

# Styles and Trends: Fashion

**F**ASHION is a growing, global, multibillion-dollar industry. Today, fashion is geared to trends rather than brands. Socioeconomic demographics impact—and technology constantly changes—fashion’s timeline. First, we will explore demographics that impact all market trends. Then we will examine some technological advances and apps that help us review and purchase the latest styles and trends. Finally, we will investigate some fashion trends of the future.



## Objective:



Summarize fashion styles and trends by demographic groups, resources, and future markets.

## Key Terms:



Baby Boomers  
Covet Fashion  
demographics  
fad  
fashion  
Generation X  
Generation Y  
Generation Z

Keep Shopping App  
LIKEtoKNOW.it  
Lyst  
Pinterest  
Polyvore  
Pose  
PS Dept.  
ShopStyle

Silent Generation  
style  
Stylebook  
Stylect  
Tradesy  
trend  
wearable technology  
Whisp

## Understanding Fashion Styles and Trends

Fashion styles and trends change from year to year and, more significantly, from decade to decade. However, some styles and trends resurface with slight alterations.

## FASHION, STYLE, TRENDS, AND FADS

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Fashion, style, trends, and fads impact what is worn in certain age groups.

### Fashion

**Fashion** is a popular trend of a particular style or practice of clothing, footwear, accessories, or other forms of adornment at a given time. Change is a constant element of fashion: new styles, reinventing a classic, and styles popularized by celebrities and royalty.

### Style

**Style** is an individual's artistic approach to expressing himself or herself through apparel. Style line categories that influence the silhouette include necklines, collars, seams, sleeves, cuffs, and pockets.

### Trend

A **trend** is a fashion style popular at a specific point in time that gradually changes over an extended time. A fashion trend is a new and innovative way to provoke a style. A trend may include one or more of the following: color, fabrics, textures, materials, prints, graphics, accessories, footwear, or a particular style (e.g., classic, grunge, punk, or artsy).

### Fad

A **fad** is a style popular for a short period of time that expresses personality and a sense of belonging with peers. Often, a fad is less expensive than a classic style and is sometimes termed “fast fashion.” Some fads are rediscoveries of trends by other generations. For example, today the 1960s, 70s, and 80s are being rediscovered in the following observable ways:

- ◆ Fluorescent colors
- ◆ Bangles and mood rings
- ◆ Platform, classic Air Jordan, and boat shoes
- ◆ Plaids and floral prints
- ◆ Slogan and vintage T-shirts

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

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**Demographics** are data and related factors for a specific group of people based on socioeconomics: income, age, education, and gender. The following factors affect style trends and markets within the fashion industry.

### Income

Income is the amount of disposable income an individual or a family has and is a key factor that significantly impacts fashion trends and the global market. Lack of disposable income or

an economic recession more than likely reflects a decline in the fashion market because people tend to save money rather than spend it on current fashion trends. Income classes include wealthy, middle, lower, and poverty level.

### Wealthy Level

The wealthy level is households that earn \$150,000 or more per year and have more disposable income to spend on current trends.

### Middle Level

The middle level is households that earn around \$60,000 per year. They are classified as “lower middle class.” The “upper middle class” earn more than \$100,000 and less than \$150,000 per year. These households have disposable income. However, they tend to be more cost-conscious when it comes to buying their wardrobe.

### Lower Level

The lower level is households that earn around \$30,000 per year. Although low-income housing is typically located more in urban areas, the cost of living is also higher. Therefore, costs for fashion trends take a hit as well. According to statistics, they still spend a good percentage of their disposable income on fashion.

### Poverty Level

The poverty level is generally households with an annual income below \$25,000. Although there may be minimal disposable income, the focus is more on the necessities rather than on the most current fashion trends.

### Age

Age has a significant impact on spending patterns for apparel and fashion. For example, more recent generations are less likely to be brand or logo loyal. They do not feel the need to “fit in.” They feel comfortable “standing out” in society. For instance, they express themselves and create an identity through fashion. For instance, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, and Nicki Minaj are considered fashion icons for the younger generations. Age classifications are Generations X, Y, and Z; Baby Boomers; and Boomers.

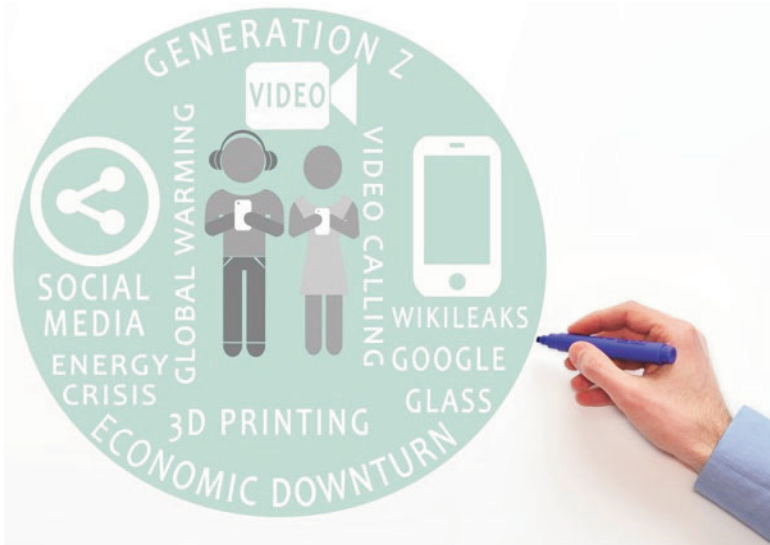


**FIGURE 1.** Demographics are data and related factors for a specific group of people, based on income, age, education, and gender. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the wealthy class comprises about 5 percent of the population, but the poverty class consists of about 15 percent of the population. The remainder falls somewhere in the low or middle social classes.

## Generation Z

**Generation Z** are home landers or centennials born after 2000 who are typically tech-savvy and innovative. They tend not to be brand loyal (e.g., possibly due to an economic recession or not having a reliable source of income). Like Generation X, they are more likely to adopt certain fashion trends. However, they are careful about where they spend money. Generally, they focus more on convenience and necessity.

- ◆ They spend lots of time online, shopping and playing video games.
- ◆ They are less attached to gender specifications and are more focused on being unique individuals looking for gender neutralism. Hence, males wearing traditionally female apparel items is more common.
- ◆ Fashion icons include Jayden Smith, Bea Miller, and Kendall Jenner.



**FIGURE 2.** Generation Z—home landers or centennials born after 2000—are tech-savvy and innovative. Fashion icons include Jaden Smith, Bea Miller, and Kendall Jenner.

## Generation Y

**Generation Y** are millennials who were born in the 1980s to early 2000s and are less interested in name brands and logo apparel than other generations. Typically, they are trendsetters. They have more disposable income than Generation Z due to parental support or living with parents. Millennials are careful about purchasing expensive items that are less original because they have been personally influenced by an economic crisis.

- ◆ They tend to buy vintage and shop at thrift stores because they might find unique items.
- ◆ They “tweak” pre-existing clothing for a new trendy look by modifying, cutting, and/or adding embellishments.



**FIGURE 3.** Generation Y—millennials—were born in the 1980s to early 2000s and are less interested in name brands and logo apparel than other generations. They are trendsetters. Fashion icons include Katy Perry, Nikki Minaj, Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift, Chris Brown, Beyoncé, Drake, Miley Cyrus, Mark Zuckerberg, and Future.

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## Generation X

**Generation X** is the “lost generation” or “latch-key” kids who tend to be a unique, independent, and skeptical group born between 1965 and the late 1970s who were introduced to computers and gaming systems early. They display a more casual fashion style and are brand loyal. This group is entering its peak earning cycle.

- ◆ They love to shop, but they like to save. They have disposable income. However, the latest trends are not a necessity to most in Generation X.
- ◆ Carefully research their purchases and search for the best value for their money.
- ◆ Fashion icons include Jared Leto, Eminem, Tony Hawk, Janet Jackson, Kurt Cobain, Missy Elliott, Ricky Martin, Gwen Stefani, Jay Z, and Marilyn Manson.

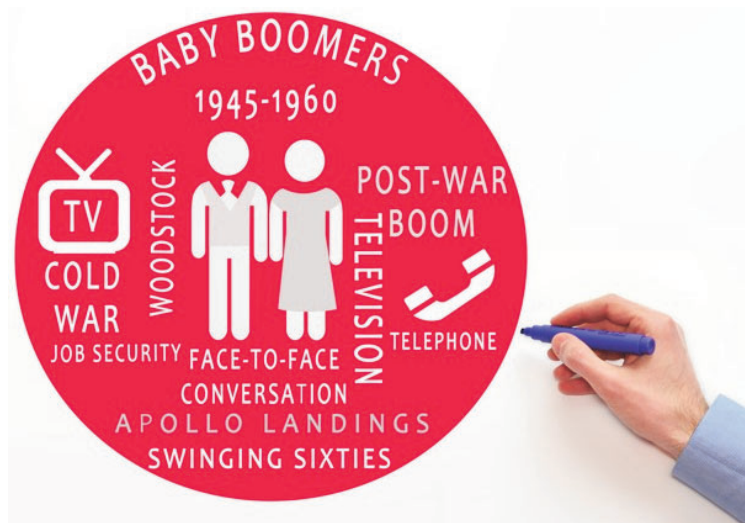
## Baby Boomers

**Baby Boomers** are people who were born between 1946 and 1964 and have extreme buying power in the market today. This generation had good economic opportunities.

- ◆ Baby Boomers tend to be conscientious of the market and its advertising techniques.
- ◆ Baby Boomers carefully analyze the market and decide to spend money.
- ◆ Fashion icons include/included Steven Tyler, Twigg, Michael Jackson, Jacqueline Kennedy, Madonna, and Princess Diana.



**FIGURE 4.** Generation X—the “lost generation” or “latchkey” kids—is a unique, independent, and skeptical group born between 1965 and the late 1970s who were introduced to computers and gaming systems early. They display a more casual fashion style and are brand loyal. Fashion icons include Jared Leto, Eminem, Tony Hawk, Janet Jackson, Kurt Cobain, Missy Elliott, Ricky Martin, Gwen Stefani, Jay Z, and Marilyn Manson.



**FIGURE 5.** Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 and have extreme buying power in the market today. This generation had good economic opportunities. Fashion icons include/included Steven Tyler, Twigg, Michael Jackson, Jacqueline Kennedy, Madonna, and Princess Diana.

## Silent Generation

The **Silent Generation** was born between 1909 and 1945 and is practical, loyal, and savvy about where to spend money. They lived or were influenced by the Great Depression, World War II, and a few recessions.

- ◆ They like to spend but focus on value over anything else.
- ◆ Fashion icons include/included Bettie Page, Bette Davis, Audrey Hepburn, Marlon Brando, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, James Dean, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Mick Jagger.

## Education

A person's education level influences market choices. For example, a college student paying for his or her education may need to use disposable income for school or housing items. Most high school students live with their parents, and much of their disposable income tends to be for clothing or entertainment. Also, choosing to be economical and looking for bargains is sometimes a result of educational level versus impulsive spending habits.

## Gender

Gender may impact fashion spending. Typically, women spend more on fashion—specifically clothing and clothing trends—than men. This may be due to the glorification of women and fashion trends. Also, gender identity, what is fashionable, and how others perceive gender roles impact trends, spending, and global markets. For instance, a man who decides to wear women's clothing may be perceived as feminine, and a woman who decides to wear men's clothing may be perceived as masculine. Today, the identification of gender-specific clothing is not as clear-cut as in the past. Clothing choices may be identified or classified as a trend or fashion versus role-specific.

## STYLE AND FASHION RESOURCES

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Various resources are consulted to stay current on style and fashion trends and fads.

### Style Review Resources

According to a *Forbes* recent interview with Dr. Baumgartner, the author of “You Are What You Wear,” many people dress according to how they feel and not how they wish to feel. The article discussed common wardrobe types and related perception issues. For instance, if a person keeps every piece of clothing ever purchased, he or she is said to be literally holding onto the past. Dr. Baumgartner recommends throwing out two articles of clothing for every one that is kept. Most people know or have observed a person who dresses too “young” or too “old” for his or her age. The article discusses the objective of dressing for personal goals rather than for a specific age. For example, rather than dressing for an age, a person should dress for:

- ◆ A night out with friends

- ◆ A date night
- ◆ A job promotion
- ◆ Another specific activity

With today's technological advances, several ways exist to help amplify a wardrobe. Following are apps that identify or review current fashion styles.



## Fashion App Resources

- ◆ **Covet Fashion** is a virtual shopping and styling game tool in which users compete for top fashion looks. The URL is <http://www.covetfashion.com/>.
- ◆ The **Keep Shopping App** is a tool that allows clients to shop and buy online products from virtually any store. The URL is <https://keep.com/downloads/>.
- ◆ **LIKEtoKNOW.it** is an Instagram shopping website and app for Apple and Android users to “like” a photo by adding a caption. This action triggers an email of that photo and allows the creator to provide shopping or styling services. The URL is <http://liketoknow.it/login>.
- ◆ The **Lyst** is an Apple-based website and an app that allows shoppers to view numerous brands from thousands of designers. The tool allows shoppers to buy from multiple retailers on one site. It also lets the users know when an item goes on sale for potential purchase at a later time. The URL is <https://www.lyst.com/>.
- ◆ **Pinterest** is a social media site that allows a person to view style blogs. Users can “like” or “save” a pin for future reference. The URL is <https://www.pinterest.com/>.
- ◆ **Polyvore** is a website and an app that allows users to play the role of a style editor by creating specific collections and describing how to wear specific trends. The site has a virtual “mood board” that allows members to curate products into a shared product index and use them to create image collages called “Sets.” The URL is <http://www.polyvore.com/>.
- ◆ The **Pose** is a website and an app tool used to post or tag photos that allow users to view and comment on the style. It also allows a client to view, trade, and/or buy from others on the site. The URL for the app is <https://poseapp.com/>.
- ◆ **PS Dept.** (personal shopping department) is an online iOS personal shopper site that helps a user find a specific fashion item. Once an item is located, an email is sent with further information about where to shop, how much the item costs, and other specifications. The app URL is <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ps-dept.-your-personal-shopper/id536957427?mt=8>.
- ◆ **ShopStyle** is a shopping search engine website and app that helps refine a clients’ search to locate a specific fashion item at a set spending limit. Shopping categories include

**FIGURE 6.** Most of us know or have observed a person who dresses too “young” or too “old.” Dressing for your goals rather than for a specific age should be your goal. How do fashion resources help you realize your long-term goals?

women's bags, shoes, beauty, jewelry, men's items, kid's items, home, offers, sale items, and the editor's blog. The URL is <http://www.shopstyle.com/>.

- ◆ **Stylebook** is a virtual closet app that displays the user's real clothes to help develop a personal look. A key feature is shopping less because the site gives the client choices that "go with" what the client already has in his or her closet. Stylebook is partnered with ShopStyle to link clients who are looking for items to the ShopStyle site. The URL is <http://www.stylebookapp.com/>.
- ◆ **Stylelect** is an iPhone and iPad app that allows users to "like" a shoe and then to alert the user when that item is on sale. The app URL is <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/stylelect-find-your-perfect/id740871893?mt=8>.
- ◆ **Tradesy** is a website and an app that allows its clients to buy and sell authentic high-end designer items. If a client chooses to sell an item, the company receives a commission; the client can apply the remaining profit to other purchases at a discount. The URL is <https://www.tradesy.com/>.
- ◆ **Whisp** is a private messaging app that allows users to chat or message with other shoppers. Clients can view an image of interest and post that image to other Whisp users via a message. Then viewers are able to review the posted item before purchasing and chat with others about the product's pros and cons. The URL is <https://laughingsquid.com/whisp-a-private-messaging-app-for-online-fashion-shoppers/>.

## Style Resources

Style magazines, with online sites, that review men and women's trends from the runways and where to purchase include:

- ◆ *Allure*
- ◆ *Bazaar*
- ◆ *Elle*
- ◆ *Glamour*
- ◆ *GQ*
- ◆ *InStyle*
- ◆ *Harper's Bazaar*
- ◆ *Marie Claire*
- ◆ *Redbook*
- ◆ *Vogue*
- ◆ *Women's Wear Daily (WWD)*



FIGURE 7. Fashion magazines house the most current fashion trends.

## FUTURE FASHION STYLES AND TRENDS

People can sometimes predict future fashion styles and trends by following blogs, runway shows, fashion magazines, and more.

### Wearable Fashion Technology

**Wearable technology** is electronics worn on the body as an accessory or as part of the garment's fabric. It is a future fashion and style trend hitting markets globally in the upcoming years. For example, future garments or fashion include:

- ◆ Items that measure biometrics: blood pressure, heart rate, etc.
- ◆ Items that “light up” for style and safety reasons
- ◆ Items that use tracking devices or built-in navigation systems

Current fashion styles and trends that help predict the future include:

- ◆ Garments that manage heart rate and blood pressure
- ◆ Garments that use built-in solar panels that charge electronic devices (e.g., smartphones)
- ◆ Garments that react to certain stimuli in the environment (e.g., light or sound), such as designer of Rainbow Winters, Amy Winters, creating garments that react to sound (The louder the environment, the more the garment lights up and creates a “show” for people to view.)



## FURTHER EXPLORATION...

### ONLINE CONNECTION: Social Media Impact

Fashion supermodel, Kate Moss, and Hudson's Bay Company raised some controversy over a quote Moss made. In 2009, she said, “Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels.” In turn, the company stocked its shelves and advertised the sale to its online stores with T-shirts printed with the quote. An outcry from the public caused the company to remove the shirts from shelves as well as from the online stores.

What image do you think the company and Kate Moss sent to young consumers? Why do you think such quotes have raised controversy in the fashion industry? Do you think the company was wrong to print this quote and market it? Why, or why not? What impact do you think this will have on the supermodel and on the company's image?



today  
is a  
perfect  
day  
to be  
awesome

How does this T-shirt design compare with the one offered by Hudson's Bay Company?

- ◆ Garments that use built-in tracking chips to locate an item or a person using an app, such as Asher Levine creating clothing with tracking chips using the TrackR app
- ◆ Garments that use built-in navigation systems (e.g., a company called Adafuit that sells helmets with built-in navigation that directs a person to turn right or left using lights that flash on the side of the helmet)
- ◆ Garments that use LED lights, glow-in-the-dark threads, or luminescent threads applied to clothing (Ying Gao is currently creating articles of clothing that appear to be moving when stared at for a period of time.)
- ◆ Garments that use sensors for athletic garments to measure biometric data (e.g., heart rate and blood pressure) and when making a movement that could cause bodily injury
- ◆ Garments that use built-in heating coils in pant leg linings to keep the wearer warm
- ◆ Garments that use microchips in recently released Adidas running shoe soles that monitor the terrain and adjust shock absorption to prevent injury
- ◆ Garments that use fabrics with conductive fabric fibers (An MIT student, Amanda Parkes, has been studying a fabric called nitinol—a mixture of titanium and nickel that changes shape when heated. Within a few seconds, a pair of pants can be turned into shorts when heat is applied directly and is able to return to full-length pants when cooled.)

## Summary:



Fashion and apparel markets are impacted by several factors. Without income, there is no spending power. Age, education, and gender are other leading factors when it boils down to styles and trends in fashion. For younger generations, technology has impacted their lives because it has been around since the day they were born. Smart clothes and wearable tech gadgets are current and future trends.

Gender equality and neutralism have always been ongoing battles. However, younger generations are more accepting of it as the norm. They are less likely to be brand loyal because they want to be unique and stand out, whereas older generations tended to “fit in” with branding being accepted. Technology, online shopping, and apps allow us to review and purchase the latest styles and trends.

## Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What are demographics? Describe two age-related demographic groups.
2. List four key socioeconomic factors that influence trends in the fashion market.
3. What are three apps or resources that review fashion styles and trends?
4. Describe wearable technology. How would you use it as a fashion accessory?
5. Predict three examples of future trends in wearable technology.

## Expanding Your Knowledge:

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Yesterday, smart watches and fitness bands were the rave. Are smart clothes the future? Samsung, Google, Under Armour, and Hexo Skin have been creating innovative ways to expand technology into apparel and fashion. Instead of appealing to all fitness gurus, these companies are attempting to reach all populations by making clothes smarter and more natural looking. For instance, today's smart watches are bulky and "futuristic looking." These companies want to change that image and make them look like "normal" watches. What other examples of smart clothes or wearable technology are being geared away from a sole focus on fitness? Do research, and write a two- to three-page paper on what you learned.

## Web Links:

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### **Fashion Bloggers You Need to Follow**

<http://www.ibizabohogirl.com/5-best-fashion-bloggers-you-need-to-follow-in-2017/>

### **Style Apps for Guys**

<http://www.businessinsider.com/best-style-apps-for-men-2013-10>

### **Fashion Blog for Runway Shows**

<http://www.stylishm.com/dkny-ss-17/>

### **Smart Clothes**

<http://www.digitaltrends.com/wearables/smart-clothing-is-the-future-of-wearables/>

### **Celebrity Style and Fashion Trend Coverage**

<http://www.whowhatwear.com/>