

**Cultural Shifts in the UK and how this Effects
the Fashion Sector and its Consumer.**

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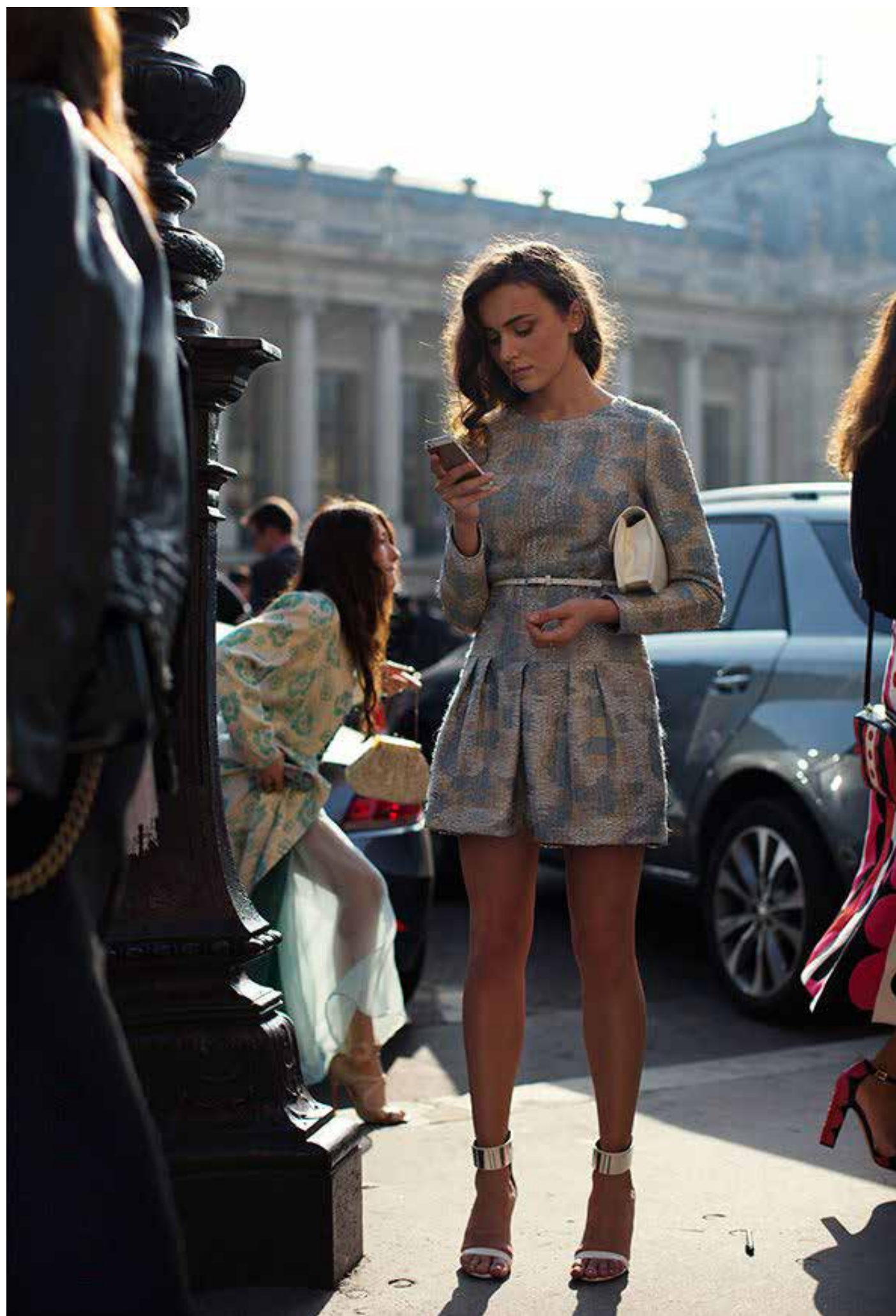


ABSTRACT

The rise of cultural changes in the Fashion Sector has continued to grow in recent years and has effected retail as a whole and its consumer. This investigation, has focused on digital and technology influences, as well as physical retail, store aspects. The evident result of this, is the effect on the British consumer and how future trends, predict the new consumer and how they will shop, in the next couple of years.

Although, this dissertation explains how online platforms have now influenced consumer buying habits, this investigation, also shows, how important physical stores are for retail. The British Fashion Industry, has developed over the years and this is analysed through different topics, such as blogging, Celebritiy endosrements and collaborations.

Through research from primary and secondary sources, the investigation concluded that online platforms in Fashion, were on the rise and this could potentially effect the consumer wants and needs. Future trends were also analysed from LSN Global predictions and the result shows that future consumers are after personal and trustworthy brands that tend too what they individually want out of a product. Consumers want to see empathy and personal hints through marketing and advertisements too. This will overall give brand want they want-Loyalty.



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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Celebrity Endorsements- A form of brand of advertising campaign that involves a well-known person using their fame and profile to help promote a product or service.

Conventional- Based on or in accordance with what is generally done or believed.

Cultural Appropriation- Taking inspiration from another culture and making it a product or garment and passes it off as your own.

Eurozone- The geographical area containing the countries that have joined the European single currency.

GDP- Gross Domestic Product.

KTZ-A Young Fashion Clothing Company.

LSN- The Future Laboratory for trends and reports in Fashion.

Macro Trend- Large scale, sustained shift in consumer Interest.

Recession- A period of an economic contraction, sometimes limited in scope or duration.

URBN-Company that founded Urban Outfitters and other Brands.

Vlogging- Video Journals of a blogger, uploaded to youtube or a website.

I NTRODUCTION

The UK retail sector, is a leader in innovation and is constantly changing, due to technology, events and physical beings. The way in which consumers are buying a product or spending in retail has changed over the years due to a number of factors. Britain's are being consumed by the latest fad and deal and this is effecting the retail sector. Online spending has risen in recent years and companies are constantly changing the way in which they advertise and sell a product. Cultural shifts like blogging, art and celebrities, are also having an influence over the British consumer and this is resulting in a change in fashion trends.

The modern, British, consumer has differed in recent years, and certain consumer habits have reacted due to cultural shifts in the UK. These consumer habits have created the basis for future trends and acted as a platform for new technology and overall the way in which the new generation will shop. This will have a major impact on every aspect of the retail sector and this is shown through this investigation.

This dissertation will explore the cultural shift today in the UK by looking at different factors such as social media, consumer habits, international business' and the financial economy of Britain to date. These elements all focus on how this impacts or will impact the UK Fashion Industry and what trends can be predicted from how people are living their lives. There are signs of the industry already showing strong resources to show culture shifts.

Focus groups, interviews from industry and an online survey will assist secondary online research from the internet and other resources, for this investigation as this will allow for a more in depth understanding and analysis of this chosen theme to explore. As a result, the writer will also be ensured to get a better understanding of consumer wants and needs.

These particular themes of cultural shifts for this dissertation was chosen from all different threads of inspiration from the writer. Initially, the writer looked at current affairs that were having an impact on the UK, whether that was in the news or in particular the fashion sector. (catwalk shows). This then branched out into the effect art has on a person and the message that some artists were portraying to its consumer. After a time, it was clear that all of these issues weren't enough to physically have an effect on the Fashion Industry, they only aided a few elements. So then cultural shifts as a whole with the influence from social media, financial states of the UK, consumer habits and collaborations of art was concluded as a topic, because all from secondary research initially, these elements together were changing the fashion sector and its British consumer.



METHODOLOGY

Research Question: 'What cultural changes are effecting the fashion industry and how will this effect consumer habits?'

Secondary Research:

Various sites, articles and surveys on the Internet have aided to the research methods, taken out to analyse specific topics raised in this dissertation. Secondary research formed as a basis for primary research as it highlighted some clear arguments in articles and surveys. These arguments were then raised in interviews, surveys and focus groups in primary research methods. There were elements of both quantitative and qualitative data, throughout the secondary research.

Primary Research:

ONLINE SURVEY- One method of primary research undertaken was an online survey, that was produced on the site 'SurveyMonkey.com'. (See Appendix A). The survey consisted of 10 relevant questions that were key in findings out responses for certain topics raised. This method was chosen because it was a quick way to get accurate results and was effective, once the survey was advertised on various social media. (A key example of how social media is effective for advertising information today). The questions asked were predominately multiple choice questions, with a few opportunities for the respondent to comment below with their views on certain questions raised.

There were a handful of limitations that were highlighted from doing an online survey. Firstly, as the online survey was advertised on social media sites, there were mainly 16-20 year olds providing the data in the answers. This shows a younger audience due to the site, Facebook as people that use this site the most are mostly that age. To add to this, From analysing the data results, it is clear to see that respondents gender are primarily female. There was no control over this as anyone was able to take the online survey. However, it can be argued that this is because the survey was broadcasted as primary research for Fashion. Once respondents were assured that it wasn't one sided and there were questions that would appeal to both genders, more male recipients undertook the survey. Nonetheless, this still didn't effect the overall result.

Data Analysis

A coding system has been created, specially for the audience to understand the data that was developed and analysed. Individual responses were analysed on the site, 'Survey Monkey', so that the data could be counted and accurately dissected, for the use of primary research.

FOCUS GROUP - This focus group was the first structured session, consisting of 4 20-22 year olds, all female, that had a linked interest in retail. There were various questions asked including questions about social media, technology, and consumer related topics. The focus group was purposefully structured, so that the questions were understandable and gave the respondents all chance to voice their own opinions. The environment was set in a relaxed manner and the recipients all said, that they enjoyed the discussion. To add to this, it was a quick way to get consumer feedback on the related subject and apart from the writing up of the transcript, (See Appendix D), the overall experience was that of a positive one.

However, again there were some limitations. The first one that was highlighted was that the focus group, again was all women and not a mixed gender session, which was great in some ways as all the females knew each other, so felt comfortable, but negative because some of the questions leaned into a more female orientated answer and was a little bias. The other limitation, was that none of the females had any qualifications or were studying a fashion related course, so some of the questions had to be altered for their understanding or explained in a tone that was understood.

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS- A number of companies and individuals were contacted through email, to answer, some media and consumer related questions, for primary research. After, numerous failed attempts, the manager at Tommy Hilfiger in Worcester, agreed to answer consumer related questions. There were five questions presented to the recipient of Tommy Hilfiger and the questions were written for the understanding of the respondent.

The limitations of doing structured interviews was that not many companies/ people in industry actually replied and wanted to get involved. This could be due to their busy schedules and the time of year. Also, as there was only one structured interview, there was nothing to compare the answers to, and this could be interpreted as bias information as Tommy Hilfiger only stated about their company and their thoughts on consumer habits, from what their company has experienced.



CHAPTER 1: *The British Fashion Industry*

1.1 Estimated Worth of British Fashion as a Business

The British Fashion industry has been around and influential to its consumer, for a number of years. It is estimated to be worth £26 billion to the country's economy, according to figures from the British Fashion Council, 2015. This is up from the £21 billion estimation in 2009. This suggests that the industry is constantly getting better and better and that this industry is contributing to the UK's economy significantly.

This year, 2015, in the five days of London Fashion Week, that took place in September, £100 million of orders, were placed for the season. This is a large chunk of its orders and evidence shows, that 2/3rds of buyers at the catwalk shows are international, (Fashion Telegraph 2015). 2/3rds, is a vast mass and suggests that international buying is bigger than it ever has been. International buyers are influenced by British fashion and this only adds to the wealth of the Fashion sector.

The Fashion industry is estimated to support 797,000 jobs according to research by Oxford Economics. This is a decrease of 2.3% compared to 4 years ago. The industry is as competitive as ever, however these statistics show a decrease in fashion related employment. This could be because of the amount of variety of jobs that have occurred in the past couple of years., that people feel that it isn't for them or that it is too competitive to get into. To add to this, fashion can sometimes be accused of being too controversial and is controlled by so many different factors like the media, designers and influencers, that it can be explained as being bias and not reality to its consumer. Therefore, there are a number of reasons why jobs have decreased and the events of the Fashion economy, could be have played a part in this and the Fashion Industry as a whole.



1.2 The Financial State of the UK Now, Compared to 2008-9

The recession of 2008 and 2009 hit the UK economy hard, and effected every aspect of financial austerity: From customer spending habits, the lack of confidence in the government and the struggle for business'. and in homes, the moral of Britain had hit an all time low. The recession affected Britain's retailers significantly. Using assumptions of what the country would look like outside recession, recent figures suggest that the overall cost of the downturn amounts to a huge £23 billion. (Retail week jobs 2015). The data factors in information on overall spending, including household disposable income, credit, population and demographic behaviour. This clearly shows that the Fashion sector was in a huge amount of trouble and the evidence to back this statement up is, that dozens of well known UK, small, retail stores began close down their shops from the high street.

Additional factors that assisted, the Fashion economies downfall, was terrible summer weather, extreme winter snowfall and the on-going instability of the Eurozone. This can suggest that all of these problems all aided in the downfall of UK's retail sector. If banks were collapsing, Business's were failing, unemployment was high, consumers were not buying and therefore, the economy was suffering. (UK Finance 2014).

Now in 2015, evidence has suggested that the economy has comfortably recovered from the recession, and The Fashion Industry is at its best its ever been in terms of profit, successful business' and consumer confidence. Employment has risen since 2009, and 74% of the UK population aged 16-24, are employed. (This is Money 2015). This strongly implies that there have been more business' offering job vacancies in the last couple of years and that people are now willing to find a job and earn a wage.

For the first time in four years, inflation is low. However according to an Aviva survey, inflation is actually too low in Britain. Average incomes are 'barely up to pre crisis levels' and there is a persistent problem of 'feeble improvements' in productivity. This indicates that this have a big effect on wages and how much people are earning, compared to what they should be earning. To add to this, this defeats the previous statement about the rate of employment in the Uk, because although more people are working, if the productivity growth is low, and there is no inflation, business' will have to cut wages from somewhere and this will be by cutting employees wages. (Jared Bernstein Blog). This could have a knock on effect on consumer habits, because if they are earning less, they wont have money to buy consumer goods and retail business' could suffer from this.

1.3 The Online Market of Fashion

Today, the UK online fashion market is expected to be worth over 10 billion pounds this year, according to new research from Mintel. E-commerce is seeing a strong growth in sales as consumers are taking an interest in shopping online. Although, it is a migration of consumer, it shows there is a rise in online shoppers in 2015. This can be for a number of reasons. More social media networks are becoming popular to the UK consumer and online shopping is far more accessible to people now. The evidence also shows that, it is a lot easier to shop online and more companies are advertising their products on their company websites. More companies are visibly expanding their marketing strategies, to online websites and media pages. An example of a retailer providing a quick and easy service to customers, is Amazon. They have a one click to buy tool on their website and this shows how easy it is to buy a product online. Consumers already have their bank details on the website, so they can click once and have bought a product. This is perfect for consumers that have busy and fast paced lives and need to make a quick purchase on the go, without the long winded checkout online.

17 % of online spending is on clothing and footwear, up from 13 percent in 2011. (Fashion United). These statistics, show that this is becoming a more popular way to buy clothing and it can be implied that this will become the norm for consumers in the UK, in the next few years. If these percentages continue to rise, the way in which consumers buy clothing could be impacted greatly. People may prefer to shop online permanently as it is quick and easy, and this could effect companies and especially small businesses with just one stand alone store.

Taking everything into account, it can be said that the influence of online platforms, will be set to rise and could effect the way in which consumers will shop in retail. Although, the recession had dampened the economy of fashion, the recent statistics of the industry, shows it's now back on track and is better than ever. This chapter sets the scene, for the investigation and what cultural changes are influencing retail and how it will go on to effect its consumer.



CHAPTER 2: *Online Cultural Influence Compared to Physical Stores*

2.1 The Rise of Social Media in Fashion

Social media has become part of a globally connected world. In the past few years, and in recent years, it has shifted its focus into the Fashion sector inspiring designs and trends. The main social networks that are advertising inspiration for Fashion business' is Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. (Social media today, Jan 2015). These social network sites are used in slightly different advertising ways for products, but all have the aim to connect to its consumer. According to an identified LSN trend in 2014, the Awakening Tech macro trend explores how consumers are negotiating their identities in a digital format and how this is showing how the continuous evolvement of technology is become integral to our sense of self. This creates the idea that technology is consuming us and that social media is being used as a platform for this. Social media is constantly improving and platforms are evolving and this may have an effect on its consumer. People, are revealing their identities and social media is becoming a more personal platform for online users to look up things of interest.



Social media has become a platform for communicating with friends, video content, business marketing, social listening, browsing blogs and now buying online from well known retail brands. According to a 2015 survey from a social network and buying behaviour website survey, 30% of shoppers, made a purchase via social media early this year. This is up by 12% from last year (2014). 48% of people in the UK, believe it is important to share product recommendations via social media. This connects people to each other and companies and gives the retail experience a whole new meaning.

Sophie Davis, a regular Fashion blogger for 'Filthy Paws & Silky Drawers', has confidence that, Instagram is ideal for people that has a Fashion or beauty focus. She quoted " In primary visual industries like Fashion, I see no problem with bloggers uploading visual content". She believes that the use of social media can be turned into a positive tool that also assists business if it is used correctly. She also mentions, in this statement the use of bloggers and as a blogger herself, she stresses the importance of social media. Blogging is another online platform, that is effecting the Fashion Industry immensely and the next part of this investigation explains this argument.

2.2 The Rise of Fashion Blogging and Vlogging

Zoella, Fleur de Force, Tanya Burr and Sprinkle of Glitter are just some of the famous blogging names that are the influencers and having an impact on UK fashion. With thousands of fans reading and watching these blogs, it comes as no surprise, that a number of brands and PR companies have now switched on to promoting their products through them and these inducible bloggers are getting recognition for this and are financially aiding these bloggers.

Zoella (Zoe Sugg) is a key example of a blogger who has done well for themselves in Fashion and she currently has over 3.77 million followers on Twitter and 2,404,527 likes on Facebook. (Huffington Post 2015). These statistics state that Zoella has a massive influence on social media as well as the blogging industry and has a huge fan following. To add to this, the 25 year old, earns a massive £20,000 a month just from advertisers alone. These companies are all desperate to get Zoella to promote their products on social media and on her sites. Therefore this is a key example of a celebrity endorser for the Fashion industry. According to Huffington Post, 2015, Company Magazine enlisted Zoella for a cover shoot. Within 24 hours of Zoella posting about the magazine online, the magazine showed an 87% rise in sales. This fundamentally shows that social media is an important asset as a marketing tool and that by having celebrity endorsers, to back this up as well, there is even more advertisement and consumer acknowledgement.

Furthermore, Zoella is a key example of a blogger that has benefitted from the use of social media and online platforms and has now become extremely well known, because of this.





In terms of business', according to a survey by Hubspot, 2014, 60% of companies who blog, acquire more customers. The growing importance of blogging, will continue to rise in the next few years and predictions suggest that this will change the whole dynamic of business' marketing strategies. More business's are giving personal blogs advertising their products and giving reviews on certain goods and garments, by showing celebrity endorsements or consumers wearing/ advertising certain products. Clothing business' like Topshop, are showing blogs of up and coming news, events and products, in a section on their website and other fast fashion companies are also introducing this marketing strategy to their own sites too. Magazines, are another example of having blog sections as one of their marketing tools also. For example, Look magazine and Vogue magazine, both have blogs on their online sites and in their magazines. These show more of consumer tribes buying the latest Fashion trend and show a more street style direction, but Vogue especially, has started to blog about reviews on certain beauty products and electrical items in recent years. This is can be suggested that this is effecting the consumer greatly, because consumers are going out at buying recommended products from blog reviews and this will up the advertisement on certain companies and their profits on goods.

Therefore, evidence of the rise of blogging and bloggers, can be suggested to have an effect on consumer habits and this latest trend in fashion, is taking over business marketing strategies. This will only rise more in years to come because more companies will promote blogs on their sites and there will be more influential blog sites, doing what people like Zoella and Tanya Burr are doing at the moment.



2.3 Retail Shopping in Store

Retail shopping in store, in the UK, can still be considered as the primary way to buy a product of any sort, whether that be food, goods or clothing. This may be a bit surprising to people, as there are so many online platforms around and online shopping is only going to rise. However, according to a business news daily recent survey, in the UK, nearly 40% of consumers make purchases inside a store, compared to just 27% that shop online.

There are a number of elements that can entice a consumer, into shopping in a physical, retail store. These include, visual merchandising in store, staff advice and services and policies of the company. The way a product is laid out and advertises a store, can be suggested to effect the way in which a consumer buys that product. According to a recent focus group, carried out by the writer, one female, respondent said that she likes to see what a garment looks like on the mannequin and its especially good if their are outfit builds too and that makes her more likely to buy the whole outfit rather than one item of clothing. (See Appendix D).

Sales Associates and other staff working in a retail store, can also impact whether somebody buys a product. According to a recent survey conducted by TimeTrade, 2015, 90% of consumers are more likely to buy a product, if they are approached by a sales assistant in store. This shows that having staff in store to recommend or help a consumer buy a product, can in fact influence a consumer to buy a product and that having a physical being interacting with someone, supports a consumers decision into buying. People prefer personal approaches to retail and consumers get this with staff interacting with them.

According to a marketing teacher website online, an author of The Science of Shopping, suggest numerous ways in which a company can give better customer service and an inviting environment for shoppers in their physical stores. One example to support this statement is, a checklist of do's and don'ts in a retail store:

What Shoppers Like:

- 1. Touching a product
- 2. Mirrors visible to use and more than one
- 3. Discovering Bargains and special offers
- 4. Interacting with employees
- 5. Recognition by employees and help

What Shoppers Do Not Like:

- 1. Too Many Mirrors in store
- 2. Long queues by tills and lack of staff
- 3. (Being Forced to ask) un related Questions
- 4. Merchandise out of stock
- 5. Uncertain Price Tags
- 6. Intimidating Customer Service from Staff
- 7. Crowded stores and aisles

This checklist, reiterates, how important the way in which a store is laid out in a physical store. These examples are only some points, that business' choose to advertise in their stores and there are plenty more ways in which to get a consumer to buy a product.

An example of a company, that focus' on promoting their brand in their stores, is Urban Outfitters. According to URBN, 2015, they suggest, that as a company, they try to promote and fill their stores with what they love and what the consumer will love. They give emphasis on contemporary art, music and fashion and this shows throughout their stores. As a company, they also offer a lifestyle specific shopping experience for a target consumer of 18-30. The relaxed feel of the in store ambiance is portrayed and this targets their consumer directly and also promotes the brand identity through their stores. This is a key example, of a company, relying on their stores to promote their brand and appeal to its consumer in a successful way. Although, they do have an online website and a blog on their site, they rely mostly on their stores across the UK and beyond.

To conclude, these cultural changes in fashion, show the the comparison between online platforms and physical store in retail. Evidence, suggest in these chapters, that although there is a rise of online platforms such as social media, blogging and shopping online, physical stores are still play a big part in companies promoting a product and consumers are still preferring to shop in physical shops. However, according to a retail forecast for 2018, by Retail Futures, they have predicted that by 2018, the total of company stores in the Uk, will fall by 22% . They have predicted this from recent figures showing that although people prefer physical stores to shop, there a less shops and online retail is only on the rise.

CHAPTER 3: *Cultural Collaborations within the Retail Sector*

3.1 Inspiration or Appropriation in Designers Work

Cultural appropriation has been a controversial subject for designers, dating back numerous years., for a number of reasons. It can be argued that some consider influences of culture to be nothing more than inspiration. Others, suggest that it is cultural appropriation and that designers need to be aware of cultures and that certain people don't take offence to what has inspired the latest trend.

According to the view of Refinery 29, 2015, the writer believes that its classed as appropriate when a designer borrows ideas from cultures, but there is a fine line when designers claim to take inspiration from whole cultures. A recent collection brought out in 2015, that shows the controversial argument of this topic is Valentino's spring/summer 2016 collection. It was described in a Vogue Edition shortly after, as a message of tolerance and the beauty that comes out of cultural expression. (vogue,2015). The debated collection, caused quite a stir not only because 8 of the 90 models were of colour and this was because the collection was described by Valentino, as a primitive, tribal and spiritual. This suggested that Valentino was not expressing this at all, it was quite the opposite and this ultimately could have caused offence to some audiences. To add to this, Fashion critics praised the 'Africa-themed' collection in magazines and on online reviews. However this can be argued, as Africa is a continent and as a continent, there are so many cultural influences, styles and traditions. Therefore people can argue that It is not one country so cannot be defined like one, as just inspiration.



Brazilian designer Oskar Metsavaht, argues that designers should start paying the people that have inspired their clothing in their collections. (Huffington Post, 2015). The designer then went on to back up his argument by doing just that. In the Osklen spring/summer 2016 collection, the Brazilian designer showed inspiration from indigenous people that lived in the Brazilian and Peruvian rainforest. All of his garments, were taken from his surroundings and what these people were wearing themselves. In return for these inspirations, Oskar paid the tribe, as recognition for his inspiration. With the money that the designer gave to the tribe, they were able to build a school. This is an extreme version of designers showing recognition to their initial inspiration, but some may argue that other designers need to take note of this and do something similar.

Some people may beg to differ and claim that everything now a days can inspire a designer and their collection. Uk brand KTZ, has recently come under fire for claiming inspiration from clothing of a special garment and causing offence to a certain individual. However the brand has hit back and states that as a country of multiculturalism, that people should all celebrate this and appreciate traditions.(Esquire, 2015).

Therefore, this topic is still as divided as ever and people have split opinions on cultural appropriation. More and more designers are using cultural influences in their collections and this will probably carry on for years to come. It can be argued that this will be, because everything around people can be classed as inspiration and when will that line be drawn on whether these influences need to be recognised? This subject, will continue to effect the fashion Sector and the consumer of people buying from these collections. Will people not buy from certain designers if they deem their collections to be offensive? Only time will tell.



3.2 Examples of Collaborations that Emphasise Cultural Shifts

Over the years, a number of well-known business' have teamed up with designers, artists and other individuals, to produce a product or clothing collection to sell to its consumer. There are many explanations for companies, taking the collaboration route and these include, recognition of new brands, products and garments. Or by having well-known designers teaming up with retailers to create a collection to bring in profit for their company. Collaborations have become popular and there are a benefits from this.

there are a number of benefits, to brand collaborations and by participating in joint projects. According to Trend Reports, 2015, it can be suggested that consumers are instantly more receptive to a brand that has collaborated with someone else. There is interest there and people itching to see what joint collections will look like. The fashion Industry especially has embraced collaborations and are always looking for the next best trend. Collaborations offer this as they combine interests to create a product worthy of selling to both its consumers.

There have been some remarkable collaborations in 2015 and there have also been news that are more to come in 2016. One example of a successful collaboration in 2015 was Balmain for H&M. The collection went on sale in November 2015 and instantly set off a retail frenzy. Everybody wanted to get hold of something from their collection. The collection was also given lots of praise for staying true to Oliver Rousteing's brand identity of heavy, ornate looks, although the prices were little more affordable to the consumer. One jacket was priced at \$550 and may have been a bargain for Balmain, however, it was a compromise on H&M's, highstreet, affordable pricing. (The Atlantic, 2015). The collection was seen as special, therefore the normal H&M consumer, although it was classed as expensive, bought items as it was a one off collection and an iconic collaboration.



Another example of brand collaboration, that is less conventional than Fashion brands, is Courreges for Evian. The collaboration with the French designer, marked the 50th anniversary of Evian. (Business Trend Report,2015). Although, collaborations between water and fashion aren't usually heard of, these specific joining, was successful. The duo also made the collaboration appealing by advertising their bottle design as eco-friendly ad recyclable. Which appealed to a large consumer.

2016, is set to see even more collaborations in the Fashion Sector. According to a recent reports from Relax News, Dec 2015, River Island have finalised that next year, they will collaborate with London Label, Sibling. Designer, Cozette McCreery, has given an insight into what to expect from this joint venture. Bold prints, colour and knit techniques will be expected in this collaboration. This reflects both brands identities and will compliment in selling to both of its consumers. The collaboration will officially launch in February 2016. (Yahoo News).

Therefore all of these collaborations, reflect on the importance of both consumers and how they create more brand awareness for a retail company. Collaborations entice people to go and buy one off collections, even if they are a little bit more highly priced, than what they expected. Collaborations, will also only rise in years to come to create new on trend products, that will result in the impact of its consumer. Consumers will more likely buy a product if their is a joint collection.



3.3 The Celebrity Effect on Fast Fashion

In the last five years, mass media has aided the exposure of power of a celebrity status. From the promotion of magazines, social media and adverts, it shows that celebrities are constantly influencing society and some may agree that these celebrity figures are role models for its target market.

Fashion has always been competitive as a business, keeping up to date with new trends and having different marketing strategies, to stand out from the competition. Therefore, the celebrity effect as a marketing tool, has become increasingly popular in recent years. Celebrities are often peoples inspiration on what to wear and what not to wear, so having celebrities marketing products or garments for well known fashion brands, this influences the consumer to aspire to celebrities and as a result buy the product.


Beauty companies, especially are using celebrity endorsements for their adverts, to promote specific products on social media, their websites and the television. From years back, many well-known 'hollywood' and non British figures were used as celebrity promoters for certain products. However, over the past few years, many more British celebrities have been involved in certain collaborations and celebrity endorsement advertisement. A suggestion of this, is the use of bloggers. They are constantly becoming famous by promoting beauty products on their social media sites and this has got them recognition in Fashion. According to Social Media Today, 2015, Fleur de Force, a well-known Fashion and Beauty blogger works with beauty brands directly, and gets paid to promote the newest beauty product to consumers, so they will go out and buy it.



"The world we live in now is about influencers, and that's all a celebrity really is," says Evan Morgenstein, chief executive of US-based firm Celeb Experts.

Another way in which a company has used celebrity endorsement is, Kate Winslet for Lancome. Since 2007, the actress has represented the beauty brand to promote products from perfume, to face creams and has now become an ambassador of the brand. (Celebrity Endorsement Ads, 2015). Kate Winslet is Lancome's target market and the company is clever, because they are getting a celebrity of their target market age, to promote their products to other women, that are of the same age. This is a successful marketing strategy, by the beauty brand, because consumers can relate to the celebrity, a woman of similar age, a working mother, although a celebrity. Women will then instantly see this ad, through some sort of media, and then go out and buy the latest face cream.

The use of celebrity endorsement is becoming more widely used, in retailers' advertisement campaigns and magazines. It not only, evidently increases brand awareness, it could increase financial returns for companies. According to several studies that have shown, that celebrities have a direct and positive impact on a brand's attitude and buying behaviour. (Pelsmacker, 2007). With advertisements, continuing to be promoted on online platforms and through media, the need for celebrity endorsements for retailers is at a higher rate than ever, depending on consumer habits. In the future, consumers will always be influenced by celebrities, in some way or another. Collaborations, cultural influences/influencers and these celebrities are overall, promoting the brand itself and ultimately, trying to interact with its consumer to buy a certain collection or product.



Kate Winslet

LANCÔME
PARIS

CHAPTER 4: *UK Consumer Habits in Retail*

4.1 Consumer Habits in the UK

Consumers, still shop in multiple ways in Britain, from checking on stores websites, looking up reviews of products, shopping in stores, comparing prices from competitors and looking for offers for products on social media. (Retail Research 2013). However, there is evidence from online research, that these consumer habits are set to change, due to a number of influences.

Because of all of the factors, such as online platforms, the recession and influences, consumer habits have somewhat changed over the years. People may think that because of the use of social media, retail advertisements and enforcements, that the majority of consumers in the UK would shop online. However from secondary and primary research evidence, this argument says otherwise...

From a recent online survey, on survey monkey, conducted as primary research, (100 respondents) 76.09% of people said that they preferred shopping in store rather than online. (See appendix A). Although, this dissertation has shown cultural changes influenced by online platforms, the result is still unanimous. In store physical shopping is still preferred. This statement can also be backed up by a focus group, taken out as primary research also, where predominantly females, commented that they like to try on garments before buying them and liked to see what the quality was like. They also said that although they browsed on online retail websites, they would save the item for later and end up just buying it in a store. (See Appendix D).

According to a survey, carried out by Business News Daily, nearly 3/4's of the people surveyed, spend time browsing products online, before going out and physically buying the same product. Therefore, although many people in the UK are initially looking online for products, they are eventually not going ahead with the transaction online and buying them in store. Online shops have become a 'showroom' for shoppers to research something specific and compare prices, for later in store purchasing. (Business News daily 2014). However, evidence from a retail research survey, in 2014, shows that although the percentage of food online shopping is lower in recent years, non-food retail shopping is on the rise, accounting for 19% of online use. This emphasises that consumers are using online to shop more and this will continue to rise in the future, thanks to factors like social media and more online advertisements. This therefore, contradicts the argument that more people are shopping physical stores.

Another argument, can also be that people like to support their local companies, according to PWC's annual consumer survey, 2015. This could be for a number of reasons: such as people preferring personal experiences from sales assistants that can focus on the customers needs and recommend any products that may be of interest to them. Sian, a 20 year old, female, recipient in a primary focus group, agrees with the above statement, but also fears that this could be changed in the future if people continue to be influenced by online platforms. To add to this, the respondent, also believes that sales assistants could be effected by online and there would be less jobs in the future in retail stores because of this.

This could back up why Fashion related jobs in the past four years has declined. Personal shopping can still be considered important. It gives consumers the opportunity to interact with staff and come away happy and with the best product to suit their needs.

4.2 Consumer Tribes that are Effected by Cultural Shifts in Fashion

Consumer tribes, detect consumer behaviour and spending habits in retail. Retailers target specific target markets, by using consumer tribes. This table, shows collected data from recent primary research, taken out by the writer. The data above, has been collected from a recent online survey, produced on Survey Monkey. (See Appendix A). The table has been split up into four sections: Age range, online use, shopping habits and what consumers are influenced initially by, in the UK. The four, age range categories show similar results in some cases, for example, 16-25 years olds, predominantly use online platforms such as social media and do shop online. Similarly, 26-35 years olds, also use social media regularly and although they tend to shop in physical stores more, this tribe does use online tools like social media too and tend to shop online for food as well as clothing. It can also be suggested that the younger generation, are more influenced by celebrity endorsements and bloggers, whereas the age category of 26-35 and 36-50 are most influenced by current affairs from media and reviews about products.

| AGE RANGE | ONLINE USE | SHOPPING HABITS | INFLUENCED BY |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 16-25 [Fashion Followers] | Mainly social media, online shopping, mostly clothing, blogs | Buy online, discount codes, student discount through social media. Buy now, save later. | Celebrity endorsements, magazine covers, social media, bloggers. |
| 26-35 | Social media, businesses, food shopping, online clothes shopping | More physical store shopping, browsing online, some online purchases mostly amazon. | Current Affairs, news articles, some celebrity endorsement advertisements, some social media. |
| 36-50 | Some social media, e.g. Facebook, online Shopping. | Reviews on sites, comparing prices, specific products. Loyalty cards, points cards, physical shops. | Current Affairs, Reviews online, Television Advertisements, Celebrity Endorsement to an extent. |
| 50+ | Online browsing, reviews, recipes, food shopping, Facebook. | Physical Stores mostly, Online reviews on specific products, Saving, Only getting necessities. | Reviews, Recommendations, Likes/dislikes, Advertisements. |

4.3 Predictions of Consumer Behaviour for the Future

There have been many, key catalysts for retail and predictions for the future. According to the centre for retail research in 2013, the UK is facing a crisis with retail as a whole. They have suggested that because of consumer spending habits have increased by 12% since 2006, that it will be many more years before Britain returns to its previous levels of growth. The GDP is still not returned to what it was in 2008 when the recession hit the UK. Although this chapter has already looked at consumer habits currently, there have been a handful of studies on online platforms, to suggest that consumer behaviour could change because of the number of cultural shifts that are influencing retail.

To start these predictions, there are fewer, physical shops in the UK, then there has ever been before, according to Retail Research, 2014. It can be argued that people are preferring to shop in stores, but if physical shops are declining in 2015, imagine if this continues and then consumers may have no choice but to shop online. Consumers need to have trust for brands, and if they see companies failing they will have no other option but to move on to another company and build loyalty with them.



consumers will also be controlled by online platforms and their habits will change depending on this. If companies advertise personal assistance online and understand people's direct and individual needs, consumers will no longer need to go shop in stores. An example of this, is an up and coming system online where consumers can put in their exact measurements and details for clothing items in to the website and the website will search for the exact garment that will not only fit its consumer, but will compliment their body shape. (The Gadget Show, 2015). People will feel that they can have the experience of trying on a garment online, without the hassle of physically trying on garments in a changing room.

There also may be a large influence from marketing strategies and celebrity endorsement. Celebrity influence will continue to grow due to the amount of media influence there is today, in the UK. Consumers, will continue to be effected by these factors. Future trends, will impact the way in which people will shop and this investigation leads on to how these future trends, will control consumer behaviour and this will then go on to change how brands will promote their products and the retail sector direction.

CHAPTER 5: *Future Cultural, Consumer Trends Predicted for Fashion*

5.1 LSN: The Sharded Self

Social media, has a massive influence on the consumer today. It controls how people interact with one another, how people make decisions and how people form opinions on something. (LSN, 2014). Sharded self expresses how creating the perfect identity is important to consumers and consumers are constantly after the next best thing. Consumers are so engrossed by social media, this is effecting the offline world.

Brands will see consumers extreme behaviours effect their spending habits and need to establish how they can connect with their consumer to make consumers needs and wants come to life and not just in a virtual world. Marketing strategies for brands will also need to advertise the latest fashion fads, that are being dreamed about online and bring these products to life. Brands will also need to make sure that they are building on new consumer relationships. They will need to show empathy and emotion through advertisements and campaigns so they get the consumer on their side and consumers feel their stories that connect them to others online, are coming to life through a message from a brand or a product.



5.2 LSN: New Value Economy

Changes in recent consumer behaviour, and the shift in advanced technology, has resulted in a shift of values. This macro trend emphasises a new way for consumers to save money when shopping in retail. New Value Economy, promotes sharing, renting and borrowing products, creating new systems of value and worth. (LSN, 2014). This trend also involves trust, reputation, integrity even in terms of how consumers can market their personal data.

consumers will ask themselves, what is the value of getting out of bed in the morning?, what is the value of having a good time?, what is the value of work?, what is the value of existence?, what is the value of alternative? The sharing economy will continue to rise and this will determine the ways in which consumers will interact with one another. This will then be useful to brands, as they will be able to access consumer behaviour patterns, whilst sharing products and the result of this will give these companies loyalty they long from consumers.

Brands will need to learn how to co-exist with one another and to work together to share its consumer so people will share their products. There will be examples of collaborations especially within the Fashion Industry and people will learn to except this new way of living and learn to share with other consumers.



5.3 LSN: Awakening Tech

As the line between online and reality become converged, consumer behaviour will become more fragmented. As consumers take advice from the last review of a product or gadget, they begin to rely on answers from these latest online fads and latest revelation. (LSN,2014).

Companies must understand how certain data and marketing tools, can deliver their products and services, to gain consumer loyalty and trust. This will then build there brand up from this consumer loyalty and this will ultimately bring in the revenue. According to LSN Global, Awakening Tech, privacy and invasiveness will be vital for consumers in retail. This means, that brands need to focus solely on its consumer and helping to build their non digital identities. This trend shows that it is important to know what consumers need before the product is even made and this will then act as a foundation for companies, to create their marketing strategies around this. For example, advertisements could look into the psychology of its consumer and what products relate most to them. To add to this, brands will also have to combine this new way of advertising, with technology in their stores, to still show they have adapted to the new online way of living. Furthermore, by using technology, brands will be able to detect how technology connects to its consumer and what makes consumers still feel superhuman too.

Will This Work? ...

All of these predicted trends by LSN, show similar patterns for the future. There will be more of a focus of technology and how business' can use online platforms, to interact and gain consumer loyalty. The continual connection between online and real life will work together to create new products, taking into account what these consumers are interested in and want. This way of living will only work, if business' work with consumers and grasp what people in the UK want from a product.

Artist Svetlana S.



CONCLUSION

In various studies and surveys, analysed throughout this investigation, it can be argued that people in the UK are influenced heavily by online use, whether that be following bloggers, magazines, social media or shopping online on retail websites, and that as these factors continue to rise, people believe that online shopping will eventually take over retail shopping.

From analysing this investigation of cultural factors that effect retail and consumers, it can be concluded that consumer behaviour and spending habits, are always influenced by cultural changes like online platforms, business strategies of advertisements and certain individuals. This dissertation has demonstrated, that through future trends, predicted by LSN, consumers will take over, the way in which all of these cultural factors will market new technology and products, to make sure that there is loyalty and connections to what consumers need and want. Brands, will no longer focus on the product itself, it will be about connections of millennials, experiences for physical stores and interaction between staff and customer, collaborations to entice people to buy and products that are advertised to relate to consumers. The future trends, analysed in chapter five, show that building back retailer and consumer relationships is achievable and that consumer habits are what's most important. Through this, in time this will influence the fashion Sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future Trends- New and innovative fashion trends need to constantly be doing bigger and better things than its competitor, with a trend. Trends need to use elements such as online and consumer behaviour to depict their current trends. This will ensure that they are up to date with consumer wants and needs and also gain that trust between people and business'.

Retailers- Moving forward, from this investigation, it can be predicted that retailers will be significantly effected by cultural shifts in the Fashion Industry. It is proposed that retailers will focus more on online platforms, but will be making sure to target consumers on a personal level, so an interaction element is still there. Businesses will benefit more from blogging about their merchandise and giving insightful reviews to lure the consumer to buy a product. Fashion brands should constantly be seeking ways to stay up to date with its competitors and the way to do this is to keep up to date with every media tool available. However, retailers, should not forget that consumer is the most important factor.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Online Survey

Title- "Cultural Shifts in the Uk and the effect this has on the Fashion Sector and it's Consumer".

Intro- I'm currently studying Fashion Business & Promotion at Birmingham City University and I'm conducting primary research for my Dissertation. If you could all fill in the survey below, it would be very much appreciated.

Questions-

1. Do you currently follow any bloggers for fashion or Beauty?

Yes

No

2. If yes, how often do you go on their sites?

Everyday

2-3 times a week

Once every month

3. What makes people go on bloggers sites in the first place?

Good advertisements

Tips on how to use certain products

Can relate to the blogger

Following celebrity influencers

4. If you use social media, what social media sites do you use the most and what for?

[Open text box here]

5. What influences you in buying a product?

[Open text box here]

6. Do you prefer buying a product online, or in store?

Online

In store

7. Why is this?

[Open text box here]

8. What do you think is the biggest cultural change, in the past 5 years?

[Open text box here]

9. What is your age?

16-20

21-25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56-65

66+

10. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Appendix B: Coding System for Online Survey

Demographic > Age > 16-20, 21-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66+ [Code: 16, 21, 26, 36, 46, 56, 66]

Appendix C: Structured Interview- Sophie May Bill (Retail manager, Tommy Hilfiger)

I am currently studying Fashion Business & Promotion at Birmingham City University. As part of my dissertation, I need to conduct relevant primary research to aid my work and get a point of view from a person that can relate to the fashion industry. Below are some standard questions about the fashion industry, your personal views, your company and consumer habits:

Question 1: What do you think is the biggest cultural change in the past five years in Fashion?

Question 2: What are the marketing techniques that your company uses for advertising a product?

Question 3: Why do you think customer service is important to the consumer?

Question 4: Do you think consumer habits have changed in recent years, if yes why?

Question 5: What do you think might happen in the future for the UK Fashion Industry, because of consumer habits?

Appendix D: Focus Group Transcript

Respondents consist of 4, females with an age range of 20-22 years.

Interviewer (Sophie Snape): Hi guys, thank you for all taking part in this focus group. This focus group is for my dissertation at uni. So, erm, as you all know, I do fashion, so umm the theme of this focus group is on the cultural shifts that effect fashion. The dissertation will also look at the er how it effects consumer also! So shall we get to it.... I will ask a range of questions on this topic, some questions you may not be familiar with so just answer what you think. Any thought are welcomed so don't be shy. [All laugh]. So question1, you ready guys? So what do you guys think is the biggest cultural change, in the last 5 years, in the uk? ... It can literally be anything, so fire away.

Sian: Okay I'll take it away, umm the biggest cultural change?, id probably say social media. I don't know if that classes for the past 5 years, but id definitely say that, as it is constantly developing! I mean that, people are constantly and are immediate to express themselves these days, if you get me. You know like writing blogs, posting pictures on instagram, sharing information over Facebook, that kinda thing... and this is effecting our society massively.

Becky: Yeah I agree...

Isabella: Yeah same, I would say that too, umm but its the availability of social media and the internet that this stems from in the first place.

Katie: Yeah I would say the internet too, because its so accessible these days you can use it for anything, its like we don't even need to communicate with each other now, like we can just google or siri it. [All laugh].

Interviewer: Okay guys so you're all pretty much in agreement there then. I'll move on to the next question. so... this one doesn't apply to everyone but do you follow any blogs for fashion or and beauty?...

Isabella: umm I occasionally look at beauty sections, you know like zoella.

Sian: Oh yeah I love her, she's ace!

Isabella: Yeah she's brill, so yeah those sites now and then, and you know I love my cosmopolitan mags, so I look at all the beauty tips in there, but do it just to see whats out there at the moment. I don't like read them religiously or anything though.

Sian: umm, apart from her of course, um its on occasion yeah. I like the video blogs more so though, just so you can watch them and they do demonstrations and stuff. I guess I watch her because she is funny and friendly isn't she?... I like her style and she buys affordable fashion so can relate to her I guess. BASICALLY I JUST WANT TO BE HER. [Laughs]. She did one recently actually about an affordable foundation, and I went out and bought it after. I guess in terms of other bloggers, its all about the umm likes and how many views they've got. Then you know whether they are worth following or watching.

Katie: Well I'm not gunna lie guys I really don't. I just like looking at stuff on clothes sites and instagram.

Becky: Yeahhh I don't either! God I don't have time for that!... [Laughs].

Interviewer: Right, thats fine guys, lets get rolling with the next question. I have a feeling you guys will defiantly have similar views on this next one! so.. What social network sites do you use the most, and how often?...

Becky: Well you all know what I'm like with my phone guys.... so I'd have to say twitter first, then Facebook just to have a little browse or stalk!... Oh and snapchat. But i think that getting a bit boring now.

Sian: Do you think? I use that one everyday still....

Becky: Yeah I guess... but yeah Facebook and twitter is daily! I feel like I need to delete the apps on my phone, Im that bad!

Katie: well Im not that bad... [laughs], but I have all the apps. I use the same sort of ones really. umm I use instagram and twitter I suppose I use them every day too, just not as much as Beck!

Isabella: Im the same I use Facebook the most and daily. I like looking at peoples photos and general goss.

Interviewer: That was great guys, the next question is a little bit trickier, and if you don't know what it means don't worry, but if you do feel free to answer... umm so guys, do you know what culture appropriation means? If you do, do you think designers should be giving recognition to people or cultures that have inspired their work... or collections? Lets see what you all think then..

[Slight Pause]

Sian: Yeah I know what it means, although I don't know what to really think about it.hmmm I definitely think designers should recognise that they have been inspired by something or someone. But I do think its a bit of a controversial issue, about whether that is enough I suppose. Even those who are effected by it seem to disagree and in many ways it is complimentary, but obviously the line must be drawn when it become offensive, you know...

Becky: Well I have no clue at all what it means.

Sian: Its like when someone does a collection using cornrows or like using african inspiration and copying into their garments.

Becky: Oh okay, well I agree then. If its racist or offensive then it shouldn't be allowed.

Katie: I don't really understand what it means so...

Isabella: Well I think that they do give enough recognition to wear designs come from.

Interviewer: Shall we move on then, if you guys are a little stuck on that one. [All agree to]. So question 5 is, umm, Oh this ones a little easier, what influences you to buy a product? Anyone?...

Katie: Well I usually look online so Id have to say, seeing photos of the product visually is good. Yeah or If a beauty product review is good.

Becky: Mines the way it looks and is displayed in store. If clothes are put together as an outfit I'll more likely buy them. They look good, and you can see it visually then.

Isabella: Well depending on what I'm buying, Makeup I always go for a good make. You don't want to get break its from cheap foundation! I don't like the idea of putting something cheap on my face. Clothes, I will look at the latest high street fashions, like tiptop, look. That kind of thing. And then choose something that suits me.

Sian: The normal things influence me.. a good advert, seeing other people in something I like.

Katie: Yeah you still haven't given me that top back you borrowed! [Laughs].

Sian: Ha yeah I know. Well it normally has to be different enough that I don't have anything too similar already... umm but also, not too crazy as I wouldn't want to take too big of a risk. Like seeing celebrities wear something, and look good in it sometimes influences me.

Katie: Yeah I agree with that. Like if you see something thats cheap on the high street, that affordable and looks good, I'll go hunt for it in stores.

Interviewer: Some really good thoughts there guys, the next question is... umm, do you prefer to buy clothes, or products umm online or in the store?

Isabella: umm, I'd have to say I really don't like doing online shopping at all! I normally end up taking what I order online back, because it doesn't fit or it looks nothing like what the picture looks like.

Sian: Thats definitely like misguided! They're awful for it.

Isabella: Yeah they are the worst!!! So I much prefer physical shopping. Plus I enjoy making a day of it. You know like grabbing lunch too, or a coffee.

Becky: Instore every day of the week. I definitely agree with you Izz. They just look better in store and I like knowing that things will fit and not make me look 6 months pregnant.

Sian: umm, I think I prefer to buy in store too guys. but I like to research online first if its something specific. So I know whats out there and what Im looking for. And it's good to see if some brands have things in stock just in case, you know.

Katie: Well I am a poor student... so I just tend to window shop. But I don't like online sometimes to see if there are any deals. Like on beauty stuff they sometimes give away free gifts and stuff. House of fraser are really good online for advertising deals. They've always got a good deal on to be fair.

Isabella: Yeah thats true actually....

Interviewer: Right lets move on then, yeah, so this ones on consumer habits. So do any of you think consumer habits have changed since the use of social media?

Sian: Yeah definitely, yeah. We are much more likely to see an advert or see a celebrity wearing something online now. they are always promoting products, like the teeth whitening stuff. When we buy something, we think how it might look not just to those who see us in the flesh, but also when photos are uploaded online. We can justify spending money if we are more aware of our friends doing the same. If there is some sort of craze going about, then we can see the scale of it and how quick consumers are to catch on to it and apply it. So many reasons...

Isabella: Yeah I agree with the thing about the craze, I think trends are much more easily spread now a days on social media. Instagrams a big one for promoting this. There is always a pressure to look good to and thats in magazines as well... but I guess thats social media.

Katie: Yeah instagrams a big one. It always shows what celebrities are wearing and some companies do like clothes matches and tries to copy the look so its affordable, for people like us.

Becky: Social media is a big thing for influencing fashion. People can see how things look so it makes them want to try things on and potentially buy it.

Interviewer: Brilliant views guys, some interesting opinions there and good explanations. Right you'll be pleased to know this is the last one, umm so there isn't really a right or wrong answer to this so I'll be keen to see what you come up with... What do you predict for the future in terms of cultural shifts in fashion?...

Sian: Gosh, umm, well I defiantly think marketing will become much more online based, like using social media as an advertisement tool. I think ultimately, it go one or two ways... either the advertisements will become more personal for the consumer. Like social media already advertises things it thinks we are more likely to want to see, you know like the pop ups on facebook. Much more interactive. or it will become less personal. No longer have sales assistants and we buy everything online. or most likely a bit of both will happen. Being able to live life through clicking, is something that I think will happen someday!

Becky: Yeah I agree with more advertisements on social media. Like, I think every page on every site will show random stuff as an impulse to make you buy it.

Katie: I think that will contribute to an increase on online shopping, as a result of those advertisements.

Isabella: Well I think customer habits will change, like high streets are struggling with the pressures of internet shopping already, they don't need this to grow even more., and I cant see how this will change to be honest. I think this will impact small businesses and only big names will sell.

Interviewer: Right is there any more things you want to add to? ... Okay so that concludes this focus group, that was really good guys. umm thank you again for taking part it was a great help.

[End of focus group discussion].

