



# Empowerment Couture: “Unveiling the psychology of fashion with regards to Women Empowerment”

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**Abstract:** Empowerment is all about confidence and fashion is an amazing tool to reflect the same. Fashion and clothing are a phenomenon that penetrates deep into the aesthetic and psychological characteristics of the person. Fashion allows women to express their personality, creativity, and individuality. By choosing their clothing and accessories, women can convey their style and make a statement about who they are. An individual's dressing sense symbolizes self-empowerment and confidence. For most of the important events of life, the first thing that comes to mind is the dress, for all casual, formal, and social events.

The purpose of this research was to study and establish a relationship between Fashion and women feeling empowered. This research paper will highlight the importance and relationship of fashion concerning women's empowerment by surveying young women and their perception of adapting fashion to feel empowered. It will also highlight the importance of fashion concerning the confidence and the feeling of inclusivity among individuals.

**Key Words:** Fashion, confidence, women empowerment, inclusivity, psychology of fashion.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Throughout diverse cultures across history and geographical locations, humans have adorned themselves in unique and skilfully crafted ways, often with opulence. Clothing constitutes an integral facet of our humanity, contributing to our distinctiveness. Varied dressing styles, along with the diverse psychological traits inherent in individuals, result in the effective expression of one’s mental composition through clothing and fashion. Clothing and fashion allow the multiplication of multiple personalities into one human being. The possibilities offered by fashion for a person to reflect many emotions and expressions with the help of clothes, cosmetics, or make-up are great. Clothing can help a person compensate for certain shortcomings and, in this way, a certain psychological balance is achieved [1].

People feel inferior for various reasons and aim to address and compensate for these feelings through their clothing choices. For example, when someone can’t establish their worth in a specific environment, they try to gain recognition through fashion – the clothes they wear. Our dressing style expresses our personality. Recent studies indicate that our choice of attire has a genuine impact on our thought processes. One research revealed that wearing a business suit, regardless of gender, boosts abstract thinking and provides a more expansive cognitive outlook. Consequently, wearing a tie might serve as a significant factor in showcasing your professional creativity [1].

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

### Shaping self-expression: identity, diversity, and performance

An individual's clothing choices intricately mirror their inner self, conveying a lot about their unique identity. Fashion serves as a means of expressing oneself and establishing a link to the outside world. In the 1950s, social science theories from economics, psychology, social psychology, and sociology were being used to study dress and human behaviour [2]. Apparel is a part of the first impression that individuals convey about themselves to the world surrounding them [3]. Mood can be altered because the selected clothes may be perceived as fashionable, enhancing individuality and confidence or providing physical comfort [4].



### Fashion and confidence

Selecting what to wear can influence our emotions and the way we address our emotional requirements [5]. The garments we choose can also have a cognitive impact on the person donning them. Clothing can affect our self-concept and how we feel about ourselves [5], majorly positively affecting our self-concept. This was evident in many researches [6,7]. Self-confidence, much like self-concept, significantly boosts performance and encourages individuals to uphold a strong sense of self-assurance [8]. Humans utilize their clothing choices as a means to articulate their self-perceptions and personal viewpoints [9]. By wearing clothes, we love, we feel confident in ourselves [10].

### Fashion and personality development

There exist numerous avenues and strategies to realize the objective of personality development through attire. One approach involves using clothing as a means to conceal one's identity during the dressing process. Subsequently, clothing can be utilized to attain a sense of spiritual and psychological equilibrium, effectively counteracting any feelings of inadequacy through the act of dressing. Garments serve as more than just a means of self-expression; they also have the potential to influence our actions and self-assurance, according to findings by researchers [10].

### 3. OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the psychology of fashion and how is fashion considered a form of self-expression.
- To establish a correlation between dressing up well and feeling confident and empowered.
- To understand the role of fashion with regard to personality development.
- To offer useful suggestions based on findings.

### 4. METHODOLOGY:

The research methodology includes primary data collection and secondary data collection. The secondary data involves the tabulated data that is readily available through sources such as the internet, e-books, and research papers. For this study, secondary data was collected mainly by referring to websites, journals, and scholarly articles and was then tabulated, analyzed, and presented in the form of inferences. The primary data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire method. A random sample of 126 students aged 18-21 years was selected from the textile and fashion designing department, SVT College of Home Science, Mumbai. The recorded responses were documented for future analysis purposes. Analysis of primary data is done based on variables such as gender, age group, profession, and personal choices of the respondent.

### Sample characteristics

This survey was mainly conducted using the questionnaire survey and was distributed through google forms to the female students belonging to SVT College of Home Science, Mumbai. A total of 126 responses were collected. The researcher got all the information field from the students and guided the students where ever there was confusion. Care was taken that all the respondents complete the information and submit the same.

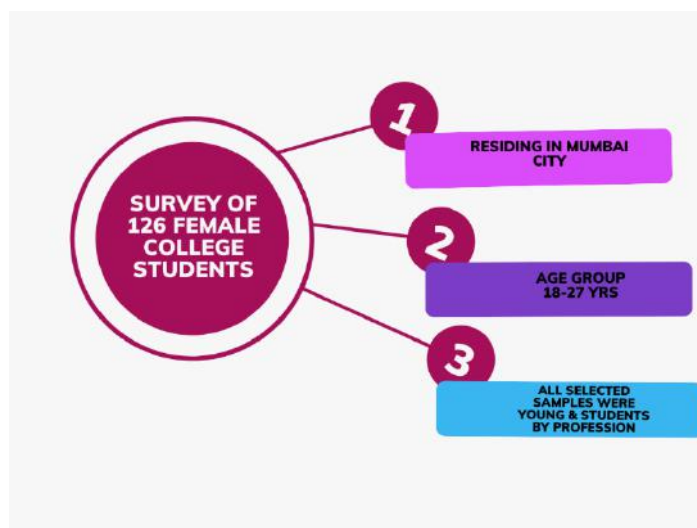


Fig 1: stakeholders and their relationship



Following are the few main questions asked and the data analysis apart from demographic information:

How often do you use fashion as a form of self expression  
126 responses

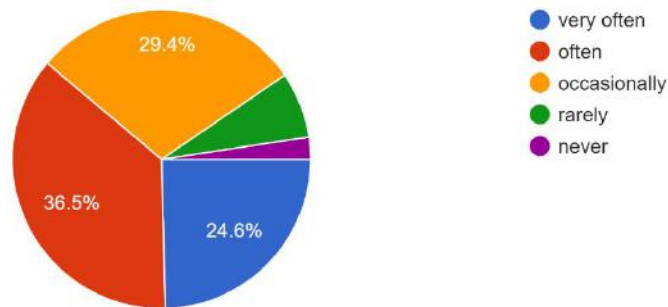


Fig: 2

Do you feel more confident wearing outfits you personally like?  
126 responses

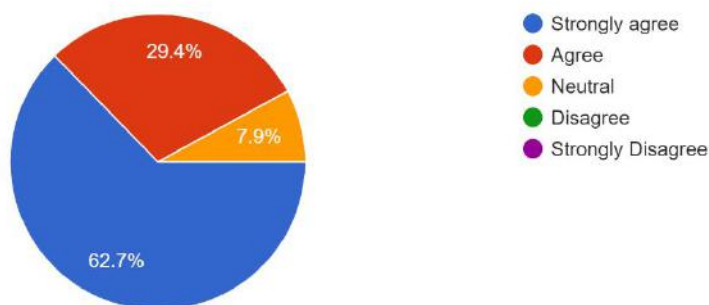


Fig: 3

Do you believe dressing well enhances your confidence in professional settings?  
126 responses

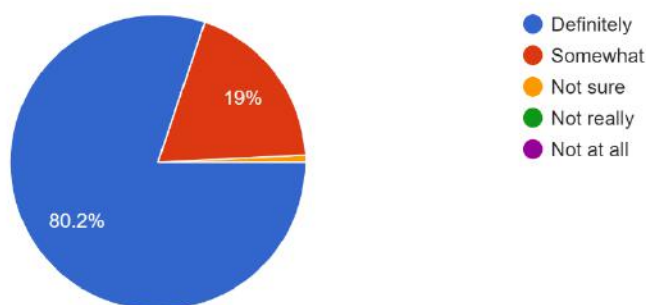


Fig: 4



Do you think fashion's representation of diverse body types promotes body positivity?

126 responses

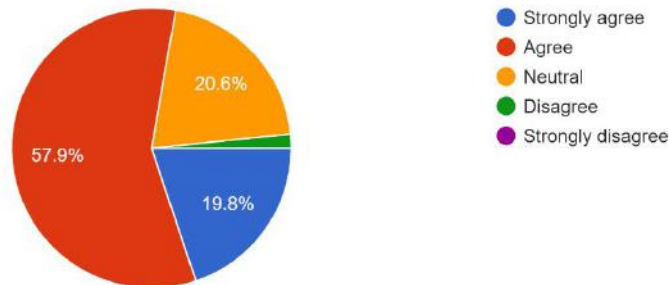


Fig: 5

Has fashion helped you challenge traditional ideas about gender and stereotypes?

126 responses

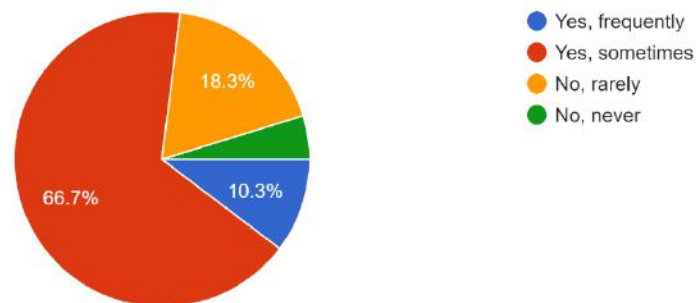


Fig: 6

Do you feel a sense of belonging when participating in current fashion trends?

126 responses

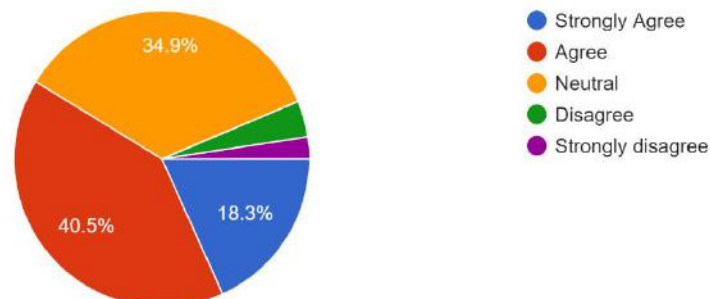


Fig: 7



Overall, do you believe that fashion plays a significant role in empowering women?

126 responses

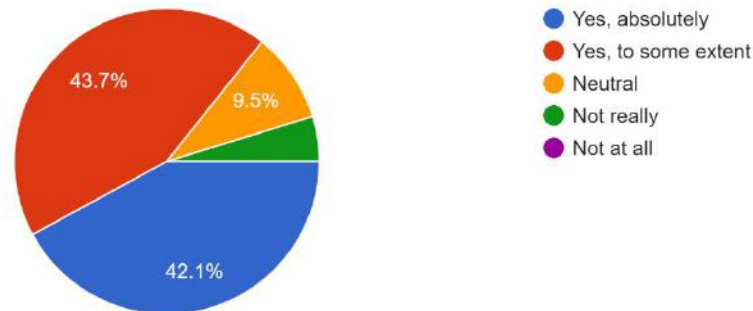


Fig: 8

How would you describe the overall impact of fashion on your sense of empowerment as a woman?

126 responses

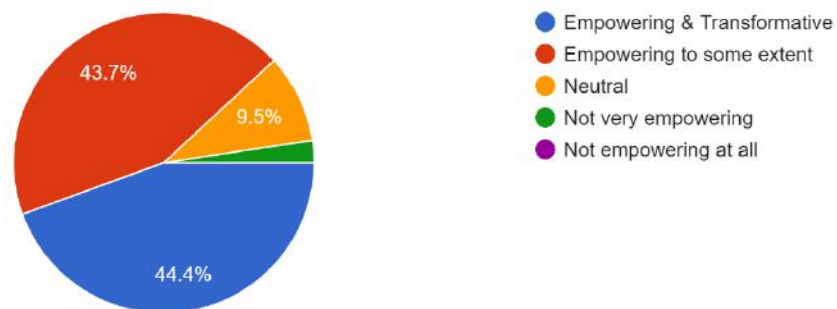


Fig: 9

How do you use clothing to express your personality, identity, or values?

126 responses

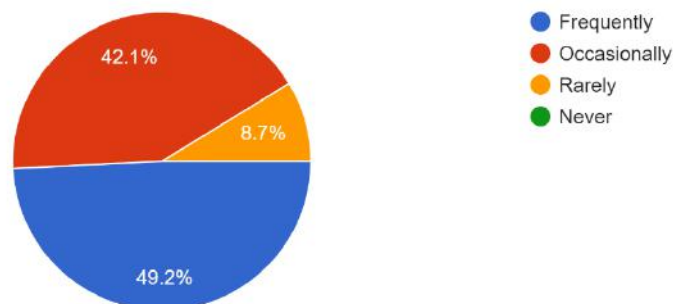


Fig: 10



Do you notice a difference in your confidence and demeanor when wearing professional attire?

126 responses

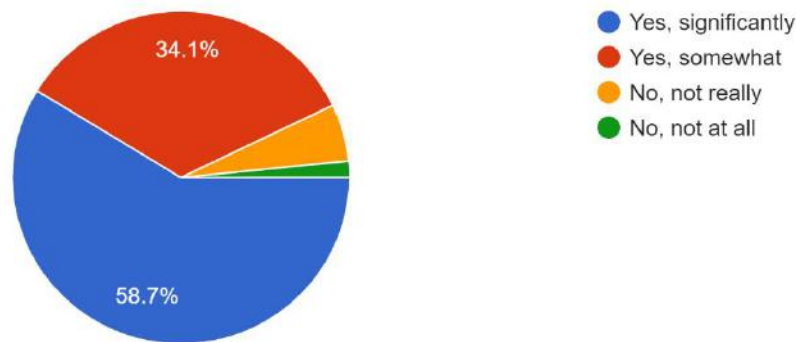


Fig: 11

Do you have any rituals or practices related to getting dressed that make you feel empowered?

126 responses

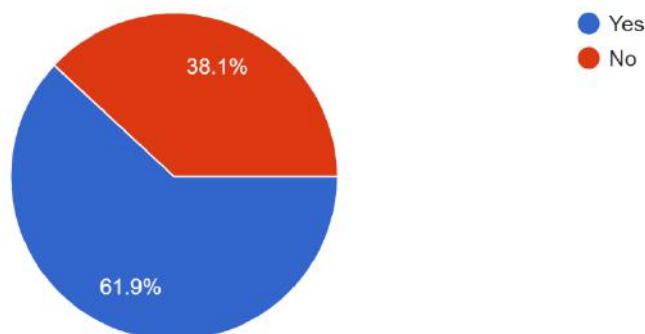


Fig: 12

## 5. FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY:

- 61.1% of respondents use fashion as a means to express themselves and 29.4% of respondents occasionally use fashion as a form of self-expression.
- 62.7% of respondents agree that they feel more confident wearing the outfits they like.
- 80.2% of respondents believe that dressing up well enhances self-confidence in professional settings.
- 77.7% of respondents agree that fashion's representation of various body types promotes body positivity.
- 66.7% of respondents agree that fashion has helped them challenge traditional ideas about gender and stereotypes.
- 58.8% of stakeholders feel a sense of belonging when they participate in current fashion trends.
- 42.1% of respondents believe that fashion plays a significant role in empowering women and 43.7% believe the significance of fashion in empowering women is to some extent.
- 44.4% of respondents believe that the impact of fashion on their sense of empowerment as a woman is empowering and transformative, and 43.7% agree to some extent.
- 49.2% of respondents use clothing to express their personality, identity, or values and 42.1% use it occasionally for the same.



- 92.8% of respondents agreed that they notice a difference in their confidence and demeanour when they wear professional attire, significantly to some extent.
- 61.9% of respondents also believe that they follow rituals and practices related to getting dressed that make them feel empowered.

## 6. CONCLUSION:

Clothing makes a woman feel comfortable, stylish, and confident at the same time. It can have a positive impact on her self-esteem. Fashion helps in breaking stereotypes and gender norms by helping women to feel comfortable in whatever they wear. This has the potential to enable women to redefine their positions and confront restrictions imposed by society. Therefore, most women in some or another way, use fashion as a form of self-expression. They believe that fashion positively empowers and transforms their sense of empowerment as a woman. Through the selection of their attire and accessories, women can express their unique style and communicate a message about their identity. In numerous professional environments, wearing suitable and fashionable clothing can enhance women's sense of authority, credibility, and readiness to assume leadership positions. Additionally, dressing impeccably can strengthen their confidence in the workplace.

Another positive aspect is that the fashion sector is progressively becoming more accepting and accommodating of diverse body types, sizes, and ages. When various women are showcased in fashion, it can encourage body positivity and the acceptance of oneself. The data indicates that an overwhelming majority, around 92.8% of the respondents, agreed that they experience a noticeable change in their confidence and demeanour when they wear professional attire. This change was reported across a significant spectrum, ranging from considerable to some extent. It is also derived from the findings that women adhere to specific rituals and practices associated with dressing, which they believe contribute to a sense of empowerment for them. Ultimately, the extent of empowerment derived from fashion relies on the decisions women make and the principles they prioritize.

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