

Minority Fashion Contexts

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2. Celebrity endorsement as a tool for building credibility with minority fashion consumers: an analysis on luxury cosmetic for mature women

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Jennifer Brown, Elaine L Ritch, Noreen Siddiqui and Norman Peng (Glasgow Caledonian University)

Declaration:

Each presenter has agreed to register for the conference and to present the paper, if the proposal is accepted; and none of the papers has been submitted to other conference tracks, and none have previously been presented at EMAC.

Abstract

The fashion industry is highly competitive on a global platform, and mainstream fashion retailing is dominated by homogenous international chains, such as H&M, Zara, Topshop, Gap and Primark. Similar prepotency is replicated in the UK and most high street fashion retailers compose of the brands listed above, alongside UK retailers, for example M&S, Monsoon, New Look etc. Further competition is intensified with solely online fashion retailers, including ASOS, Boohoo and IntheStyle. Given the levels of competition, some well-established retailers in the UK have been forced into liquidation in recent years (for example House of Fraser, Debenhams) and the current marketplace concentrates on speed to market (rapid reactions to newly evolving trends) and lower price points. The implications that this dominating fast-fashion business model has upon the fashion industry limit choice, in terms of heterogenous styles and alternative consumption options that avoid allegations of exploiting the environment or garment-workers, which have been levied for a number of decades. Moreover, this homogenised approach to design, retailing and marketing does not take into account that fashion consumers are heterogenous, in terms of style, demographics, psychographics and related idiographic moral, ethical and political constructs.

This special session presents research into fashion consumers who do not fall into a homogenous profile; we argue that these '*minority*' consumers are neglected by the mainstream fashion industry due to assumptions they are no longer interested in fashion, as is the case of mature or generation-X consumers, or disinterested in westernised fashion trends, as assumed of Muslim fashion consumers or have preferences for subculture fashion, as sought by vintage consumers. We argue that this narrow vision neglects to recognise these cohorts have significant market potential. For example, the research carried out by Amores et al. and Brown et al. illustrate that more mature consumers are still involved with, and care about, their appearance, leading to engaging with cosmetics and fashion. Further, many of this cohort have a higher disposable incomes and seek indulgent experiences. Yet, Amores et al. and Brown et al. illustrate how marketers both misunderstand this cohort and focus on younger consumers as their main demographic. Similarly, Akin et al. presents research that has found that young Muslim women are highly involved in fashion, constructing and recreating western fashion to respect their religion. Within the growth of the Muslim population and emancipation of Muslim women, this cohort also has significant spending power. Finally, Canning et al. examine the appeal of vintage fashion. Whilst this may seem

like an antithesis to the fashion industry, Selfridges in London recently opened a concession brand that buys and sells second-hand clothes among the designer ranges. Rising interest in redistribution fashion markets is a reaction against allegations that the fashion industry is a major environmental polluter, exploits workers in developing countries and focuses on homogenous styles. Collectively, this research adopts a more diverse approach to fashion consumption through examining the neglected fashion consumer and provides rich insight that can inform the product and service innovation, as well as marketing.

Consuming Vintage: Motivation and behaviour of vintage fashion consumers

Catherine Canning, Linda Shearer and Julie McColl (Glasgow Caledonian University)

Keywords: Vintage fashion, vintage consumer, consumer decision making, ethical fashion.

Over the past 20 years there has been an increasing trend for vintage fashion clothing (McColl et al., 2017). Previously, second-hand clothing was purchased by low income groups, economically disadvantaged in terms of mainstream fashion. More recently, however, vintage clothing has become an alternative or an additional choice to high street fashion (Veenstra & Kuipers, 2013). Vintage stores and markets have become a desirable source for acquiring fashion items. This is the result of increasing societal acceptance of an aesthetic shift, with vintage fashion being intended as a means of self-expression and differentiation (Tungate, 2008; Veenstra & Kuipers, 2013).

The acceptance of second-hand clothing as an alternative to high street fashion is partly due to the resurgence of fashion styles from the 1960s to the 1990s and the influence of celebrity culture (McColl et al., 2013). Consumers are increasingly aware of unethical practices in the fashion industry (Brace-Govan & Binay, 2010) and have become less tolerant of disposable fashion and more suspicious of the behaviour of global brands (Tungate, 2008). The move of vintage from niche sub-culture to mainstream may be evidenced by the increased vintage offerings by high street, luxury and online retailers in the UK and Internationally and by the plethora of guides on selecting and assembling vintage clothing (Tungate, 2008). This apparent increase in vintage offerings has broadened the opportunities for consumption of vintage clothing and for some consumers, meets a need to be more sustainable and ethical.

Previous research in second hand and vintage fashion has neglected the production dimension whereby consumers not only trade but also engage with the attribution of meaning in a socio-cultural context (Turunen, et al., 2018). This working paper addresses the gap by focussing on consumer motivations to purchase, consume, dispose or trade vintage items. Ten consumers were interviewed in their homes and video evidence collected in relation to their wardrobes, belongings and online behaviour. Consumers were found to use vintage fashion as a means of self-expression and differentiation and as a vehicle for ethical purchasing. In addition, consumers value unusual and rare purchases as a successful achievement worthy of extensive search effort.

Celebrity endorsement as a tool for building credibility with minority fashion consumers: an analysis on luxury cosmetic for mature women

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Keywords: minority fashion consumers, luxury cosmetic, mature female, celebrity endorsement

Luxury cosmetic brands employ celebrity endorsement as a tool for building credibility with minority fashion consumers (Ilici et al., 2015). This study analyses the influence of celebrity endorsements on luxury cosmetic for mature women, aged 40-60, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. One of the objectives of the study is to examine the awareness or recognition level of mature female consumers with respect to celebrity endorsement campaigns by luxury cosmetic brands. Another objective is identify the features that they deem most credible in a celebrity endorser and to examine how mature female consumers perceive their own ideal self and whether the luxury cosmetic brands they buy are in synch with this ideal self.

Using aspects of the match-up hypothesis, from the stand point of mature female consumers, the study will help to understand whether luxury cosmetic brands are successfully choosing appropriate celebrities to endorse their brand and provide actionable recommendations, which will help stimulate further research to possibly improve the potential of celebrity endorsement as an efficient marketing tool for luxury cosmetic brands now and in the future. Contemporary research is centred for the most part on the buying behaviour of female luxury cosmetics users in the 25-40 segment. However, a minority fashion women

consumers in the 40+ demographic exist, and the potential influences on this market certainly deserve careful consideration by market researchers (Margaret et al., 2013). It is critical that luxury cosmetics brands ensure their products are not only within easy reach of their intended end users but are also able to have a positive effect on their purchase decision (Seno et al., 2007).

The study reveal that minority fashion consumers rather prefer to see famous who are closer to their age range endorsing luxury cosmetics. Also, the study shows that brands are increasingly prevailing on consumers to accept their age, rather than obscuring it. Trust, experience and appeal are the key attributes associated with creating a reliable celebrity supporter (Peters et al., 2011). Even so, respondents felt the celebrity's age was also a key attribute and endorsers must be age appropriate to the target audience. An overwhelming majority of 98 participants out of 100 participants were active on one social networking site at the very least. However, a massive majority of 98 percent of them answered in the negative when asked if ever a celebrity endorser had influenced them to buy a cosmetic brand. The reason could be their low recognition level about celebrity endorsers on social media, which is borne out by the fact that 85 percent of respondents acknowledged that they were not cognisant of celebrities endorsing luxury cosmetic brands via social networks. The results show that children were playing a key role in increasing their parents' awareness of celebrity endorsement. Participants in the study admitted that celebrity endorsers were indeed an influence on their children and, further, that they were in the habit of purchasing such endorsed products for their children. Further research on a larger sample size will be necessary in order to formulate stronger concepts for the mature female consumer market to be understood.

Understanding the Cultural Influences and the Role of Religion on British Muslim Women's Fashion Preferences in the UK

Emine Akin, Noreen Siddiqui and Elaine L Ritch (Glasgow Caledonian University)

Keywords: Consumer behaviour, Culture, Modest Fashion, Muslim Consumers, Muslim women consumers, religion, veiling fashion

In the UK, Muslims are the second largest religious group offering much potential in terms of market presence and spending power (Syed et al., 2011; Elseidi, 2018). Traditionally considered as 'minority consumers' in the UK, research has identified that younger Muslim

consumers are more ambitious, fashion conscious and cosmopolitan compared to previous Muslim generations (Syed et al., 2011). In particular, young Muslim women are interested in Western fashion brands (Syed et al., 2011). In order to seize that opportunity available in the market, western fashion brands are also trying to target Muslim fashion consumers. For example, many fashion brands, including both high street and high-end luxury brands, have made various attempts to engage with Muslim women through modest fashion collections; this includes: H&M; Marks and Spencer; DKNY; Tommy Hilfiger; Dolce Gabbana; and, Versace (Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016). However, little is known of how young female Muslim consumers engage with western fashion and the tensions between fashion and Muslim identities.

Islam, as a form of religion is classified as the third monotheistic Abrahamic faith that influences Muslims' consumer behaviour and this has been an interest of academic literature for many years including many different areas of research such as Islamic Banking, Halal Food Industry and Consumer Behaviour (Elseidi, 2018). Although traditionally a patriarchal culture, the role of Muslim women in society has recently regenerated, especially for UK 2nd and 3rd generation Muslims who have been socialised in western culture (Ajala, 2017). However, many still prefer to adhere to certain codes when it comes to their appearance. Modest Fashion, Islamic Fashion or Veiling Fashion are terms which have been created to define a specific fashion segment especially targeting for Muslim women who desire to dress modestly (Global Islamic Report, 2018/2019). This specialised fashion segment is driven by cultural and religious influences and becoming an even more trendy fashion segment in western countries. Yet as a new phenomenon, this topic has been neglected by academic research; particularly, the role of Islam and degree of influences that impact on Muslim consumers (especially on Muslim women) are not clearly defined. Although previous research has attempted to analyse religion and fashion, this has focused on Muslim dominated countries (Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016), rather than a westernised culture. Consequently, there is gap in research which analyses cultural influences and the role of religion (as a subculture) as to how both impact on Muslim women's' fashion preferences in the UK. There is an increasingly important as young ambitious and empowered Muslims become a significant force in terms of market presence and purchasing power.

This study critically explores the cultural influences, the impact of religion and how this informs fashion preferences for young Muslim women in the UK. The research study builds

upon mixed methodology to critically evaluate these forces, initially adopting inductive exploratory research to enable the generation of hypotheses. Preliminary outcomes revealed three main themes: fashion; culture; and, religion. Firstly, fashion gives an outline of their references, motivations and perceptions towards mostly western high street fashion brands and how they adapt fashion according to their religious limitations. Secondly, culture indicates a clear understanding that the participants fashion selection was not influenced by their cultural background, linking with their mixed cultural socialisation. Thirdly, religion was the most significant influence for the participants and each encountered different levels of limitations impacted by their religion. All of the participants have some similarities: all were fashion conscious and religion was an important influencer, they were all exposed to mixed cultures. The second stage of the data collection will include a questionnaire which will be distributed to British Muslim women who were either born in the UK or are full-time residents. Overall the results of this particular research will be useful for fashion brands which are considering this emerging consumer segment for especially UK high street fashion brands and contribute to the body of knowledge on fashion buyer behaviour to develop marketing strategies.

Exploring the role of fashion in identity creation for Generation X women

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Keywords: fashion; identity construction; aging; Generation-X; femininity

Although the fashion industry claims to be a non-age ordered market (Gilbert & Powell 2009), Generation-X females (Gen-XF) receive little attention from fashion retailers, marketers (Woo, 2018) or fashion consumption research (Cole & Yoon, 2008); the main focus is on younger consumers (Generation-Y and millennials), who are considered more fashion involved and profitable. The limited research carried out has found that Gen-XFs feel that fashion forces them into garments that age them, or that they opt for fashion produced for younger consumers that often does not fit their changing body-shape (Ritch, forthcoming). Further, the literature has neglected to examine how identity evolves and how fashion plays a role in identity trajectory (Black, 2013). Yet, Gen-XFs are still interested in fashion, both as an indulgent treat (Ritch, forthcoming) and in response to social pressure to maintain social belonging (Peters et al., 2011) they want to receive product offerings which will enable them to fully express their generational persona and identity construction beyond their actual age (McGregor, 2016).

Peters et al. (2011) believe that this is an area of research which is neglected, and it seems justifiable to assume that developing an understanding of how Generation-X females utilise fashion to create their identities would benefit the fashion industry; especially as a recent Experian report (2018) estimated this cohort spends on average £130.72 a week on fashion, which is substantially more than any other generation. Perceptions of feminine identities have evolved significantly over the last fifty years, and fashion has played a role in the trajectory of feminism and autonomy. In the 1980's when Gen-XFs were entering adulthood, societal expectations of femininity were evolving from domesticity, professional roles (and indeed the country was led by a female PM). Supporting this transition, fashion acts as a visual signifier of multiple constructs of femininity. As Gen-XFs enter maturity (50 years+), medical advancements and fitness trends have increased life expectancies; there are greater prospects for living longer in better health. However, 'ageism' is still experienced within society, especially the fashion industry. Many women struggle with the aging process and, for example, seek to mask grey hairs with hair dye, maintain a slim figure and purchase beauty products to minimise wrinkles and sagging skin. There has also been a rise in medical interventions to mitigate the aging process. As such, patriarchal assumptions of femininity as aesthetically pleasing continues, despite progress in the feminist movement. Little is known of how this is experienced in identity construction, particularly as fashion research and brands focuses on younger generations. We would argue that Gen-XFs are neglected by both and this research explores the relationship Gen-XFs have with fashion and identity construction.

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