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“Fashion Sustainability” Inverstigated: Does Fashion or Style Generate More Life Satisfaction?

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This manuscript takes a macro perspective of consumer satisfaction in order to investigate whether one can argue that consumer satisfaction with the apparel industry may compensate in a cost/benefit sense for the environmental harm caused by the production, maintenance, and disposal of apparel. We make the case that style orientations lead to more sustainable patterns than do fashion orientations. Consumers aged 16-35 were surveyed in national surveys in five countries as to their apparel usage, their fashion versus style orientations, their perspectives of sustainable fashion, and their quality of life in a variety of domains. We hypothesize that older consumers will be more style-oriented than younger consumers, and that style-orientation will be associated with higher levels of quality of life than fashion-orientation.

Introduction

In an era in which meaningful sustainability efforts are becoming very evident in the business world, the fashion industry is receiving increasing criticism for its emphasis on the purchase of trendy items, many of which are discarded in the relative short term. The social evils of the industry are easy to note, and will be subsequently. Is there a compensating balance? Does fashion add to consumer well-being? The purpose of this manuscript is to acknowledge explicitly the harm associated with the fashion industry and to investigate whether fashion adds to the quality of life of young adults (ages 16-35).

‘Evil’ Perceptions of the Fashion Industry

Any industry based on planned obsolescence, as is the fashion industry, is susceptible to criticism of its ethical conduct. The practices of the fashion industry, especially the recently developed fast fashion segment, are largely indefensible from a sustainability perspective. The fashion industry creates environmental concerns due to production, maintenance, and disposal.

Production. The production of clothing requires high resource levels. For example, cotton, found in most clothing, is the most pesticide-dependent crop in the world, using approximately 25% of the world’s insecticides. The 5% of cotton-bearing land in India uses 55% of all pesticides in India. The average cotton t-shirt requires 1/3 pound of pesticide (Lee undated). Another concern with the production process is the water usage which lately has increased tremendously in the developing world. For example, it is estimated that Indian textile effluent is about 300 million liters per day (O Ecotextiles 2010).

Synthetic fibers are developed within factories and do not require water to grow textiles, but the production processes endanger workers and the environment through the use of hazardous chemicals (Lynch 2009). Almost all dyes, specialty chemicals, and finishing chemicals are applied to textiles in water baths. The various fabric preparation processes (desizing, scouring, bleaching, and mercerizing) use water, and most processes are followed by a thorough washing to remove the chemicals before the next step. Eventually the water used is returned to the ecosystem, usually without any attempt to remove the chemicals used in the milling processes. Groundwater is polluted and the health of those who use water downstream is put at increased risk due to the dyestuff, solubalisers and dispersants, leveling agents, soaping and dyeing agents, finishing chemicals, cationic and nonionic softeners, and a few other assorted chemicals in the effluent (O Ecotextiles 2010).

Maintenance. Textiles are costly (both from out-of-pocket and environmental perspectives) to keep usable as well. Social norms on hygiene and demands for cleanliness go hand in hand with the environmental burden regarding energy, water, and detergent use (Mont, 2004). Dry cleaning involves the use of the toxic chemical known as perc, which has been linked to reproductive problems, including miscarriage and male infertility, as well as disorders of the central nervous system (MacEachern 2008, 241). Tumble drying of clothing accounts for 60% of the use phase energy. It is estimated (Fletcher 2008, 81) that eliminating tumble drying and ironing, in combination with a lower washing temperature, would lead to about a 50% energy reduction related to the product.

Maintenance practices like washing can also create environmental issues. Currently, Europeans wash their clothes with hot water, as the average temperature is 45.8°C (Stamminger 2009). Detergents have become more environmentally friendly in recent years mainly due to product reformulations where, for example, detergents are more efficient at lower temperatures, and by replacing harmful chemicals with bio-based, degradable ingredients (Laitala et al. 2011). However, consumers experience difficulties understanding dosing instructions properly, especially considering the hardness of water, the dirtiness of the clothes, and the amount of clothes being washed which may result in overdosing (Järvi and Paloviita 2007). To extend the life of garments during the use phase, mending is another important aspect. As a recent survey shows, young Swedish consumers aged between 16 and 30 years mend their clothing more often than had been previously assumed; consumers indicated that they mend their clothes sometimes (39.7%) or often/always (29.3%) (Gwozdz et al. 2013).

Disposal. The US is a throw-away society, and much of what is disposed of is clothing. There is a variety of clothing disposal methods possible, which include disposing of fashion items in rubbish bins, selling fashion garments via E-bay, car boot sales or consignment shops, donation to charity shops, clothes thrown in landfills, etc. The World Wide Resource Institute reported that 51.2% (64000 tons) of consumer textile products end up in landfills each year in the US (Koch and Domina 1997). Lee (undated) later reported that Americans discard an estimated 68 pounds of clothing a year, with about 1/7 of that being recycled or reused. Goodwill Industries is able to sell about half of the items it receives at its recycling sites, with the remainder sold to textile dealers and brokers (rag dealers) after baling it. The global recycling industry consists of approximately 3000 businesses that are able to divert over 1.25 million tons of post-consumer textile waste annually (Lee undated). Sorted garments are compressed into bales from which the

better graded used clothing is exported to Central American and the lower graded clothing is shipped to Africa and Asia. The world's largest importers of used clothing are sub-Saharan countries, receiving over 25% of global secondhand exports. A possible byproduct of these imported cheap clothes is the harm being done to emerging textile industries in developing countries from the cheap competition.

Does Consumption Lead to Life Satisfaction?

There is much evidence that wealth does not lead to greater happiness or life satisfaction, as long as one has enough money to cover a basic level of needs (Escuder-Mollon 2013). But, as detailed below, there is evidence also that the shopping process can lead to positive increases in a variety of individual constructs.

Ekici et al. (2014) noted that existing research indicates that shopping may contribute to the well-being of consumers by creating hedonic enjoyment and satisfaction of self-expressive needs. Specifically, scholars have argued that shopping is associated with hedonic value (e.g., Arnold and Reynolds 2003, 2012; Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994), excitement and delight (e.g., Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997; Wakefield and Baker 1998), and enjoyment (e.g., Beatty and Ferrell 1998). Shopping activities have been described as a form of "recreation" (e.g., Backstrom 2006; Guiry, Magi, and Lutz 2006), entertainment (e.g., Moss 2007), or related to enthusiasm that creates emotional arousal and joy (e.g., Jin and Sternquist 2004; Pooler 2003). After all, Firat (1999) stated that today's culture of consumption is the equation of success and development with accumulation of material products.

While shopping in general has been found to have positive effects on some relatively macro satisfaction constructs, it is not clear that fashion consumption has those same effects. Most of the satisfaction literature dealing with fashion has investigated the evaluation of particular apparel purchases (Francis and Browne 1991; Francis and Burns 1992; Francis and Davis; Hong and Racker 1995; Shim and Bickle 1993) or with the variety of apparel disposal options (Francis and Butler 1994), rather than with the role of fashion in terms of one's life satisfaction. The next section will provide perspective on this possibility.

A Case for the Fashion Industry?

The macro perspective taken in this manuscript is concerned with the evolution of sustainable fashion. Sustainable consumption in the fashion industry seems unlikely, as the planned obsolescence underlying most fashions results in destructive consumption. Thus, from a standard economic stance, the fashion industry would seem to be hard to justify and quite easy to point fingers at for being socially irresponsible. However, Connolly and Prothero (2003, p. 278) warn "that an over emphasis on the functional/utilitarian aspects of consumption, which is essentially an economist's perspective, will not further the cost of sustainable consumption." Taking a more humanistic approach by looking for possible benefits derived from fashion, the most obvious benefit of the fashion industry is its provision of uniqueness in terms of one's personal identity, which is especially more prominent in individualistic cultures such as the United States. Thus, the possibility of symbolic benefits being offered by fashion behooves us to develop a more comprehensive definition for sustainable consumption.

Schaefer and Crane (2005) noted that “sustainability” has been subjected to multiple interpretations and meanings, while Reisch (1998) wrote that there are more than two dozen definitions of “sustainable consumption.” In brief, sustainability is defined as the meeting of the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, thus not threatening long-term viability (Brundlandt 1987). However, as noted by Dolan (2002), to understand sustainable consumption one has to define what constitutes proper needs. In fact, consumption is an embedded process and thus the notion of sustainable consumption should account for the significance of consumption practices as embodying the relations between individuals. Thus, discussion of sustainable consumption should not center on the individual and his or her needs and wants, but rather should take into account the cultural meaningfulness of consumption activities, which is largely ignored by looking at the micro meanings of sustainable consumption (Slater 1997). We need to understand facets of life that through the process of consumption people can establish their own identity and thus are able to make visible the social and cultural differences between people. Once we see consumer practices as social practices embedded in social relations, then only may we truly understand the concept of sustainable consumption.

Given Dolan’s perspective, before defining sustainable fashion, we as researchers need to understand what clothing symbolizes in modern culture. Does it just mean wearing clothes to protect a body, thus fulfilling the basic physiological need, or does it symbolize consumption through which people are able to communicate their identities to others (Goffman 1959; Timothy 2005)? Clothing is a form of non-verbal communication, reflecting symbolic and social consumption with an aim to establish identity and appearance management (Ostberg 2012). Belk (1988) noted that clothing, housing, and cars are acquired as a “second skin” in which others may see us. Clothes enhance an individual’s self-image, which is a mixture of social conformity (i.e., peer approval) and the expression of his/her own individuality (Marsh, Eckert, and Potter 2010). Similarly, O’Cass (2000) argues that fashion clothing tells others how much status an individual has, and what the individual is like (e.g., professional, sexy, casual).

One approach to propagate sustainable fashion consumption is to shift consumer focus from quantity to quality (to reduce the purchasing of apparel); in other words, a shift in consumer focus from buying fashion to buying styles is needed. Style and fashion are often used synonymously, but in reality they have different meanings (Gregory 1948; Bly, Gwozdz, and Reisch 2015). With reference to clothing, style is any distinctive mode of tailoring, while fashion is the style prevailing at any given time. Wilson (2003) noted that a key feature of fashion is the rapid and continually changing of styles. A style evolves slowly and reflects people’s ways of life, whereas fashion is a chameleon, ever changing thus creating a high rate of obsolescence. Thus, buying styles, rather than buying fashion, would reduce consumption, which is one of the three R’s (reduce, reuse, and recycle) and becomes one possible solution to ethical fashion consumption. We see our emphasis on style versus fashion as a subset of the more comprehensive slow fashion movement (Erekin and Atik 2015; Fletcher 2008).

DeYoung (1996) suggested that a lifestyle focused on restraining consumption of resources can lead to higher levels of satisfaction. We suggest that since style orientation is likely to be associated with reduced consumption, it will lead to higher satisfaction among consumers.

On the other hand, consumers who indulge in fashion orientation may under stress due to the need to acquire knowledge about the latest fashions and buying them. Increased consumption that supports fashion orientation may actually lead to lower experiences of positive affect, greater levels of depression, anxiety, and physical ailments, all reflecting less satisfaction with health. Further, Kim, Choo, and Yoon (2013) suggest fashion orientation epitomizes materialistic consumption. Thus, fashion orientation involves materialistic values that are further related to lessened involvement in family, community, and social issues (Kasser 2002). Solberg, Diener, and Robinson (2004) also suggest a “built-in-trade-off” between materialism and quality of relationships. Materialistic individuals are also suggested to be less satisfied with their 'life as a whole' as well as with the life domains of standard of living, 'family life,' and 'amount of fun and enjoyment.' Thus, we will test the following hypotheses:

H1: The higher the fashion orientation, the lower is quality of life.

H2: The higher the style orientation, the higher is quality of life.

Further, we speculate that consumer perceptions of style versus fashion will change as one matures. Though age has been identified as an important dimension that influences clothing consumption (O’Cass 2001), consumer research has largely overlooked the importance of examining how fashion versus style orientation changes over time. It should be noted that these two orientations really deal with subtle differences that may be oblivious to many consumers, especially younger ones. We believe that “fashion” is more important to younger consumers (late teens to young adults). Younger people place more emphasis on their appearance as they tend to be more socially active and need to show their look to friends (Vieira 2009). They place more emphasis on their appearance as they want to be accepted in a reference group, to imitate an aspiration group, or to gain social recognition (Schiffman and Kanuk 2006).

However, with maturity, consumers tend to form an identity which tends to remain somewhat stable with age changes (Rocha, Hammond, and Hawkins 2005). As clothes help communicate one’s identity to others, older consumers are more likely to wear their own styles rather than focus on being fashionable, so as to resonate with a consistent identity (Ekstrom, Hjelgren, and Salomonson 2015). Further, wearing their own styles helps mature consumers fit with their identities, allowing themselves to be their own persons. Chowdhary (1988) found that mature consumer samples prefer to wear style. Among the sampled consumers, only 25% actually chose apparel that was currently fashionable; the remaining 75% selected classic styles more fashionable in previous decades. Watson and Yan (2013) also argued that consumers who prefer to purchase clothes that complement their existing style and wardrobe value quality and tend to avoid buying fast fashion (i.e., clothing that reflects the latest fashion trends). Consumers who buy style and quality are more satisfied with their clothes and wear them through several seasons, thus reducing their urge to buy more (Watson and Yan 2013)

The above comments resonate with the views expressed by two females in their late twenties who were interviewed in a preliminary study to explore perspective about fashion versus style orientations.

I used to buy fashion when I was a teenager. Now, I just make my own styles....To be stylish it is not just about the clothing that you are wearing. It is also about your hair cut, the make-up you chose, jewelry, the shoes. So I think to be stylish you don’t have to make more purchases. With

style I think you are more sustainable than you are with fashion. [Jen 29]

Style is more long term and classy, and fashion is more short term and trendy. I tend to buy more style....I tend not to buy a lot of fashion simply because I am scared that it is possible that I will wear them twice and they will be out of fashion and then I won't want to wear it again....I think as I grew older I bought more style. Stylish means consuming less or buying less, and the consequence is that my clothes last longer. [Elaine 26]

As such, some consumers see a difference between the two orientations and how it changes with age. Thus, based on the above literature and exploratory qualitative interviews, we propose the following:

H3: As one progresses in age, one is less likely to indulge in fashion orientation.

H4: As one progresses in age, one is more likely to indulge in style orientation.

Method

Sample and Measurements

To investigate the above hypotheses, we draw on a representative sample of Swedish, U.K., German, U.S. and Dutch consumers aged 16 to 35 years. The sample size is about 1,000 per country resulting in a total sample size of 6,386 respondents. The data collection was carried out by GfK in Sweden, U.K., the Netherlands, and Germany and the survey research center at the University of Illinois-Springfield in the U.S. during March and June 2014. The sample is representative by sex, age, region and education within the given age group. The survey addressed aspects of general fashion consumption with regard to purchase and disposal as well as aspects of sustainable fashion consumption. For further information on the survey, see Gwozdz et al. (2013).

To measure consumers' *fashion orientation*, we draw on items stemming from Sproles and Kendall (1986), who developed an instrument for measuring the fashion consciousness of consumers. We use the original scale including the six items. The answer categories range from 1 'completely disagree' to 5 'completely agree.'

To measure *style orientation*, we draw on Tai (2005) and Tiggemann and Lacey (2009). Specifically, we use one item from Tai (2005) (two items of this scale had to be deleted due to low factor loadings) and two items from Tiggemann and Lacey's (2009) scale on the individuality function of clothing. The three remaining items are presented in Table 2. Again, answer categories ranged from 1 'completely disagree' to 5 'completely agree.' A high value indicates a high style and/or fashion orientation. Interesting to note: fashion and style orientation are significantly positively correlated ($r = .59, p \leq .001$).

Table 1: Reliability and Validity of Measurement Model

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
Style consciousness	.732	.482	.242	.130
Fashion consciousness	.934	.701	.242	.134
Personal Wellbeing PWI	.929	.652	.026	.022

Note: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance explained; MSV = maximum shared variance; ASV average shared variance

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the measurement model

Items per concept	Original concept	M	SD	CFA estimates¹
<i>Style orientation</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>3.16</i>	<i>.81</i>	
I tend to select clothes that make me distinctive.	Tiggemann, M. & Lacey, C. (2009).	3.16	1.05	.808
I tend to select clothes that are rare.	'Individuality	2.75	1.07	.694
When buying clothes, I like to buy those which emphasize my own characteristics.	Function' dimension; Tai, Susan H. C. (2005). Style orientation	3.56	.908	.558
<i>Fashion orientation</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>2.61</i>	<i>1.01</i>	
Keeping up with the latest fashion is important to me.	Sproles, G. & Kendall, E. (1986)	2.48	1.16	.872
I keep my wardrobe up-to-date with the changing fashions.		2.60	1.16	.876
I consciously choose something that reflects the current fashion.		2.71	1.15	.828
I usually have one or more outfits of the very new fashion.		2.68	1.17	.838
I spend considerable time and effort to learn about the latest fashion.		2.25	1.17	.818
Fashionable, attractive clothing is very important to me.		2.94	1.15	.790
<i>Personal Wellbeing (PWI)</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>6.51</i>	<i>1.92</i>	
your standard of living?	<i>International</i>	6.66	2.17	.825
your health?	<i>Wellbeing Group</i>	6.65	2.26	.751
what you are achieving in life?	<i>(2013)</i>	6.27	2.33	.869
your personal relationships?		6.72	2.45	.748

how safe you feel?	6.82	2.21	.808
feeling part of your community?	6.24	2.35	.792
your future security?	6.24	2.38	.850

Note: M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation;

No missing values – N=6,386 for all items;

Single items: Min = 1, Max = 5; Scores: Min = 1, Max = 5, except PWI: Min = 0, Max = 10

¹ standardized regression weights of measurement models

Measuring quality of life, we draw on the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) developed by the International Wellbeing Group (2013). The PWI consists of 7 items on satisfaction with specific life domains. Answer categories vary from 0 ‘not at all satisfied’ to 10 ‘completely satisfied.’ To get a score on subjective wellbeing, we calculated the mean of all 7 items.

We employed confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation analysis (SEM) in IBM SPSS Amos 22 using the maximum likelihood estimator. In a first step, we carried out a confirmatory factor analysis with all three measurements: style orientation, fashion orientation and PWI. The structural model was assessed in a second step testing H1 and H2. Subsequently, to investigate H3 and H4, we carried out a multigroup comparison. Table 1 shows the reliability and validity measures for style-, fashion- orientation and PWI, and Table 2 displays the item statistics for the three measures. The results are presented below.

Results

The average age of the sample is 26.2 years (min = 16, max = 35) and 47.4% are female, with 21.1% of the respondents from Sweden, 21.5% from the U.K., 20.9% from Germany, 14.1% from the U.S. and 22.4% from the Netherlands. Table 3 depicts descriptive differences between younger and older consumers, i.e., consumer aged 16 – 24 (n=2,651) and consumers aged 25 – 35 years (n=3,735), for the whole sample and by country. Against our hypothesis (H3) that style orientation is higher with older age, we find a slightly higher style orientation for younger consumers. Regarding fashion orientation, that of the older consumers is statistically lower compared to younger consumers, supporting our hypothesis (H4). Thus, both style and fashion orientations declined with age. We varied the age delineating young and older from 25 to 30, and did not find that older consumers were more style oriented than younger ones under any delineation.

For the comparisons between younger and older consumers within each country, we employed a t-test. The results of the country comparisons are not presented in Table 3. Interesting to note here is that the U.K. and the US score highest in style and fashion orientation, and Sweden, Germany and Netherlands lowest for both style and fashion. Table 4 presents the SEM results for the whole sample and by age. Generally, we find positive relationships between both style orientations and fashion orientation and PWI. Thus, we find no support for H1, but can confirm H2. When looking at younger and older consumers, we find about the same strength of relationship between style orientation and PWI, but a stronger relationship between fashion orientation and PWI for older consumers. Thus, fashion orientation adds to one’s quality of life, and more so for older consumers, contrary to what we hypothesized.

Table 3: Style and Fashion Orientation by Age and Country

Measurement	All	Age < 25 years	Age ≥ 25 years	t-value	p-value
<i>Style orientation</i>					
All		3.19	3.14	2.40*	.016
Sweden	3.11	3.17	3.07	2.15*	.032
UK	3.30	3.26	3.33	1.43	.152
Germany	3.13	3.18	3.08	2.42*	.015
US	3.46	3.55	3.40	2.63**	.009
Netherlands	2.91	2.93	2.88	1.27	.205
<i>Fashion orientation</i>					
All		2.66	2.57	3.51***	≤.001
Sweden	2.29	2.28	2.29	.25	.804
UK	2.93	2.93	2.92	.114	.909
Germany	2.63	2.74	2.54	3.74***	≤ .001
US	2.91	2.93	2.89	.51	.608
Netherlands	2.40	2.48	2.33	3.37***	.001
<i>Personal Wellbeing PWI</i>					
All		6.45	6.56	2.41**	.016
Sweden	6.48	6.28	6.58	2.71**	.007
UK	5.95	5.82	6.04	1.73	.083
Germany	6.50	6.49	6.51	.14	.888
US	6.57	6.43	6.66	1.69	.091
Netherlands	7.07	7.10	7.05	.91	.361

Note: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Table 4: SEM results style – and fashion orientation on PWI by age

	ALL	Age < 25 years	Age ≥ 25 years
DV: PWI			
Style orientation	.08* [.04; .10]	.11** [.06; .16]	.06* [.02;.09]
Fashion orientation	.13*** [.11;.16]	.10** [.06;.14]	.16*** [.13;.19]
Obs.	6,386	2,651	3,735
Model fit: CFI = .959; GFI = .948; AGFI = .928; NFI = .955; RMSEA = .022			

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Standardized coefficients, Bootstrapped confidence intervals in parentheses (n=200; bias-corrected percentile method); controls: age, education; moderators: sex, country

CFI = Comparative Fit Index; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index; NFI = Normed Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Table 5 shows the mean satisfactions levels on the overall PWI score as well as the seven PWI items across countries (measured on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied). For the country group comparisons, we employed ANOVA (posthoc test: Games-Howell). Quite clearly, young Brits are far more dissatisfied with all facets of life than are their counterparts in Sweden, Germany, and the US. Dutch consumers are most satisfied in all areas and overall compared to all others. Next we correlated the satisfaction measures with style orientation and fashion orientation, with the results shown in Table 6 and then carried out the SEM, with the results presented in Table 7. The hypothesized patterns of results were found, but only in Germany (fashion orientation relates less strongly to satisfaction than does style orientation). The pattern of results are the opposite in the Swedish, US and Dutch data, with fashion orientation being more strongly related to satisfaction. There are no discernible differences in the patterns of relationships in the UK, nor for the aggregated satisfaction measures across countries. At this point, we have no meaningful explanation for the different results across countries.

Table 5: Satisfaction Measures by Country

	All	Sweden	UK	Germany	US	Nether-lands
PWI Score	6.51	6.48	5.95	6.50	6.57	7.07
1. Satisfaction with Living Standards	6.66	6.78	6.14	6.58	6.53	7.20
2. Satisfaction with Health	6.65	6.49	6.14	6.73	6.68	7.20
3. Satisfaction with Achievements	6.27	6.28	5.70	6.24	6.23	6.86
4. Satisfaction with Personal Relations	6.72	6.74	6.23	6.73	6.67	7.19
5. Satisfaction with Safety	6.82	6.59	6.36	6.62	7.39	7.31
6. Satisfaciton with Part in Community	6.24	6.25	5.43	6.43	6.24	6.85
7. Satisfaction with the Future	6.24	6.21	5.62	6.18	6.26	6.89

Table 6: Correlations between the Satisfaction Measures and Style and Fashion Orientation, by Country

Style orientation with ...	All	Sweden	UK	Germany	US	Nether-lands
PWI Score	.13	.06*	.34	.15	.19	-.02ns
1. Satisfaction with Living Standards	.11	.05ns	.27	.14	.18	.00ns
2. Satisfaction with Health	.11	.06*	.28	.13	.16	-.02ns
3. Satisfaction with Achievements	.12	.07*	.32	.11	.18	.01ns
4. Satisfaction with Personal Relations	.11	.07	.25	.12	.16	.00ns
5. Satisfaction with Safety	.09	.03ns	.25	.10	.07*	-.06*
6. Satisfaction with Part in Community	.11	.02ns	.32	.15	.18	.01ns
7. Satisfaction with the Future	.09	.03ns	.29	.10	.17	-.06*
Fashion orientation with ...	All	Sweden	UK	Germany	US	Nether-lands
PWI Score	.15	.12	.31	.09	.30	.05*
1. Satisfaction with Living Standards	.09	.05ns	.25	.03ns	.24	.01ns
2. Satisfaction with Health	.13	.10	.29	.08	.24	.04ns
3. Satisfaction with Achievements	.16	.11	.31	.11	.29	.09
4. Satisfaction with Personal Relations	.08	.07*	.19	.03ns	.20	.02ns
5. Satisfaction with Safety	.08	.08	.18	.06*	.11	-.07*
6. Satisfaction with Part in Community	.17	.15	.34	.09	.33	.11
7. Satisfaction with the Future	.15	.12	.29	.09	.28	.08
Obs.	6,386	1,351	1,373	1,335	898	1,429
Note: All correlations are significant at the .01 level except those indicated by * (p<.05) or ns (p>.05)						

Table 7: SEM results style orientation and fashion orientation on PWI by country

	Sweden	UK	Germany	US	Netherlands
DV: PWI					
Style	.03 [-.03;.09]	.26*** [.20;.34]	.10* [.02;.17]	.02 [-.05;.10]	-.03 [-.10;.04]
Fashion	.11** [.06;.16]	.22* [.15;.26]	.07* [.02;.13]	.31** [.24;.38]	.09* [.03;.14]
Obs.	1,351	1,373	1,335	898	1,429
Model fit: CFI = .959; GFI = .948; AGFI = .928; NFI = .955; RMSEA = .022					

Note: *** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05

Standardized coefficients, Bootstrapped confidence intervals in parentheses (n=200; bias-corrected percentile method); controls: age, education; moderators: sex, country

CFI = Comparative Fit Index; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index; NFI = Normed Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Discussion

The fashion industry is subject to a great deal of criticism in terms of its environmental impact, from the resources used and polluted in the creation of apparel, the energy used in its maintenance, and the vast amounts of apparel disposed of without recycling. This paper asked if there was any compensatory balance in terms of fashion benefiting consumers' life satisfaction. Both style orientation and fashion orientation were significantly positively correlated with almost all facets of life satisfaction, indicating that both style and fashion orientations are associated with wellbeing. We hypothesized that fashion orientation would be negatively related to satisfaction, but found no evidence of that. In fact, we found that fashion orientation was far more strongly related to wellbeing than was style orientation. We had proposed that style orientation would be more strongly related to satisfaction than would fashion orientation. In general, no such relationship was found. In both Sweden and the US, fashion orientation was much more strongly related to satisfaction than was style orientation. The lowest levels of life satisfaction were found in the UK, which is where the highest correlations were found between both orientations and satisfaction. This may be the strongest finding in support of the fashion industry, as one interpretation is that are young shoppers there are in need of a source of pleasure. Alternatively, one might argue that young Brits are less satisfied with life because they are so involved with fashion. More research is needed in order to disentangle these relationships.

Despite the results, the authors still believe that younger consumers are more susceptible to the immediacy of fashion appeal than are older ones. Whereas fashion orientation has a rich history of measurement, style orientation has not been investigated with similar depth. Our measure of style orientation was cobbled together, and no doubt needs further development before the relative importance of fashion versus style is determined accurately.

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