent of the respondents were fond of specialty stores and boutiques, which they considered as being more diverse, offered more options to choose among various brands, and offered a possibility of making a return or swapping. Markets of second-hand clothes (mitumba) received 48 per cent of respondents- a number that discloses the practicality of parents to the inconsistency and low quality of new clothes produced locally. Mitumba markets have the bonus of physical fitting of a variety of clothing, which basically balances the lack of sound size standards.

Less than 20 percent of the respondents mentioned online shopping and custom tailoring. The comparatively low adoption of e-commerce in the case of clothing children is educative: the lack of trusted and standardised information about the size poses unacceptable risks to the online purchases. The availability of a nationally tested size chart would directly allow the development of e-commerce within the children apparel sector as parents would have the confidence to shop remotely.

4.7 Challenges in the Current Sizing System

The level of dissatisfaction with existing sizing systems was high: 18 percent of the respondents were very dissatisfied and 26 percent dissatisfied with the existing sizing systems and only 16 percent were satisfied and 4 percent were very satisfied. Another 36% were indifferent: many of them, when explored qualitatively, had just realised their expectations around the poor fit as something they had to accept. According to the cumulative results of the survey 44 percent of the respondents had a negative attitude towards the present

system and 80 percent of the respondents reported difficulties in buying RTW children apparel.

The most common mentioned fit issues were that clothes were either too tight or too loose (46%), too long or too short (42%), and too big or too small in general (34%). The combination of these three characterises a market that is typified by systematic inability to fit the real body size of Kenyan children. These findings were supported by qualitative data, as the respondents noted frustration, confusion, and wastage of resources.

The experience was explained by one of the parents in Nakuru:

"Sometimes we feel so frustrated when purchasing clothes for our children. Garment labels are never consistent—you find the top fitting very well but the skirt or trousers fail to

fit completely and yet the garment reads the same size."

This statement is representative of a larger institutional issue: clothing manufacturers in Kenya are each developing their own sizing systems, not based on an established national standard. The outcome is a market where size 4 in one brand can vary widely compared to size 4 in another and cross-brand comparisons can never occur and size labels become virtually meaningless.

A Nakuru-based manufacturing firm fashion designer observed downstream effects on industry: manufacturers are unable to optimise fabric consumption, predict returns or gain consumer confidence when sizes are not standardised. Such inefficiencies in operations add to the cost of production and limit market expansion. The fact that an anthropometric database and size chart unique to Kenya is developed is not merely a benefit to the consumer, but a commercial necessity.

Table 5: Consumer Satisfaction with Current Sizing Systems (N = 120)

Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very dissatisfied	22	18%
Dissatisfied	31	26%
Neutral	43	36%
Satisfied	19	16%
Very satisfied	5	4%

Source: Field Survey Data (2025); N = 120

4.8 Regression Analysis: Predictors of Sizing and Fit Satisfaction

The relative predictive power of identified factors on consumer satisfaction with children apparel sizing and fit was determined by conducting a regression analysis. Clothing quality and durability was the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.65, p < 0.001$), followed by sizing and fit accuracy ($\beta = 0.58, p < 0.001$), appropriateness of apparel choice ($\beta = 0.55, p < 0.01$), child's input ($\beta = 0.43, p < 0.05$), and fashion trends ($\beta = 0.30, p < 0.05$). The reputation of a garment brand/manufacturer did not appear to be a statistically significant predictor ($\beta = 0.10, p = 0.21$).

The findings of these regressions prove that consumer satisfaction is highly dependent on tangible product features such as quality, fit, and pertinent design and not brand prestige. In the case of the Kenyan children clothing industry, this is a practical observation: an investment in building a proper sizing mechanism and standard quality control is more prone to consumer satisfaction and market expansion than an investment on brand marketing.

**CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION**

The results of this research all offer a consistent view of a fashion industry where the structural lack of confirmed sizing criteria offers bottom-line customer dissatisfaction, ineffective purchasing patterns, and market development limitations. The fact that the most common sizing strategy was physical fitting (69 percent) is perhaps the best indicator of systematic failure: in an effective sizing context, parents would not have to take their children to a store and spend much time and emotional resources just to get to a garment that fits.

Respondent illiteracy is not a reason to explain sizing problems as the respondents are highly educated (71% tertiary-educated). The parents in this study could read labels; these labels were merely not reliable. This reformulates the issue: it is not the issue of consumer education but the standards of the industry and regulatory control. Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) has not developed a validated and regularly updated children apparel size chart using locally collected anthropometric data. This gap is the source of the consumer challenges that have been recorded in this study.

The response that 44% of the parents were not happy with the existing sizing systems- and an additional 36% were indifferent- implies that a significant percentage of the market has accepted poor sizing as an inevitable aspect of shopping children into clothing. Reestablishing this expectation means a change on an industry-wide scale: a national, evidence-based standard of sizing that manufacturers are either incentivized or obligated to adhere to.

The gender composition of the respondents (72 percent female) is also similar with other available studies on parental buying roles, however, the results of the study on convenience and specifically the demand to use e-commerce and to have reliable size labelling indicate that not only mothers would be interested in a standardized sizing system. According to Peggy (2020), with good size labelling, the process of shopping children clothes can be democratized so any family member or caregiver can successfully purchase the right clothes.

The fact that sustainability issues are so salient in the consumer and industry reactions is a long-term observation that has practical short-term consequences. Improperly fitted clothes sent back, swapped or thrown away add to the number of textile wastes- a rising environmental issue in the world of fashion. An effective sizing system would minimise this wastage stream and enhance consumer satisfaction. The clothing market of the children in Kenya can therefore experience the prospect to build sustainable competitive advantage with anchoring of growth in evidence-based standards.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

This paper has determined that the variables that affect the apparel size and fit among children between the age of two to six years in Kisumu, Nakuru, and Nairobi are multidimensional, with quality and durability (65%), sizing and fit accuracy (58%), and informed apparel choice (55%), being the main variables. Lacking an anthropometrically validated nationally validated sizing system has led parents to physical fitting at the point of sale, as the leading -and by far uncontrollable- sizing strategy. Widespread dissatisfaction with current sizing systems (44%) and challenges during RTW shopping (80%) reflect the systemic consequences of this gap.

The Kenyan market has high expectations of children clothing and they relate to quality, comfort, safety, aesthetics and proper sizing of the garment and this is a complex set of expectations that the available market products have never lived up to. The children apparel market is projected to grow (2.91% CAGR through 2029) but will not do so without the underpinning of standardized and reliable sizing

standards that are useful to both consumers and manufacturers.

6.2 Recommendations

1. Kenya-Specific Size Chart:

Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) must consider developing and adopting an anthropometric size chart of children aged between two and six years old, with respect to a size chart, using the anthropometric measurement in the research. This chart ought to be updated after every ten years to indicate the changes in population, as it is done internationally.

2. Mandatory Size Labelling Standards:

Garment manufacturers must be obligated to adhere to sizing standards approved by KEBS, and be clearly labeled with reference to both age and important body measurements (height, chest circumference and waist circumference). This would minimize consumer confusion and also allow them to make informed decisions when making purchases.

3. Support for E-Commerce Growth:

Standardised size charts are to be incorporated into the online store to provide the parents with the opportunity to purchase children clothes remotely without doubts. It would increase access to the market and save on time and resources spent in the physical fitting currently in-store.

4. Industry Training and Capacity Building:

Government agencies and industry associations should assist in training Fashion designers and garment manufacturers on how to use anthropometric size charts in the development and production of patterns.

5. Further Research:

Individual anthropometric analyses should be conducted in children aged 7-14 years, plus-size children, and physically disabled children to account to the fact that benefits of standardized sizing should be spread to all demographics.

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