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A Study of Cultural Significance on Women's Clothing and Fashion in the Present Era (With Reference to Visakhapatnam District)

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Abstract

With the development of Fashion, every human being, especially women, has tried not to be left behind. Starting from children to adults is very concerned about the development of the Fashion. Contemporarily, fast fashion had developed a lot and become common in people's daily life. A person's dress style is influenced by many things such as culture, values inherited by community groups as well as family, environment, media, fashion trends, and personal character. All of them give reference to how to dress and shape their preferences. Everyday Fashion is an interactive process through which the aspiring individuals of the society consciously project their bodily self in a distinctive manner in the form of clothing style. Therefore, the paper largely focuses on the cultural significance on women's clothing and fashion in the select region and the methodology of the study is purely based on the primary data by conducting survey on women about their cultural influence on clothing in the select region.

Keywords: Fashion, culture, values inherited, preferences, society

Introduction

The historical continuity of fashion can be a guide in the prediction of fashion trends (Sproles, 1981) ^[8]. For the better understanding of the current fashion trend it is important to see its historical antecedents. The revival of the appearance of folkloric traditions in contemporary fashion and the development of the application of cultural heritage elements. The folk art was mostly used by designers as a source of inspiration; they used the traditional motives, techniques in an innovative way.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, and the appearance of machine made textiles, clothing was amongst a person's most valuable possessions. To the lowest class in society, the poor, new clothing was unattainable. They relied on clothes that were handed down through many hands before reaching theirs. A poor man was likely to own only one outfit of clothing. The higher class was rich enough to own very lavish clothing that was usually willed to deserving youth in the family when they died. Clothing was so precious that in times where funds were scarce, clothing presented itself as a form of currency. It replaced gold and sometimes was pawned for money, along with jewels and other valuables.

Fashion is a complex structure with different tendencies; it can certainly not be defined or described only from the viewpoint of one discipline. Although fashion is in some extent presented in many aspects of life; in politics, business, entertainment, academics, law, etc; until recently in academic circles it did not get the deserved attention. For a long time the majority admits the sociological, psychological nature of

fashion but its artistic nature is not widely accepted. But today fashion as a sector of 'cognitive cultural economy' is among the world's most important creative industries. It plays an important role in both economic development and urban policy (Williams, 2011) ^[11].

With the development of Fashion, every human being, especially women, has tried not to be left behind. Starting from children to adults is very concerned about the development of the Fashion. And now, the development of the fashion world has experienced a period of rapid revolution in various places. Clothing is now a basic need for humans besides food and shelter. Clothing is needed to protect the body. Clothing is everything from head to toe that gives the wearer comfort. Clothing is not limited to the fabric problem that is worn by someone, but design creations that are deliberately chosen after adjusting to one's circumstances. Therefore, they will not wear clothing without understanding the self-disclosure based on habits or laws that apply in the surrounding community.

Fashion as a social phenomenon is a tool for individuals, social groups, classes and nations to express their affiliation and social identity and at the same time to segregate and differentiate themselves from the others (Simmel, 1957; Thompson & Haytko, 1997) ^[7, 9]. Fashion studies can give a good quality cross section of the society. The history of garments reflects the social ideals, the culture, the social and economical life and development.

Socio-cultural changes that occur in society, such as changes from traditional society to modern, it turns out that not all

people can accept it, but there are some people who cannot accept it. Communities that cannot accept change usually still have a traditional and thick mind-set, so they are not easily influenced by new things, especially those related to beliefs or belief systems that have been believed for generations. Traditional communities tend to be more difficult to accept foreign cultures that enter their environment, but there are also people who easily accept foreign cultures in their lives. This is due to the element of foreign culture that usually brings great convenience and benefits to their lives, or elements of culture that easily adjust to the state of the people who receive these elements.

Clothing is a form of imitation of one's social body, so that the limitations of each person's personal comfort are different. A piece of clothing can describe a structure of social life, ideology, history, class, community, and identity. The ideology of religion in clothing, regarding moral and ethical issues, is a rule or law regarding how to dress according to the conditions of space, place, and time, which need to be understood and implemented. Supposedly, freedom in creating clothes, not forgetting the relationship of clothing with the surrounding social environment, because clothing as a basic necessity is included in the public domain, so that social welfare is still needed. In the end, clothing is still a part of inanimate objects, social construction in it, which makes clothing a product that has a lot meaning.

Significance of the Study

Society takes pleasure in designer clothing and accessories, the latest technology, and the other luxuries in life. The reasons for these indulgences may be brand loyalty, larger disposable income, social pressures, the media, or a combination of these factors. People are prejudged by what they wear, because it is a cultural norm to groom and dress appropriately for the occasion. Thus, the importance of fashion industry also lies in the basic fact that clothes satisfy both basic and social needs presented by Maslow's pyramid of needs as motivational theory presents.

Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted taking into consideration the following objectives:

- To examine the significance of culture on women's clothing and fashion
- To study the impact of women's clothing and fashion on society.

Methodology of the Study

The research study is purely based on the primary sources of data through structured questionnaire and a sample size of 645 respondents of Visakhapatnam District have been taken by the researcher through the method of $S_s = [Z^2 P(1-P)] C^2$ when the population is infinite. Finally the data used for the present study was collected from a sample of 645 respondents at 99% of Confidence level. In this research, the researcher followed a detailed descriptive research to solve the research problem. In the present study, the researcher used different statistical procedures viz., through Hypothesis Testing Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test, KMO and Bartlett's Test is conducted and the statistical tool Factor analysis is used for analyzing and interpreting the data and results.

Hypothesis of the Study

H1: There is a significant relationship of cultural significance on women's clothing and fashion in the present era of the select region.

H0: There is no significant relationship of cultural significance on women's clothing and fashion in the present era of the select region.

Fashion and Culture

Clothing, as one of the most visible forms of consumption, performs a major role in the social construction of identity. In earlier centuries, clothing was a dominant way to identify oneself in public. Throughout the nineteenth century various elements of this identity were represented in the United States. Such elements include occupation, regional identity, religion, and social class. The use of sumptuary laws specified the types, materials, and ornaments that were acceptable for people of different social classes.

Families are a strong source through which cultural morals are conveyed. Found that mothers were seen as enforcers of the family norms about appearance related issues. While families provide support and protection to their members, but, if negative, their influence can be damaging to a person's self-perception. Correlations have been found between daughters' perceptions of their mothers' body satisfaction, weight concerns, and appearance investment. Therefore, Fashion trends come and go; meanwhile a society's values are established and evolving characteristic to their beliefs and culture.

Fashion and Society

Society consists of an extended social group having a distinctive cultural and economic organization. Self-esteem and body image development results from an assembly of historical factors and other influences, such as early socialization about one's appearance or interpersonal experiences in adolescence. Over time, people adopt attitudes towards their bodies that, in turn, predispose how they perceive, interpret, and respond to situations. If an individual believes his or her appearance to be unsatisfactory, this may cause that person to believe that it is also socially unacceptable. Women who are 10 invested in appearance and who feel that their ideal physical self-differs from their actual self-report significantly higher levels of evaluative social anxiety. A strong purveyor of society is the media, which includes, but is not limited to, movies, magazines, music videos, music, television shows, and commercials (Williams, 2003) ^[10].

The women perceived themselves in clothing and fashion. They have a basic knowledge of their own interests and tastes. They shop for their own clothing and interact with the world around them and are active in society. The women have a positive self-esteem.

It is also every woman's right to have the decision to dress as she so chooses. Even today, women are expected to keep up with the trends and look fashionable. It is why it is empowering for women to be able to make their own choices when it comes to fashion. Whether a woman decides to go along with trends or not is her prerogative.

Reliability Test

Table 1(a): Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	645	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	645	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 1(b): Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.992	.992	13

Cronbach's Alpha is a convenient test used to estimate the reliability, or internal consistency, of a composite score. Cronbach's alpha gives us a simple way to measure whether or not a score is reliable. Theoretically, Cronbach's alpha results should give you a number from 0 to 1, the general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's alpha of .70 and above is good, .80 and above is better, .90 and above is best. Therefore, the table no. 1(a) depicts Cronbach's Alpha which is .992 which is a valid construct. Higher the value more reliable is the construct. For Valid Cronbach's Alpha the minimum value is 0.6. Hence, the construct is valid with a value of .992 for thirteen items which is excellent.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.933
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	22447.392
	df	78
	Sig.	.000

From the table no. 2, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) would be used to measure the "the sampling adequacy" of the data collected for the Regression analysis as this would help the researcher to know if the intended study (variables) is properly being measured, KMO returns values between 0 and 1. A KMO value between 0.8 and 1 indicates the sampling is adequate; therefore the sampling adequacy for the present study stands at .933 which is marvelous. While the Bartlett's test for sphericity is used for comparisons between correlation matrix and to see if there is any verbose in the measured variables.

By description, regression can explain the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Estimation means that by using the observed values of independent variables, the value of dependent variable can be estimated. Regression analysis can be useful for predicting the outcomes and changes in dependent variables based on the relationships of dependent and independent variables. Finally, regression enables in controlling the effect of one or more independent variables while investigating the relationship of one independent variable with the dependent variable.

One popular statistic is R Square, the coefficient of determination. R Square provides a measure of the strength of the linear relationship between the response and the predictor. In simple linear regression, R Square is the square of the correlation coefficient, r. This statistic, which falls between 0 and 1, measures the proportion of the total variation explained by the model.

R2 values should be equal to or greater than 0.10 in order for the variance explained of a particular endogenous construct to be deemed adequate. Therefore, R square value is .890 which is substantial, from table no. 3 reveals that there is a significant linear relationship between cultural significance and women's clothing and fashion in the present era of the select region.

Table 3: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.944 ^a	.890	.889	.35652

a) **Predictors: (Constant):** Women Self-perception a determining factor of their dress for each day, Women and their closest friends dress alike, Women's feel the clothes they wear define them at large, Women Habitually shop a four or more stores, Women weight dictates the stores they select to shop, Women's mood plays a major role in the clothes to wear, Women daily surroundings influence their dress, Women morals effect the clothes they wear, The culture influences their dress more than their daily surroundings, Women base their body image on the acceptance in the society.

b) **Dependent Variable:** Age

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a statistical procedure that helps interpret regression models by providing information about variability within them. From table no. 4 ANOVA is used to determine the effectiveness of independent variables in explaining the variation of the dependent variable. It can also be used to test whether the slope coefficients in a linear regression model are equal to zero.

Table 4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	654.992	10	65.499	515.322	.000 ^b
	Residual	80.584	634	.127		
	Total	735.575	644			

a) **Dependent Variable:** Age

b) **Predictors: (Constant),** Women Self-perception a determining factor of their dress for each day, Women and their closest friends dress alike, Women's feel the clothes they wear define them at large, Women Habitually shop a four or more stores, Women weight dictates the stores they select to shop, Women's mood plays a major role in the clothes to wear, Women daily surroundings influence their dress, Women morals effect the clothes they wear, The culture influences their dress more than their daily surroundings, Women base their body image on the acceptance in the society

The "F" column in the table provides a statistic for testing the hypothesis that 0 against the null hypothesis that = 0. Large values of the test statistic provide evidence against the null hypothesis. Hence, the F column is 515.322 so the alternate hypothesis is accepted as there is a significant relationship of cultural significance on women's clothing and fashion in the present era of the select region.

From table no. 5 examines that R Square provides a measure of the strength of the linear relationship between the response and the predictor. Therefore, R square value is .949 which is highly substantial; there is a significant linear relationship between cultural significance and women's clothing and fashion in the present era of the select region.

Table 5: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.974 ^a	.949	.948	.31534

- a) **Predictors: (Constant)**, Women Self-perception a determining factor of their dress for each day, Women and their closest friends dress alike, Women’s feel the clothes they wear define them at large, Women Habitually shop a four or more stores, Women weight dictates the stores they select to shop, Women's mood plays a major role in the clothes to wear, Women daily surroundings influence their dress, Women morals effect the clothes they wear, The culture influences their dress more than their daily surroundings, Women base their body image on the acceptance in the society
- b) **Dependent Variable:** Income

The "F" column in the table provides a statistic for testing the hypothesis that 0 against the null hypothesis that = 0. Large values of the test statistic provide evidence against the null hypothesis. Hence, from the table no. 6 observes that F column is 1174.574 so the alternate hypothesis is accepted as there is a significant relationship of cultural significance on women’s clothing and fashion in the present era of the select region.

Table 6: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	1168.015	10	116.801	1174.574	.000 ^b
	Residual	63.046	634	.099		
	Total	1231.060	644			

- a) **Dependent Variable:** Income
- b) **Predictors: (Constant)**, Women Self-perception a determining factor of their dress for each day, Women and their closest friends dress alike, Women’s feel the clothes they wear define them at large, Women Habitually shop a four or more stores, Women weight dictates the stores they select to shop, Women's mood plays a major role in the clothes to wear, Women daily surroundings influence their dress, Women morals effect the clothes they wear, The culture influences their dress more than their daily surroundings, Women base their body image on the acceptance in the society

R Square provides a measure of the strength of the linear relationship between the response and the predictor. Therefore, R square value is .925 from table no. 7 which is highly substantial; there is a significant linear relationship between cultural significance and women’s clothing and fashion in the present era of the select region.

Table 7: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.962 ^a	.925	.924	.32773

- a) **Predictors: (Constant)**, Women Self-perception a determining factor of their dress for each day, Women and their closest friends dress alike, Women’s feel the clothes they wear define them at large, Women Habitually shop a four or more stores, Women weight dictates the stores they select to shop, Women's mood plays a major role in the clothes to wear, Women daily surroundings influence their dress, Women morals effect the clothes they wear, The culture influences their dress more than their daily surroundings, Women base their body image on the acceptance in the society
- b) **Dependent Variable:** Locality

Table 7: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	843.934	10	84.393	785.717	.000 ^b
	Residual	68.098	634	.107		
	Total	912.031	644			

- a) **Dependent Variable:** Locality
- b) **Predictors: (Constant)**, Women Self-perception a determining factor of their dress for each day, Women and their closest friends dress alike, Women’s feel the clothes they wear define them at large, Women Habitually shop a four or more stores, Women weight dictates the stores they select to shop, Women's mood plays a major role in the clothes to wear, Women daily surroundings influence their dress, Women morals effect the clothes they wear, The culture influences their dress more than their daily surroundings, Women base their body image on the acceptance in the society

The "F" column in the table provides a statistic for testing the hypothesis that 0 against the null hypothesis that = 0. Large values of the test statistic provide evidence against the null hypothesis. Hence, the table no. 8 interprets that F column is 785.717 so alternate hypothesis is accepted as there is a significant relationship of cultural significance on women’s clothing and fashion in the present era of the select region.

Conclusion

Further today’s anonymous style trends opens up the societal expressions unheard and unseen ever before just evocative of the spirit of our moments that does not bother whether the content is worth artistic and meaningful which could give a hint or two about the individuals real existence and real needs. Since this study only focused on self-perception and other areas that influence a woman’s buying habits such as income, availability, and uniqueness. Besides, it requires background knowledge and understanding of the culture behind in order to realize that. Most of the common people do not have the ability to identify the culture, and the garment does not have any requirement to the buyer. Therefore, the garment is successfully incorporated into the pop culture during this process.

Many people not only follow the latest trends and styles but also believe and emulate the images of sticky skinny that are projected by fashion industry. Today’s new generation prefer western outfits than traditional. At least wear traditional costumes in the festivals and rituals so that it can be carried forward and be known by the coming generation. Indian fashion today is about change, price, brand, confidence and position. Hence, the future of fashion will be very different from its past.

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