
Psychology of Fashion and its influence on Indian Consumers

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Abstract

Fashion psychology is commonly defined as the study of the impact of clothing choices on the way in which we perceive and judge each other. However, the term fashion psychology is a bit misleading, as the field actually looks well beyond clothing's impact on the individual. And its focus transcends clothing to also consider the impact of many other products that express self-identity and are influenced by the same forces that drive change in the apparel industry. Many psychological factors help explain what motivates us to be fashionable. These include conformity, desires for variety seeking, the need to express personal creativity, and sexual attraction. For example, many consumers seem to have a need for uniqueness: They want to be different (though not necessarily too different!). As a result, people may conform to the basic outlines of a fashion, but still improvise to make a personal statement within these general guidelines.

Psychology and fashion are two fields that, on the surface, may seem unrelated, but they have a deep connection. Psychology is the study of the mind and behaviour, while fashion is the study of clothing and accessories. However, fashion is also a reflection of societal values, cultural influences, and personal expression. It is a visual representation of how individuals want to be perceived and how they want to present themselves to the world. Therefore, fashion can be used as a tool to understand various psychological concepts such as identity, self-esteem, and social status. Understanding the relationship between psychology and fashion can provide insights into how individuals use clothing and accessories to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and personality to others, and how fashion trends are shaped by psychological factors.

Key Words: Fashion Psychology and clothing

1. Introduction:

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“Fashion is very important. It is life enhancing and, like everything that gives pleasure, it is worth doing well”

Vivienne Westwood

2. Objectives

- To understand the psychological factors that influence fashion, such as self-expression, identity, and conformity.
- To explore the impact of fashion on self-esteem and body image, and how it can be used to enhance or undermine these aspects of psychological well-being.
- To examine the role of fashion in social interactions and communication, and how it can be used to convey different messages and impressions.
- To study the relationship between fashion and consumer behaviour, including the influence of advertising, branding, and other marketing strategies on fashion choices.
- To understand the psychological effects of fashion on individuals across different age groups and demographic groups.

3. Research Methodology

Area of Research: India

Secondary Data: Collected through books, websites, online journals

Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire

Sample Size: 100

Sampling Technique: Convenience Sampling (Non probability)

Research on the relationship between psychology and fashion can be approached using a variety of methodologies. Some common methods used in this area of research include surveys, experiments, and observation. Surveys can be used to gather self-reported data on individuals' fashion choices and their psychological motivations for those choices. Experiments can be used to manipulate certain variables and measure their effects on fashion choices and psychological outcomes. Observation can be used to study individuals' fashion choices and behaviour in naturalistic settings. Additionally, some researchers use qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to gather more in-depth information about individuals' fashion experiences and the psychological factors that influence them.

4. Profile Of Psychology & Fashion

Fashion and psychology have a complex relationship. On one hand, fashion can be seen as a form of self-expression, allowing individuals to showcase their personality, values, and beliefs through the clothes they wear. On the other hand, fashion can also be seen as a tool for social conformity, where individuals feel pressure to conform to societal expectations and trends. This paper will explore the relationship between psychology and fashion, including the role of self-expression, social conformity, and body image in the fashion industry.

Self-Expression

One of the most obvious ways in which fashion and psychology intersect is through self-expression. The clothes we wear can communicate a lot about who we are and what we stand for. For example, someone who wears a lot of black may be seen as mysterious or edgy, while someone who wears bright colors may be seen as outgoing or cheerful. Similarly, the types of clothing we wear can also communicate our values and beliefs. For example, someone who wears a lot of sustainable and ethically-made clothing may be seen as environmentally conscious.

Self-expression through fashion can also be a form of self-care. When we feel good about the way we look, it can boost our self-esteem and confidence, which can have positive effects on our mental health. Additionally, expressing ourselves through fashion can be a form of self-expression for those who may not feel comfortable expressing themselves in other ways.

Social Conformity

While fashion can be a form of self-expression, it can also be a tool for social conformity. Society often has certain expectations for how people should dress based on their gender, age, occupation, and social status. For example, it is considered more socially acceptable for women to wear dresses and skirts than it is for men. Similarly, it is considered more socially acceptable for business professionals to wear suits and ties than it is for artists to wear ripped jeans and a t-shirt.

These societal expectations can put a lot of pressure on individuals to conform to certain fashion trends and styles. This can be especially challenging for those who don't fit into traditional gender norms or who don't have the same financial resources as others. Additionally, this pressure to conform can also have negative effects on mental health, leading to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.

Body Image

Another important aspect of the relationship between psychology and fashion is the impact it has on body image. The fashion industry often promotes a certain idealized body type, which can be incredibly damaging for those who don't fit into that mold. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, and can even contribute to the development of eating disorders.

Additionally, the fashion industry often promotes unrealistic and unsustainable standards of beauty. For example, models are often photo shopped to have impossibly thin waists and legs, and advertisements often promote products that promise to make us look and feel younger. These unrealistic standards can be incredibly damaging, leading to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.

The psychological effects of fashion

This subtopic could explore how fashion influences people's self-esteem, self-expression, and social interactions. It could also discuss how fashion can be used as a form of self-expression and how it can affect people's moods and emotions.

Fashion and consumer behaviour

This subtopic could examine how fashion influences consumer behaviour, such as how people make fashion choices, how they are influenced by fashion trends, and how they perceive fashion as a status symbol.

Fashion and psychology have a complex relationship. While fashion can be a form of self-expression, it can also be a tool for social conformity and can have negative effects on body image. Understanding this relationship is important for both individuals and the fashion industry as a whole. By recognizing the potential negative effects of societal expectations and unrealistic beauty standards, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and empowering fashion industry.

5. Literature Review

Dress, body and self: research in the social psychology of dress By Kim Johnson, Sharron J Lennon & Nancy Rudd

Dress is defined as “an assemblage of modifications of the body or supplements to the body” (Roach-Higgins & Eicher [1992](#), p. 1). Body modifications include cosmetic use, sun tanning, piercing, tattooing, dieting, exercising, and cosmetic surgery among others. Body supplements include, but are not limited to, accessories, clothing, hearing aids, and glasses. By the 1950s social science theories from economics, psychology, social psychology, and sociology were being used to study dress and human behavior (Rudd [1991](#), p. 24).

Scientific Advisory Board By Fabiana Franco, Ph.D.

Your fashion style can determine if you ace that interview and get that dream job. Once you are on the job, your wardrobe can determine if you get more responsibility and get promoted. Your clothing choices can make friends, and develop the romantic relationship that you seek. Just as dress radiated outward to your surroundings, it also moves inward. How you dress affects have a psychological impact. Karen pine demonstrates in her book mind what you wear that there is a science behind fashion and that psychology and fashion are indeed linked.

College men's fashion: clothing preference, identity, and avoidance

By Mijeong Noh, Meng Li, Kaleb Martin & Joseph Purpura

The goal of our exploratory study was to investigate what fashion means to college men in terms of preference, identity, and avoidance. Specifically, we aimed to determine what young men want to achieve as well as avoid through their clothing. We interviewed 15 college men to collect data. The results suggest that college men's fashion preferences are driven largely by a desire for comfort and adherence to norms. Moreover, the study participants avoided certain types of clothing due to the clothing's incongruence with their styles.

Effects of fashion vlogger attributes on product attitude and content sharing By Woojin Choi & Yuri Lee

Recently, general people posting vlog on newly shopped fashion and cosmetics items are gaining popularity, and it is growing more common to get consumer reviews or opinion through vlogs. In this paper, we examine the effect of vloggers' attributes (i.e., attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness) depending on the types that the vlogs expose certain products in videos. Also we find out how emotional bond between vloggers and viewers affect the relationships of vlogger's attributes with content sharing intention and attitude towards products.

'MIND WHAT YOU WEAR' The psychology of fashion By Professor Karen J Pine

Professor Pine's first online **Wear Something Different** programme is now available. Changing your look can literally change your life. Wear Something Different is a unique psychology-based programme to shake up your wardrobe habits, revamp your look and help you to look at life from a new perspective. As humans we communicate a great deal about ourselves via the medium of personal style and dress. I try to pay a lot of attention to this, personally and professionally

How to be seen As more professional:

You don't need to spend tons of money on clothes, but you do need to make sure your clothes fit right. That holds true for both women and men. Doubly so if you want to come across as professional. According to **Frank Bernieri, PhD**, associate professor in the psychology department at Oregon state university, an interviewer will determine within 10 seconds of meeting a job candidate whether they're right for the job. *A well-tailored outfit implies that you're conscientious and pay close attention to details.*

Nothing is trending because everything is trending By Hannah Ernt

Author Hannah is a freelance writer based on Munich, Germany. During her studies of communication science and psychology, she founded her own a unique perspective on the fashion industry. She writes at the intersections of fashion, sustainability, culture and consumer behaviour and is particularly passionate about circular fashion.

She talks about the increasingly fact cycle of fashion trends and how everything (or some version of a trend) was popular at some point in the last five years. Another creator wisdom Kaye, added .

The psychology of clothing: meaning of Colors, Body Image and Gender Expression in FashionBy **Duje Kodzoman**

elect clothes that we're purchasing and wearing according to the meaning we believe them to have, or the messages we believe them to send. But what are psychological consequences of clothing, and how does clothing express something about the user? To assess the state of knowledge about the communicative nature of fashion, the aim of this review was to provide a concise and succinct literature overview of over twenty empirical studies of the above-mentioned concept. elect clothes that we're purchasing and wearing according to the meaning we believe them to have, or the messages we believe them to send. But what are psychological consequences of clothing, and how does clothing express something about the user? To assess the state of knowledge about the communicative nature of fashion, the aim of this review was to provide a concise and succinct literature overview of over twenty empirical studies of the above-mentioned concept.

Cognitive Consumer-Behavior Therapy

Ms. Karen calls herself a "pioneer" of the "Fashion Psychology Field," (a phrase she has trademarked), but she is not alone in combining the topics. For the past decade, the department of

fashion and apparel studies at the University of Delaware has offered a course called the Social Psychological Aspects of Clothing. Its professor, Jaehee Jung, says it's one of the few requirements for both apparel design and fashion merchandising majors.

What you wear is what you are. Meet Harsheen K. Arora, who deals with the psychology of fashion

“The psychology of fashion is quite fascinating actually. It's all about understanding what a person wears and how it affects him/her. It's also about how it would impact the person who sees it. For example, if you go to a conference and meet a man in a well-tailored suit and another in formal shirt and trousers, your mind will automatically perceive the man in the suit to be high up in the hierarchy. Even a cop in uniform will be taken more seriously than one in plain clothes.”

Dr. Mair, will you tell us about the MA Psychology for Fashion Professionals and MSc Applied Psychology in Fashion programs?

Fashion is about people! It involves perception, attention, memory, creativity and communication and social interaction. Fashion designers, producers, retailers and consumers, reason, make decisions and solve problems. Fashion is psychology! Although it has been interpreted anecdotally in psychological terms for centuries, applying psychological science to fashion is new. The common understanding of psychology applied to fashion is an interpretation of what our clothes say about us, but psychology matters far beyond this.

fashion psychology secrets to know By ,Yuliya Klochan

“If you felt good in your dress, and you felt good about yourself, and that inner confidence was on fire — it's that inner light that shines through my whole design process,” said Don O'Neill, a designer of evening wear and custom bridal apparel who's dressed celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Meghan Markle and Carrie Underwood. “When you walked into a room in one of my dresses, I wanted people to say, ‘You look great,’ instead of, ‘That dress was awesome.’ It was about you rather than the dress.”

What people wear influences how they think and feel

The “Zoom mullet,” according to [Urban Dictionary](#), is “business on top, pajama pants on the bottom.” Many have adopted this attire during the remote work era, but what are the psychological consequences? A January 2022 [study](#), published in *Academy of Management Discoveries*, showed wearing full-on home attire, top and bottom, increased workers' authenticity and engagement, while neither full work attire nor the “Zoom mullet” had these positive effects.

Painful heels and restrictive skirts—the role of gender in fashion choices

If you don't feel comfortable and confident in what you're wearing, you're not going to have fun, and it's going to show,” Argiro said. But not every designer agrees, and people continue to wear clothing that can be uncomfortable and even take a physical toll.

How the COVID-19 pandemic affected fashion choices

“What (the pandemic) has done is to realign a lot of values that people have and what they're looking to get out of apparel and other fashion related items,” said Michael Solomon, professor of marketing at Saint Joseph's University. “Probably the biggest change is the consciousness about sustainability.”

The psychology of dressing: body image by Tulika Ajwani

We select dress that we're purchasing and wearing according to the meaning we believe them to have, or the messages we believe them to send. There are some psychological consequences of dressing and dressing expresses something about the wearer. Clothing serves many purposes; it protects the wearer by enhancing safety; it protects by providing barrier between the skin and the environment; it can insulate against cold or hot conditions. It may also function as the form of adornment & expression of the personal taste and style.

"The Psychology of Fashion: How Clothing Affects our Emotions and Behavior" by Dr. Jennifer Baumgartner, published in Psychology Today.

In this article, Dr. Baumgartner explores the ways in which clothing can influence our emotions and behavior. She explains that clothing can be used to signal social status and belonging, and can also

be used to express personal identity and mood. She also discusses the impact of fashion on self-esteem and body image.

"The Link Between Fashion and Self-Esteem" by Dr. Susan Biali Haas, published in Huffington Post.

In this article, Dr. Biali Haas discusses the relationship between fashion and self-esteem. She explains that the way we dress can have a powerful impact on how we feel about ourselves, and that the fashion industry often perpetuates unrealistic beauty standards that can lead to negative body image and self-esteem issues. She also offers tips for using fashion to boost self-confidence and self-acceptance.

"The Role of Fashion in Social Identity" by Dr. Mark Travers, published in Scientific American.

In this article, Dr. Travers examines the ways in which fashion can shape our social identities. He explains that clothing can be used to signal group membership and belonging, and that fashion can also be used to assert individuality and self-expression. He also discusses the impact of fashion on social status and power dynamics.

"The Psychology of Color in Fashion" by Dr. Karen Pine, published in The Guardian.

In this article, Dr. Pine examines the ways in which color can influence our emotions and behavior in relation to fashion. She explains that different colors can evoke different feelings and associations, and that the use of color in clothing can be used to convey meaning and message. She also discusses the impact of color on self-esteem and body image.

"The Impact of Social Media on Fashion and Body Image" by Dr. Jennifer Anolik, published in Forbes.

In this article, Dr. Anolik explores the ways in which social media is shaping the fashion industry and our perceptions of beauty and body image. She explains that social media platforms like Instagram and Pinterest have made it easier for individuals to access fashion inspiration and trends, but also perpetuate unrealistic beauty standards. She also discusses the impact of social media on self-esteem and body image, and offers tips for using social media in a healthy way.

6. Findings & Suggestions

Understanding body image and self-esteem:

One of the most significant ways in which psychology and fashion intersect is through body image and self-esteem. People's clothing choices can be influenced by their body image and self-esteem, which can be improved through positive self-talk and self-care. Understanding how body image and self-esteem impact fashion choices can help individuals make better choices that will improve their self-confidence.

Using fashion to express personality and individuality:

Another way in which psychology and fashion intersect is through the use of fashion to express one's personality and individuality. People use clothing, accessories, and hairstyles to communicate who they are and what they stand for. By understanding how fashion can be used to express personality and individuality, individuals can use this to their advantage to increase self-confidence and self-expression.

Using fashion to improve mental health

Fashion can also be used to improve mental health. Wearing clothes that make you feel confident and good about yourself can improve your mood and overall well-being. Clothing that reflects your personality and individuality can also help individuals feel more comfortable and confident in social situations.

Understanding the impact of social norms on fashion choices:

Psychology also plays a role in understanding how social norms impact fashion choices. Social norms, such as gender and cultural expectations, can influence the types of clothing and accessories that people feel comfortable wearing. Understanding how these norms impact fashion choices can help individuals make more informed decisions about Psychology and fashion have a complex relationship, as fashion is not only about aesthetics, but also about how people express their identities and how

they want to be perceived by others. In this answer, we will explore some of the ways in which psychology and fashion are related, and provide suggestions for further research and exploration in this field.

One of the main ways in which psychology and fashion are related is through the concept of self-expression. People use fashion as a way to communicate their identities, values, and personalities to others. This can be seen in the way that people choose to dress, as well as in the way that they accessorize and style their clothing. Research has shown that people tend to choose clothing that reflects their personalities and those they feel comfortable wearing. For example, someone who is outgoing and extroverted may choose bold and colourful clothing, while someone who is more introverted may choose more subdued and neutral colours.

Another way in which psychology and fashion are related is through the concept of social identity. People use fashion to signal their membership in a particular group or social category. This can be seen in the way that people dress in specific styles or colours that are associated with a particular group or subculture. For example, someone who is a member of a punk rock subculture may dress in a way that is associated with that subculture, such as wearing studded leather jackets and ripped jeans. Another suggestion for further research in this field would be to study the relationship between social identity and fashion choices. Researchers could conduct ethnographic studies of different subcultures and groups to gather information about how people dress and why they dress in certain ways. This research could provide valuable insights into the ways in which people use fashion to signal their membership in a particular group or subculture.

Finally, another suggestion for further research in this field would be to study the relationship between fashion and self-esteem. Researchers could conduct surveys or interviews with people to gather information about their fashion choices and then use this information to make inferences about their self-esteem. This research could provide valuable insights into the ways in which people use fashion to boost their self-esteem and confidence.

Psychology and fashion have a complex relationship, as fashion is not only about aesthetics, but also about how people express their identities and how they want to be perceived by others. Research in this field can provide valuable insights into how people express themselves through fashion and how they use fashion to signal their social identities. Suggestions for further research in this field include studying the relationship between personality traits and fashion choices, studying the relationship between social identity and fashion choices, and studying the relationship between fashion and self-esteem.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Psychology and fashion are closely related, as the way we dress can communicate a lot about our personality, mood, and social status. Clothing can also influence our behaviour and self-perception. Fashion can be used as a form of self-expression, allowing individuals to communicate their individuality and unique sense of style. It can also be used as a form of social signalling, allowing individuals to convey their social status, cultural background, and even political beliefs.

Research has shown that the clothes we wear can affect our cognitive and behavioural processes, including our self-esteem, confidence, and decision-making abilities.

In conclusion, fashion is not just about the clothes we wear, but also the way we present ourselves to the world and how we want to be perceived by others. It can be used as a tool for self-expression and social signalling, and can have a significant impact on our psychology and behaviour.

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