FASHION AND A CRITIQUE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY:
THE IMPLICATION FOR ART EDUCATION

A thesis

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By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the thesis is to explore contemporary fashion culture through literature in terms of the concept of style and the expression of individual identity. Contemporary fashion culture conveys aesthetic, cultural, and social values. In the twentieth century, fashion culture has had a great influence on individuals through everyday life.

The concept of style relates to the fashion business and cultural perspectives because it is used as a metaphor to express the concept of individual identity through fashion images. Fashion business concerns the operation of style through fashion cycles and fashion forecast. The concept of style in terms of cultural perspective, concerns the relationship between culture and the expression of individual identity. Both the business and cultural perspectives are the force of the construction of lifestyle through fashion.

Fashion culture is part of visual culture because it is primary circulated by fashion images such as photography and advertisement through mass media. Fashion image conveys aesthetic, cultural, psychological, and social ideologies and values. Thus, it has great impact on the ways in which individuals perceive their identity through the ideologies of fashion images.
The study of fashion culture has not yet been integrated into the field of art education. Part of the reason for this lack of integration results from a concern about whether fashion is art or not. I propose fashion culture should be taught in art education by using art interpretation because this method conveys educational and aesthetic values. The method of art interpretation and the disruptive method are applied to the practice of interpretation of fashion image in order to support teaching of fashion culture as a contribution to visual culture education.

The implication of contemporary fashion culture for the art education lies in its values on art, culture, and education, and how this content can be taught through art appreciation. Suggestions for studying fashion are discussed as contention with the movement of visual culture or art education.
Dedicated to my father, Steve Huang, and my mother, Mei Huang
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Fashion is a phenomenon that conveys art, cultural, social, and political facets in contemporary society. The questions of what fashion is and how fashion permeates its power through human society are complex. It is obvious that the great influence of fashion in contemporary society not only spreads throughout fashion commodities but is also deeply rooted and reflected in cultural and social aspects.

Fashion is seen as a cultural industry that not only operates through business and marketing fields but also exercises its power through the observation and construction of lifestyle. Anthropologist (Barnes & Eicher, 1992; Welters, 1999) research on fashion proposes it is an activity in which humans adorn their bodies with various objects and materials, such as clothes, jewelry, shoes, etc (Entwistle, 2000). This activity represents the fact that all human beings in different cultures have a general concept for the appreciation of beauty in relation to fashion. Accompanying the social upheavals and industrial revolution began in Western Europe in the late 1880s, fashion marked the shift of radical cultural and social phenomena from Europe to the United States in the twentieth century (Lipovetsky, 1994). According to a number of fashion studies, the twentieth century was the turning point for fashion and a changing fashion industry. This has had a great impact on the construction of contemporary lifestyles. The difference
before the 1960s was that fashion phenomena was chiefly exercised through collective power. After the 1960s the world of fashion changed because of the social and cultural upheavals and empowered individuals to create fashion standards of their own. Because of this change in the function of fashion, the art and culture industry now empowers individuals to construct lifestyles through fashion consumption (Lury, 1996).

Therefore, fashion not only reflects various forms of artistic styles but also expresses diverse aspects of social and economic conditions, cultural phenomena, sex and gender roles, national, ethnic, and individual identity, etc. Hence, fashion phenomena communicates the construction of lifestyles in terms of style and the expression of individual identity (Fred, 1992; Lury, 1996).

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of my thesis is to explore the relationship between contemporary fashion culture and the concept of visual culture in terms of styles and the expression of individual identity through fashion. Style and the expression of individual identity through fashion help individuals construct lifestyles through the products that individuals possess. Fashion culture circulates its power through the distribution of visual images in today's society. Fashion images, thus play an important role in visual culture studies because they convey the ideology of individual identity through image and context (Radner, 2000). For this reason, the issue of fashion culture can be integrated into art curriculum by utilizing the model of art interpretation. I find the interpretation of fashion images can enhance the understanding of the dynamics of contemporary fashion. I further suggest that the relationship between fashion culture and visual culture has
implications for art education which I present.

Research questions

My primary research questions are: 1) How does fashion culture express individual identity in terms of style? 2) What is the relationship between fashion culture and the concept of visual culture? 3) What are the implications of the study of fashion culture for the field of Art Education? These questions will be explored in the following chapters of this thesis in order to propose a reasonable argument for the field of art education to teach issues of fashion culture through art appreciation.

Five theoretical frameworks from which to study fashion

The study of fashion cultures involves complex theoretical frameworks. Five major theoretical research approaches in relation to fashion studies include: 1) Anthropological; 2) Sociology and fashion; 3) fashion as communication: semiotics; 4) the condition of modernity and post-modernity; and 5) explanations of empirical approaches.

The study of Anthropology

Anthropology investigates the reasons humans adorn their bodies with clothing and accessories. Traditional anthropological literature on fashion is concerned with accounts of dress or adornment. Anthropologists ask why human beings wear clothes and adornment. One of the basic needs is to protect the body from being exposed, especially the sexual organs (Barnes & Eicher, 1992). Contemporary anthropological approaches

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1 These four major theoretical frameworks appeared in Entwistle’s article *The Dressed Body*, 2000.
tend to focus on the meanings and practices of adornment or dress in non-western
culture, or the cross-cultural studies on dress, and the study of ethnographic concern with
practices surrounding dress, clothing, and fabric (Welters, 1999).

The study of Sociology and fashion

Sociological studies investigate the association between body and adornment that is
strongly concerned with class, gender, and morality issues throughout historical and
social shifts and movements. Research on fashion and dress in this area has been
concerned with various questions, for example: How and why does fashion change as it
does? What does fashion mean and what form of communication is it? (Entwistle, 2000).

From the Sociological perspective, fashion systems have constantly changed due to
fashion connections and responses to social and political shifts, and questions the
phenomenon of social hierarchy (Fred, 1992; Ash & Wilson, 1992).

Fashion as communication: semiotics

The idea that fashion functions as communication is adopted by theorists such as
Bernard (1996) and Lury (1996) and is used to explain the purpose of fashion in modern society. Semiotics has been applied to examine the emergence of fashion and the role played by fashion in modernity, to accounts of the significance of fashion in late modern life, an approach which focuses on the role of fashion in the construction of identity (Lury, 1996). From this perspective, fashion operates like a language that is often label as a "dress code". The idea of a code is "the binding ligament in the shared understandings that comprise a sphere of discourse and its associated social arrangements" (Entwistle, 2000, p. 67). The semiotic analysis explains fashion as a system of texts rather than
everyday practice. In Roland Barthes' (1990) *Fashion System*, he proposes using the
metaphor of sign to decode the fashion system and the use of semiotics to decode fashion
images. Thus, the semiotic studies fashion in the sign decoding process, in order to
analyze texts that exist in clothing images. The practice focuses on how to read fashion
through visual material, such as photographs and advertisements in mass media.

The conditions of modernity and post-modernity

This approach enriches the examination of the role of fashion as an integral aspect
of modernity and postmodernity. Entwistle (2000) affirms that “the significant influence
of modernity and post-modernity is the nature of identity under conditions of rapid
change, exploring the resources for the expression of self that modernity opens up to
cope with these changes and examines the role played by dress in the presentation of self
on the modern social stages” (p. 72). It examines the value of individual identity and
issue of ambivalence. Thus, theories of modernity and post-modernity offer fashion
studies accounts of how identity in contemporary society is reconstructed (Featherstone,
1995; Feinstein, 1998). Those themes are particularly useful for understanding how
fashion develops as a technique of dressing, employed self-consciously to construct an
identity suitable for the modern stage (Entwistle, 2000).

Explanations of empirical approaches

Empirical approaches are concerned with the ethnographic approach and social
psychoanalysis. Ethnography, adopted by anthropology, has resulted in detailed and
grounded accounts of the meanings and practices of dress within particular cultural
contexts. Ethnographers are concerned with the meanings of dress as they are understood
and lived by a group (Kaiser, 1992; Welters, 1999). Social psychoanalysis is interested in dress in terms of how it is utilized by individuals and what role it plays in interpersonal communication. Thus, the significance of these research approaches is that they intend to understand how fashion is an important contemporary site for discourses of the body and plays an important role in framing particular practices of dress, along with other social factors (Jobling, 1999; Arnold, 2001). Other theories such as the History of Art on costume, Aesthetics, Feminist Theory, Cultural Studies, Media Studies, Film Studies, Economy, Business and Marketing, and so forth have been integrated into fashion culture study as well (Mendes & De La Haye, 1999; Bruzzi & Gibson, 2000; MaCracken, 1988; Jobling, 1999; Malossi, 1998; Breward, 2003; Hines & Bruce, 2001).

Values of fashion culture

Based on five theoretical frameworks on fashion culture: the study of Anthropology, the study of Sociology and fashion, fashion as communication: semiotics, the conditions of modernity and post-modernity, and an explanation of empirical approaches, I primary focus on the values of fashion and art, concept of style, individual identity, and the implication of fashion study for art education. Contemporary fashion culture is strongly associated with mass consumption. Consumption of fashion products has become a significant activity in contemporary society because consumers construct their identity through the ways they consume fashion. The mass production for fashion has changed fashion systems in order to cope with the flow of the contemporary fashion world (Diamond, 1997).

Fashion values involve artistic, exchange, and use values (Walker & Chaplin,
1997). Artistic value indicates that the relationship between the art and fashion worlds have been integrated because art has been progressively taking on certain qualities associated with fashion. Confusion as to whether fashion is art or not has prompted much debate in the fashion and art world. Contemporary art historians, art critics, fashion designers, fashion journalists, and museum curators have provided different points of view on this issue from which to examine the significance of this congruence. Art inspires fashion when designers search for the creative impulses for the artistic affinity attribute to fashion in a talent for decoration. Both the art and fashion worlds create diverse styles and articulate tastes through congruence of aesthetics ideals and expressions (Baudot, 1999; Fogg, 2003; Malossi, 2003).

Artists especially the avant-garde were involved in creating fashion because of their growing dissatisfaction with contemporary fashion in the early twentieth from Europe such as Bauhaus, the Weimar Werkstatte, the Russian Constructivists, and the Surrealists (Kim, 1998). Of these, the Surrealists established the strongest connection between art and fashion, because of their contribution to styles through fashion photographs in popular fashion magazines. Surrealism with its incongruous juxtapositions of real objects, allowed for startling fashion effects without interfering with the integrity of the objects in this clothing. Surrealism has proved to be one of the most persistent of the many stylistic options to be found in fashion photography since the 1920s until today. For example, photographer Man Ray adopted Surrealist styles beginning in the 1920s to produce fashion photographs in a new style for fashion magazines (Fer, 1993).
Similarly, fashion designers also adopted arts styles to create apparel and fabric. Some fabric designers integrated art movement styles into fabric design. For example, the British fabric designer, Bernard Neville, adopted the Arts Deco and Vorticism styles to create fabric pattern in the sixties (Fogg, 2003). The contemporary French designer Yves Saint Laurent used Modrian style as a kind of paradigm to create a flatness in dresses in the 1970s (Breward, 2003). After the 1980s until the present time, the minimalist styles have been adopted by most contemporary fashion designers as a paradigm from which to design clothes and accessories with the emphasize on simple shapes and basic colors such as black, gray, white, and neutral hues (Gibson, 2000).

Another trend is that the new generation of fashion designers after the 1990s integrate conceptual art with multimedia technology into clothing design that blur the boundaries between art and fashion. This group of fashion designers is labeled as "experimental avant-garde design" for their clothing styles are beyond practical function (Baudot, 1999; Breward, 2003). Their styles represent theatrical and extravagant effects that construct fashion as a form of art through image design.

In this sense, the fashion world consists of hierarchies just as the art world does. Fashion hierarchies are divided into high fashion and popular fashion. It might be inappropriate to distinguish fashion in this way today because its boundaries to some extent have been blurred. Nevertheless, high fashion and popular fashion still determine the quality that especially lay in brand names and prices due to design and marketing strategies (Hines & Bruce, 2001). Generally speaking, modern fashion is articulated around two industries: haute couture and industrial clothing manufacture. Haute couture
refers to luxury items and made-to-order creations, while industrial clothing manufacture refers to inexpensive, mass-produced, ready-to-wear articles that imitated more or less closely the prestigious "labeled" models of haute couture. The creations of the original models coupled with the industrial reproduction of copies; the emergence of a fashion system that is characterized by a marked differentiation in techniques, prices, reputations, and objectives, as befit a society itself divided into classes with quite distinct life styles and goals (Lipovetsky, 1994).

**Haute couture and ready-to-wear systems**

From the late 1890s to the late 1950s, haute couture has played a distinguished role in the fashion system because it was used to reflecting social class and taste through clothing styles. It is essentially designed for feminine fashion that represents luxury and includes exaggerated decorations with jewelry, lace, feather, etc. Haute couture became a business system since the founding of Chambre Syndicale in the early 1900s². Since then the haute couture system, included numerous prestigious designers' brands, set standards and principles of couture organization, use of fabrics and materials, arrangements of seasonal shows to promote this business in France and has also spread to the United States. The industry suffered a great recession during the First World War and Second World War. By the late-40s to mid-1950s, the House of Christian Dior regained its prestige again because of the success of the "New Look" design³ (Baudot, 1999). This success reopened the post era for the haute couture market although the fashion system

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² It is a business organization to manage business of haute couture design and organize fashion shows for haute couture

³ "New Look" refers to the style of jacket and round skirt with the tiny waist and the majestic bust, see Baudot, 1999
has begun to be dominated by the emergence of popular culture from Britain and the United States since the 1960s (Bruzzi & Gibson, 2000).

Industrial clothing manufacturing started in the 1820s in France. It was an industry for producing new, inexpensive, ready-to-wear clothing because of the development of the Industrial age and the advent of the sewing machines. This industry was intended to offer low cost articles for the lower and middle bourgeoisie since 1860, especially through the establishment of department stores in the 1880s in France. After the First World War, manufacturing was profoundly transformed under the influence of an increasing division of labor, improved machinery, breakthroughs in the chemical industry allowing richer colors and new textiles based on synthetic fibers (Lipovetsky, 1994). But not until the 1960s was the fashion world dominated by the haute couture system.

Starting in the 1960s, styles have transformed to meet diverse forces accompanied by radical shifts in the social environments, especially in Britain and the United States. Ready-to-wear, the new development of industrial clothing manufacture which sought to blend industry and fashion and meant to put novelty, style, and aesthetics on the street. It came into its own by creating clothes in a spirit oriented more toward daring, youthfulness, and novelty than toward “class” perfection (Lipovetsky, 1994). Many young designers invented styles such as miniskirts, A line dresses, and so on, which created a new youth culture under the rise of popular culture during that period. For example, Mary Quant created the miniskirt style in 1963 in London. In the 1970s and 1980s, a second and third wave of designers gave impetus to the most important innovations in
professional fashion. Kenzo galvanized fashion in the early 1970s with his flat-chested cuts with bright colors and flower pattern prints derived from kimonos. Jean Paul Gaultier played the game of fashion by using humor and mockery and by blending gender roles in the 1980s. During these transitional years, haute couture also experienced new revolutions in matters of style. Prestigious couture houses adopted street styles to their luxury clothing designs not only due to inventive aesthetics but also for the purpose of mass marketing. In 1966 Yves Saint Laurent included jeans in his collections, which opened the haute couture threshold to the adoption of street styles (Mendes & De La Hayes, 1999).

By contrast, the ready-to-wear system tends to lessen the anonymity characteristic of earlier industrial production, and to produce articles with a creative bonus, added aesthetic value, and a personalized cachet. The democratization of the system depends not only on the destruction and dismissal of haute couture, but also on the concomitant promotion of fashion quality in mass apparel (Lipovetsky, 1994). The success of this system lays in production at inexpensive prices. The gap in price between the haute couture system and the ready-to-wear system still exists in the retail marketplace. In fact, the labels that resist most successfully, often belong to large groups for whom haute couture is the driving force, which sells perfumes, cosmetics and all derivative products, such as bags, shoes and etc. These derivative products play an important role in the current couture system because of their inexpensive prices. The price of a garment can range from US$16,000 to 20,000 for a woman’s tailored suits, to US$ 60,000 and more for an evening gown (Benaim, 1996).
At the present time, both systems are still distinct in the fashion retail marketplace. Fashion shows for the latest design of the spring and fall seasons are held every year in New York, Paris, Milan, and London, which divides them into haute couture and ready-to-wear. Prices for the two lines are expensive because clothes and accessories are designed by famous designers although the ready-to-wear line is assumed to be more inexpensive than the haute couture lines (Breward, 2003).

The consumption of fashion

The consumption of fashion involves use and exchange values. Use value indicates the reasons and motivations of individuals for fashion consumption. Exchange value indicates that fashion consumption relates to business, especially referring to the development and process of fashion merchandising and marketing strategy. Fashion can be seen as a cultural industry nowadays because culture and the arts have been defined as socially beneficial. This remakes culture in a dispersed and positive sense marking a new modality of power, one that operates through appeals to the social body to enjoy and find pleasure in these practices (McRobbie, 2000). In this sense, the consumption of fashion can refer to the development of a cultural sphere.

According to Max Weber’s (1995) theory of cultural rationalization and differentiation, the general expansion of cultural production via culture industries and the generation of a wider market for cultural and other symbolic goods is to produce what has been termed a consumer culture (Featherstone, 1995). Fashion consumption not only builds on concrete commodities but also relies on the construction of individuals’ images for the public. Advertising is not only used to transform or replace high and mass culture
but also to promote the consumption of commodities and further mass deception and to
draw attention to the symbolic aspect of commodities. The triumph of economic
exchange need not just entail traditional culture and high culture, but a new artificial
culture was generated from below, via the logic of commodity production, to replace
them (Featherstone, 1995).

Baudrillard argued that consumption involves the active manipulation of signs
and that what is consumed is not objects but the system of objects, the sign system that
makes up the code (Featherstone, 1995). Fashion consumption is a way to consume
culture in terms of art, taste, identity, desire and further to construct lifestyles. Utilities in
all cultures are symbolic; goods are in effect doubly symbolic in contemporary societies.
Symbolism is “consciously employed in the design and imagery attached to goods in the
production and marketing process, and symbolic associations are used by consumers in
using goods to construct differentiated lifestyle models” (Featherstone, 1995, p. 21).
Consumption classes are defined in relation to the consumption of three sets of goods: a
staple of set (for example food), a technology set (travel and capital equipment), and the
information set (education, arts, and cultural and leisure pursuits) (Featherstone, 1995).
In this sense, the consumption of fashion nowadays is related to diverse ways of
consumption, which are aimed to build modes of lifestyle.

The motivations for consumers to consume fashion commodities are related to
satisfying desires and the expression of individual identity. Each individual has specific
tastes towards the selection of styles on clothing, appearance, furniture, cars, etc. It is a
way for us to express our identity through fashion. The psychological aspect also
contributes to the fashion business in that this is one of the important factors that leads consumers to purchase fashion. Therefore, fashion economy is very important to fashion industry and consumption. This emerged from fashion marketing and merchandising. This business aspect is involved with the textile industry; the trade of fashion marketing in domestic, foreign, and global markets; the fashion merchandise process; designing and manufacturing of fashion apparel and accessories; segments of retailing markets, marketing strategies; and consumers’ decision on fashion consumption (Diamond, 1997).

Therefore, fashion is a significant issue for us to study because it plays an important role in cultural, social, economic, and psychic levels that involved human life today. This phenomenon is booming ever faster from the local to global orientation because of the influences of pop culture and mass media around the world (Bruzzi & Gibson, 2000; Lury, 1996).
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature includes: fashion theories, fashion and cultural studies, fashion and philosophies, fashion and feminism and postmodernism, fashion and art movement, fashion business, art interpretation, and related journals and magazines about fashion. I derived the eight categories for my research based on the literature reviewed for this thesis.

Fashion theories emerged from literature on Sociology and the four theories that I discuss in the this chapter were proposed by sociologists George Simmel (1904), Blumer (1969), King (1963), Greenberg and Glynn (1966). Simmel and Blumer’s theories still have an impact on the study of fashion culture at the present time. Fashion culture is one of the issues associated with Cultural Studies. It has been studied under the disciplines of material culture, visual culture, and global culture and they all provide theoretical frameworks from which to structure the study of fashion culture.

Fashion and philosophies are derived from philosophical discourse. I discuss Benjamin’s (1999) *The Arcades Project*, Barthes’s (1990) *The Fashion System*, and Bourdieu’s (1984) *Habitus*, because they represent deep association with the fashion culture. Barthes proposed the methodology for the decoding of fashion images in terms a of semiotic principle, which is useful for analyzing the connotation of fashion images.
Bourdieu's concept of habitus explained how taste functions as a discrimination for distinct social hierarchy. Fashion and Feminism and Postmodernism focus on the studies of the association of women, sexuality, and fashion because it is assumed that fashion commodities reflect women's attitude and psychology through the ways they adorn their bodies. In other words, fashion commodities are imbue with connotations which could represent an individuals' unique tastes in fashion (Bruzzi & Gibson, 2000).

Fashion connections to art movements concerns the historical review of the relationship between fashion and art worlds. This has been studied under the field of history of art in order to understand the development of costume in diverse cultural contexts such as the Western, Asian, African, and other ethnic cultures. I limited the literature and research to the European and American modern art movements in the twentieth century because they present intense interaction between art and creation of fashion style (Breward, 2003). Fashion business is about the operation and management of the fashion industry, which is the primary activity for fashion culture to permeate through a society in terms of marketing strategies such as advertisement, sale promotion, fashion runway shows, etc (Diamond, 1997).

Art interpretation is based in Feldman's method: describe, analysis, interpret, and judge (Prater, 2002). Barrett (2000) further explained the use of the method to interpret contemporary art in art education. The literature I reviewed in this category focuses on the usage of art interpretation and its implications for the study of fashion culture. Journals and magazines on fashion, publish fashion news, trends, reports, criticism, and studies at the present time. I will explain these eight categories in detail in the following
section because they present the structure of this thesis and further develop my
suggestions for the implications of fashion culture to the field of art education.

Fashion theories

There are four major theories about fashion culture that derive from sociology in
the twentieth century. They interpret the phenomena of fashion culture based on social
hierarchies through historical shifts. These theories include "Trickle-Down Theory",
"Collective Selection Theory", "Trickle-Across Theory", and "Bottom-Up Theory"
although they interpret different principles, they are interrelated with each other because
social and cultural phenomena are complex. No single theory could represent diverse the
diversity of the phenomena of fashion.

Simmel's Trickle-Down theory

In 1904 the German sociologist, Georg Simmel, proposed the “trickle-down
theory”, which was based on his observation of the relationship between fashion behavior
and society. It was an ingenious account of fashion change. He maintained that “a style
must be first adopted by people at the top of a society in order to be identified as a true
fashion social pyramid. The style then gradually wins acceptance at progressively lower
social levels” (Stone, 1990, p. 77). In other words, a style should spread from upper-class
to lower-class because the lower class would like to imitate high fashion styles rather
than create their own styles. The Trickle-down theory thus contends that the two motives
of fashion change are differentiation and imitation.

McCracken (1988) in Culture and Consumption said the theory has several
strengths. The first strength places fashion diffusion in a social context because it
presupposes that this system will consist of in the differential distribution of status, which will be made up of social groups ranked high and low. Fashion movement will be directed by the hierarchal nature of these social relations and the social interaction these relations create. In short, the theory gives us an understanding of how the social context in which a fashion movement occurs determines its direction, tempo, and dynamics.

The second strength of this theory also allows us to see the fashion behavior of disparate social groups as expression of the same underlying logic (McCracken, 1998). It allows us to see that the two motives of fashion change, act in concert, because they are mutually presupposing. There are two problems with this aspect of theory:

First, it is worth observing that the term “trickle-down” is an error in metaphor in that what drives the dynamic is an upward “chase and flight” pattern created by a subordinate social group that hunts upper-class status markers and a subordinate social group that moves on in hasty flight to new one. The second problem is that Simmel did not specify the operation of the trickle-down effect in its full detail and complexity because Simmel failed to note that only two social groups in the social system have a single motive for their fashion behavior. The highest ranking group acts solely for the purpose of differentiation. The lowest ranking group acts solely for the purpose of imitation. But for the intermediate groups in system, the motives for fashion change are not so predictable. They may undertake fashion change for the purpose of imitation, differentiation, or both. Simmels’ failure to observe the duality of motive of intermediate groups left the theory insufficiently appreciative of some of the
empirical reality for which it was meant to account (p. 94).

The third strength of this theory is "its ability to give the fashion observer early warning of fashion change because it allows the observer to predict a change in one group's fashion behavior from the moment there is a change in the behavior of a proximate group" (McCracken, 1998, p. 95). As soon as a subordinate group begins to appropriate superordinate fashion, superordinate differentiation is set in motion. Conversely, as soon as a superordinate group begins to differentiate itself from a subordinate group, this latter group will undertake further acts of appropriation (McCracken, 1988).

The trickle-down theory still has influenced to some extent the fashion world today. It has been identified as a fundamental principle of explanation for the study of fashion and also has been used for the study of the sociological implications of contemporary fashion. For example, many fashion magazines such as Elle and Vogue report the latest fashion trends that entertainers wear in movies and at parties in every issue. They report their latest new looks from clothing styles to hairstyles in order to spread new fashion designs. The taste of the styles in these magazines usually focuses on luxurious fashion products that only small portion of customers could afford. However, this still could influence readers to imitate their dress styles. Thus, this theory still can explain the phenomenon (Dickerson, 2003).

**Blumer's Collective Selection Theory**

Herbert Blumer proposed the "Collective Selection Theory" that was specifically designed to rebut the trickle-down theory in 1965. His formulation denies that
hierarchical class relations animate the fashion process and that, in turn, fashion serves primarily to symbolically ratify those relations (Fred, 1992). He shifts the "Trickle-Down Theory" to the states of collective mood, taste, and choice.

Blumer (1969) emphasizes that "the fashion mechanism appears not in response to a need of class differentiation and class emulation but respond to a wish to be in fashion, to be abreast of what has good standing, to express new tastes which are emerging in a changing world" (Fred, 1992, p. 116). Blumer (1969) wrote on the topic of "collective selection" in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Science*:

Tastes are themselves a product of experience; they usually develop from an initial state of vagueness to a state of refinement and stability, but once formed they may decay and disintegrate. They are formed in the context of social interaction, responding to the definitions and affirmations given by others. People throw into areas of common interaction and having similar runs of experience develop common tastes. The fashion process involves both a formation and an expression of collective taste in the given area of fashion. Initially, the taste is a loose fusion of vague inclinations and dissatisfactions that are aroused by new experiences in the field of fashion and in the larger surrounding world. In this initial state, collective taste is amorphous, inarticulate, vaguely poised, and awaiting specific direction. Through models and proposals, fashion innovators sketch our possible lines along which the incipient taste may gain objectivity expression and take definite form. Collective taste is an active force in the ensuing process of selecting, setting limits and providing guidance; yet, at the same time it undergoes
refinement and organization through its attachment to, and embodiment in specific social forms. The origin, formation, and careers of collective taste constitute the huge problematic area of fashion. (p. 281)

According to Bulmer's (1969) account, he points out that "collective taste" plays an important role in fashion culture because people tend to imitate the same styles as their favorites or the desire to elevate individual values. Fashion companies produce the same styles of clothes and accessories in different price ranges that target different levels of consumers. "Collective taste" is the most obvious fashion phenomenon because trends of certain styles in each season represent consumers' taste on products (p. 281).

**Trickle-Across Theory**

This Trickle-Across Theory was enunciated by Charles W. King in 1963. He observed that fashions spread horizontally within and across homogeneous groups, rather than merely vertically from one social level to another. He believed that each segment of our pluralistic society has its own leader or leaders whom it emulates (Dickerson, 2003).

This theory indicates that people would choose their own role models in order to follow styles that role models wear. For example, cargo pants are very popular among students today, so that many young students imitate the style because it is in fashion now. In other words, fashion imitation could occur in groups, once certain styles that are worn by a person in a group become fashionable. It can explain why certain styles can become fashionable with young people although social and economic factors are still involved in this theory (Dickerson, 2003).
**Bottom-Up Theory**

This Bottom-Up Theory, as advanced by Greenberg and Glynn in 1966, maintains that young people are quicker than any other social group to initiate new and different fashions and that fashions filter up, not merely from youth to older age groups, but also from lower to upper economic classes (Dickerson, 2003).

This trend can also be observed in famous designs. Some youth street styles such as punk or sport wear inspire high fashion design. Many new generations of fashion designers mix classic style with street styles to create new looks for clothes.

From these fashion theories, it is obvious that they are interrelated with each other because the spread of fashion is so complex that no single factor could fully explain diverse fashion culture. They explain how fashion phenomena spreads among groups and in society and points out that fashion spread is the movement of imitation of styles.

**Fashion and Cultural Studies**

The study of fashion culture was studied by cultural studies since the 1970s in England (Bruzzi & Gibson, 2000). Cultural studies in fashion focuses on the cultural, sociological, and psychological perspectives that explore the dynamics of fashion (Bruzzi & Gibson, 2000; Jobling, 1999; Fred, 1992).

Fashion culture derives from theories of material culture, visual culture, subculture, and global culture (Barnard, 2002; Lury, 1996; McCracken, 1988). Barnard (2002) in *Fashion as Communication*, describes that fashion functions as cultural communication in terms of individualistic expression, social worth, social role, economic status, political symbol, religious condition, social rituals, and recreation (Barnard,
2002). Under this umbrella, fashion presents power and ideology through design and distribution in a society.

**Fashion and material culture**

The relationship between fashion and material culture lies in the fact that fashion products are connoted as symbolic codes that reflect aesthetic value in relation to use and exchange values. As an element of material culture, fashion has been studied under the disciplines of anthropology and ethnography (Entwistle, 2000). The study of clothing as an instance of material culture in the two fields has several dimensions. In *Culture and Consumption* (1988), McCracken described that the areas of symbolic, structural, semiotic anthropology, have encouraged a long-standing interest in the expressive aspects of material culture. According to this metaphor, studies of clothing as an expressive medium reveal several ways in which clothing may be seen as a concrete manifestation of "particular ideas in the mind" (McCracken, 1988, pp. 58). Clothing and the study of cultural categories, of cultural principles, of cultural process, of social distance, and of change and history are central to anthropology research. Numerous anthropologists and ethnographic studies (Burton, 2001; Welters, 1999) on fashion and customs usually focus on how folk customs and tribal customs express the identity of a nation or a folk group through objects. The study of folk customs in certain ethnic groups helps audiences understand the role fashion plays in certain social and cultural contexts (Welters, 1999).

**Fashion and visual culture**

As a participant in visual culture, fashion presents diverse facets through visual images through mass media. Visual culture can be defined and interpreted in diverse
perspectives across different disciplines. Visual culture consists of all visible artifacts studied in terms of the beliefs and values from which they arise and with which they are viewed (Duncum, 2000). Barnard (1998) defines visual culture as “Anything visual produced, interpreted or created by humans which has, or is given, functional, communicative and/or aesthetics intent” (p. 23). Radford (1998) maintains “The most evident shared element of fashion in visual culture is that of the phenomenological priority of the appearance and readability of information and semantic associations” (p. 154). The study of visual culture also focuses on the interpretation of images. In the *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Sturken & Cartwright (2001) states that “Images are an important means through which ideologies are produced and onto which ideologies are projected” (p. 21). Thus, to explore the meaning of images is to recognize that they are produced within the dynamics of social power and ideology.

Thus, the relationship between fashion and visual culture lies in how fashion images circulate fashion culture from country to country. Fashion images promote products such as clothes, bags, shoes, watches, jewelry, cars, furniture, and so on through visual designs intended to attract consumers to purchase goods. Hence, fashion images play important roles in visual culture because they connote diverse ideologies through design and packages of products.

**Fashion and global culture**

From the perspective of global culture, fashion consumption is an important trading activity among international business and individuals. Morgan (1998) writes “The notion of globalization is the assertion that a worldwide system of economic, cultural and
political interdependencies has come into being or is in the process of information” (p. 1). Fashion consumption indicates how the spread of fashion commodities permeate our everyday life and influence an individual’s identity through economic levels to psychological levels.

The fashion industry is involved in the trend of globalization. Global economy has had a great impact on the distribution of fashion business. Every segment of the fashion goods chain has taken on more global ways of doing business. For example, retailers have been actively participating in global economy as they travel to other countries to buy product lines for their stores. According to Dickerson (2003), retailers are now assuming many of the roles once associated with manufactures for their private-label lines. In these arrangements, retailers’ product development divisions, develop their own designs for the line, coordinate details related to making the garments, and then have the garments produced in a broad array of countries throughout the world (Dickerson, 2003).

Fashion is a global business because the industry needs to corporate with textile suppliers, manufactures, design, retail and mass media in order to sell products to domestic and global markets. In this sense, the fashion industry is not only concerned with the beauty business but also is concerned with the quality of business (Diamond, 1997; Dickson, 2003; Frings, 1999; Hines & Bruce, 2001)

Fashion and philosophy

Philosophy provides for the study of fashion cultures and profound knowledge from some philosophies are applied to issues and have broaden the field. The fusion of

**Walter Benjamin: Philosophical discourse on fashion in The Arcade Project**

In Walter Benjamin's (1999) *The Arcade Project*, he illustrates fashion as a phenomenon that opens the dialectical exchange between women and wear in the article "Fashion". According to his observation on fashion in the late nineteenth century, he sees fashion as the love of art that can enrich an individual's inward desire for change, sense of beauty, passion for dressing up, and drive to conform. He also connects fashion phenomenon with Surrealist Art because the aim of the Surrealist Art is to represent how psychic automatism in its pure state could be expressed to the world or in any other manner. Fantasy, desire, dream, and sexuality are important concepts for the creation of Surrealist styles. Hence, Surrealism placed women at its center and as the focus of its dream because it is through a particular construction of women that Surrealist concerns with fantasy and the unconscious were enacted (Fer, 1994). This has had a strong impact on the creation of fashion images up to the present. Numerous contemporary fashion studies focus on how fashion represents images of the body and reflects an individual's psyche through clothing styles. This aspect especially reflects on feminist studies on the roles and power of gender in fashion (Benstock & Ferriss, 1994; Jobling, 1999).

**Roland Barthes: The Fashion System**

For Roland Barthes (1990), fashion is the semiotic system. In his book *The
*Fashion System*, he contends that the structure of fashion images lies in language. The written language on fashion contains image-clothing and written clothing. The structure has the signified, signifier, and the sign. The analysis of fashion images contains the rhetorical signifier that is fashion writing, the rhetorical signified, which is the ideology of fashion, and the rhetoric of the sign, which is the reason for fashion (Barthes, 1990). The rhetorical signifier of fashion is about the denotation and connotation of fashion language in fashion writing. The rhetorical of the signified is about how fashion writing represents the ideology of the fashion world. The rhetoric of the sign is about the function-sign, which has signs and functions in real clothing, and real functions and unreal functions.

These principles are intended to analyze fashion in language. This functions like criticism that can be found in some professional fashion and art magazines and newspapers today. The three principles can work appropriately to interpret fashion images that help readers understand fashion metaphorically (Barthes, 1990; Jobling, 1999).

**Pierre Bourdieu: Habitus**

In French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu's study of taste in French society in the late 1960s, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, he argues that “taste is not the result of individualistic choices, but is socially patterned” (Lury, 1996, p. 83).

"Habitus" is the term that Bourdieu used in his analysis. Bourdieu (1984) explains habitus as:

A system of lasting, transposable, which, integrating past experiences, functions
at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely by diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transformations of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems.

(p. 83)

The habitus is evident in the individual's taken-for-granted preferences about the appropriateness and validity of her or his taste in art, food, holidays, hobbies, etc. (Lury, 1996). Bourdieu argues that the habitus operates according to a relatively coherent logic, that he calls the "logic of practice" and this is organized by a system of classification. The habitus, which operates below the level of individual consciousness, is what will shape an individual's apparently personal taste through the way in which the individual applies the system of classification. The system of classification operates with dichotomous distinctions like high/low, masculine/feminine, white/black, distinguished/vulgar and good/bad (Lury, 1996, p. 86).

Styles of fashion products represent individuals' taste. Taste plays an important role in fashion in that this concept has become a tool that distinguishes the hierarchy of the fashion world, such as high/pop fashion, or haute couture/street styles, etc.

Taste is an important factor that differentiates hierarchies of fashion products. The hierarchies of taste are always related to power. Fornas (1995) maintains that "Taste tendentiously organized in value hierarchies, here constitute the objects of the cultural sphere of symbols, texts, works of art and artifacts, which are used when people mutually recognize and evaluate each other and themselves" (p. 94). Taste and distaste are often
relative and seen as what they are, and have always been, socially, culturally and psychologically anchored constructions (Fornas, 1995).

These three philosophical discourses are related to the issue of fashion culture for they provide the rationales on art, semiotic codes of fashion images, and taste that are the major aspects of this thesis. Benjamin’s (1999) discourse expresses the association between art and fashion worlds, Barthes’ (1990) theory provides a method of fashion interpretation from the semiotic discipline, and Bourdieu’s (1984) discourse on taste provides the theoretical framework to study fashion culture from the discipline of sociology.

Fashion, Feminism, and Postmodernism

Feminism has criticized fashion and psychology in terms of identity, gender, and sexuality embedded in fashion images. In this sense, contemporary fashion studies have emphasized the issues of gender and sexuality because they play important roles in the interpretation of fashion images.

Contemporary fashion images in various fashion magazines present female and male sexuality through visual design. From the feminist perspective, fashion is a way to represent women’s roles in cultural and social contexts. Studies on this topic tend to analyze positive and negative gender issues through fashion images such as how dress styles express women’s characteristics and psychic worlds. Gibson (2000) contended that the aesthetics of fashion are not primarily sexual in nature, nor are they designed, necessarily, to attract male gaze. Rather, fashionable dress is a complex lexicon where the intention of sexual enticement may be absent altogether or be
unimportant in comparison with other criteria (p. 350).

This statement points out the ongoing debate about whether fashion is sexual in nature or created by design, because sex is a metaphor for designers to use in designing clothes and accessories. Elizabeth Wilson’s (1985) *Adorned in Dream*, defines fashion as a performance art that acts as a vehicle for the ambivalence of contradictory and irreconcilable desire (p. 246). Wilson’s account identifies the central problem that has contributed to the continuing disagreements around the question of fashion. How does fashion influence women’s roles in public and private spheres in terms of dress and body images? Thus, feminist perspectives mainly structure critical debates on the relationship between women and fashion culture.

The world of fashion can be observed through postmodern culture as well. Postmodernists have examined fashion culture because its “slipperiness- the ambivalence, polyvalence, semiotic smorgasbord and excess” which “fits into a world view of consumerism, pluralism and masquerade gone mad- the unfettered circulation of free-floating signs” (Craik, 1994, p. 8). In this sense, women’s involvement with fashion can be read positively through concepts of identity and material surfaces.

Fashion and art movements

The study of fashion also relates to theory of art movements, which indicates interactions between art and the fashion world. Fashion and history of costume has been studied in the field of the history of art, which provides a history and evolution of costume in the Western society (Mendes & de la Haye, 1999). The issue of design plays an important role in the contemporary fashion culture because the integration of fashion
and art design create new meanings to both worlds.

Fashion design for clothes, accessories, and other products is associated with various art movements. Fashion designs have reflected various artistic styles since the early twentieth century art movements. Of these, art movements such as the German Bauhaus, the Russian Constructivists, Surrealists, Pop art, and the Minimalists have been involved in creating fashion. For example, the German Bauhaus developed art curriculum to integrate industrial design and art into formal school art curriculum. The Russian Constructivists contributed to textile design and further applied it to theater costume design. The Surrealist has had a great impact on the style of fashion photography. Pop Art has influenced clothing design since the 1960s. The Minimalist style has had a great impact on clothing design after the 1980s up until today because of its simple cuts and neutral colors. Therefore, the congruence of art and fashion worlds has broaden fashion culture into a more pluralistic world.


Despite fashion theories, cultural studies, philosophy, feminism and postmodernism, and art movements, the most important aspect for fashion lies in fashion business because it is the aim of industry to make a profit through consumption that presents the reality of business.
Fashion business

Fashion business engages in the selling and the consumption of the fashion world. The major goal of the fashion business is to make a profit by selling fashion products to consumers in local, domestic, and global markets through marketing strategies. Marketing strategies have been adopted by fashion business because it is a means of running a business. In Frings’ (1999) book *Fashion: From Concept to Consumer* introduces the components of the fashion industry. The fashion industry includes the fundamentals of fashion that include fashion development, consumer demand and fashion marketing, fashion change and consumer acceptance, fashion research and analysis. The raw material of fashion includes: textile, fiber, and fabric production; textile product development and marketing; trimmings; leather, and fur. The manufacture of fashion includes international fashion centers, product and design development, apparel production, accessory and fur manufacturing, wholesale markets, sales promotion, and distribution. Fashion retail includes the categories of fashion stores, retail fashion merchandising, and retail fashion promotion. All these components are interrelated. Other similar books such as Dickerson’s (2003) *Inside the Fashion Business*, and Diamonds’ (1997) *The World of Fashion* also introduce the fashion business from similar perspectives. Some related books and journals such as Hine and Bruce’s (2001) *Fashion Marketing: Contemporary Issues, The Journal of Fashion Marketing* explore fashion through the facts of business and marketing fields.

The next section of reviewed literature is derived from the theory of art interpretation. Art interpretation relates to the study of the appreciation of works of art. I
intend to use this discipline and method to integrate the study of fashion culture into the field of art education.

Art Interpretation

One approach to teaching fashion culture in art education is to integrate the issue of fashion culture with art appreciation and interpretation. Terry Barrett (2000), in his book *Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary*, described four principles of art interpretation. According to Barrett (2000), four principles of art interpretation include describing, interpreting, judging art, and considering assumptions. Descriptive data includes internal and external information. Internal information refers to the description of subject matter, the medium, and the form. External contextual information includes data about the time in which the piece was made—its social and intellectual milieu—other works by the same artists, and works by other artists of the same period (Barrett, 2000). Interpretation of an artwork is based on two types of information: internal evidence and external evidence. Internal evidence consists of what is in the work itself. External evidence consists of relevant information not within the work itself; the artist's other works; the artist's biography, including gender, race, age; and the social, political, and religious milieu of the time and place in which the work was made (Barrett, 2000). Responsible judgments about art include a clear assessment of the worth of an art object and reasons for the assessment based on reasonable criteria. Types of criteria are realism, formalism, expressionism, instrumentalism, and combinations and variations thereof (Barrett, 2000). The principles of art interpretation can apply to the study of fashion culture when art educators deal with fashion images.

The last section of reviewed literature concerns journals and magazines on fashion which provide the latest news, reports, criticism, and studies on fashion culture from business and academic perspectives.

**Journals and magazines on fashion**

There are various kinds of journals and magazines that are associated with fashion theories, fashion trends, fashion criticism from the academy, fields of business, art, and mass culture. *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Body, Dress, and Culture* has published many contemporary studies on fashion theories and philosophies derived from Sociology and Cultural Study since 1997 (Kim, 1998; Miller, 2002). *The Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* focuses on the fashion business, marketing strategies analysis and consumer perspectives since 1997 to the present. Some art magazines, such as *Art Forum* and *The Artist* also publish some art criticism about contemporary fashion designers especially when some famous fashion designers have exhibitions in art museums (Morton, 2002; Noi, 2002; Saxton, 2002). Some mass fashion magazines, such as *Elle, Vogue, Happer Bazaar, Glamour, W*, and *I.D* publish
one issue per month that aim to introduce the latest trends of fashion around the world (Alfano, 2003; Fraser, 2003; Webb, 2003).

From the reviewed literature I developed and explored the issue of fashion culture in terms of style and the expression of individual identity. This literature helped me develop my ideas concerning the significance of fashion culture and the implications for the field of Art Education.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

I will address the design methodology, method of data collection, and method of data analysis in this chapter. Design methodology concerns methodologies that I used to conduct the thesis, which included philosophical investigation, historical inquiry, and methods of critique. Methods of data collection is concerned with how I collected my reviewed literature. Method of data analysis is concerned with the methods of content analysis and its results. These research aspects structured my research investigation concerning fashion culture and visual culture art education.

Design methodology

My research is based on philosophical investigation, historical inquiry and methods of critique. According to La Pierre and Zimmerman (1997), philosophical inquiry is the analysis of key features of a concept or discipline for the purpose of adding to or articulating relevant paradigms within the field. Most resources used in this thesis were collected from philosophical discourse and cultural studies in relation to fashion culture. For example, philosophies of modernism and postmodernism provide the contexts to explore studies of fashion culture. Historical inquiry is "the systematic collection, evaluation, synthesis, and interpretation of data related to past events" (La Pierre & Zimmerman, 1997 p. 80). A great number of literature sources for this thesis are
based on the contemporary history of fashion and customs in the twentieth century. This history specifically focuses on the evolution of fashion styles, of custom and accessories in each era of the twentieth century. The critique method (also called social critical theory) expresses that “personal perceptions, meanings, and value systems underline all research and need to be flushed out” (La Pierre & Zimmerman, 1997, p. 36). A great number of studies on contemporary fashion culture are based on social and cultural issues because fashion culture has been deeply influenced by social and cultural events. Cultural studies contribute to criticism about the roles of fashion culture from social, cultural, and gender perspectives.

Method of data collection

The methods of data collection for this thesis was primarily based in a review of literature. In addition to the literature review data, some information was collected from mass produced fashion magazines and newspaper articles on criticism of fashion. I also used many fashion images, articles on current fashion trends, and news in various fashion magazines, which helped me to understand fashion culture from the art and business perspectives. Analyzing articles about fashion from fashion magazines and art journals, which reported the latest fashion trends and provided profound perspectives on art, cultural, and social issues. Fashion images in fashion magazines conveyed diverse cultural meanings through visual design. In addition, some data was collected from Art Education and Aesthetic Education journals that helped me to integrate the issue of fashion culture into visual culture content for teaching in the field of Art Education.
Method of data analysis

I used the method of content analysis to analyze my data. Content analysis is “a process of forming convincing suppositions and is used in discovering concepts and themes” (Stokrocki, 1997). The process includes writing down evolving questions at the beginning of the study. These questions are then used to construct assumption and sorting categories. Based on the content of the data methodology and used to name the categories that emerge. Table 3-1 was constructed to explain the presence of data analysis.

My research questions are: 1) How does fashion culture express individual identity in terms of style? 2) What is the relationship between fashion culture and the concept of visual culture? 3) What are the implications of the study of fashion culture for the field of Art Education? These questions were developed from the literature I reviewed. I then analyzed the data into three themes: concept of style, individual identity and lifestyle, and the methods of interpretation of art. These categories were derived from the literature including: fashion theories, fashion and cultural studies, fashion and philosophies, fashion and feminism and postmodernism, fashion and art movements, art interpretation, fashion business, and related journals and magazines on fashion. The three categories are primary themes and implicate the significance of fashion culture and visual culture in the field of art education. Analysis of these concepts and themes is presented as a table and is also used as source for the method of interpretation that I proposed to be used when studying fashion as part of visual culture education and individual identity.
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<td>*Sociology, psychoanalysis, Feminist theory, postmodernism, and cultural theories</td>
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<td>*Disruptive model for the interpretation of art</td>
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Conclusion

In this chapter I addressed the methodology that I used to conduct the research for this thesis. I collected literature about fashion culture and the interpretation of art. This data formed the categories and argument of this thesis. A difficulty that I encountered was that I couldn't find literature about the relationship between fashion culture and art education. Because of this I deduced that the issue of fashion culture has not been integrated into art education literature. This provided the rationale for my discussion of the implication and significance of fashion culture for art education, which will be presented in the following chapters.
CHAPTER 4

AN EXPLORATION OF STYLE AND LIFESTYLE CONSTRUCTION THROUGH FASHION CULTURE

In this chapter I will present the concepts of style and individual identity in order to reflect on fashion culture. I discuss the concept of style, its definitions, and perspectives from the views of fashion business and cultural studies. Fashion cycle and fashion forecasting will also be discussed in relation to this discourse. A table of fashion styles of the twentieth century is included as well in order to provide evidence concerning the impact on fashion of social and cultural life. The concept of individual identity is presented from the perspective of culture in relation to individual identity and subjectivity. I also address the issue of the construction of lifestyles through fashion culture in this chapter.

Definitions of style

Fashion is a complex phenomenon that is associated with social, cultural, political and economic conditions. Fashion communicates aesthetic values in terms of style and constructs individual identity. Style is not only a key factor for the fashion industry to determine the success of the fashion retail markets but also for individuals to express
their aesthetic values implicitly and explicitly through the ways they adorn their bodies.

The term “style” is defined diversely in different academic disciplines. In the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Science*, Gombrich (1968) defines style as “any distinctive, and therefore recognizable, way in which an act is performed or an artifact made or ought to be performed and made” (p. 352). This definition is applicable for my thesis because it covers the cultural perspective inherent in fashion. In my thesis, style is defined from the perspectives of fashion business and Cultural Studies. The former is a practical approach in which style is used as a tool for designers and fashion firms to sell customers fashion products in order to earn profits in fashion retail markets, while the latter implies style functions as symbols for consumers to construct individual identity and lifestyles. In other words, style conveys symbolic meanings. Both definitions are interrelated because they represent how lifestyles can be constructed through fashion. Thus, fashion reflects each individual’s attitude toward life through the fashion objects that they possess.

**Style in the fashion business**

A style in the fashion business is “a type of product that has one or more specific features or characteristics that distinguish it and make it different from other products of the same type” (Dickerson, 2003, p. 35). There are a variety of styles represented in garments, accessories, furnishings, and cars etc. There can be many variations in trimmings, texture, decoration, or other details of fashion design. Each design can be different from others in detail; they are all individual interpretations of their respective styles. In the fashion industry, when a style becomes popular, many different designs or
versions of that style may be produced.

Styles may come and go in fashion, but certain specific styles always remain that style, whether it is in fashion or not. What makes fashion interesting, is that it is always changing. Fashion changes might relate to other factors, such as it reflects changes in people's lifestyles and current events, people's needs for change, and that people get bored with what they have. A style does not become a fashion until it gains consumer acceptance and it remains a fashion only as long as it is accepted.

Fashion styles are categorized as "classics" and "fads." "Classic" is a style that continues to be accepted, to a greater or lesser degree, over an extended period of time. This means that a style's acceptance endures for several seasons or even decades. "Fads" are styles that sweep suddenly into popularity and then just as quickly disappear. Their acceptance is generally for a brief period of time and among a limited following. Thus, the issue of fashion trends is important for the fashion industry because it is concerned with to what extent that consumers can accept certain styles that lead to the success of fashion companies in retail markets. Fashion trends are the directions in which fashions are moving. Fashion trends mean that fashions are always changing in certain directions from season to season. The fashion industry must work far ahead of consumers' buying periods in order to read the signs and recognize the incoming and outgoing trends in fashion.

Fashion cycle and fashion forecasting

In the fashion business, the "fashion cycle" refers to the life span of the acceptance of a style in certain periods or seasons. Styles become fashions through a "follow-the-
leader” process. Understanding this acceptance pattern is key to understanding fashion movements; it explains how a look or idea begins with a few and spreads to many (Dickerson, 2003).

Fashion cycles consist of three major stages: the beginning; the peak; and the decline. In the beginning stage, a fashion is adopted by people who like or can afford to be first with what is new or who are highly motivated by a desire to dress differently from others. The new fashion is often called a high fashion. High fashion is often limited to a certain group of consumers because of its extremely high priced. In the peak stage, the new fashion idea spreads and is widely imitated by a greater number of people who tend to follow, rather than lead. In this stage, high fashion styles are generally copied and sold at a lower price if certain styles have the potential for appealing to a broader audience. The fashion is then in such demand that it can be mass produced and distributed at prices within the reach of many consumers. Each fashion moves into the declining stage. So many copies are mass produced that fashion-conscious people tire of the in style and begin to look for something new. Retail stores put declining styles on sales racks in order to make room for new merchandise. Consumers are no longer as willing to purchase them. In the meantime, other newer fashions are going through the earlier stages of their cycles.

The understanding of the fashion cycle is basic to successful merchandising of fashion goods, either at wholesale or retail. Each firm must have a clear-cut policy on which fashion stages it wishes to deal with. The kinds of style to be sold in the mass markets are selected 1 to 2 years in advance. This is called fashion forecasting. Fashion
forecasting is one of the most vital activities in the industry. What fashion forecasting does is to analyze and predict which styles will become the fashions for the coming seasons. For example, fiber, textile, and leather producers must work from 1 to 2 years ahead of the consumers' buying seasons; apparel and accessory designers/manufactures must prepare their lines from 9 months to a year ahead in order to show them to retail buyers 3 to 6 months in advance of the consumers' wearing season (Dickerson, 2003). Without accurate forecasts and projections of what looks, color, fabrics, silhouettes, and design details are likely to be acceptable to consumers, they would not be able to produce and sell the massive quantities of textiles and apparel that are presented.

There is no measurable timetable for a fashion cycle, although all fashions follow the same cyclical pattern. Some fashions take a short time to peak in popularity, others take longer; some decline slowly, others swiftly. Certain fashions fade quickly; others never completely disappear. Certain styles have been repeated again and again through different decades. After a fashion dies, it may resurface. When a style reappears later, it is reinterpreted for a new time. For example, a silhouette or proportion may reappear, but it could be reinterpreted with a change in fabric and details. Current designers are showing many nostalgic looks of the 1940s', 1950s', 1960s', 1970s' to the 1980s' in today's fashions.

**Fashion styles reflect the times in the twentieth century**

From the development of fashion styles throughout the twentieth century, styles have changed in every decade. Each decade had famous designers who designed certain styles that reflected social, cultural, political and economic conditions. In this sense, fashion
styles express diverse life facets. They document the variety of aesthetic values of
different eras just as paintings, sculpture, and other art forms do. Fashions reflect social
psychology because they could mirror the way people think and live and are therefore
influenced by the same environmental forces that act on any society (Dickerson, 2003).
Table 4-1 is a brief review on the development of styles in different eras of the twentieth
century.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Looks</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>The Charleston</td>
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<td>Art Deco</td>
<td>Bobbed hair</td>
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<td>Bootleg liquor</td>
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<td>Showboat on Broadway</td>
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<td>The cotton club in Harlem</td>
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<td><strong>1930s</strong></td>
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<td>Hollywood glamour influences</td>
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<td>fashion</td>
<td>Body-conscious shape</td>
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<td>Café society</td>
<td>Bias cut</td>
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<td>Our town on Broadway</td>
<td>Shirtwaists</td>
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<td>Jazz</td>
<td>Draping and shirring</td>
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<td>Halter and hip wraps</td>
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<td>Hats and gloves</td>
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<td>Fox-trimmed coats</td>
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<td><strong>1940s</strong></td>
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<td>WWII ends</td>
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<td>Nylon stockings available</td>
<td>Dior’s “New Look”</td>
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<td>A streetcare named desire</td>
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<td>On Broadway</td>
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<td>Uniform-style suits</td>
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<td>Hats with veils</td>
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<td>Platform shoes</td>
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<td>1950s</td>
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<td>Television</td>
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<td>The “beat” generation</td>
<td>The chemise</td>
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<td>Abstract expressionism</td>
<td>The shirtdress</td>
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<td>Sock hops</td>
<td>Penny loafers</td>
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<td>My fair lady on Broadway</td>
<td>Bobby sox</td>
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<td>Capri pants</td>
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<td>1960s</td>
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<td>Woodstock</td>
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<td>Pop art</td>
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<td>Psychedelics</td>
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<td>The Beatles</td>
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<td>Flower children</td>
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<td>Hair on Broadway</td>
<td>Miniskirts</td>
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<td>Dark eyes, pale lips</td>
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<td>Pillbox hats</td>
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<td>Prints</td>
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<td>1970s</td>
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<td>Roller skating</td>
<td>Granny dresses</td>
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<td>Disco</td>
<td>Platform shoes</td>
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<td>Message T-shirts</td>
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<td>Midis</td>
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<td>Hot pants</td>
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<td>Designer jeans</td>
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<td>Punk</td>
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<td>Bell button jeans</td>
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<td>1980s</td>
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<td>MTV</td>
<td>Menswear</td>
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<td>Michael Jackson</td>
<td>Sweaters</td>
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<td>Postmodern art and architecture</td>
<td>Preppy</td>
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<td>Madonna</td>
<td>Leggings</td>
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<td>Heavy metal</td>
<td>Punk hairdo</td>
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<td>Torn jeans</td>
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<td>Sweat clothes</td>
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<td>Earrings</td>
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<th>1990s</th>
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<td>Globalization</td>
<td>Casual wear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computerization</td>
<td>Grunge or postindustrial thrift shop look</td>
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<td>Information age</td>
<td>Retro looks</td>
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<td>Satellite TV</td>
<td>Dress-down Fridays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cellular phones</td>
<td>Baseball caps</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Internet and cyberspace</td>
<td>'70s revival</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS/HIV grows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cautious consumer spending</td>
<td>Tattoos and body piercing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulf war</td>
<td>Natural fibers</td>
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**Note:** Inside the fashion business (p. 78), by K.G. Dickerson, 2003, Upper Saddler River, N.J: Prentice.

From the table 4-1, it is obvious that the change of fashion styles has been influenced by entertainment such as the movies, TV, and music industry throughout the twentieth century. The phenomena of popular culture since the booming of 1960s in the U.S and U.K have had a great impact on the spread of fashion to the masses especially for teenagers. Styles of clothes, hair, and makeup that movies stars and popular singers wear have influenced vast number of young audiences to imitate them in their daily lives. The fashion phenomenon chiefly spread through the mass media, such as fashion advertisement in fashion magazines, movies, MTV and the like. In other words, visual
images play a powerful role for fashions to permeate people's daily lives. Images are used as a tool to sell consumers products that aim at constructing lifestyle through embedded meanings in fashion products.

Hence, the meaning of "style" in the fashion business expresses the practical perspectives that are associated with aesthetic values in that fashion companies aim at making profits through the selling of products such as clothes and accessories. The fashion products design plays an important role. Styles must appeal to greater number of consumers in order to earn profits. Furthermore, consumers choose certain styles of fashion products, which reflect their differences in cultural, social, and economic conditions. This aspect, reflected in fashion, is an important factor for individuals in their construction of lifestyles.

Style from a cultural perspective

From the cultural studies perspective, style is often defined as “A distinctive manner of expression, distinctive manner or custom behaving or conducting oneself, particular mode of living, particular technique by which something is done, created or performed” (Collins, 1995, p. 1661). In this sense, style is a way for humans to act or perform a mode of living under specific circumstances. It represents diverse aspects of the construction of life. Fornas (1995) maintains that a style:

is a particular way of using symbolic codes. Through stylization, individual works, texts or discourses get their cultural identity... Styles are partly actively chosen, developed and learned in exchanges with others, partly unintentional results of the social position and psychological deep structure
of the individual or collective subjects who produce them (p. 178).

Therefore, style can be used as a metaphorical sign that individuals can construct meanings through objects. In this sense, styles connote diverse meanings that shape lifestyles through fashion objects. Fashion products are thus transferred into symbolic codes and express individual identity.

Symbolic codes in this instance refer to meanings that are embedded in materials. It is suggested that fashion commodities can reflect diverse values in terms of cultural, social, psychological, and economic status quo. In the fashion world, meaning is constantly flowing to and from its several locations in the social world, aided by the collective and individual efforts of designers, producers, advertisers, and consumers. Contemporary fashion is associated with visual images in terms of photography and advertising. Visual images and verbal material appear to assume a very particular relationship in the advertising process of transfer. It is chiefly the visual aspect of the advertisement that conjoins the world and object between which a transfer of meaning is sought (McCracken, 1988).

According to McCracken (1988), cultural meanings can be characterized in terms of two concepts: cultural categories and cultural principles. The fashion world works in three ways to transfer meaning to goods. In one capacity, “the fashion system performs a transfer of meaning from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods that is remarkably similar in character and effect to the transfer performed by advertising” (McCracken, 1988, p. 80). In this capacity, the fashion system takes new styles of clothing or other objects associated them with and establish cultural categories and
principles. In the second capacity, the fashion system actually invents new cultural meanings in a modest way. This invention is undertaken by "opinion leaders" who help shape and refine existing cultural meaning, encouraging the reform of cultural categories and principles. These are "distant" opinion leaders: individuals who by virtue of beauty, celebrity, or accomplishment, are held in high esteem. For example, movie and music stars are one group of opinion leaders. These groups are permeable along with cultural innovations, changes in style, value, and attitude which they then pass along to the subordinate parties who imitate them. In the third capacity, the fashion system engages not just in the invention of cultural meanings but also in its radical reform. It is suggest that the cultural meanings of societies are subject to constant and ongoing change. The fashion system serves as one of the conduits for capture and movement in this category of highly innovative meaning.

Furthermore, style is a process or act of managing appearance in everyday life as well; this process characterizes the visible identity constructions through which individuals can articulate social psychological yearnings—yearnings are not only aesthetic but also political in nature (Kaiser, 2001). Styles have revealed how individuals tend to focus in their "identity talk" on those personalities with which they are conscious of having to struggle for power and recognition. Style is the power in every society and group that can differentiate hierarchies of social and political influence. For example, certain styles of clothes represent certain careers and career hierarchies.

Fashion helps individuals collectively adapt to a rapidly changing world. Minding appearances through the discourse of style provides a way of articulating positionalities
that otherwise have little space for expression or voice. Making and creating a style implies some faith that it is possible to learn about who are becoming and in concert with which communities. Through style, individuals find and construct means for relating to different kinds of circumstances, such as cultural and social-political circumstances. Aesthetic perspectives of style draw heavily upon an integration of social and political frames of reference (Cholachatpinyo, Padgett, & Crocker, 2002; Kaiser, 1992).

Individual identity and subjectivity

Subjectivity is in relation to style and individual identity. Styles that individuals express through their dress, accessories, home furnishing, and so forth express their distinctive identity. From the psychological perspectives, clothing and fashion may be used to reflect, reinforce, disguise or create mood. For example, bright, contrasting colors may reflect light-heartedness. Linear contrast, where lines change direction or intersect, may be used to reflect inner dynamism.

According to Merleau-Ponty’s (1981) notion of subjectivity, “subjects are reinstated as temporal and spatial beings. Subjectivity is located in time and space. Body/subjects are always subjects in space but our experience of it comes from our movement around the world and our grasping of objects in that space through perceptual awareness” (Kaiser, 2001, p. 32). This analysis offers a point for the analysis of dress as situated body practice.

Dress is always located spatially and temporally. The dressed body is not a passive object, acted upon by social force, but actively produced through particular, routine and mundane practice. Our experience of the body is not as inert object but the envelope of
our being, the site for our articulation of self (Kaiser, 2001). According to Kaiser (1992),

The cultural spaces in which subjectivities come to reside and shift are
influenced in part by such factors as gender, ethnicity, and sexuality,
within larger economic and cultural contexts. It is through these intersecting
lenses—framed as they are through social interactions within
cultural discourses—that individuals experience everyday life and develop,
sustain, and revise their aesthetic standpoints (p. 22).

Individual identity becomes tangible through intersections between mind, and
clothes, which individuals experience in their everyday lives. The performance of
individual identity is interacted through dress and body that symbolize personal codes.

Style allows power across, but not within, specific social-political circumstances.
Through style, individuals find and construct meaning for relating these different kinds of
circumstances. That is, we move through everyday life with and through subjectivities
that are at least in part framed by the appearances we construct, gauge, and refine
according to social context. Certain styles of dress emphasize parts of the body that speak
of other designations because clothing is employed as a means for claiming an identity
within the public sphere.

For the fashion business, the expression of individual identity is also an important
issue because style is the tool for them to categorize consumers in terms of their future
purchasing intent. This aspect has been used by fashion advertisers to emphasize the
purchase of fashion products that construct consumers' individual identity. Thus,
knowledge of the precise nature of the interactive influences of the individual to the


group and of the group to the individual will, logically, reveal the dialectic inherent in


social formations generally, and fashion purchasing particularly (Dodd, Clark, Baron, &

Houston, 2000). In this sense, the concept of individual identity is used as a metaphor in


fashion advertisement to create positive values of consumption of fashion products for


the concept can enhance and construct consumers' desires through the possess of buying


products.


The construction of lifestyle through fashion culture


Fashion styles differentiate and present individuals' social class, economic


condition, gender, sexual preference, career, and cultural backgrounds, etc. The fashion


world today sells lifestyle in terms of fashion commodities through visual images in mass


media such as magazine advertisement and TV commercials. "Lifestyle" is a term that


refers to the new consumer sensibility. Hebdige (1988) identifies it as "characteristic of


modern consumption; through lifestyle, consumers are seen to bring a more stylized


awareness or sensitivity to the processes of consumption" (p. 78). As a mode of


consumption, or attitude to consuming, lifestyle refers to "the ways in which people seek
to display their individuality and their sense of style through the choice of a particular
range of goods and their subsequent customizing or personalizing of these goods" (Lury,


The success or failure of the fashion industry depends on consumers' purchases of
its products. Consumer's individual and collective power is exercised in the selections
they make, and in their refusals to buy on the other hand. It is by their acceptance or
rejection that they influence goods that will be presented for their favor and even the methods of presentations. Social, economic and cultural factors have impact on consumers' demands and needs for purchasing fashion commodities. The importance of consumer power, forces the fashion industry to adjust marketing strategies in order to attract consumers. Fashion firms need good marketing plans and strategies to stimulate consumers' purchasing desires. Thus, the strategy of advertising promotes fashion commodities to consumers (Jhally, 1990). Fashion advertisement in this thesis refers to fashion photographs in fashion magazines.

So, how does fashion culture construct lifestyle in terms of style and individuality? One of the most important strategies for fashion companies to promote fashion items, is the use of advertisement on mass media. Fashion advertisement today is saturated in mass media. They chiefly appear in various fashion magazines that aim to represent aesthetic value of fashion commodity through visual design and further to stimulate consumers to buy fashion goods. The power of fashion images has become a marketing tool for fashion companies to sell all kinds of fashion commodities to consumer in order to earn profits in that fashion images convey metaphorical information about goods that aims to stimulate and satisfy consumers' desire for a fashionable self. Hence, fashion consumption is deeply rooted in visual images. The power of fashion images provides a way for each individual to create their lifestyles in terms of style and taste through commodities that they prefer to choose and possess. This aspect reflects the aesthetic value of fashion advertisement and has great impact on individuals associated with cultural and social concerns. It also indicates the relationship between fashion
culture and art visual culture education.

Fashion firms use advertising to create fashion images for the promotion of apparel, cosmetics, accessories and cars and so on in order to attract consumers to buy products. In fact, advertisement image is the most important element in the study of fashion visual culture. Advertisement not only represents the aesthetic value of fashion products in terms of image design but also expresses ideologies of culture, society, and individualism that are inherent in images. Fashion advertisement targets different groups of consumers because of the price ranges of fashion products. The hierarchies of fashion brands are reflected in the quality of materials and designs, which chiefly differentiates price ranges. Thus, fashion images do have positive and negative impact on consumption in that they provide consumers diverse styles in order to create lifestyle. How do fashion images stimulate and persuade individuals to buy fashion goods? This lies in the embedded meanings of aesthetic value in fashion images.

Fashion and visual images

The spread of fashion chiefly relies on the distribution of fashion photography. Fashion photography not only aims to present the beauty of fashion commodities through product and visual design but also expresses gender roles, cultural, and social phenomena through images context. Styles of fashion photography are related to the contemporary art movements in the twentieth century: Dadaism, Surrealism, Pop Art, etc. And they have great impact on the construction of fashion photography styles. Of these, Surrealist Art has had the greatest impact on fashion photography in magazines since the 1930s until today. Surrealist artists such as Man Ray and Dali had created numbers of fashion
photographs and illustrations in mass fashion magazines since the 1930s. Surrealist style for fashion photography focus on the close-up of an object or human figure that often has sexual implication in image context (Fer, 1994).

Ewing (1991) in "Perfect surface" states that one of earliest essays on the subject of fashion and photography appeared in The Photographic News in January 1876. Magazines writings were about "fashion and photography" rather than "fashion photography" at that time. It was not until 1927 that the first modern fashion photography appeared with Edward Steichen's study of Marion Morehouse in a Cheruit gown. The first fashion photography ever published in Vogue shows a nattily attired J.L. Taylor in a portrait that is indistiguishable from a carte portrait. Carte portraits were the earliest forms of photographic medium during the late nineteenth and early twenties. Enterprising photographers began to promote carte portraits of public figures such as royalty, famous dancers, statesmen and the like (Ewing, 1991). The dramatic change for fashion photography began with Baron de Meyer's 1914 appointment as chief photographer for Vogue and Vanity Fair. Photographs de Meyer produced were defined in terms of "fashionable photography" and "the photography of fashion". The mode was still essentially portraiture, but it was now the portrait of painting. Later, Hoyningen-Huene, Beaton, and a handful of others largely recruited from the fine arts, brought their distinct sense to bear on fashion photographs. The snapshot and Surrealist style influenced fashion photographs. In 1934, a Hungarian photojournalist, Martin Munkacsi, proposed to adopt a reportage technique (having accepted a fashion assignment with no ideas about how to proceed) to produce fashion photographs. The implication was that the snapshot
gave the illusion of spontaneity and therefore absolute credibility.

Surrealism is an art form with incongruous juxtapositions of real objects that allowed for startling effects without interfering with the integrity of the objects such as clothes. Surrealism has proved to be one of the most persistent of the many stylistic options to be found in fashion photography since the 1920s till the present. Jobling (1999) asserts "this much is due in part to the theatricality of fashion itself, which lends itself to an otherworldly beauty and the possibility of dynamic identity transformation itself" (p. 159). Andre Breton, leader of the Surrealist movement in France, began to promote the potential transformation of photography. He realized that both the camera and the photography could have a pivotal position in developing automatism, which centered on ideas of the mechanical and transcendence. Surrealism's potential lay in its enormously tense configuration of the collective that are expressed in fashion. Photographers employ surrealism as metaphor for another reality-- dream, myth, fantasy, and desire. This is a collection of simulacra for the human and body. Thus, it can be said that contemporary fashion photography is a hybrid approach.

Fashion photography later emerged within and grew to dominate the commercial arena during the 1920s and 1930s, largely as a reaction against fashion illustration in magazines. Photography was at first seen as a form of representation that possessed the ability to depict clothes realistically, without any artistic distortion. In effect, early fashion photography was “a continuation of the ideas of portraits or illustrations, creating a vision which women and men could aspire, and a standard that conventional fashion photograph still pursues” (Smedley, 2001, p. 144). A further transition to a realistic
approach to photographing fashion in the 1940 magazines discouraged displays of excess and frivolity while fashion itself became austere due to the rationing of fabrics. At this period, Lee Miller and Man Ray were the most famous photographers who produced realistic fashion styles in the USA and UK. In the 1950, Alexander Liberman, who was the art director at Vogue, commissioned photographers to use the techniques of social documentary to produce fashion photographs. Richard Avedon and Irving Penn's images contain a contrived spontaneity. In the 1960, a shift of social attitudes and new direction in publishing traversed the boundaries customarily placed around the editorial fashion story in a defiant yet controlled way. These environments extended the role of fashion photography into a larger debate which encompassed discussions of race, sexuality, and class within fashion and style. The emphasis on sexuality in fashion photography also promoted the sense of women's independence positive and negative, for they construct and depict images of the liberal women through fashion commodity (Buckley & Gundale, 2000; Caws, 1994; Evans, 2000).

In the 1970, some of these themes were promoted into more complicated contexts. The glamorous fashion role of the period and the highly stylized images in which some photographs were involved in the eroticism of women and provoked wider cultural debates. They could be seen as reflecting the underlying tensions about fantasies, myths, and images of sexuality. This evokes the feminist debate on gender discrimination and objectification of female role through male gaze and psychoanalysis. Street styles and subculture began developing in fashion photography at that time. The powerful growing influence of subculture and increasing subversive forms of self-representation were
ignored by high-profile magazines until the 1970s. In the 1980s, subculture styles in 
fashion photography imply the significance of ordinary people, youthful life and social 
class issues.

From the 1990s until the present time, fashion photography have represented hybrid 
styles that have collapsed and blurred the boundaries between aesthetics, design, 
technology and performance. Through diverse images narratives we see the history of 
past, present, and future that represent the fashion dynamics and broaden its aesthetic 
values. Thus, fashion photography represents art, cultural, social, and psychological 
facets.

Conclusion

I have addressed the concept of style and individual identity in order to discuss 
fashion as a force in the construction of lifestyles. Style and identity are metaphoric 
concepts for fashion culture to circulate in the society through fashion images. The 
integration of concepts of style and identity has impact on fashion images which reflects 
art, cultural, social, economic, and psychological phenomenon. This aspect points to the 
fact that fashion culture is related to visual culture because fashion images could 
influence individuals' lifestyles in diverse ways. Thus, fashion culture should be valued 
positively in art/visual culture education.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION, SIGNIFICANCE, AND SUGGESTION FOR ART EDUCATION

In this chapter I will discuss the problem of the relationship between fashion culture and art, the implication of fashion culture in relation to the interpretation of art and visual culture, and the significance of fashion culture for the field of art education.

I have addressed the concept of style and the expression of individual identity through fashion business and cultural perspectives in chapter four. The discourse about the issue has been emphasized in a great number of fashion reports, analysis, and criticisms in magazines, newspapers, and mass media. It is obvious that fashion is associated with cultural, artistic, and commercial values at the present time. However, another question arises from the issue concerning whether fashion conveys educational value. Fashion has been studied under the various disciplines of cultural studies, sociology, psychology, and business. It seems that the issue has not yet played a significant role in the field of art education. Thus, my discussion results from this question because I want to affirm that fashion has educational value that can contribute to art education. I will also address the integration of fashion culture into art education and visual culture by applying the disciplines and methods of art interpretation in order to build the association between visual culture and art education. I will then connect with
the significance of fashion study for the field of art education.

Discussion: Fashion culture and art

In chapter four of this thesis, I addressed the issue of contemporary fashion culture in terms of the concept of style, the expression of individual identity, and the construction of lifestyle. Contemporary fashion culture permeates through the society by the circulation of fashion images in mass media. Fashion images convey diverse meanings metaphorically in order to stimulate consumers' desire to purchase products and satisfy the desire for the expression of individual identity. Fashion image thus has great influence on the construction of lifestyle through style and individual identity. In other words, fashion is an important image-maker for it projects how various fashion styles can represent the sense of individual identity through products.

Fashion culture is part of visual culture because its image in mass media empowers how fashion styles can shape individuals' lives even though the influence does not go far beyond a specific group of people. For example, some people are not influenced by fashion trends when they purchase products because fashion trends are meaningless to them. Some ethnic and religious groups in different cultures and societies are not influenced by fashion trends because they always adopt and keep traditional clothing and lifestyles. Hence, changes of fashion do not influence these people and groups.

The issue of fashion culture does not yet play an important role in art education although visual culture studies have started to be integrated into art education. Thus, this important issues should be discussed as it relations to visual culture and art education in
order to integrate fashion culture into art education.

Is fashion important for the field of art education?

This question can be explored from the perspectives of visual cultural and art. Visual culture has studied fashion across various disciplines and theories such as Cultural Studies, Critical Theory, Media Studies, Philosophy, Semiotics, Sociology, Women Studies, etc. These disciplines explore fashion culture in relation to social and cultural perspectives. Currently visual culture studies primarily focuses on understanding the meanings embedded in visual images because they represent various ideologies through products (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). Ideologies of fashion images are designed purposefully to attract consumers to purchase product because they assume that consumers' lifestyles can be constructed through images of products.

The dilemma between visual culture and the arts is situated in the discussion of whether mass media images are art or not. In general, visual images such as advertisement and fashion photography in magazines are often labeled as graphic art or commercial art. In theory, the boundaries on classification of arts such as fine art, mass art, popular art, folk art, performance art have been blurred due to the change of content and meanings even though these labels still draw clear lines among them. In reality, the distinction between fine art and popular art still exists for art educators when they integrate the issue of visual culture into the art curricula. Visual culture refers to images of all kinds of human-made forms because they reflect diverse cultural and social phenomena through images. Mass produced visual images do convey aesthetic value the same as fine art does. Some art educators deny the aesthetic value of mass produced
visual images such as advertisement, therefore, judging it is unworthy of being taught in art education (Smith, 2003). This point of view reflects a narrow concept of the art world. From this perspective, art educators could only teach fine art and folk art because they convey higher aesthetic values than mass produced visual products in art curricula. This distinction does not benefit art education in broadening its points of view.

Today the power of visual images circulated through popular culture has great impact on individuals because it is a significant force in shaping lifestyles. Thus, it is obvious that contemporary fashion culture is associated with visual culture because the phenomena of fashion culture have been represented through visual images such as fashion advertising in mass media. Fashion images convey artistic and cultural values although their primary aim is to earn profit for industry through fashion products.

For the integration of visual culture in the field of art education, studies need to focus on the framework of what visual culture is, how it could be taught in the art curricula, and what the advantages and disadvantages will be for teaching visual culture as art education. In general, the study of visual culture focuses on mass produced products, that refer to graphic art, pop art, commercial art, and design. In this sense, fashion falls into these categories. I found that the issue of fashion culture has not yet been applied to the studies of art criticism and art appreciation in the field of art education. Therefore, there are some factors involved in this situation that keep art education from integrating it into the field.

The studies of contemporary fashion culture are involve in the study of art, images, and design from disciplines such as: design, art history, cultural study, sociology,
psychology, media study, fashion business, etc. Fashion culture has been taught in the fields of Textile and Costume science, History of Art, Fashion Marketing and business, and Cultural Studies. In Textile and Costume, its core curricula focus on textile industry and apparel business. In History of Art, it focuses on the study of history of costumes from cultural and art perspectives. In fashion marketing and business, it focuses on the promotion and profit earning of fashion products in retail markets. In Cultural Studies, fashion culture is studied in terms of cultural, social, and psychological disciplines in order to explore the connotations of fashion values. Art education has not yet established fashion culture in terms of educational value in art curricula. Fashion culture should be elevated in the curriculum because it has social and multicultural values for art education. It is for this reason that I discussed the question of whether fashion is art or not, which has been debated from perspectives from the fields of fashion and design, history of art, museum education, and cultural studies.

Why is fashion not art? The fashion culture is chiefly a business because it aims at creating profit by selling fashion products to consumers. The business is involved with textile, material supplies, design, manufacture, merchandise, and retail markets. From this perspective, fashion is practical because it has a business orientation. Nevertheless, design of fashion products still conveys aesthetic values because of good design. This key factor attracts consumers to purchase products. However, the aesthetic value of fashion is undervalued because fashion as it is generally labeled only conveys superficial artistic value. For this reason fashion is not conceived of as the art.

Why is fashion art? Fashion is strongly associated with art because of the design
of fashion products such as clothing, accessories, furniture involving aesthetic value.

Fashion design is the same as the produce of artworks, which involve illustration, material selection and use, style design, and product. Fashion design, thus, is associated with fine art, graphic art, design, folk art, and digital media design since art and fashion have collaborated in order to create styles for fashion products. The integration of various forms of art enriches the aesthetic value of fashion.

At the present time, the spread of fashion culture is circulated through fashion photography in fashion magazines. The aim of fashion photography is not only to present the beauty of fashion products. It also conveys diverse ideologies of culture, taste, social meanings, and individualism through images. Fashion images do not really represent the practical value of clothes and other products; rather, they should be decoded in terms of ideological facets.

Contemporary fashion culture plays an important role in our lives because the power of visual images influences the construction of our lifestyles through the fashion products that individuals possess. Fashion images emphasize various ideologies that are embedded in fashion products in terms of styles and identity. The visual metaphor not only represents its commercial value but also express the dynamic of fashion culture in relation to visual culture. Sturken & Cartwright (2001) define visual culture as “the shared practice of a group, community, or society, through which meaning is made out of visual, aural, and textual world of representation” (p. 3). The concept of visual culture studies the representation of images, power, politics, and meanings embedded in images. Therefore, fashion images can be taught through disciplines and methods of art.
interpretation in art curricula. This aspect will be discussed in the following section.

Implication of fashion culture studies to art education

The role of fashion culture in the visual culture studies lies in that it conveys diverse meanings through visual metaphor, namely, the design of advertising images. Design of fashion advertising not only focuses on the display of visual effects but also imbibes images with cultural and social meanings. From this perspective, the concept of art appreciation and methods of art interpretation can apply to the study of fashion culture in terms of image decoding. Art appreciation and art interpretation will be discussed in the following section in order to build the rationale for fashion culture studies in art education.

Appreciation of art

Appreciation of art is associated with art history and art criticism. Art history is a body of knowledge and study of specific works of art and their relationship to other works and to the chronological period and cultural milieu in which they were created (Seabolt, 2001, p. 45). Art criticism is the activity of talking about art. Both compose the concept of art appreciation from which to educate people to appreciate the dynamics of works of art. The National Committee for Standards in the Arts (1994) defines aesthetics as “a branch of philosophy that focuses on the nature of beauty, the nature and value of art, and the inquiry processes and human responses associated with those topics” (p. 82). According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1989), appreciation is “perception; recognition; intelligent notice... perception of delicate impressions or distinctions” (p. 581). John Dewey’s (1934) definition of appreciation as “aesthetic perception,” and
Thomas Nunro’s (1941) definition is “understanding and enjoying art (Johnson, p. 24). In other words, art appreciation is both an act and a state of understanding and enjoying art through the understanding of art from diverse perspectives.

For art education, the four principles of DBAE: art history, art production, art criticism, and aesthetics develop students’ knowledge and appreciation of artworks. Basically DBAE is used for teaching students to develop the ability of appreciation through the activity of production and interpretation. Interpretation of photography, performance art, video art, and multimedia art are rarely used as examples in art education. These fields should be taught in art appreciation because the art world contains various forms of art. Art education is not only concerned with fine art and ethnic art but also should broaden its perspectives on visuals and cultures.

The appreciation of fashion broadens the dynamic of art and fashion because it conveys aesthetic values as well. Fashion images have a great influence on viewers because they aims to guide viewers on how to construct their lifestyles through clothes, accessories, hair styles, etc. In fact, the contexts of fashion images often contain strong sexual intentions. Sexual intention is represented by sexed body gestures that models strike. For this reason fashion images are often criticized by feminists and educators for they could imprint discrimination and negative stereotypes of sex on the ways viewers perceive the value of fashion. Fashion is thus devalued because of its commercial and physical orientation. However, fashion images should be taught through the discipline of the interpretation of art in order to broaden students’ points of view on connotations of fashion images, because young students are easily influenced by fashion images.
positively and negatively.

**Interpretation of art**

The processes of art interpretation include four phases: description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment (Barrett, 1999). Description concerns the learners' record of relevant information such as the title and artist. Then the artwork is described in terms of what is seen, such as subject matter and forms. Analysis concerns the learners' analysis of the principles of design or compositional ideas that are evident. This focuses on the structures of the artwork such as balance, emphasis, harmony, etc. Interpretation concerns how the learner interprets the emotions, moods, symbols, and ideas that are visible in the artwork. Judgment concerns how the learner decides what type of art is being examined by comparing it to theories of art. Students decide how effectively the artwork compares to the criteria for artwork through the use of aesthetic theory, literally judging the success or quality of the art object (Prater, 2002). In addition to this, there are some general principles regarding the interpretation of art. According to Barrett (2000), the principles of art interpretation include:

"Artworks have "abundantness" and demand interpretation. Interpretations are arguments.

Interpretations are persuasive.

No single interpretation is exhaustive of the meaning of an artwork.

Interpretations imply a world-view.

Interpretations are not so much absolutely right, but more or less reasonable, convincing, enlightening, and informative.

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Feelings are guides to interpretations.

Interpretation is ultimately a communal endeavor and the community is eventually self-corrective.

To interpret a work of art is to respond to it.

Interpreting art is an endeavor that is both individual and personal, and communal and shared.

Artworks attract multiple interpretations and it is not the goal of interpretation to arrive at single, grand, unified, composite interpretations” (p. 6).

These principles illustrate advantages of the practice of interpretation of art. It is designed for conducting art criticism exercises, through describing, interpreting, and analyzing photographs and other art forms created by artists (Wilson & Clark, 2000). The model focuses on the exercise of criticism writing through observing works of art.

The “disruptive model” is also useful for the interpretation of art. Gooding-Brown (2000) proposes the disruptive model for art interpretation is to expose the positioning in discursive practices embedded in visual culture as a means of understanding self and difference. Gooding-Brown (2000) states that “the process of the disruptive model begins as identification of the authoritative interpretation of the selected work. Understanding the interpretation as a discourse, the model moves toward an examination of the practices of this discourse and the work is temporarily left behind. The model allows students to explore their own positions in the discursive practices and to see how those positions may construct interpretation. Finally, in a return to the work through discussion and

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writing, a reinterpretation occurs through an understanding of positioning and its role in the constitution of interpretation. A certain understanding about the constructedness of self emerges from this process" (p. 42).

The significance of the discursive practices could discover the problematic aspects of art criticism in order to provide more space for an exploration of potential for change. It further explores different aesthetic values toward various kinds of artworks that viewers perceive from their experiences and perspectives. According to Gooding-Brown (2000), the advantages of this model for teaching interpretation of art include the fact that "students can work with the artwork from a known and accepted premise. This model encourages disruption of authoritative interpretations. By doing this, it allows viewers to move into the artwork itself in order to disrupt the dominant discursive practices in a way that may force the text to acknowledge its own constructedness in all discourses" (p. 44).

These two models of interpretation of art can be blended in order to interpret various fashion images critically. The design of this model for the interpretation to fashion images will be discussed in the following section.

**Interpretation of fashion images: Diesel advertisement**

The discursive model and the formalism model are applied to interpret the two examples in order to prove that fashion images can be used as educational materials to understand the art of fashion. The process includes identification of authoritative interpretations of artwork, which includes a review of art criticism, examination of the discursive practices of interpretation. This involves conversation and discussion in order
to provoke critical thinking ability about artworks, and the practice of reinterpretation of artwork, which involves writing criticism. The purpose of this model design is to open up areas of thinking for students where they might understand the significance of self and difference as constructed by discourses (Gooding-Brown, 2000).

There are two fashion advertisement that I use as examples to interpret the meanings of fashion culture. The two images correspond with the concept of style and the expression of individual identity. The two fashion advertisements appeared in the magazines "I.D" and "Elle" in the spring issue 2003. They represent Diesel products, shoes and bags, embedded ideologies of the sense of style, and the expression of individual identity that could construct young people's unique lifestyles if they possess the Diesel products. This interpretation will be illustrated in the following section.

The objective of the interpretation is intend to explore how individual identity can be expressed through fashion style in order to investigate the impact of fashion culture on young people. Fashion styles have great impact on young people. Because fashion information has the power to form individuals' identity through fashion styles.

First, students need to do research the brand "Diesel" because it is important for students to understand the background of that company and the target markets for its fashion products. Articles for reviewing the brand can be obtained from Diesel website, fashion marketing resources, fashion trend report websites, newspaper reviews of fashion trends. This information will provide the latest fashion trends of all the famous designers and brands. Another way to asses this type of data is to search for information about fashion culture from academic and business journals. They provide deeper and broaden
perspectives on fashion in terms of cultural, social, psychological, artistic, business, and historical facets.

Second, students start having discussions about the image with regard to art, cultural, social, and psychological facets after examining the brand information. Students should develop their own perspectives on how they perceive the images from reflective-thinking and ideologies that are embedded in the images. The issue of fashion culture should be of interest to students because it is one of most common issue that students like to talk about with their peer groups. The power of fashion influences all ranges of students more or less because it concerns the construction of self-images through fashion products. In this process, students could exchange their perspectives about fashion and further develop theoretical concepts about fashion in order to help them understand that fashion culture represents diverse perspectives rather than just superficial values.

Third, students should start to write criticism about the two images from what they perceive by examining the content of images. Through the writing processes the students are to describe external and internal information, to analyze the content of the image design, to interpret its meanings, and to judge aesthetic values of the images. For example, my interpretation for the two images, presents aspects of how I perceive fashion from my own experience and perspectives. The title of the two images is “The Global Diesel individuals market research”, which indicates that the association of style and individual identity can be constructed through shoes and bags. The background is designed as a statistic flowchart with labels resulting from market research of its products. Image one shows a pair of women legs wearing high heeled sporty shoes and a
dog along with the slogan “total number of Diesel shoes stepping into chewing gum or dog shit in Northern European regions last years went down by 29%” in the background. Image two is about a young man and woman who are being inspecting by airport security because they carry Diesel’s bags. The slogan “the chance of having your bag inspected by airport security goes up by 23% if the bag is a Diesel one” is contained in the background. Background colors are grayish-pink and dark brown. The meanings of the two advertisements indicate that the brands’ shoes and bags have specific taste, which could add attention to, and shape young people’s unique identity once they possess them.

The last process concerns judgment of the images and establishing the values of fashion in relation to visual culture. Students can reexamine the role of fashion from the visual culture perspective because fashion has penetrated human life at the present time through mass media images. Through this process, students can think critically about fashion culture in terms of cultural, art, self-image values.

In summary, the interpretation process aims at guiding students on how to appreciate the value of fashion culture from diverse perspectives. Different perceptions about values of the fashion culture would result from this practice of interpretation. The interpretation for fashion images indicates that they convey aesthetic, cultural, and educational values.

Significance

Fashion culture has great impact on most individuals especially for youth because it has the power to shape various lifestyles through fashion styles. Style and identity have become a metaphoric sign for fashion to construct lifestyles through materials. Fashion
has artistic and cultural value, as other forms of art do, although it is represented through apparel, accessories, and other material forms. Its value is often underestimated in the field of art education. The significance of fashion culture for art education can be studied from art, cultural, and social perspectives, which can be taught through the application of strategies for the interpretation of art. Fashion is the representation of aesthetic values in clothing and accessories. This kind of daily life practice should not be devalued, for it is concerned with how individuals construct their lifestyles and self images through the influences of fashion. Therefore, the study of fashion culture in the field of art education can broaden students’ perspectives on fashion in relation to art, cultural, social, and self values.

Suggestion for future research

Based on this thesis, I suggest that fashion culture should be taught in the field of art education. The importance of teaching fashion culture lies in it is part of visual culture. It is not only because fashion culture is circulated and spread through mass media but also it conveys social and cultural ideologies in itself. Through the practice of art interpretation, students can learn issues such as violence, sexuality, gender, etc. in fashion images and gain understanding on how advertisements construct meanings of fashion. In doing so, art educators and students can have opportunity to broaden their understandings of the art worlds through teaching and learning about fashion culture issues.
APPENDIX
Photography 2 Three Schiaparelli silhouettes, 1938

Photography 3 Woollen suit by Jacques Fath for everyday wear, 1942

Photography 4 Dress in white organdie by Givenchy, 1953

Photography 5 Ensembles by Louis Feraud, 1966

Photography 6 Suit and dress by Krizia, 1971

Photography 7 Ready-to-wear, 1981

Photography 8 Gianfranco Ferre, the Nineties

Total number of Diesel shoes stepping into chewing gum or dog shit in Northern European regions last year went down by 29%.
The chance of having your bag inspected by airport security goes up by 23% if the bag is a Diesel one.
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