Beyond Mainstream Fashion: Overcoming the Traditional Meaning of the Color Black in the Middle East

Nadine Khair [1] , Bassima Massis [2]

1 Amman, Jordan, n.khair@aum.edu.jo

2 Amman, Jordan, The Neuron, bassima_ghassan@hotmail.com

Abstract.

This research explores the changes in mainstream fashion and the meanings associated with the color black in the Middle East. It is important because it sheds light on the perspectives of Middle Eastern university students regarding the color black, which has been overlooked in previous studies in the Middle East. Conducted through a qualitative approach with 25 narratives from 8 different Middle Eastern countries, the research provides insights into their attitudes and behaviors towards their personal style, what mainstream fashion is to them, and their views regarding the color black today. Participants expressed views influenced by culture, society, personal preferences, and trends. The findings conflict with Arab claims that the color black promotes sadness and negativity; they suggest practical and theoretical implications that the color black represents power, elegance, confidence, comfort and is now viewed as an essential color in the participants' closet. Incorporation of more of the color black is recommended for the fashion industry in the Middle East. Moreover, the research indicates changing societal patterns and views toward the color black.

Keywords— **Mainstream Fashion, Culture, Middle East Black, Fashion Style, Traditions**

I. INTRODUCTION

The difference between fashion and style has long been an issue of controversy. "Fashion is the representation of personality for a purpose." (Ikhtiar,2021). Coco Chanel and Saint Laurent did not mean to imply that there is some sort of timeless beauty that transcends fashion, as that would be absurd given the highly subjective nature of dress aesthetics (Van de Peer, 2014); rather, they meant that true fashion creativity comes from paying attention to one's own style rather than copying others.

Mainstream fashion can be defined as conventional and ordinary; nothing too strange or excessive (Gustin,2021). From the eyes of fashion, Individuals initial social interaction is what they wear (Khair et al.,2021). Clothes serve as a vital and essential social instrument that connects individuals' bodies to the outside world. In the twenty-first century, clothing serves a variety of purposes in addition to protection (such as identification, modesty, prestige, and adornment) (Kodžoman,2019). This means that clothes help individuals express their individuality and originality, identify them as members of a particular group, and cover the body in a way that is appropriate.

Color significantly shapes perceptions of attractiveness and communicates identity, emotions, and beliefs (Kodžoman et al., 2021). Michel Pastoureau notes that black, initially linked to death and darkness, evolved from symbolizing holy virtue and royal elegance in the Middle Ages to gaining new meanings through print and scientific discoveries (Pastoureau, 2009). Therefore, the aim of this research is understanding the changes in mainstream fashion by evaluating how identities and communities are understood through fashion's cultural narratives and the sharing of authentic stories to comprehend meanings associated to the color black in the Middle East. Particularly, the focus of this paper is to changes in mainstream fashion and the meanings associated to the color black in the Middle East.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fashion and Style

"Mode passes, Style Remains."
-Coco Chanel,1965

When the word "fashion" is heard, images of models wearing exquisite clothing as they go down a ramp immediately spring to mind. Clothes of varying colors, sizes, or materials are empowered by fashion (Lenka, 2021). However, what exactly is fashion? Fashion is not just about choosing designer clothing, pricey accessories, or high-end shoes. Individuality involves not being afraid to follow your own instincts rather than conforming to social pressure (Frost, 2019).

Fashion is the art of storytelling using clothing, both the ones that are created around them and the ones that have a backstory. What an individual is wearing has a cultural influence, a backstory, or an intellectual touchstone. It is used to celebrate tradition, embrace it, and get away from the everyday. It's more than just a piece of clothing thrown on to cover bodies; it represents a deeper meaning such as a feeling of history and pride (Turini,2018). On the other hand, it can still be argued that fashion follows trends. In fact, depending on the trends followed, fashion is whatever it is at the moment (Matogo,2022).

A person's own style can vary day to day and is frequently fairly fluid. Some individuals choose a look as a kind of "uniform," dressing in the same way every day for several weeks, months, or even years (Draws,2017). The famous statement "Mode passes; style remains" was spoken by French fashion designer Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel in an interview with American writer Joseph Barry, who was based in Paris; This phrase, however a bit cliche now, was adopted as the Chanel brand's slogan. The well-known fashion designer hinted that in contrast to fashion, which is perceived as a never-ending cycle of upper-level alterations forced upon people, style is believed to be a reflection of good taste and the genuine self of the creator (Godart, 2018).

Style-oriented and fashion-oriented consumers have different clothing preferences. Style-oriented customers prefer timeless designs and express their unique style. (Cho et al., 2015). Materialistic buyers rely on external influences and public settings. Fashion-oriented consumers use sophisticated products to show success and elevate social standing. (Gwozdz, 2017).

Mainstream Fashion

As mentioned earlier, the word 'mainstream' in fashion is defined as something basic and ordinary; nothing too extravagant (Gustin,2021). This may be associated with mainstream culture, which is the culture that individuals of a specific community seem to share the most. It pushes individuals to have uniform appearances (Partington, 2017).

The hippie aesthetic emerged in the 1960s, promoting free-spirited clothing. This trend continued into the 1970s, with women embracing pants. In the 1980s, individualism thrived with sports-inspired trends. In the 1990s, Punk, Preppy, and Grunge subcultures emerged, influenced by designers like Marc Jacobs and Alexander McQueen. In the 21st century, comfort-driven athletic wear and minimalism resurged (Turner, 2021). By the 21st century, jeans remained a staple, and post-COVID-19, comfort-driven athletic wear and minimalism resurged (Harris, 2022; Stadler, 2019).

Even after the evolution through the years, there still has been changes in the mainstream fashion industry. The fashion industry has evolved over the past decade, driven by ethics, sustainability, and shifting cultural norms. Consumers now expect transparency in labor practices, resource use, and environmental impact (Ozdamar et al., 2020; Goncalves et al.,

2017). Designers are becoming more socially and environmentally conscious, challenging fast fashion trends (Hatley, 2021).

Diversity has become essential, with brands embracing inclusive campaigns and more body-positive representation (Abrahim & Khadaroo, 2021). The rise of such campaigns reflects efforts to confront past biases (Jääskeläinen, 2020). Fashion now depicts diverse societies, breaking stereotypes about beauty (Lopez, 2020).This cultural shift has transformed consumer behavior and redefined the meaning of black (Roberts, 2022).

Meanings Associated Towards the Color Black in the Middle East

Black also has significant cultural and symbolic associations; black has always been associated with modesty, respect and traditionalism. One example of a marker of respect for Islamic moral principles is the black abaya worn by Muslims (Alajaji, 2019). In this instance, the people' historical and religious customs, rather than just fashion sense, are the driving force for the adoption of black (Bain, 2018). In Middle Eastern poetry and literature, black is utilized to convey a wide range of emotions. The black may represent loss and death, or it may represent a spiritually astute and pious soul (Racoma, 2019).

Perspectives Associated with the Color Black in the Middle East

In the Middle East, there are differing perspectives regarding the many cultures associated with the color black. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Black is associated with sadness and seriousness in both culture and religion. Wearing black is both an outward sign of loss and a way to pay respect to the departed (Robinson, 2017).

Black is linked to traditional attire like the abaya in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Thus, black is more than just a trendy piece of clothing—it has deeper cultural and religious connotations (Thimm,2021). Although historically connected to black, the abaya and kandura are today more emblems of fashionable, contemporary taste (MacLean, 2021). Because of their rich history, culture, and religion, Jordanians attach special significance to the color black. Jordanian women tend to dress more traditionally (Greer, 2020). Many of them wear black, and the majority do so while wearing abayas or hijabs. It has also historically been connected to nomadism, both with black and the beauty of the desert (Dolbee,2022). The perception of black in modern Jordanian society is changing, particularly among youth. They've used this color to create a variety of looks (Obaidi et al., 2020). It implies that traditional dress is no longer limited to color perception. Color is a symbol of modern style that conveys an individual's uniqueness. (AKDEMİR, 2018). The dynamic perspective portrays black as a way of self-expression and cultural reinterpretation, reflecting shifting society attitudes.

Black Changed Mainstream

While black remains highly symbolic, many individuals are increasingly deciding not to feel restricted by preconceived notions and are forging their own path (Chochrane, 2021). Individuals are adopting black as a means to showcase their uniqueness, perspectives, and individuality in modern society. The evolution of black from a small group to widespread acceptance provides an interesting view into how the color's cultural significance and definition has changed over time. Fashion was revolutionized by Chanel in the 1920's with the introduction of the Little Black Dress (LBD) which later became a notion of elegance and attractiveness. The LBD modernized the way individuals viewed black, turning it into a sophisticated and understated look that became an essential wardrobe staple for every woman (Coulter,2020). Black transitioned from representing sorrow to signifying timelessness and elegance as perspectives shifted in society (Miner, 2023).

Individuals are exposed to a variety of perspectives regarding color, traditional and modern approaches, shaping their views and choices. As a result, this offers an opportunity for marketers and designers to capitalize on the preferences of

customers concerning color and character (Rathore,2023). However, much remains to understand regarding the ever-evolving connection between the color black and consumer behavior in the Middle East.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses interpretivism to use perceived knowledge to comprehend a particular environment (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). As a result, rather than emphasizing a particular reality, this study adopts a qualitative technique to highlight reflections. This essentially affects the decisions and choices made in relation to a study procedure (Carson et al., 2001). Narratives were used to conduct this study. The purpose of this study is to comprehend how the meanings associated to the color black in the Middle East have changed, along with the mainstream fashion trends that have affected it, and how these changes have affected consumer behavior. Thus, narratives among university students were adopted in order to further study how meanings linked with the color black evolved in the Middle East. The same themes were grouped together through the use of thematic analysis.

The sample for this study consists of 25 university students in order to meet the research's aim. This is because university students these days frequently wear black or incorporate it into their fashion (Krambs,2023). The following table describes the list of participants in this research:

Table 1: List of Participants (HERE)

Twenty-Five participants from both direct and indirect social and personal ties are included in this study (Khair et al., 2023). Furthermore, as shown in Table 1 Above, pseudonyms were added to protect participant identities and improve the accuracy of the results. The restriction of a closed-ended experimental research methodologies are removed when using a qualitative open-ended approach (Moore and Lutz, 2000). Twenty-Five participants were chosen because saturation took place, and no further narratives were needed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
Difference Between Fashion and Style

As Efremov et al. (2022) explain, fashion refers to clothing trends embraced by the majority within a country, typically changing every few months or years. Fashion trends shift with seasons, while style reflects personal expression through choices in clothing, accessories, and grooming (Lascity, 2021). This section presents participants' views on the difference between fashion and style:

Loiy: *"Fashion showcases designers' artistic tastes and initiates trends, while style reflects personal preferences in clothing."*

Wael: *"Fashion changes every few months, but personal style takes much longer to change, if it ever does."*

Dalia: *"Fashion is a collective expression that evolves, driven by trends, while style is timeless, expressing identity and creativity."*

Mira: *"Fashion is what's socially valued at a certain time, but style is personal and reflects individuality."*

Michael: *"Fashion is what's trendy, while style is about personal preferences and what makes someone unique."*

Mahmoud: *"Fashion follows trends and reflects societal expectations, but style expresses individuality and self-expression."*

Participants agreed that fashion follows societal trends, while style is personal and remains more consistent over time. As Wael and Dalia noted, style expresses individuality, often resisting trends. Michael acknowledged that while distinct,

fashion and style are interrelated, with people using fashion to express their personal style. These insights align with literature suggesting that fashion influences personal style while allowing space for self-expression (Kaiser & Green, 2021).

Factors influencing Style

Individuals express themselves and differentiate themselves through style, with clothing serving as a means of communication that reflects identity (Cham et al., 2018). This section highlights the factors influencing participants' personal styles:

Ramiz: "I prefer wearing something comfortable but elegant, so I usually wear black."

Taleen: "Comfort is essential. I prefer simplicity, functionality, and timeless designs."

Joelle: "My style is trendy and influenced by social media and celebrities."

Mahmoud: "Music changed my style, helping me step out of my comfort zone."

Yasmine: "I adapt my style to seasons—bright colors and beads in summer, darker clothes in winter, often black."

Participants emphasized comfort as a key factor. Yasmine and others noted that color heavily influences their choices. Taleen and several others prefer simple styles that enhance confidence, while Joelle and four others follow trends influenced by social media. Mahmoud's style was shaped by music. These insights align with previous literature, affirming that personal style reflects both self-expression and external influences like trends and music (Park & Chun, 2023).

Cultural Influences on the Way Individuals Incorporate Black into their Style

In many cultures, black symbolizes grief and death, yet it is also associated with sophistication and elegance (Fussel, 2019). This section explores how participants' cultures influenced their choice to wear black:

Yasmine: "In Egypt, I grew up seeing women wear black abayas, especially at my grandma's house in old Egypt. Black represented comfort and familiarity, which is why I still wear it."

Wael: "In my culture, we say that black is the king of colors."

Mustafa: "In Jordan, black traditionally symbolizes grief, but I now wear it for its elegance."

Taleen: "In Lebanon, black signifies both sadness and sophistication, but I see it as practical, so I don't tie colors to emotions."

Loiy: "In Syria, bright colors are popular, but I wear black because it's my favorite, not due to culture."

Mira: "In Arab culture, black is considered luxurious."

Participants acknowledged that black still represents grief but is now also linked to sophistication and elegance. Yasmine and Joelle emphasized black's association with modesty through abayas. Yacoub noted how his perception of black evolved as he explored personal style. Some participants, including Loiy, said culture had no impact on his preference for black. This shift reflects a move away from cultural norms, as individuals increasingly use black to express personal confidence and style. As Reynolds (2023) explains, black has a complex history and is often worn to convey power, strength, and sophistication, aligning with participants' views.

Meanings Associated with the Color Black

A key color in modern fashion, black holds diverse meanings, including simplicity, luxury, elegance, grief, and sophistication (Ewa, 2022). This section explores participants' views on black:

Mustafa: "*Black symbolizes elegance and beauty. It depends on the setting—appropriate for both funerals and parties. It's hard to assign one meaning; it varies with context.*"

Laith: "*I associate black with strength and power. Its darkness makes it unique.*"

Jana: "*Black means comfort, ease of styling, and class—it matches everything.*"

Wael: "*Though black is fancy and versatile, wearing all black reminds me of funerals.*"

Most participants view black as comfortable rather than sad, though Wael and others associate it with funerals. Nearly all participants agreed black symbolizes power, sophistication, and elegance. Some noted that its meaning changes with context, reinforcing that black represents timeless elegance and class (Purnama, 2020).

Sensations towards the Color Black

A preference for the color black is associated with power and recognition, according to color psychology research, and those who wear black take their own identity very seriously (Douedari,2022). This section discusses the emotions that participants experience when wearing black. The following excerpts are a sample:

Husam: "*More mature, royalty, more presentable, calmness.*"

Hana: "*I always feel confident when wearing black compared to other colors.*"

Joelle: "*When I wear black, I feel confident and comfortable, can't go wrong with wearing black.*"

Jana: "*There is sense of empowerment and assertiveness that comes when I wear this color, it makes me feel more self-assured and put together.*"

Laith: "*For me wearing black always makes feel mysterious.*"

Mahmoud: "*Wearing black awakens various types of emotions and sensations, it can change my mood in a good way surprisingly (it being associated with misery it shouldn't do that) but for me it does*"

Jolie: "*Black makes me appear slimmer and sleek. Overall, it's a color that brings about positive emotions and sensations, making me feel fashionable.*"

Husam and two other participants stated that they feel more mature when they wear black. Wearing black gives Hana and six other participants more confidence. Joelle and three other participants believe that the color black is comfortable. Jolie and two other participants report feeling slimmer when wearing black. Jana and Taleen convey a sense of assurance and put together. Laith feels mysterious when they wear black. Finally, Mahmoud and others said that the color black lifts their moods. As a result, the responses validate the literature and contradict the notion that black is a sad color—instead, they indicate that it uplifts the mood of individuals. According to color psychology research, those who wear all black feel together and certain (Robinson,2021).

After the analysis section of the research is thoroughly finished, the researchers' objective, which is to understand the changes in mainstream fashion and the meanings associated to the color black in the Middle East becomes clear. The research's key findings were:

- Fashion and style are interrelated. Style, however, conveys individuality even when it goes against what is "fashionable."

- The most crucial factors that participants took into consideration while creating their personal style were following trends, their preferred music, what they felt comfortable wearing, what gave them confidence, and what allowed them to express themselves.

- All research participants in the Middle Eastern countries agreed that black is a color that boosts their confidence, elevates their mood, and is perceived as a symbol of strength.
- Participants in an analysis of the meanings and feelings associated with the color black stated that it is a timeless color that, as previously stated, symbolizes power, elegance, and sophistication. In the Gulf, it stands for modesty. A few participants expressed that the association of the color is not specific and varies depending on the occassion in which it is worn.

With all factors taken into consideration, these themes show how attitudes are shifting in the Middle East. The results of the research also demonstrated that people are disregarding the norms of society and following their own interests and preferences more and more. Society and previously accepted practices are changing as a result.

CONCLUSION

In a society where views are changing and perspectives towards the color black are evolving, individuals are changing the mainstream and choosing what they prefer over societal standards. Accordingly, the aim of this research is understanding the changes in mainstream fashion and the meanings associated to the color black in the middle east.

Few research has been done to show these changing opinions; therefore, this research has been interpretive in nature and included a qualitative approach. This approach was used to deeply understand the reasons behind this shift in perspective and let individuals express their feelings towards why they prefer the color black in their wardrobe over others.

Since this is a sensitive topic, a well interpreted approach was needed so the research relied on narratives that were conducted with twenty-five participants, all of which were university students and included eleven females and fourteen males from eight different middle eastern countries through networks and ties.

The participants were expressive and said drivers related to culture, the way they were raised, the country they were raised in, body image, and how individualistic they are all influenced their responses. However, all the participants agreed on was that Middle East's collective societal standards are changing, and people are starting to dress more according to their personal tastes and feelings rather than following cultural norms. For this reason, the results are significant, and black is becoming the new mainstream.

Theoretical Implications

Previous research demonstrates the collective nature of the Middle East (Zeffane, 2020). This research, however, contradicts that. Individuals nowadays are challenging culture and focusing more on their interests and personal preferences. This is altering society and the preconceived notions of standards.

Previous Western articles discussed how black is becoming a statement color and how it is making an appearance in the fashion industry; It stands for sophistication, style, and power (Sapri, 2022). However, research indicates that black is associated with mourning in the Middle East, where it is typically worn to funerals (Reena, 2020). In addition, black is worn in the Gulf countries for wintertime apparel for men like thobs and abayas for women, aside from sadness (Ansie, 2022). The purpose of this research is to understand the new meanings that the color black has acquired, particularly among younger generations and university students, which is new to the context. Specifically, it mentioned a newly introduced term that came from thematic analysis and had never been used before; middle easterners are specifically

opposing against their culture and choosing to be individualistic, which is strange because, as previously mentioned, middle easterners are collective in nature.

The participants' responses indicated that black is a color of timeless elegance that also conveys confidence, maturity, mystery, and comfort. Participants' responses suggested that wearing black improves their mood, contrary to the notion in literature that black is a color associated with mourning.

Practical Implications

Due to changing consumer preferences, Middle Eastern fashion companies might find the research beneficial. They might want to use more of the color black in their stores and collection pieces. The research's conclusions show that participants preferred to wear black even in Middle Eastern countries where individuals often wear colorful clothing. As a result, the fashion industry may use black in a variety of clothing designs.

Limitationsand Future Research

Given the nature of the research, a qualitative approach was used, resulting in numerous constraints. Because the subjects were highly sensitive, avoiding biased responses was a primary priority for this research. In addition, time restrictions made it nearly difficult to obtain a sufficient number of participants to generalize the opinions; instead, a small sample size of twenty-five individuals was questioned to explore and understand the perspectives of various Middle Eastern segments. Furthermore, since this research focused on the Middle East as a whole and the region has a variety of characteristics, gathering participants from different backgrounds and countries was difficult because the study was an individual effort with no resources. Further research might conduct a quantitative approach and include greater sample sizes and concentrate more on each Middle Eastern country because they all have distinctive characteristics, personalities, social classes, and perspectives. As a result, opinions may be understood better and the reasons for changing mainstream fashion.

REFERENCES

[1] C. Abraham and A. Khadaroo, *Culturally Inspired Fashion: Perceptions of Fashion Designers and Consumers*, 2021.

[2] N. Akdemir, "Visible expression of social identity: The clothing and fashion," *Dergipark*. Available: https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/543644.

[3] T. N. Alajaji, "Abaya and its Aesthetic Fashion Role in Saudi Arabia," *Global Fashion*, pp. 1–28, 2019.

[4] L. Al-Obaidi, A. Bataineh, S. Aljabaly, and H. Salhab, "Factors influencing youths' fashion leadership behavior of fashion retailing stores in Jordan," *Management Science Letters*, vol. 10, no. 16, pp. 3833–3842, 2020.

[5] A. Al-Twal and N. Khair, "Uncovering the role of 'culture' and 'self-image' in determining academics' acceptance of performance appraisal in a Jordanian university context," *International Journal of Business Innovation and Research*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 169–187, 2023.

[6] Ansie, "Colour in UAE Dress," *The Zay Initiative*. [Online]. Available: https://www.academia.edu/34838580/Fashion_and_Style_Reference_Guide_pdf.

[7] M. Bain, "Only black is the new black: A cultural history of fashion's favorite shade," *Quartz*. Available: https://qz.com/quartzy/1194798/only-black-is-the-newblack-a-cultural-history-of-fashions-favorite-shade.

[8] T. H. Cham, C. K. Y. Ng, Y. M. Lim, and B. L. Cheng, "Factors influencing clothing interest and purchase intention: A study of Generation Y consumers in Malaysia," *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 174–189, 2018.

[9] E. Cho, S. Gupta, and Y. K. Kim, "Style consumption: Its drivers and role in sustainable apparel consumption," *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, vol. 39, no. 6, pp. 661–669, 2015.

[10] S. M. Coulter, *Fashion: The Temporality and Performance of Femininity and Identity and the Fight to be Modern*, Doctoral dissertation, Dartmouth College, 2020.

[11] S. Dolbee, "Empire on the edge: Desert, nomads, and the making of an Ottoman provincial border," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 127, no. 1, pp. 129–158, 2022.

[12] S. Douedari, "All black: Der Wunsch, Alles Schwarz zu tragen und die unbewusste Botschaft dahinter," *L'Officiel*. [Online]. Available: https://www.lofficiel.at/en/fashion/all-black-the-desire-to-wear-all-black-and-its-unconscious-message-to-ourselves.

[13] M. Draws, *Fashion and Style Reference Guide*, Academia.edu. [Online]. Available: https://www.academia.edu/34838580/Fashion_and_Style_Reference_Guide_pdf.

[14] J. Efremov, M. Kertakova, and V. Dimitrijeva, "Different aspects of fashion," *Tekstilna industrija*, vol. 70, no. 4, pp. 48–54, 2022.

[15] O. E. Ewa, "A brief history of black in fashion," *The Harvard Crimson*. [Online]. Available: https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2022/2/3/ewa-brief-history-of-black/.

[16] K. Frost, "How I found my individual style," *Elle*. [Online]. Available: https://www.elle.com/uk/fashion/a28927773/how-i-found-my-individual-style/.

[17] G. Fussell, "Color symbolism and meanings around the world," *The Shutterstock Blog*. [Online]. Available: https://www.shutterstock.com/blog/color-symbolism-and-meanings-around-the-world.

[18] F. C. Godart, "Why is style not in fashion? Using the concept of 'style' to understand the creative industries," in *Frontiers of Creative Industries: Exploring Structural and Categorical Dynamics*, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018, pp. 103–128.

[19] G. Greer, "Jordanian customs: What Jordanians wear," *Arab Culture*. [Online]. Available: https://kaleela.com/en/jordanian-clothes-what-jordanians-wear.

[20] I. Gustin, "The end of mainstream fashion," *WHYTT Magazine*. [Online]. Available: https://whyttmagazine.com/all/the-end-of-mainstream-fashion.

[21] W. Gwozdz, K. S. Nielsen, S. Gupta, and J. Gentry, "The relationship between fashion and style orientation and wellbeing," *Mistra Future Fashion*, 2017.

[22] H. Harris, "The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the global fashion industry," 2022.

[23] N. Hatley, *The Impact of Fast Fashion, Consumer Behaviour and Fashion Brand Communication on Sustainability*, Master's thesis, Manchester Metropolitan University, 2021.

[24] V. Jääskeläinen, "Body image in the fashion and beauty industries," 2020.

[25] S. B. Kaiser and D. N. Green, *Fashion and Cultural Studies*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021.

[26] N. Khair, E. Lloyd-Parkes, and J. Deacon, "'Foreign brands of course!' An ethnographic study exploring COO image perceptions and its influence on the preference of foreign clothing brands," *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 274–290, 2021.

[27] D. Kodžoman, "The psychology of clothing: Meaning of colors, body image and gender expression in fashion," *Textile & Leather Review*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 90–103, 2019.

[28] D. Kodžoman, A. Hladnik, A. Pavko Čuden, and V. Čok, "Exploring color attractiveness and its relevance to fashion," *Color Research & Application*, vol. 47, no. 1, pp. 182–193, 2022.

[29] G. Krambs, "The most popular school colors: A ranking of student preferences," *StrawPoll*. [Online]. Available: https://strawpoll.com/most-popular-school-colors.

[30] M. E. Lascity, *Communicating Fashion: Clothing, Culture, and Media*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021.

[31] R. Lenka, "The true meaning of fashion," *Fuzia*. [Online]. Available: https://www.fuzia.com/article_detail/278219/the-true-meaning-of-fashion.

[32] A. Luna López, "Representation of ethnic diversity in online advertising images of fashion brands (2010–2019)," 2020.

[33] M. MacLean, "National identity in the UAE," *Middle East Insight*, no. 256, p. 41, 2021.

[34] P. Matogo, "The true meaning of fashion," *Pulse Uganda*. [Online]. Available: https://www.pulse.ug/lifestyle/the-true-meaning-of-fashion/ljb4dv4.

[35] S. Miner, *Ethics, Fashion, and Film in the 1950s and 60s*, 2023.

[36] R. Mukamal, "How humans see in color," *American Academy of Ophthalmology*. [Online]. Available: https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/how-humans-see-in-color.

[37] Z. Ozdamar Ertekin, D. Atik, and J. B. Murray, "The logic of sustainability: Institutional transformation towards a new culture of fashion," *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol. 36, no. 15–16, pp. 1447–1480, 2020.

[38] J. Park and J. Chun, "Evolution of fashion as play in the digital space," *Fashion Practice*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 256–278, 2023.

[39] A. Partington, "Popular fashion and working-class affluence," in *Fashion Theory*, Routledge, 2017, pp. 220–231.

[40] M. Pastoureau, *Black: The History of a Color*, Princeton University Press, 2009.

[41] I. Y. Purnama, "The meaning of color and its symbol of strength in the exhibition '17/71: Goresan Juang Kemerdekaan'," *KnE Social Sciences*, pp. 590–599, 2020.

[42] B. Racoma, "Color symbolism – psychology across cultures," *Day Translations Blog*. [Online]. Available: https://www.daytranslations.com/blog/color-psychology/.

[43] B. Rathore, "Digital Transformation 4.0: Integration of Artificial Intelligence & Metaverse in Marketing," *Eduzone: International Peer-Reviewed/Refereed Multidisciplinary Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 42–48, 2023.

[44] A. Reynolds, "The absence or presence of all colours? The colour black," *Adrian Reynolds*. [Online]. Available: https://adrianreynolds.ie/the-colour-black/.

[45] C. Roberts, "What is fashion?" in *Consuming Mass Fashion in 1930s England: Design, Manufacture and Retailing for Young Working-Class Women*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022, pp. 63–86.

[46] J. Robinson, "Colour semiotics and what they mean in other cultures," *Buzzword*. [Online]. Available: https://buzzwordcreative.co.uk/colour-semiotics-and-what-they-mean-in-other-cultures.

[47] E. Robinson, "The psychology behind an all-black wardrobe," *Mindless Mag*. [Online]. Available: https://www.mindlessmag.com/post/the-psychology-behind-an-all-black-wardrobe.

[48] W. Sapri, "The power of black in fashion," *Illumination*, 2022.

[49] V. Thimm, "Muslim fashion: Challenging transregional connectivities between Malaysia and the Arabian Peninsula," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and National Studies of Southeast Asia*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 117–128, 2021.

[50] N. Turner, "Disco: When fashion took to the dance floor," *Clothing Cultures*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 5–26, 2021.

[51] A. Van de Peer, "So last season: The production of the fashion present in the politics of time," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 317–340, 2014. doi:10.2752/175174114X13938552557880.

[52] R. Zeffane, "Gender, individualism–collectivism, and individuals' propensity to trust: A comparative exploratory study," *Journal of Management & Organization*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 445–459, 2020.

List of TABLES

Table 1. Student Names and Information

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Nationality
Yasmine	Female	21	Student	Egyptian
Jana	Female	21	Student	Lebanese
Hana	Female	21	Student	Palestinian
Jolie	Female	21	Student	Jordanian
Natalia	Female	21	Student	Emarati
Dalia	Female	23	Student	Saudi
Mira	Female	21	Student	Jordanian
Taleen	Female	19	Student	Lebanese
Joelle	Female	22	Student	Jordanian
Tally	Female	21	Student	Syria
Sama	Female	21	Student	Kuwaiti
Omar	Male	21	Student	Kuwaiti
Eyad	Male	22	Student	Emarati
Yaqoub	Male	19	Student	Jordanian
Husam	Male	23	Student	Palestinian
Hamza	Male	23	Student	Saudi
Laith	Male	23	Student	Jordanian
Micheal	Male	23	Student	Palestinian
Malek	Male	21	Student	Jordanian
Wael	Male	23	Student	Jordanian
Mustafa	Male	22	Student	Jordanian
Mahmoud	Male	22	Student	Egyptian
Amir	Male	21	Student	Lebanese
Loiy	Male	23	Student	Syria