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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FASHION TRENDS AND ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Fashion trends and online shopping platforms have transformed the way consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase fashion products. Psychological factors, including fashion involvement, social influence, self-image, trust, and perceived product value, play an important role in shaping online shopping behavior. This study aims to examine the psychological factors influencing consumers' responses to fashion trends and their online purchasing decisions. A quantitative research approach is proposed, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from online fashion shoppers. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis will be used to examine relationships among the selected variables. Previous research indicates that fashion involvement, peer communication, brand trust, and social media influences can affect consumers' online fashion purchase intentions (Harrigan et al., 2021; Shin & Lee, 2021). Research on fashion trend conformity also suggests that social influence and consumers' perceptions of emerging trends can shape purchasing decisions (Trend conformity study, 2024). The proposed study is expected to provide insights into the psychological mechanisms associated with fashion trend adoption and online shopping behavior.

KEYWORDS

Fashion psychology, fashion trends, online shopping behavior, consumer behavior, social influence, fashion involvement, purchase intention.

INTRODUCTION

Fashion is not only a means of clothing but also a form of self-expression through which individuals communicate their identity, preferences, and social status. Consumers often adopt fashion trends to express individuality, maintain social acceptance, and remain connected with changing styles. Psychological factors such as self-image, fashion involvement, social comparison, and the desire for belonging can influence the ways individuals respond to emerging trends. In the digital environment, these influences have become increasingly visible because social media platforms allow consumers to observe fashion choices, compare products, and interact with fashion brands and influencers. Research on fashion adoption in Pakistan has highlighted the importance of fashion involvement, opinion leadership, and status in explaining consumers' intentions to adopt new apparel trends (Rahman et al., 2014).Online shopping has further transformed fashion consumption by providing convenient access to products, reviews, brand information, and personalized recommendations. Consumers can evaluate different clothing options without visiting physical stores, but their decisions may also be affected by perceived risk, website quality, brand trust, and the opinions of other shoppers. Harrigan et al. (2021) found that perceived usefulness and peer communication influenced trust in fashion brands and their social media channels, while brand trust was associated with purchase intention. Similarly, Kim and Jones (2010) identified brand trust, clothing involvement, and website

quality as important factors influencing online apparel shopping intentions. These findings demonstrate that online fashion purchases involve both practical evaluations and psychological judgments.

Social media and fashion influencers have also become important sources of trend information. Consumers may develop interest in particular products after observing influencer recommendations, celebrity endorsements, or popular styles shared within their social networks. Shin and Lee (2021) examined the influence of fashion influencers and product novelty on consumers' curiosity and purchase intentions in social shopping environments. Their findings indicated that product curiosity was positively associated with purchase intention and the intention to use social shopping services. In addition, research on luxury fashion trend conformity has shown that trend perceptions and reference-group pressure can influence consumers' tendency to follow popular fashion styles (Trend conformity study, 2024). These findings suggest that social visibility and psychological responses to trends can contribute to online purchasing decisions.Despite the convenience of online shopping, consumers may experience uncertainty regarding product quality, fit, appearance, and the reliability of seller information. Fashion trends can also encourage rapid purchasing, while individual differences in self-image, trust, and fashion involvement may determine how consumers respond to online promotions. Wang et al. (2025) examined the roles of traditional and social media in shaping purchase intentions within Pakistan's fashion industry, highlighting the importance of nostalgia, perceived credibility, and persuasive communication. Therefore, this study proposes a quantitative investigation of the psychological factors associated with fashion trend adoption and online shopping behavior, focusing on fashion involvement, social influence, consumer trust, and purchase intention.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the psychological factors influencing consumers' adoption of fashion trends.
2. To analyze the relationship between social influence, consumer trust, and online fashion shopping behavior.
3. To identify the psychological factors that significantly predict consumers' online fashion purchase intentions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Which psychological factors influence consumers' adoption of fashion trends?
2. How do social influence and consumer trust affect online fashion shopping behavior?
3. Which psychological factors significantly predict consumers' online fashion purchase intentions?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fashion psychology plays an important role in understanding why consumers adopt particular clothing styles and follow emerging trends. Rahman et al. (2014) investigated the influence of

innovativeness, fashion involvement, opinion leadership, and social values on apparel fashion adoption in Pakistan. Their findings indicated that fashion involvement, opinion leadership, and status positively influenced consumers' intentions to adopt new fashion trends. However, the relationship between adoption intention and actual behavior was not significant. This finding suggests that consumers' psychological motivations may influence their intentions without necessarily resulting in actual purchases.Online fashion shopping is also influenced by trust, perceived usefulness, and communication among consumers. Harrigan et al. (2021) examined how brand social media usefulness and peer communication influence trust and purchase intention. Their findings showed that peer communication and perceived usefulness contributed to trust, while trust in the fashion brand was positively associated with purchase intention. These findings indicate that online shopping decisions are influenced not only by product characteristics but also by consumers' confidence in brands and the information available through digital platforms.Fashion influencers and social shopping environments provide additional psychological explanations for consumer behavior. Shin and Lee (2021) examined the influence of fashion influencers and product novelty on consumer curiosity and purchasing intentions. Their findings indicated that curiosity about fashion products was positively related to purchase intentions and intentions to use social shopping services. This suggests that consumers' emotional responses to novel fashion products and their perceptions of influencers can contribute to online purchasing decisions.

Social media can also strengthen consumers' tendency to follow popular fashion trends. Research on luxury fashion trend conformity in the social media age found that trend perceptions and reference-group pressure influenced consumers' conformity behavior, with demand amplification helping explain this relationship (Trend conformity study, 2024). These findings suggest that consumers may adopt fashion trends partly because they observe popular products and perceive social pressure to follow particular styles. However, the strength of these influences may differ according to consumers' preferences, social environments, and fashion involvement.The quality of online shopping platforms is another factor associated with fashion purchase intentions. Kim and Jones (2010) examined retail brand trust, clothing involvement, and website quality in online apparel shopping. Their findings showed that brand trust, clothing involvement, and aspects of website quality significantly influenced online shopping intentions. This research highlights the importance of providing reliable product information, an appealing website experience, and a trustworthy shopping environment to encourage consumers to purchase fashion products online.

Online consumer communication and electronic word-of-mouth also contribute to fashion purchasing decisions. Research involving Chinese online consumers found that fashion involvement, trust, informational influence, and a sense of belonging were positively associated with online purchase intention, with electronic word-of-mouth helping explain several of these relationships (Understanding the Effects of eWOM Antecedents on Online Purchase Intention in China, 2021). This suggests that reviews, recommendations, and social interactions can influence consumers' perceptions of fashion products and their willingness to buy them online.Recent research has further examined how media credibility and emotional responses affect fashion

purchase intentions. Wang et al. (2025) investigated traditional and social media influences in Pakistan's fashion industry. Their findings indicated that nostalgia and perceived credibility were relevant to consumer purchase intentions, demonstrating that consumers' emotional and cognitive responses to marketing communications can shape their decisions. Overall, the literature indicates that fashion involvement, social influence, consumer trust, product curiosity, and digital shopping experiences are important factors in fashion-related consumer behavior. The present study proposes to examine these psychological factors together to better understand fashion trend adoption and online shopping behavior.

METHODOLOGY

This study will employ a quantitative research methodology to examine the psychological factors associated with fashion trends and online shopping behavior. Primary data will be collected through a structured questionnaire administered to consumers who have purchased fashion products through online platforms. The questionnaire will measure fashion involvement, social influence, consumer trust, and online purchase intention using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Demographic information, including age, gender, education, and online shopping frequency, will also be collected. Participation will be voluntary, and respondents' confidentiality will be maintained. The collected responses will be screened for completeness before statistical analysis.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A cross-sectional descriptive and correlational research design will be adopted to examine consumers' psychological characteristics and online fashion shopping behavior at a specific point in time. The target population will consist of adult online fashion shoppers. Convenience sampling may be used to recruit eligible respondents according to accessibility and available resources. Fashion involvement, social influence, and consumer trust will serve as independent variables, while online fashion purchase intention will serve as the dependent variable. The design will allow the researcher to examine relationships among these variables without claiming that statistical associations establish causation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS or equivalent statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, will summarize respondents' characteristics and questionnaire responses. Cronbach's alpha will be used to assess the internal consistency of multi-item measurement scales. Pearson correlation analysis will examine the direction and strength of relationships between fashion involvement, social influence, consumer trust, and online purchase intention, provided the relevant assumptions are satisfied. Multiple regression analysis will identify which psychological factors significantly predict online fashion purchase intention. Statistical significance will be evaluated at the 0.05 level, and relevant statistical assumptions will be checked before interpreting the results.

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FINDINGS

Based on previous research, fashion involvement, social influence, and consumer trust are expected to be positively associated with online fashion purchase intention. Consumers who are more interested in fashion may be more attentive to emerging trends, while recommendations from peers and influencers may increase their interest in particular products. Trust in fashion brands and online shopping platforms may also contribute to consumers' willingness to purchase products online (Harrigan et al., 2021; Shin & Lee, 2021). Furthermore, website quality and electronic word-of-mouth may help explain differences in purchasing intentions (Kim & Jones, 2010; Understanding the Effects of eWOM Antecedents on Online Purchase Intention in China, 2021). These are anticipated patterns based on existing literature, not empirical findings from the proposed study. Actual results will be established after collecting and analyzing the questionnaire data.

CONCLUSION

The psychology of fashion trends and online shopping behavior involves the interaction of personal preferences, social influences, consumer trust, and digital shopping experiences. This study proposes a quantitative investigation of fashion involvement, social influence, and consumer trust as potential predictors of online fashion purchase intention. Through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression, the research will examine how these psychological factors are associated with consumers' purchasing decisions. The study may provide useful insights for fashion retailers seeking to understand consumer motivations, improve online shopping experiences, and develop effective fashion marketing strategies. The final conclusions will depend on the statistical results obtained from the collected data.

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