

**ҚАЗАҚСТАН ЖӘНЕ ШЕТЕЛ ҒАЛЫМДАРЫНЫҢ
ОРТАҚ ҒЫЛЫМИ ЗЕРТТЕУЛЕРІ
СОВМЕСТНЫЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ УЧЕНЫХ
КАЗАХСТАНА И ЗАРУБЕЖЬЯ
JOINT RESEARCHES OF SCIENTISTS
OF KAZAKHSTAN AND ABROAD**

SRSTI: 04.61.00

DOI: 10.51889/2959-6270.2025.89.1.010

S. Zholdybayeva ¹, B. Zabun ²

¹ Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

² Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE FASHION PHENOMENON ON THE PROCESS OF
SOCIALIZATION OF STUDENTS IN A CONSUMER SOCIETY**

Abstract

This study is aimed at analyzing the importance of the process of socialization in the formation of the personality of students in consumer society, the influence of the phenomenon of fashion on its implementation. The main purpose of the research is to identify the features and mechanisms of consumer experience in the student environment.

The purpose of the research is to identify the features and mechanisms of consumer experience formation in the student environment, as well as to analyze the factors influencing its development. In the course of the work, the main directions of student youth's interaction with modern consumer trends and their role in the process of socialization are considered.

The scientific and practical significance of the research lies in a detailed analysis of the influence of fashion and consumer behavior on the processes of adaptation and self-identification of students. This will allow us to better understand the behavioral characteristics of this age group and develop effective measures for their social integration and the formation of conscious consumer behavior. The methodological basis of the study was empirical methods, including questionnaires and analysis of data collected among students in 2023.

Research has shown that fashion, as a sociocultural phenomenon, has a significant impact on the socialization of student youth, contributing to the introduction of various cultural practices and the formation of individual and group identity.

The data obtained can be used in the development of educational programs aimed at improving financial literacy of students, the creation of social initiatives for the formation of responsible consumption, as well as in the adaptation of youth policy to take into account the influence of fashion on the socialization of the student environment.

Keywords: consumption, consumer society, student youth, student environment, the process of socialization, socialization of student youth, fashion

С. Жолдыбаева ¹, Б.Забун ²

¹ Абай атындағы Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университеті,

Алматы қ., Қазақстан Республикасы

² Гази университеті, Анкара, Түркия

ТҰТЫНУ ҚОҒАМЫНДАҒЫ СТУДЕНТ ЖАСТАРДЫҢ ӘЛЕУМЕТТЕНУ ПРОЦЕСІНЕ СӘН ҚҰБЫЛЫСЫНЫҢ ЫҚПАЛЫ

Аңдатпа

Бұл зерттеу тұтыну қоғамында студент жастардың жеке басын қалыптастырудағы әлеуметтену процесінің маңыздылығын, сән құбылысының оны жүзеге асыруға әсерін талдауға бағытталған. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты-студенттік ортадағы тұтынушылық тәжірибенің ерекшеліктері мен механизмдерін анықтау.

Зерттеудің мақсаты студенттік ортада тұтынушылық тәжірибені қалыптастырудың ерекшеліктері мен механизмдерін анықтау, сондай-ақ оның дамуына әсер ететін факторларды талдау болып табылады. Жұмыс барысында студент жастардың қазіргі тұтыну үрдістерімен өзара іс-қимылының негізгі бағыттары және олардың әлеуметтену үдерісіндегі рөлі қарастырылады.

Зерттеудің ғылыми және практикалық маңыздылығы сән мен тұтынушылық мінез-құлықтың студенттердің бейімделу және өзін-өзі анықтау процестеріне әсерін егжей-тегжейлі талдау болып табылады. Бұл осы жас тобының мінез-құлық ерекшеліктерін тереңірек түсінуге және олардың әлеуметтік интеграциясы мен саналы тұтынушылық мінез-құлықты қалыптастырудың тиімді шараларын жасауға мүмкіндік береді. Зерттеудің әдіснамалық негізі эмпирикалық әдістер болды, соның ішінде 2023 жылы студенттер арасында жиналған деректерді сауалнама мен талдау.

Зерттеулер көрсеткендей, сән әлеуметтік-мәдени құбылыс ретінде студент жастардың әлеуметтенуіне айтарлықтай әсер етеді, әртүрлі мәдени тәжірибелерді енгізуге және жеке және топтық сәйкестікті қалыптастыруға ықпал етеді.

Алынған мәліметтер студенттердің қаржылық сауаттылығын арттыруға, жауапты тұтынуды қалыптастыру бойынша әлеуметтік бастамаларды құруға, сондай-ақ сәннің студенттік ортаны әлеуметтендіруге әсерін есепке алу үшін жастар саясатын бейімдеуге бағытталған білім беру бағдарламаларын әзірлеуде пайдаланылуы мүмкін.

Түйін сөздер: тұтыну, тұтыну қоғамы, студент жастар, студенттік орта, әлеуметтену процесі, студент жастардың әлеуметтенуі, сән

С. Жолдыбаева ¹, Б.Забун ²

¹ Казахский национальный педагогический университет имени Абая,

г.Алматы, Республика Казахстан.

² Университет Гази, Анкара, Турция

ВЛИЯНИЕ ФЕНОМЕНА МОДЫ НА ПРОЦЕСС СОЦИАЛИЗАЦИИ СТУДЕНЧЕСКОЙ МОЛОДЕЖИ В ПОТРЕБИТЕЛЬСКОМ ОБЩЕСТВЕ

Аннотация

Данное исследование направлено на анализ значимости процесса социализации в становлении личности студенческой молодежи в потребительском обществе, влияния феномена моды на ее реализацию. Основной целью исследования является выявление особенностей и механизмов потребительского опыта в студенческой среде.

Целью исследования является выявление особенностей и механизмов формирования потребительского опыта в студенческой среде, а также анализ факторов, влияющих на его

развитие. В ходе работы рассматриваются основные направления взаимодействия студенческой молодежи с современными тенденциями потребления и их роль в процессе социализации.

Научная и практическая значимость исследования заключается в детальном анализе влияния моды и потребительского поведения на процессы адаптации и самоидентификации студентов. Это позволит глубже понять поведенческие особенности данной возрастной группы и разработать эффективные меры для их социальной интеграции и формирования осознанного потребительского поведения. Методологической основой исследования послужили эмпирические методы, включая анкетирование и анализ данных, собранных среди студентов в 2023 году.

Исследования продемонстрировали, что мода, как социокультурный феномен, оказывает значительное влияние на социализацию студенческой молодежи, способствуя внедрению различных культурных практик и формированию индивидуальной и групповой идентичности.

Полученные данные могут быть использованы при разработке образовательных программ, направленных на повышение финансовой грамотности студентов, создании социальных инициатив по формированию ответственного потребления, а также в адаптации молодежной политики для учета влияния моды на социализацию студенческой среды.

Ключевые слова: потребление, общество потребления, студенческая молодежь, студенческая среда, процесс социализации, социализация студенческой молодежи, мода

MAIN PART

Fashion, as a sociological phenomenon, is a dynamic and multifaceted aspect of social life that significantly influences individuals and groups within society. From a sociological perspective, fashion extends beyond clothing and appearance; it encompasses behaviors, lifestyles, and even ideologies that reflect the values and norms of a given social group. It serves as a mechanism of communication, enabling individuals to express their identity, status, and cultural affiliation. The study of fashion in sociology explores how trends emerge, spread, and influence social structures, including the process of socialization.

Fashion operates as a powerful tool for social differentiation and integration. It allows individuals to assert their uniqueness while simultaneously conforming to collective expectations. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu emphasized that fashion is closely tied to social capital and distinction, as people use clothing and other fashionable elements to signify their social position and align themselves with particular groups. Similarly, Georg Simmel discussed fashion as a dual process of imitation and differentiation. According to his theory, individuals adopt fashion trends to integrate into specific social circles, yet these trends are constantly changing to maintain exclusivity among elite groups. Once a style becomes widespread, it loses its symbolic power, prompting the emergence of new trends.

The impact of fashion on socialization is particularly evident in the student environment, where young individuals actively engage in identity formation. The student phase of life is characterized by a search for self-expression, and fashion serves as a primary medium for experimentation and self-representation. It shapes social interactions by influencing group dynamics, peer relationships, and even perceptions of self-worth. Through fashion choices, students navigate social hierarchies, build social networks, and align with subcultures that share similar values and aspirations.

Furthermore, fashion is deeply embedded in consumer culture, where mass media, influencers, and marketing strategies play a crucial role in shaping preferences and behaviors. The widespread accessibility of fashion through digital platforms amplifies its influence, accelerating trend cycles and intensifying the desire for social belonging through material consumption. As a result, students' fashion choices often reflect broader societal trends, reinforcing consumer behaviors that contribute to the overall process of socialization in the modern world. This topic is significant as fashion serves as a powerful mechanism for identity construction, social stratification, and cultural

integration among students in a consumer society, shaping their self-perception, social affiliations, and value systems. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights for educators, sociologists, and policymakers in analyzing the socio-cultural implications of fashion-driven socialization, thereby informing strategies to foster critical engagement with consumer culture and its influence on youth identity formation.

INTRODUCTION

In society, depending on the interests of people, a demand is formed for the use of certain products, goods, and the needs for the consumption of goods and services increase. Therefore, in sociological science, this process is interpreted as a "consumer society".

Consumer activity is an essential aspect of societal functioning and our everyday lives. While the concept of consumption has been subject to scholarly inquiry since the mid-18th century, it was initially examined solely within the confines of economic science, primarily viewed as a means to achieve producer goals. However, in the 19th century, the foundations of a sociological approach emerged, focusing on an individual analysis of consumption and delving into the attitudes people hold toward consumption, driven by their conscious interests [1, p.149].

Conventionally, "consumption" refers to the physical utilization of material goods, wherein individuals engage with the beneficial properties of goods or processes to satisfy their needs. In essence, consumption entails both the utilization of a particular good's beneficial properties and the subsequent depletion of its value. It is the nexus where individual human needs intersect with the tangible world, facilitating satisfaction while simultaneously altering the value of the consumed good [2, p.35].

The intricate web of relations established to fulfill both material and other needs within the realm of consumption operates within a public structure. The general consumer society stands as the sole legal framework within which both commercial and non-commercial economic activities can transpire. Membership in this society is open to individuals who have reached the age of 18, as well as to legal entities of any organizational and legal form. Consumption serves as the primary motivating force across all social groups within modern society. Consequently, consumer behavior not only constitutes a form of social behavior but also stands as one of the pivotal focal points in disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and economics.

Before delving into the influence of fashion on the socialization process of student youth within a consumer society, it is prudent to elucidate the essence of the socialization process among this demographic. Students represent a distinctive social group within the broader youth stratum, and researchers across various scientific fields have long grappled with the intricacies of youth-related issues. Among the earliest publications delving into the methodological intricacies of the youth category, the works of researcher Neuborne [3, p.32] stand out. This author articulated a profound understanding of youth, defining it as a socio-demographic group distinguished by age, alongside a complex array of social and socio-psychological attributes. Moreover, Paul [4] insightful commentary underscores the multifaceted nature of youth, emphasizing that while biologically diverse at a certain life stage, their specific age range, social status, and socio-psychological characteristics are inherently socio-historical. These facets are intricately intertwined with the social system of culture and the laws of socialization inherent in society. In this context, the paramount objective of young individuals during their student years is the systematic and thorough acquisition of theoretical knowledge pertinent to self-awareness and their chosen fields of study. It is upon this foundation that they cultivate the practical skills requisite for their future endeavors. Student youth, by and large, share a common lifestyle characterized by their collective pursuit of education, employment, and leisure activities. This stage serves as a pivotal juncture wherein models of personal and social behavior are molded, alongside the development of value orientations. Consequently, they traverse the significant process of socialization, shaping their identities and roles within society.

Hence, socialization emerges as a vast and multifaceted process of paramount significance in an individual's societal existence. The concept itself made its inaugural foray into scholarly discourse toward the late 19th century, spearheaded by American sociologist F.Giddings and French sociologist and psychologist G.Tard. They posited that socialization epitomizes the developmental journey of humanity's social essence, intricately intertwined with the shaping of one's personality under the pervasive influence of the social milieu [5, p.1198].

Scholars provide thorough insights into the concept of socialization. For instance, in a concise Sociology Dictionary, socialization, derived from Latin meaning "public," is defined as the process through which personalities are shaped by studying and internalizing the behaviors, norms, and values characteristic of a specific society, social community, or group, along with their associated patterns of conduct [6, p.363].

Based on the process of socialization, individuals undergo the formation of their personality, assimilating societal requirements and rules while achieving social maturity and integrating patterns of consciousness and behavior. Socialization, particularly crucial during youth, is a bidirectional process. It involves both the absorption of social experiences by individuals as they interact within their social environments and their active engagement in shaping these environments. Youth socialization specifically entails the assimilation of social norms, cultural values, and behavioral patterns, with the student phase serving as a significant period in this process, imprinting lasting impressions on their lives.

Examining student youth within social frameworks reveals several distinct characteristics. They possess their own aspirations and interests, serving as a wellspring of spiritual and economic potential for their communities. Despite their limited life experience, their interests often herald shifts in societal orientations. Moreover, during their student years, they engage in studying behavioral and fashion trends and consumer practices, demonstrating a capacity to navigate and make choices regarding values and goals [7, p.191].

Consumption stands as a key indicator of societal development, shaping individuals' personalities, statuses, lifestyles, and broader social landscapes. As such, the intersection of youth and consumption warrants attention, given the primacy of consumption in young minds and its potential to influence their consumer experiences. Sociologists increasingly delve into the intricacies of youth consumerism as a result.

Fashion emerges as a multifaceted socio-cultural phenomenon, wielding considerable influence not only in shaping external attributes but also in the socialization of student youth. Originating from the French "mode" and Latin "modus," fashion encapsulates habits, values, and preferences adopted within specific environments and timeframes. Its dynamic nature, subject to rapid changes in the external milieu, underscores its profound impact on societal preferences and behaviors [8].

According to the Michaela [9], fashion encompasses a broad spectrum of cultural phenomena, embodying both material and spiritual values that humanity has accumulated throughout its development. In a narrower sense, fashion denotes the rapid evolution of clothing, hats, and accessories styles, marked by significant changes within relatively short timeframes. On the other hand, Martin [10, p.41] defines fashion as periodic shifts in cultural patterns and behavioral forms across various domains of human activity. Fashion predominantly pertains to personal appearance, encompassing attire, hairstyles, and extends to aspects of daily life such as housing, furniture, and even technological gadgets like household appliances and cars. It exerts a profound influence on the formation of perspectives in fields like science, art, literature, and music, and extends its impact to individuals across diverse realms including politicians and creative personalities. Moreover, fashion serves as a vital means of communication, facilitating social interaction and reflecting cultural practices. Its significance in the education of young people is notable, as it serves as a vehicle for introducing cultural norms and values. The perception of fashion varies among different social groups and time periods, capable of being both widespread and exclusive, while also shaping notions of taste and style, whether positively or negatively.

Understanding fashion's impact on student socialization is vital. Fashion mirrors cultural values, guiding identity formation. Youth, especially students, navigate identity through fashion, influenced by broader societal trends. Analyzing fashion's role informs strategies for promoting responsible consumption and inclusive education. In essence, studying fashion's influence on student socialization offers insights into cultural trends, identity formation, consumer behavior, and educational dynamics, crucial for understanding contemporary Kazakh society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of fashion's influence on the processes of youth socialization has received broad coverage in interdisciplinary research—from sociology and psychology to marketing and cultural studies. Contemporary scholars emphasize that fashion not only reflects current social and cultural values but also actively shapes behavior models, group belonging norms, and either fosters or hinders the development of individual identity.

For example, Lana et al., in the article “Status and Fashion Effects on Consumer Conformity”, found that fashion is a significant factor in shaping consumer conformity, influencing behavioral choices through mechanisms of group imitation [11, p. 301]. Their study showed that fashion trends, rather than social status, more strongly determine “consumption waves” in youth environments, creating an effect of social pressure and imitation at the level of everyday decisions.

In the study by Lachance “Adolescents’ brand sensitivity in apparel: influence of three socialization agents” [12, p. 50], the emphasis is placed on the influence of socialization agents: the primary sources of adolescent consumer behavior are peers, parents (especially fathers for girls), and to a lesser extent television. This confirms the importance of the social context and empathic communication in shaping sensitivity to brands and fashion standards.

The article “Proceedings of the 45th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – XIX International Social Congress” [13] examines fashion as a sociocultural mechanism of youth socialization, fulfilling several functions: adaptive, communicative, integrative, and identificational. The authors emphasize that fashion has an ambivalent influence: on the one hand, it allows young people to find their “self” within the social structure; on the other, it imposes standards that contribute to the erasure of uniqueness and critical thinking.

The work of O. Essiz and C. Mandrik [14] focuses on the intergenerational transmission of consumer attitudes and sustainable behavioral models. The study found that values of sustainable consumption are often passed from daughters to mothers, especially in families with open communication and trust, whereas peer influence can weaken the transmission of norms within the family. This highlights the importance of the socialization environment in determining consumption patterns and attitudes toward fashion practices.

Current research increasingly turns to analyzing fashion's role as a group and cultural code regulating youth behavior. Scholars note that fashion becomes a universal language of identification, but at the same time can lead to conformity, imitation, and external dependence on the evaluation of significant others. Nevertheless, despite the wide international coverage of this topic, the literature lacks sufficient empirical studies devoted to the specific features of fashion behavior among youth in Central Asian countries, particularly Kazakhstan.

In addition to the directions discussed above, modern academic literature emphasizes the influence of the digital environment and influencers on youth fashion behavior.

In particular, the article “The Role of Fashion Influencers in Shaping Consumers’ Buying Decisions and Trends” [15, p. 1013] highlights that fashion has ceased to be purely a domain of commercial advertising and has become a social phenomenon, in which fashion influencers play a key role. The study showed that young consumers (under 25) are most susceptible to their influence: they not only actively follow fashion bloggers but also see them as a source of inspiration when choosing clothes. At the same time, the influence of influencers is expressed less in direct purchase stimulation and more in shaping taste, style, and identity.

An important source is also the empirical study "Preference of Fashion Style Among University Students" [16], which records that students' style preferences depend on a combination of cultural norms, gender, social belonging, and media influence. The authors identified typical style preferences among students and showed that youth adapt fashion images by combining them with personal self-identification. It is particularly emphasized that style serves as a tool for social positioning and group identity formation.

Unlike the above-mentioned works, our study aims at a comprehensive understanding of fashion as a social phenomenon that shapes value orientations and behavioral attitudes of student youth in Kazakhstan.

For the first time, an analysis based on empirical data from Kazakhstan has been conducted to show how fashion simultaneously performs the functions of self-expression and social conformity, and how these mechanisms are manifested in everyday clothing choices, style, and self-identification of youth. In our study, special attention is paid to the socializing and normative role of fashion. We consider fashion not merely as a channel of trend information but as a tool for integration into the sociocultural environment, a means of adaptation and inclusion.

Our research takes into account the specifics of the post-Soviet, multicultural, and transitional Kazakhstani context, where fashion becomes a field of tension between global trends and local norms.

Based on the findings, we propose recommendations applicable in educational and youth policy aimed at fostering critical thinking toward fashion models, increasing awareness in consumption, and supporting positive youth socialization.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework of this study is grounded in a sociocultural analysis aimed at examining the relationship between fashion and the socialization processes of student youth within a consumer society. The research is based on a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, which enables a more comprehensive exploration of behavioral patterns and value orientations among young people.

This study investigates the relationship between fashion and consumer behavior among student youth, focusing on how fashion influences socialization and decision-making processes. The primary objective is to explore how students perceive fashion as a social phenomenon and how demographic factors, such as gender and age, shape their attitudes and engagement with fashion trends. The study is based on the hypothesis that fashion serves both as a means of self-expression and as a tool for social conformity among student youth. To achieve this goal, a mixed-methodological approach was employed, allowing for the integration of quantitative data with in-depth qualitative analysis. This is particularly relevant in the context of interdisciplinary research on fashion, situated at the intersection of sociology, psychology, and cultural studies.

To examine these aspects, a mixed-methods research design was employed, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A structured questionnaire survey was chosen as the primary data collection method because it allows for gathering a broad range of perspectives efficiently while ensuring anonymity, which encourages honest responses. Surveys are particularly effective in capturing trends and general attitudes in a short period, making them a suitable tool for studying consumer behavior and social influences in fashion.

The study was conducted from January to October 2023 in Almaty, targeting students from the Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University. The sample size consisted of 124 participants, evenly divided between male and female respondents. Convenience sampling was used to select participants, ensuring accessibility while maintaining diversity across different age groups (17 to 22 years old). The study focused on young individuals aged 17-22, as this age group represents a critical phase of self-discovery and social adaptation. Students from Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University were chosen for this study because the university specializes in pedagogy and social sciences, meaning its students are more likely to have an academic interest in social

trends, consumer behavior, and cultural influences on fashion. Additionally, being located in Almaty, a major cultural and economic hub of Kazakhstan, these students are exposed to both global and local fashion influences. This combination makes them ideal respondents for examining the intersection of fashion and sociology. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions, with five closed-ended demographic questions aimed at collecting information on gender, age, and educational background. The remaining ten questions were open-ended, designed to explore students' attitudes, motivations, and experiences regarding fashion. The survey method was chosen due to its time-efficiency and its ability to reach more people, which is important for research outcomes.

The methodological framework included comparative-structural, comparative-historical, and systematic-structural approaches to analyze fashion's role in socialization. Comparative analysis was used to examine global practices of fashion-related socialization and assess their relevance in the Kazakhstani context. The systematic-structural approach helped to explore the interplay between fashion, consumerism, and youth identity formation. Additionally, expert and logical analyses were conducted to evaluate domestic and international literature on socialization, providing a theoretical foundation for the study.

Despite the advantages of using surveys, such as efficiency, scalability, and anonymity, this method also presents certain limitations. Surveys rely on self-reported data, which can be subject to biases such as social desirability or misinterpretation of questions.

Additionally, expert and logical analyses were conducted to evaluate domestic and international literature on socialization. This involved a comprehensive review of academic journals, books, and reports related to fashion sociology, consumer studies, and youth culture. Experts in sociology and consumer behavior were consulted to assess the relevance and applicability of various theoretical models. The findings from these analyses provided a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the role of fashion in the socialization of student youth. The study's methodological rigor ensures that the results can contribute meaningfully to discussions on responsible consumption and youth social integration.

The use of a questionnaire was determined by its high efficiency in collecting data from a significant number of respondents within a limited time frame. The anonymity of the survey encouraged participants to provide candid responses. The combination of closed- and open-ended questions enabled the collection of both statistically generalizable data and deeper insights into behavioral motivations.

The choice of a mixed-method approach allowed not only for the quantitative identification of trends but also for the exploration of the symbolic and value-laden dimensions of fashion as a tool of socialization, which is particularly important in the study of youth environments.

The limitation of the sample to a single university and a specific age group does not allow for full generalization of the results to the broader student population of Kazakhstan. Additionally, potential biases may arise from the subjective interpretation of survey questions by respondents.

RESULTS

The study aimed to examine the interplay between fashion and consumer behavior among student youth, focusing on their perceptions, motivations, and decision-making processes related to fashion consumption. The results provide valuable insights into how young individuals navigate fashion trends as both a form of self-expression and a means of social conformity.

Sociologist Fishman [17, p.67], delving into the study of consumer behavior among young individuals in relation to corporate marketing objectives, underscores the challenge of working with student demographics due to their notably fickle tastes. Author notes a diminishing predictability in the preferences of young people annually, complicating market analysis. He highlights age, living circumstances, and limited financial resources as pivotal factors influencing their consumption decisions.

Similarly, Ippolitov [18] classifies determinants of product selection into cultural, social, personal, and psychological categories. Cultural aspects, including education levels, subcultures, and prevailing trends, alongside social factors such as peer influence, family dynamics, and socioeconomic status, shape young consumers' choices. Additionally, personal traits, including age, gender, and lifestyle, as well as psychological elements such as susceptibility to persuasion and emotional tendencies, play crucial roles in defining their consumption behavior.

Within this framework, internal (personal and psychological) and external (advertising, societal trends, economic conditions, and media) factors contribute to shaping youth consumption behavior. Notably, contemporary youth exhibit a strong inclination toward luxury consumption, with fashion trends occupying a significant place in their lives. Student demographics, given their access to information and engagement with digital platforms, actively explore and assimilate details about trending fashion items, further reinforcing the role of fashion in their consumer identity.

The study's findings, based on a structured questionnaire survey, reveal key differences in attitudes toward fashion among student youth. The sample consisted of an equal number of male and female students, with 50 individuals in each group.

Analysis of the questionnaire responses highlights the subjective understanding of fashion among students. A significant portion of respondents (21.4%) perceive fashion as a means of self-expression, allowing them to convey individuality and creativity through clothing choices. Meanwhile, 19.2% view fashion as a form of interpersonal communication, emphasizing its role in social interactions and identity formation. These findings underscore the contemporary perception of fashion as a dynamic and multifaceted concept that transcends mere aesthetics, reflecting individual personality traits and social affiliations (Figure 1).

Subjective Understanding of Fashion Among Students

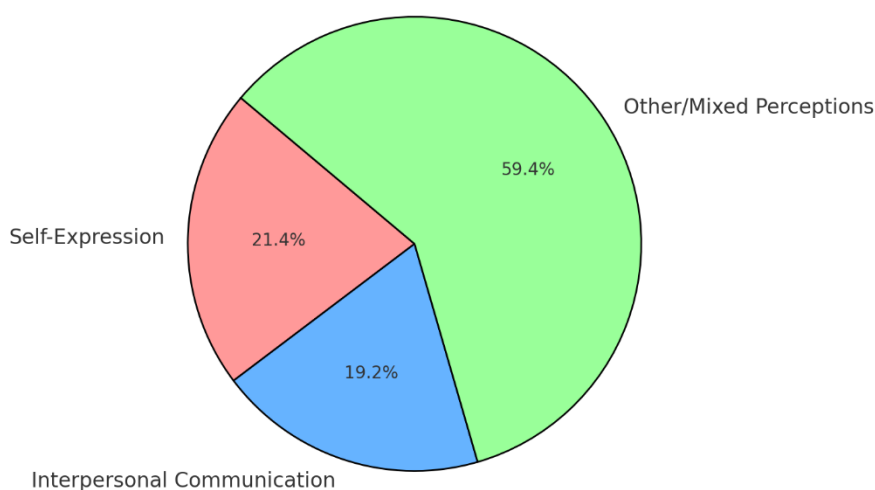


Figure 1. Subjective understanding of fashion among students

A survey exploring students' attitudes toward fashion revealed notable differences between younger and older respondents. Among students aged 17 to 19, 44.7% expressed a strong preference for dressing stylishly and keeping up with the latest fashion trends, viewing it as an essential aspect of their personal identity. In contrast, the majority (55.3%) of students aged 20 to 22 reported following fashion trends primarily to conform to societal norms rather than as a means of self-expression. These findings suggest a shift in motivation as students transition into young adulthood, moving from an emphasis on individuality toward greater alignment with social expectations.

The survey results further explored how students define fashion and the role it plays in shaping their identity. When asked what they associate with fashion, 38% of respondents identified it as

wearing famous brand clothing, emphasizing the importance of labels and designer names. Another 17% viewed fashion as simply following the latest trends, indicating that for them, being fashionable means keeping up with current styles. Additionally, 25% of students associated fashion with accessories, such as jewelry, bags, and shoes, considering these elements essential to a stylish appearance. Lastly, 20% believed fashion is about choosing the right color combinations, highlighting the role of aesthetics and harmony in dressing well (Figure 2).

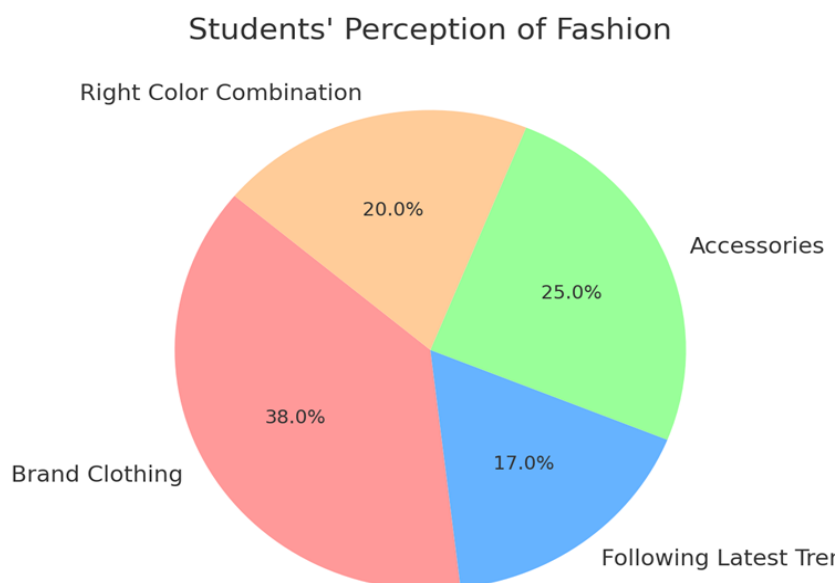


Figure 2. Students' perception of fashion

In addition to defining fashion, students also shared their perspectives on how fashion contributes to self-identification. The results indicate that 34% of respondents believe that dressing for themselves helps shape their individuality, allowing them to express their unique personality. Meanwhile, 31% think that fashion helps them gain authority and respect from others, suggesting that clothing choices influence social standing. Another 19% associate fashion with wealth, believing that one's style reflects financial status. Finally, the remaining 16% stated that fashion is purely personal and does not necessarily communicate anything significant about a person (Figure 3).



Figure 3. How fashion helps in self-identification

These results highlight the dual function of fashion in the lives of student youth—it serves both as a mechanism of individual self-expression and as a means of adapting to collective social norms. The data confirm that fashion influences not only students' outward appearance but also their social positioning, emotional well-being, and strategies of self-identification within peer groups and society at large. The observed variations in fashion-related attitudes by age and gender further emphasize the role of fashion as a dynamic and socially embedded phenomenon that reflects broader processes of cultural adaptation, identity construction, and value orientation among youth.

These findings reinforce the relevance of considering fashion as a serious subject of sociological inquiry in the context of youth studies, particularly in transitional societies like Kazakhstan, where global consumer trends intersect with traditional cultural frameworks. Thus, fashion is not merely a superficial expression of style, but a complex social language through which students articulate belonging, negotiate differences, and participate in the formation of modern youth identity.

DISCUSSION

These findings suggest that fashion serves both an external and internal function, simultaneously shaping self-perception and influencing how individuals are viewed by others. While some see fashion as a tool for self-expression, others perceive it as a means of fitting into social hierarchies or displaying economic status. According to Simmel [19, p.608], fashion serves as both an instrument of social differentiation and a means of group integration, allowing individuals to express their uniqueness while simultaneously conforming to collective trends.

The younger demographic, aged 17 to 19, appears to be primarily driven by a desire for personal style expression, viewing fashion as a tool for showcasing their individuality, creativity, and unique preferences. This age group sees clothing choices as an extension of their personality, a means of standing out, and an opportunity to experiment with diverse styles and trends that resonate with their identity.

Conversely, the older group, aged 20 to 22, demonstrates a different approach, with a stronger emphasis on conformity and social integration. Rather than prioritizing self-expression, they are more inclined to align their fashion choices with prevailing societal norms and expectations. This shift suggests that as individuals transition into young adulthood, they become increasingly conscious of their social environment, professional aspirations, and the desire to fit into broader societal structures. The emphasis on blending in rather than standing out may stem from the growing awareness of social roles, workplace expectations, and peer influences that encourage a more conventional approach to fashion.

Our results confirm and expand upon prior research. For instance, the study by Lana et al. (2022) emphasized that fashion significantly shapes consumer conformity among young people, often overpowering the role of social status in determining consumption behavior [11, p.301]. Similarly, in our study, students aged 20–22 predominantly associated fashion with social approval and societal expectations, rather than with individuality—thus reinforcing the thesis that fashion increasingly functions as a tool for external validation in later student years.

When analyzing the responses of student youth aged 17 to 19 based on gender, a clear distinction emerged in their attitudes toward fashion. The data revealed that 51.4% of girls identified themselves as fashion-conscious, actively engaging with current trends and considering fashion an important aspect of their identity. In contrast, only 32% of boys exhibited a similar inclination, highlighting a significant gender disparity in fashion awareness and enthusiasm.

Conversely, younger students (17–19) more frequently viewed fashion as a vehicle for self-expression. This observation echoes the findings of Bakar et al., who identified that early-stage university students display greater experimental engagement with fashion, using it as a form of personal exploration and social positioning [16].

However, our findings diverge in some aspects from prior studies that suggest a declining influence of traditional socialization agents (e.g., parents) in the digital age. While Lachance et al. (2003) identified peers and media as dominant sources of influence [12, p.55], our respondents still

indicated a strong reliance on parental input—especially mothers—in making fashion-related consumer choices. This contrast may reflect the cultural specificity of the Kazakhstani context, where familial bonds and intergenerational influence remain stronger compared to more individualistic societies.

Furthermore, unlike some Western-based studies that emphasize the liberating and creative potential of fashion, our results revealed a notable degree of internalized social pressure, with many students admitting to adjusting their fashion choices to meet external expectations. This is consistent with the ambivalent view of fashion presented by Zanina et al. (2019), who argue that while fashion supports identity construction, it simultaneously imposes conformist standards that limit critical thinking and authenticity [13].

This suggests that young women are generally more invested in fashion-related activities, such as following trends, shopping for stylish clothing, and staying updated on the latest styles. For many girls, fashion serves as a form of self-expression, allowing them to showcase their individuality and social identity. Meanwhile, young men demonstrate comparatively lower engagement, with only one in three boys identifying as fashion-conscious. This may be attributed to differing societal expectations, cultural influences, or personal priorities when it comes to appearance and style.

Barbi [20] also assumes that the influence of fashion is more pronounced among female students. Embracing the identity of "being fashionable" entails a certain level of consumer engagement, such as staying updated on fashion trends through activities like purchasing fashion magazines, following specific TV shows or websites, attending design events, and consuming related products.

Fashion trends for young people are heavily influenced and shaped by broader social movements. Today's student youth exhibit a generally positive outlook toward fashion, with their choices often guided by input from friends or family members. Upon analysis, it was noted that fewer than half of the surveyed student youth consult their loved ones when making consumer decisions. This suggests that while students largely rely on their own preferences and opinions, they also value the advice and recommendations of those close to them.

Notably, a significant portion (24%) of modern student youth seek guidance from friends when purchasing trendy items, driven by a desire for validation from peers who share similar values. Additionally, a substantial majority (66.5%) turn to their parents for advice. In this context, parents not only provide financial support for fashion purchases but also serve as sources of wisdom and impart consumer values based on their own experiences. In his study on consumer behavior, Singh [21] emphasizes that trends in youth fashion are not only driven by individual preferences but also by peer influence and the desire for social recognition.

The study revealed that when the opinions of young individuals regarding a particular purchase differ from those of their older family members, they often opt to delay the purchase or seek alternative products. Many student youth exhibit a tendency to rely on the guidance of others rather than making decisions independently. Overall, it can be inferred that student youth frequently experience uncertainty when making consumer choices and therefore seek advice from loved ones to validate their decisions. This stems from a desire to ensure the usefulness of their purchases, given the material and time investments involved.

Moreover, the study examined how often both boys and girls seek advice from friends or family members during the consumption process. Notably, 21% of the girls surveyed indicated that they almost never make a purchase without consulting their loved ones [22].

Therefore, fashion serves as a primary means for student youth to highlight their social belonging while simultaneously asserting their individuality within a collective setting. By aligning with current trends, they express their membership in a particular social group while also asserting their unique identity. In essence, fashion becomes a dual mechanism through which young individuals navigate their sense of belonging and differentiation within society. This intricate interplay between conformity and self-expression underscores the multifaceted role of fashion in the lives of student youth, shaping not only their outward appearance but also their sense of identity and belonging in the broader social landscape.

CONCLUSION

Fashion, as a socio-cultural phenomenon, plays a crucial role in shaping the identities, behaviors, and socialization processes of student youth. It is not merely a reflection of trends but a powerful tool for self-expression, communication, and social integration. This study highlights that young people engage with fashion in ways that extend beyond aesthetics, using it to navigate their individuality and social belonging.

The findings suggest that while fashion serves as a means of personal expression, it is also influenced by broader societal norms. As students mature, their motivations for following fashion trends shift from a focus on individuality to a desire for conformity and social acceptance. Gender differences further emphasize how fashion is perceived differently among student youth, with female students displaying a stronger association with fashion as a key element of their identity.

Moreover, fashion functions as a bridge between cultural heritage and contemporary influences, shaping students' consumer habits and perceptions of status, self-worth, and belonging. Despite the variety of perspectives, one common thread remains—fashion is deeply intertwined with the social experiences of young people, influencing their confidence, aspirations, and interactions. However, to mitigate the negative consequences of excessive consumerism and peer pressure, it is essential to promote responsible fashion choices among student youth.

Educational programs focusing on financial literacy can equip students with the knowledge needed to make informed purchasing decisions, reducing impulsive consumption and fostering a more mindful approach to fashion. Raising awareness about sustainable fashion and ethical consumption can further encourage students to adopt eco-friendly habits, thus minimizing the environmental impact of fast fashion. Universities and social institutions should also create environments that celebrate diverse fashion expressions, fostering individuality over conformity and helping students develop confidence in their unique styles. Additionally, integrating fashion discussions into cultural education can enhance students' understanding of its historical and societal significance, allowing them to engage with it in a more meaningful way. Finally, offering psychological support for students struggling with self-esteem and social pressures related to fashion can contribute to a healthier relationship with clothing and identity.

In conclusion, fashion is not merely an industry-driven phenomenon but a dynamic force that reflects and shapes societal values. Its influence on student youth extends beyond clothing choices, impacting their social roles, self-perception, and integration into the broader community. As fashion continues to evolve, its role in youth socialization will remain a key subject of study in understanding generational shifts and cultural transformation. By encouraging responsible consumption and fostering an awareness of fashion's broader implications, students can develop a balanced approach to self-expression and societal integration.

This study has revealed the complex and ambivalent role that fashion plays in the socialization of student youth within a consumer society. It has demonstrated that fashion serves not only as a channel for individual self-expression but also as a mechanism of social conformity, shaping students' identities, behaviors, and value orientations.

The empirical findings confirm that students perceive fashion both as a tool for self-identification and as a form of social communication. Younger respondents (aged 17–19) tend to emphasize personal creativity and individuality, whereas older students (20–22) increasingly align their fashion choices with societal expectations, suggesting a shift from self-expression toward conformity as students mature. These generational and gendered differences underscore the social sensitivity of fashion practices and their embeddedness in broader cultural narratives.

Moreover, the study identifies the continuing importance of traditional socialization agents - particularly parents - in shaping students' consumer behavior, despite the increasing role of digital influencers. This emphasizes the significance of the local socio-cultural context and suggests that Western models of youth consumption cannot be universally applied without adjustments.

The research also highlights the psychological and social risks associated with fashion conformity, such as peer pressure, identity insecurity, and dependence on external validation.

Therefore, fashion should be addressed in youth policy and education not only as an aesthetic or commercial domain, but as a powerful socio-cultural force influencing young people's development.

In light of these findings, it is essential to integrate fashion-related discussions into educational curricula, promote responsible and critical consumption, and create environments that support diverse and authentic expressions of identity. By doing so, institutions can empower students to navigate the social world with greater confidence, awareness, and autonomy.

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SRSTI: 11.01.65

DOI: 10.51889/2959-6270.2025.89.1.011

Fırat Yıldız ¹, B.Nuralina ^{2*}, N.Ismatullayeva ³

¹ Ankara University, Turkey

² International Educational Corporation, Almaty, Kazakhstan

³ Kazakh National Pedagogical university named after Abay, Almaty, Kazakhstan

* e-mail: botanur@mail.ru

IDEOLOGY AND EVOLUTION OF KAZAKHSTAN'S RELIGIOUS POLICY: FROM SOVIET LEGACY TO MODERN INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the state policy of the SSR on the transformation of the religious worldview, beliefs and ethnic identity of national minorities, as well as on changes in their cultural identity and social identity. The leading methodological approaches are the descriptive method, historiographical analysis and synthesis, as well as problem-chronological and socio-cultural approaches. The article examines the normative legal acts regulating the activities of religious organizations and their impact on the cultural institutions of ethnic minorities. Special attention is paid to the study of the political and ideological mechanisms by which the Soviet regime exerted pressure on religious and ethnic structures, contributing to the unification of cultural identities and the suppression of religious traditions.

Keywords: religious worldview, ethnic identity, cultural identity, social identity, descriptive method, historiographical analysis, synthesis