

Unpacking the Psychology Behind Fashion Trends and Consumer Choices

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Abstract

The fashion business and society at large are profoundly affected by the interplay between consumer behaviour and fashion trends. The purpose of this study paper is to examine the mental processes that govern buying habits and the latest fashion trends in the hopes of better understanding the forces at work in this industry. This research delves into the psychological processes that influence how people perceive, feel about, and act in relation to fashion, drawing on ideas and concepts from marketing, sociology, and psychology. The study delves into the intricate web of elements that contribute to the rise and fall of fashion trends, including the impact of social conventions and cultural influences, as well as the psychological processes of self-expression and identity development. In addition, the study delves into how consumers' social identities, self-esteem, body image, and personality attributes influence their fashion-related decisions. The fashion industry and its marketers may improve their methods for reaching and interacting with consumers by delving into the mental processes that influence purchasing decisions. In addition, the study delves into how social media and technology impact fashion trends and customer behaviour, drawing attention to the impact of online platforms on the spread of trends, the agency of consumers, and the level of connection with brands.

Keywords - Fashion trends, Consumer behaviour, Psychology, Social influence, Cultural norms

Introduction

The ever-changing world of fashion is more than just clothes; it is a cultural phenomenon that mirrors the values, trends, and personal expression of a society. To decipher the intricate web of factors that the fashion business is shaped by—including individual tastes, social norms, and

psychological processes—it is necessary to research consumer behaviour and fashion trends. Factors in society, culture, economy, and psychology all have a role in the emergence and development of fashion trends. Numerous elements, including the influence of social media influencers and celebrities, as well as historical events and technology breakthroughs, contribute to the ebb and flow of fashion trends. In order to foresee and profit from changing customer preferences, it is critical for fashion designers, marketers, and merchants to comprehend the psychology behind these trends.

Various elements, such as individual preferences, societal standards, and self-perception, influence consumer behaviour, which in turn drives fashion trends. Personality, self-esteem, body image, and social identity are some of the psychological factors that impact customers' choices when it comes to apparel, brands, and style. In addition, the rise of social media and other forms of digital communication have altered the fashion industry by making trends more accessible to a wider audience and giving customers more agency over the direction and propagation of these trends. In new and exciting ways, digital platforms are enabling peer-to-peer impact and brand engagement by serving as centres for inspiration, communication, and commerce.

Professionals in the fashion sector would do well to familiarise themselves with the psyche of trends and customer behaviour in light of this development. Stakeholders may improve their plans for product creation, advertising, and brand management by studying the forces at work in the world of fashion and consumer behaviour. The purpose of this study article is to investigate the elements that impact the emergence, spread, and development of fashion trends from a psychological perspective, with an eye towards understanding consumer behaviour in this area. Researchers, practitioners, and legislators in the fashion business may benefit from this study's interdisciplinary approach, which draws on ideas from technology, sociology, psychology, and marketing. In order to succeed in the ever-shifting fashion industry, stakeholders must have a firm grasp of the psychological factors that influence both trends and customer behaviour.

Literature review

Clothes affect how we see ourselves, according to studies. Bettina and Ulrich (2002) investigated the possibility that people's clothing choices impact their self-esteem. They reasoned that, as different types of clothes may be associated with different types of traits, this

would explain why people's clothing choices impact how they describe themselves. Participants' self-descriptions matched their clothing choices, according to the researchers. So, the clothes these people wore affected how they felt about themselves. Furthermore, studies have shown that the ways we see ourselves (e.g., as old, ugly, or overweight) influence the actions we take to change our bodies. Dieting, cosmetic surgery, and exercise are some of the appearance management behaviours that individuals engage in when they are unhappy with their bodies, according to a large body of research. Psychologists Eric, Erika, and Stein (together with Shaw, 1994) established a link between body dissatisfaction and disordered eating, while psychologists Smolek and Levine (1994) discovered a link between early dieting and body dissatisfaction. According to research by Clarke and Gryphon (2008), women's attitudes about ageing have a significant impact on whether or not they support cosmetic surgery.

Kim et al. (2003) looked at the behavioural intentions model of online clothes shopping and found that it was accurate in predicting people's actual intentions to buy clothes online. The results also showed that there is a positive relationship between attitude and subjective norms, which suggests that behavioural intention isn't just a function of a set of independent normative and attitudinal variables, but rather a set of interdependent ones. Although attitude and subjective standards may not have an equal impact on behavioural intentions, this research found that both are significant determinants of consumers' online garment purchase activity.

According to Fatima and Ejaz (2005), the success of Pakistan's readymade clothing sector is heavily dependent on quality. It is the single most critical consideration when buying clothing. Women value advantages more than features, according to research by Barletta (2006). According to the research, women give more thought to the features when buying a vehicle or home appliance, whereas men are more likely to be swayed by the flashy aspects of a device. Customers now favour personalisation, according to research by Lawrence, Teich, and Sylvia (2009). This trend was examined by the researchers in relation to the preference that young women expressed for in-store customisation of ready-to-wear fashion items.

In their 2009 study, Catherine and Etienne investigated how age interacts with other important factors influencing clothing purchasing behaviour, such as price, durability, and appropriateness. While older participants place a higher value on appropriateness and durability in clothing, younger people prioritise affordability. Using four antecedents—

attitude, perceived behaviour control, face saving, and foreign brand jeans—Jin and Kang (2010) discovered that subjective norms had no significant influence on purchase intention, whereas face saving, attitude, and perceived behaviour control had a significant impact.

In 2011, Maria, Anne, and Pia investigated and analysed the clothing purchasing habits of middle-aged women. Based on the results, it seems that when it comes to buying clothing, senior women care a lot about fashion, brand, store, price, and style. According to research by Kervenoael, De et al. (2011), consumers consider both practical considerations (such as price, quality, guarantee & warranty, etc.) and aesthetic ones while making clothing purchases (style, image). Clothes that elongate the body are more appealing to women, according to Phoebe (2011). Additionally, males expressed a preference for garments that accentuate their physical fitness. The effect of social comparison motives on the purchasing behaviour of professional women while shopping for clothing was investigated by Mandhachitara and Piamphongsan (2011). One of the main reasons people buy expensive things, like boutique clothing, is because they want them, as pointed out by Minghuanget al. (2011). Consumers' desires for more variety, affordability, service, experience, and convenience are driving changes in clothing purchasing behaviour, according to research by Krishnakumar and Gurunathan (2012). Consumers of the next generation are showing less interest in bespoke tailoring, according to the report.

Objectives of the study

- To analyze the psychological processes underlying the emergence and evolution of fashion trends.
- To investigate the impact of psychological variables.
- To explore the influence of technology and social media on fashion trends and consumer behavior.

Research methodology

Collecting data on fashion trends' tastes, attitudes, and behaviours, quantitative surveys were administered to a varied sample of consumers. The surveys included topics such as decision-making processes pertaining to fashion, social identity, self-esteem, body image, and personality attributes. Software for statistical analysis is used to provide descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analyses using quantitative survey data.

Data analysis and discussion**Table – 1 Key Factor Affecting Fashion Purchases**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Design or Style	100	20
Fit	200	40
Colour	70	14
Texture of Material	80	16
Cost	50	10
Total	500	100

Based on a total of 500 responses, the table shows the most important elements influencing fashion purchases, along with their percentages and frequencies. The most important element influencing fashion purchases, according to 100 respondents (20% of the overall sample), is design or style. It seems that a considerable number of shoppers place a premium on apparel style while making purchases. With 200 responses, or 40% of the overall sample, "fit" stands out as the most common factor. This suggests that a large percentage of shoppers place a premium on how well a piece of apparel fits their body. Colour: Seventy-one people, or fourteen percent of the total, mentioned colour as an important consideration. Colour may not be as important as design/style or fit when it comes to fashion purchases, but it is still important to a significant part of buyers. The material's texture is cited as an important aspect by 80 respondents, or 16% of the overall sample. It seems that customers consider the fabric's tactile properties while choosing garments. Fifty people, or 10% of the overall sample, cited cost as an important consideration. Although price is an issue for some buyers, it ranks last in the table of factors mentioned.

In terms of overall impact on fashion purchases, the data shows that design/style, fit, and material texture account for 76% of the total replies. It seems that when it comes to fashion, customers value comfort, visual appeal, and tactile attributes the most. Retailers and designers in the fashion industry may benefit from a better understanding of these critical variables by better meeting the needs and wants of their customers.

Table 2 – Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
behaviour related to fashion consumption	4.205	2.02922	499
elements connected to perception	4.04	2.2208	499
consumer mindset	3.872	2.01406	499
elements influencing consumers' personalities	4.636	1.81293	499
persona of the customer	4.329	1.99786	499
consumer motivation	4.412	1.94891	499

Various descriptive data pertaining to fashion consumption and consumer behaviour are included in the table. These statistics include sample sizes, standard deviations, and mean values.

Consumer Behaviour in the Fashion Industry: 4.205 is the mean score, and 2.02922 is the standard deviation for consumer behaviour in the fashion industry. What this means is that most people who took the survey are very involved in the fashion industry. Having said that, there does seem to be considerable variation in replies, with a wide variety of behaviours noted among respondents, as shown by the somewhat large standard deviation. Elements Related to Perception: A mean score of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 2.2208 were recorded for elements related to perception. Style, trends, and branding are just a few of the fashion-related aspects that respondents seem to observe with a moderate intensity, according to this. Respondents' views seem to vary, as seen by the larger standard deviation.

Regarding consumer attitude, the average score is 3.872 and the standard deviation is 2.01406. What this means is that the respondents' consumer mentality, which includes their views, attitudes, and values towards fashion purchasing, is moderate. It seems that respondents' consumer attitudes might vary, as shown by the standard deviation. When it comes to factors that impact customers' personalities, the average score is 4.636 and the standard deviation is 1.81293. It seems that the participants view different aspects of their fashion consumption as having a significant impact on their personality development. Respondents' views on these factors seem to be quite consistent, given the little standard deviation.

Customer Persona: The customer persona has a mean score of 4.329 and a standard deviation of 1.99786. This data reveals that the average fashion customer persona is well-understood by the respondents. Respondents' views on the consumer persona seem to vary, according to the standard deviation. Motivation in the Consumer Market: 4.412 is the mean score, while 1.94891 is the standard deviation. Several elements somewhat encourage respondents' fashion purchasing behaviours, according to this. There seems to be some variation in the variables that motivate responders, as seen by the standard deviation.

While there is significant variation in replies across several dimensions, the research as a whole shows that respondents display moderate to high levels of participation and perspective of fashion consumption. Insights into customer sentiment, opinion, and action around fashion consumption may be gleaned from these descriptive data, which in turn can guide fashion industry marketing and product development initiatives.

Conclusion

By illuminating the beliefs, perspectives, and driving forces of those working in the fashion business, this study's results provide important insights into many facets of consumer behaviour and fashion consumption. Important trends and patterns have been uncovered by descriptive statistics and analysis, with consequences for those involved in the fashion industry. Various variables impact the opinions and attitudes of the study's respondents, who generally participate in moderate to high levels of fashion-related behaviours. Consumers place a premium on visual appeal and comfort when making fashion purchases, with factors including design/style, fit, and material texture emerging as major concerns.

There seems to be a stronger psychological link between respondents' identities and the clothes they wear, as they view fashion consumption as having a significant impact on these aspects of their personalities. Factors including brand loyalty, social identification, and the need to exhibit one's individuality all play a part in consumers' decision-making processes when it comes to fashion-related behaviours. It seems that the fashion industry's target demographic is well-understood by respondents, who have a solid grasp of the typical fashion consumer character. To better target and engage their intended customer categories, businesses may use this knowledge to inform their marketing strategy and product development activities.

Finally, this study's results provide important information for marketers, legislators, and experts in the fashion business on consumer behaviour and consumption of fashion. Stakeholders in the fashion industry may better satisfy the demands and preferences of customers by gaining a deeper knowledge of their attitudes, perceptions, and motivations. This insight will drive development and success in the always changing market.

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