EXPLORING CONCEPTS OF FEMININITY & MASCULINITY;
CONSUMER PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER EXPRESSION IN MENSWEAR

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Kristen Kubek

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Thesis written by

Kristen Kubek

Approved by

_____,
Advisor

_____, Director, School of
Fashion Design and Merchandising

Accepted by

_____, Dean, Honors College

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Introduction

Dressing oneself is a daily task typically not given much thought by the average

consumer. It is a necessary function that becomes one of the hundreds of activities

accomplished throughout the day. However, the art of dress and appearance management

is one of the most important forms of self-expression. It is how one presents oneself to

the world and impacts how the world views one in return. Specific to this study, styles

present in menswear not only reflect trends within the fashion industry, but also provide

insight into contemporary concepts of masculinity. The wardrobe is a powerful tool

employed to strengthen one's position as the "ideal man" or show dissent to traditional

notions. Gender expression through clothing highlights the self-induced restrictions

patriarchal society places on its members in terms of communicating individuality and

identity as well as a presenting an opportunity to support a shift.

The state of men's fashion is constantly evolving because societal norms and

views of masculinity change. Throughout history, especially in Western societies, there

have been examples of people actively questioning the status quo through fashion, with

new styles emerging to challenge traditional masculine appearance conventions of the

past. It is important to understand that a seemingly inconsequential expression can reveal

convictions and behaviors that exist at the core of modern society. As we continue to

critique various aspects of society and view history through a critical lens, this critical

theory must be applied not only to subjects like race and mental health, but also to the evolution of gender expression.

While King Louis XIV of France was reported to have referred to fashion as "the mirror of history" (Ribeiro, 1997), it must be noted that fashion is also the mirror of the present. Overall, there have been rigid boundaries surrounding masculine dress throughout most of Western history, yet there are instances where views on men's gender expression were more fluid. This includes our contemporary time which may have opened the door for a less oppressive future. Designer Jean Paul Gaultier presents the idea of disconnecting the strong bonds between masculine identity and clothing, stating that "masculinity doesn't come from clothes. It comes from something inside you. Men and women can wear the same clothes and still be men and women. It's fun" (Friedman, 2017, para. 17). Because of its role as both an art form and a function integrated into daily life, fashion can truly ignite the conversation regarding gender identity and how it reflects and affects societal growth.

Statement of the Problem

While shifting perceptions of gender expression in menswear seems like a contemporary concept, it is a subject with a much longer story. There are several notable historical instances of changing ideas of masculinity that are not well known to the average consumer. Research and documentation of the times in which menswear included feminine elements is essential to understanding historical and modern perceptions of masculinity. Despite coverage in the industry that indicates today's genderfluid dressing is unique to our time, there remain areas of opportunity to connect

the patterns in the rise, influence, and decline of menswear fashion movements containing qualities typically associated with femininity. A close examination of historical examples is required to understand the progression that contemporary consumer views on feminine themes in menswear may follow or resemble.

Therefore, the research question guiding this study is:

How can past examples and current perceptions inform a future prediction of the persistence of feminine qualities in fashionable menswear?

Purpose of the Study

This study is more relevant than ever as Generation Z emerges to use their platform to continually question the very structure of gender and existence of gender norms. A commentary on a men's fashion exhibition by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art presented the view that, "It's often been remarked that masculinity itself is a kind of performance. Men spend a lifetime playacting, trying to convince themselves that they do, in fact, meet the standards of manhood" (Takeda et. al, 2016, p. 252). The purpose of this study is to determine the extent of society's impact on gender expression in menswear and how this has changed over time. Identifying key details in past menswear movements that contained elements traditionally thought to be feminine and analyzing their rise and fall will help determine the effect of masculinity in fashion on today's menswear scene. This will be accomplished through reviewing historical men's fashion and conducting a survey to gauge contemporary consumer sentiment. The study will focus specifically on Western culture and fashion in the past three centuries. This research aims to contextualize fashion as a reflection of the zeitgeist, or spirit of our time.

Findings of this research will inform and seek to clarify consumer perceptions of characteristics in menswear that are typically considered more feminine than masculine. The study will seek to provide a comprehensive view of the motivations behind how consumers dress and the patterns of contemporary dress as compared to historical fashion eras. Insight into how the male consumer views his own expression of masculinity is essential to predicting the future of the menswear industry and answers the question of what it means to be a man in today's world.

Definition of Terms

Androgynous	Having the characteristics or nature of both male and female; neither specifically feminine nor masculine (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-12-22)
Dandy	A man who gives exaggerated attention to personal appearance (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-12-22)
Effeminate	Having feminine qualities untypical of a man: not manly in appearance or manner; marked by an unbecoming delicacy or overrefinement (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-12-22)
Feminine	Considered to be characteristic of women (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-12-22)
Gender binary	a concept or belief that there are only two genders and that one's sex or gender assigned at birth will align with traditional social constructs of masculine and feminine

identity, expression, and sexuality (Dictionary.com,

Retrieved 9-25-22)

Gender fluid   Of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity is

not fixed (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-12-22)

Gender neutral   Not referring to either sex but only to people in general

(Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-12-22)

Hipster   a person who is unusually aware of and interested in new

and unconventional patterns (as in jazz or fashion)

(Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-25-22)

LGBTQIA+   An abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,

queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more. These

terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or

gender identity (LGBT Community Center, Retrieved 10-

10-22)

Masculine   Marked by or having qualities, features, etc. traditionally

associated with men (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-12-22)

Masculinity   The quality or nature of the male sex: the quality, state, or

degree of being masculine or manly (Merriam-Webster,

Retrieved 9-12-22)

Metrosexual   a usually urban heterosexual male given to enhancing his

personal appearance by fastidious grooming, beauty

treatments, and fashionable clothes (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-25-22)

Mods — Short for modern or modernist; postwar British baby boomers coming of age in the early 1960s who initiated a youth culture that emphasized modernity and high style in all aspects of life (Hill, 2018, pg. 90)

Teddy Boys — A segment of urban working-class teen boys of the 1950s that began to construct a masculine identity and look that was youthful and distinct from the typically staid British adult males of the time; their dress was thought to resemble styles from the era of King Edward VII (1901–10) (Hill, 2018, pg. 86)

Style tribe — A distinctive appearance on a national to international scale that indicates a unique 'tribal' identity that bonds a group of people together based on their appearance and sense of self (Polhemus, 1994, pg. 14).

Subculture — An ethnic, regional, economic, or social group exhibiting characteristic patterns of behavior sufficient to distinguish it from others within an embracing culture or society (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-12-22)

Sumptuary law — A law common in the 13th to 15th centuries to prevent

extravagance in private life by limiting expenditure for clothing, food, and furniture (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-12-22)

Zeitgeist   The general intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era (Merriam-Webster, Retrieved 9-16-22)

Review of Literature

Fashion change is cyclical in nature. Modern silhouettes, materials, colors, and aesthetics almost always have an influence from the past. An examination of fashion history reveals key details regarding certain fashion movements and people who both embraced and condemned them. One important aspect of fashion is the association with gender. Throughout the last few hundred years, the concept of masculinity in Western society has constantly fluctuated to reflect the impact of emerging and disappearing subcultures and social groups. When exploring the perceptions and origins of feminine qualities present in menswear, there have been several style groups throughout history that particularly emphasized and exaggerated a feminine approach in patterns of dress. The feminine approach to menswear is characterized by applying attributes typically found in womenswear to menswear styles. These include form-fitting and figure-emphasizing silhouettes, ornamentation on both garments and accessories, luxurious fabrics, a more extensive color palette, and a heightened attention to personal care and grooming techniques.

The particular historical fashion movements that accentuated these qualities have similarities to contemporary androgynous styles in both characteristics and socio-political environments. These eras warrant a focused investigation to better understand the climate surrounding perceptions of the dichotomy of masculinity and femininity present within menswear today. Specifically, this study will explore the historical periods of the French

Court in the 17th and 18th centuries, Dandyism in the 19th century, and the emergence of subcultural style known as the Peacock Revolution in the third quarter of the 20th century. In these examples, and in accordance with the cyclical nature of fashion change, there was a rise and subsequent decline in feminine elements displayed in menswear. In the first two decades of the 21st century, men's clothing trends once again begin to adopt qualities aligned with womenswear, which will be the focus of the data collection aspect of this study.

The Fashion of French Court

The French Court of the 17th and 18th centuries is infamous for its theatrical ornamentation and over-the-top ensembles. King Louis XIV, also known as "The Sun King", devoted his reign to asserting dominance over Europe politically, culturally, and economically through Court dress. The exotic consumption practiced at court allowed the king and his aristocracy to shamelessly revel in their own power by displaying it for all to see. This lavish and excessive proclamation of power and wealth through clothing and appearance was certainly not limited to womenswear. Rather, men openly and visibly displayed over-ornamentation and adoption of elements that are most commonly associated with female dress.

Elements of Dress. Popular components of dress in the early days of The Sun King's court included petticoat breeches, longer jackets called cassocks, and doublets that were unbuttoned to reveal a ruffled silk shirt underneath. These pieces were often made of embroidered silks, satins and velvets and adorned with bows, ribbon, lace, and other trimmings such as tassels and braids. The looks came in bold hues from expensive

concentrated dyes and were completed with ornate wigs, heeled shoes, and rouge (Jones, 2004). In the late 1600s, Louis XIV established a stricter dress code at Court that consisted of a coat, waistcoat, and breeches, each embroidered with gold trim. These components of Court uniform remained relatively static into the 18th century, changing only slightly in silhouette (Takeda et. al, 2016). Throughout this period, the French king was the sole source of power and held significant influence over the fashions of his subjects. He not only mandated the clothing standards of his Court, but also dictated what garments, colors, or materials commoners were prohibited from wearing. Sumptuary laws maintained a level of exclusivity even within the Court, as courtiers with special privileges were granted permission to wear *justaucorps a brevet*, specially tailored blue coats with silver and gold embroidery that marked their proximity to the king (Jones, 2004). The primary motivation for styles worn by French courtiers was to use fashion to openly display political, social, and economic power. The significant expense of the garments and amount of materials used ensured that only the crème de la crème of French society could don this style.

Motivations and The Concept of Masculinity. Although now associated with femininity, the use of luxurious fabrics in French Court fashions functioned during this time period as a sign of economic prosperity. A key reason for the use of opulent materials was the monarchy's commitment to promoting French industry, particularly the production of French silks and lace in order to stimulate the country's economy. It was not only the type of materials, but the sheer amount of them employed for court costumes that indicated extreme wealth of the French nobility. For example, elegantly dressed

aristocrats often used as much as 300 yards of ribbon in their ensembles (Jones, 2004). The crown's dedication to a mercantilist economic philosophy encouraged, and at times mandated, that members of the aristocracy showcase the splendor of French-made materials. The intricacies of French Court dress also demanded expertise in construction, tailoring, and of course, embroidery. The delicate and complicated nature of embroidery and embellishments that decorated the garments of French nobility showcased both the skill of French designers and the economic power of those who commissioned them. This exhibitionism through fashion not only showed off the wealth of those who wore the garments, but the wealth of France itself. It was a form of political propaganda, a message that those who support the king would be well-regarded and well-rewarded.

The excessive ornamentation in menswear during this era reflected a desire to contrast the wealth of the elite few with the relative poverty of the common man. Because the fashions of the French Court existed primarily to set apart the aristocracy and the common people, there was not an unyielding focus on distinguishing strict gendered elements of male versus female dress. In the 17th and early 18th centuries, views on clothing and gender were based on a one-sex model of gender, a termed coined by historian Thomas Lacquer to describe the concept viewing the sexes as similar but inverted. This suggests that the boundaries between male and female sexuality might have had more fluidity than the two-sex model that was later adopted and persists today (Jones, 2004). The concept of *la mode* was relatively gender neutral, and menswear and womenswear were seen as variations on the same theme as opposed to entirely separate spheres.

Criticism and Decline. During the height of French Court fashion influence, French fashion publications worked both for and against the king's carefully planned fashion system. Journals such as *Le Mercure Galant* and *Cabinet des Modes* supported a trickle-down fashion theory that elevated the styles of the Court; aristocratic men and women wanted to distinguish themselves from the common people while the commoners strived to imitate the dress of the elite. These early forms of fashion media increased the circulation of ideas regarding dress while simultaneously reminding readers that "the fashions described were intended for the elite men and women of the aristocracy" (Jones, 2004, p. 28). However, the distribution of these fashion publications quickly worked against the court's dominance over fashion by increasing accessibility to *la mode*. The common people were able to learn about and participate in fashion culture due to the rapid growth of the commercial economy in cities like Paris; no longer was fashion restricted to the domain of the aristocracy.

Increased communication of fashion styles to wider segments of society was not the only reason for the dissolution of French Court influence on fashion. In the years leading up to the instigation of the French Revolution, King Louis XVI had begun to economize the Court. The introduction of the Windsor uniform in England inspired similar styles to be worn across the French aristocracy that reflected order, familiarity, and comfort (Ribeiro, 1997). The influence of English country dress became increasingly prominent within the French fashion scene as more simplified garments reflected the rising industrialization and shifting political ideals in the country.

The French Revolution was the culmination of the collapse of the French Court, and subsequently, the collapse of French Court fashions. People of the lower classes were distinctively categorized by their workwear dress and referred to as *sans culottes*, or "without breeches". The working-class uniform of plain linen shirts, short wool jackets, and cotton trousers was a jolting contrast to the iconic lavish styles of the aristocracy. Clothing served as a symbol of the class disparity that the revolutionaries were fighting against. Revolutionaries could easily identify each other through dress, and in turn, could quickly recognize members of the noble class. The concept of a "new man" during and after the French Revolution gave rise to ideas of masculinity to be cemented in the new post-aristocratic society. A man's masculinity was now defined by his self-determination, achievement through hard work, and responsibility. The ideal man was self-made as opposed to having achieved his political and economic power through inherited rank in the rigid class system (V&A, n.d.). Thus, by 1789, the era of sumptuous pre-revolution French Court fashion was over. Not only was it not popular to wear the styles of the *ancien régime*; it was dangerous. No longer acceptable to wear lavish silks and yards or ribbon, menswear exhibited a period of relative blandness until a new fashion influence gained traction through attention to detail that was previously associated with female appearance management practices.

The Day of the Dandy

The Romanticism movement in art and fashion favored the natural world, aesthetics, and emotion while simultaneously existing in a 19th century society that emphasized the importance of hard work and practicality as a way to define masculinity

and strength. In a post-revolutionary era, the rise of fashion styles deemed "effeminate"

seems contradictory. However, the attention to detail that had disappeared from

menswear styles in the years leading up to the French Revolution returned in the form of

European Dandyism, a movement whose followers strove to cultivate the self as a work

of art. Dandies, as these participants were referred to, brought about a subtle revival of

French Court refinement with a more democratic approach in the period between 1800

and 1850.

Elements of Dress. Sartorial excellence was one of the most important elements of the

Dandies' image. Innovations in tailoring methods emphasized strong shoulders, a narrow

waist, and shaped hips to create an hourglass shape that mirrored womenswear

silhouettes of the era. Cotton, hemp, and other plant-based materials were used for lining

and padding that exaggerated the male figure toward curves. The most substantial

influence on Dandyism was Englishman Beau Brummell (1778- 1840). Born to a

middle-class family, his rise to high society symbolized the new age ideas of masculinity

through being a self-made man. Brummell's extensive wardrobe collection featured

many extravagant pieces custom-made by expert tailors. His daily uniform consisted of a

buttoned swallowtail coat and lighter colored breeches or trousers along with boots. His

eveningwear ensemble consisted of a similar top paired with tight pantaloons and pumps

(Takeda, et al., 2016). The signature piece of Brummell's look, however, was his cravat.

Reportedly, Brummell had such an abundance of linen neckwear that he meticulously

tied and abandoned a number of them each morning until he achieved the desired look

with a perfectly executed knot (Jesse, 1844). These ensembles were complemented by a plethora of makeup, oils, and perfumes to maintain a high standard of personal grooming.

Motivations and The Concept of Masculinity. The Dandies of the early 19th century were motivated by the refinement of the pre-revolutionary French aristocracy and the democratic ideals of being able to achieve this level of gentility despite having no noble background. Men asserted their masculinity in the social sphere through the concept of being a "gentleman", which consisted of having fine qualities such as good manners, refined behavior and dress, and a strong sense of individuality. In theory, anyone could achieve this. In reality, the level of conspicuous consumption and time spent on perfecting manners and appearance made it possible for only a few to commit fully to the demands of Dandyism. It is important to distinguish that the garments themselves were not viewed as non-masculine. The dichotomy of Dandyism was the juxtaposition of masculine identity in dress and the effeminate techniques used to achieve this look. Spending copious amounts of time on appearance was considered a part of the women's sphere, not the man's (Hill, 2018).

Criticism and Decline. As previously mentioned, Dandies carefully walked the line between what was socially acceptable and what was not. One factor that led to mounting criticism was the extensive amount of time necessary to maintain the Dandies' desired level of upkeep. As the age of Victorian industrialism approached, businessmen did not have a significant amount of time to devote to leisure and personal maintenance. They accused the Dandies of "cultivated boredom" (Takeda, et al., 2016), suggesting that their attention to their appearance resulted from a lack of discipline and activity that could be

easily remedied by engaging in modern industrial investments. Socioeconomic changes during the Victorian era brought about a shift in how society viewed masculinity with the newly popularized concept of a "noble natural man", a term coined by Ralph Waldo Emerson (Emerson, 1893). This image of a "noble natural man" directly contrasted the Dandy and his preoccupation with appearance and manners, which started to be viewed as a trespass into the women's domain. No longer did a man display his hard work and achievements through his presentation of self, but rather through his business ventures and economic pursuits. Boy's organizations such as the YMCA, Woodcroft Indians, and Sons of Daniel Boone were established in the second half of the 19th century to counter femininity in boys and instead instill them with values that aligned with the values of traditional masculinity (Hill, 2018).

It was the expense of Dandies' habits that ultimately led to their downfall and caused the last members of the movement to abandon it. The group as a whole was notorious for falling into debt because of the overconsumption required to maintain standards of living. Beau Brummell himself fled England to evade debtor's prison and died living in poverty (Hill, 2018). A man in debt, especially due to his preoccupation with fashion, was an affront to the idea of the hard-working "noble natural man". With the humiliating demise of the once iconic Beau Brummell, his followers quickly relinquished their habits and thus Dandyism came to an end. It would be many decades before men again experimented with feminine-inspired fashion elements and styles, largely propelled by the Youthquake.

Subculture Style and the Peacock Revolution

The second half of the 20th century introduced a significant change that molded the fashion world into its current form through the rise of subcultures. Also referred to as "style tribes", the emphasis on youth due to population growth known as the Baby Boom, led to an increase in groups that actively went against traditional mainstream fashion and culture. Within a context of acceptance of color, pattern, and freedom came a rise in unique styles that had more feminine qualities than seen in menswear during the first half of the century. In the years during and following World War II, notable style tribes such as Zoot Suiters influenced "Teddy Boys" who brought an elegance to streetwear not seen since the Dandyism of the early 19th century. These were followed by "Mods", as the name suggests, who sought to modernize the stiff styles of the past and bring about a fashion evolution that would break from tradition and present a more artistic *avant-garde* approach to daily dress. It was out of these subcultures that the Peacock Revolution in menswear was born.

Elements of Dress. Centered on dramatic appearance, the Peacock Revolution of the 1960s and early 1970s was characterized by exotic and theatrical elements. After generations of neutral and narrowly delineated color, fabric, and style choices, participants in this style tribe revolutionized the very idea of what could be considered menswear. Fashionable clothes were introduced by young designers as a flamboyant indulgence meant to loudly stand out to the comparatively dull styles that had previously dominated the men's fashion scene. John Stephen transformed London's Carnaby Street into a fashion hub for the young and trendy, experimenting with styles to create low-waisted, hip-hugging pants that were unlike anything menswear had ever seen (Ross,

2011). British designers initiated the fashion changes that would eventually be amplified by popular culture and spread across Europe and the Americas. Tailor John Pearse often styled silk ruffle-front shirts reminiscent of styles worn by Romantic era writers. Designer Michael Fish created affordable shirts made of luxury fabrics including voile, satin, and embroidered silks along with Renaissance-inspired ruffled collars and cuffs. Tom Gibley was known for his patterned knit tops. Michael Rainey popularized floral patterned shirts, often worn with velvet trousers (Hill, 2018). Other elements of fashion included multicultural pieces such as Nehru jackets, fringe, and moccasins. Even more interesting was the newly introduced concept of genderless clothing, which included jumpsuits, vests, cropped jackets, knit pants and tops, scarves, and jewelry. These pieces were complemented by longer unisex haircuts and an emphasis on skincare. Men's "peacock" fashion was loud, bright, and ostentatious in color, pattern, texture, and silhouette, directly challenging long-held conventions of what it meant to look like a man.

Motivations and The Concept of Masculinity. Beginning with the aforementioned early subculture groups, the notion of "Youthquake", a culture centered around teens and young people as a separate cultural group, became integral to Western society in the mid-to-late 1960s. The concept of teens as a separate fashion market meant that brands and designers could be more playful and experimental with their products. For retailers, it was an untapped domain of commercial opportunity. For teens, it was a chance to break away from the influence of their parents. The disconnect between youth and their parents was significant and political in nature. The younger generation viewed their elders as

conservative, materialistic, and traditional while themselves striving to be liberal, innovative, and individualistic (Hill, 2018). The dichotomy between the values of adults and youth at the time led teens to develop a certain level of animosity towards the older generation. They wanted to escape the class tradition that encapsulated their parents to live a more interesting life than those who came before them. Teens of the 1960s no longer looked towards their parents and society to dictate the rules of fashion. Instead, they turned to popular culture for inspiration. Feminism and social justice initiatives popular within teen subculture, including anti-war sentiment, LGBTQIA+ liberation, and anti-racism, all influenced fashion choices across style tribes. The idea of freedom and liberation politically and socially existed in tandem with fashion freedom.

The British Invasion in media and fashion brought the popular culture of the United Kingdom to the forefront of the realm of the teen. The fashion of Carnaby Street and the music of the Beatles saw all eyes turn to London as a source of inspiration. Further evolution from the peacocks, glam rockers like Elton John, David Bowie, and Gary Glitter offered escapist music alongside an androgynous appearance as a direct representation of counterculture. Their theatrical outfits full of sequins, metallics, feathers, and rhinestones paired with oversized jewelry, makeup, and platform shoes provided a level of unapologetic gender fluidity (Hill, 2018). While the Peacock Revolution in style served as an antithesis to the anti-capitalist styles of the hippies, both subcultures, along with others present during this period, were rooted in new ideas of sexuality. The feminist movement and subsequent sexual awakening that resulted from New Wave Feminism normalized open displays of sexuality and gender expression. For

the first time, women reversed the gaze, and men were seen as sex objects with the body-accentuating tailoring and nudity such as deep open necklines present in their clothing reflected this. The members of the Peacock movement were not concerned with presenting themselves as traditionally masculine like their fathers had. Instead, they took after the bird of their namesake and showed off their flamboyant styles to attract the attention of the opposite sex (Ross, 2011).

Criticism and Decline. The strong relationship between social activism and the subcultures of the 1960s was the first element in their demise. Similar to the decline of French Court fashions, when political views associated with the subculture styles fell out of favor, the excess in color, pattern, and freedom in fashion itself began to fade. The end of the Vietnam War, paired with the Watergate scandal and the oil embargo economic crisis, caused young activists to become disillusioned. The extremely liberal environment in this era eventually prompted a wave of new conservatism that influenced a return to a more traditional form of menswear. While the mass production of subculture styles made a range of fashions more accessible, they were no longer a defining feature of the style tribes that had previously used them as a social identifier. Already disappearing, the final affront to the fashion of the Peacock Revolution came with the Gay Panic that ensued with the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. Being a part of the LGBTQIA+ community, although always on the margins of mainstream society, was now considered to be dangerous as well. Many people thought that someone could be "turned homosexual" by certain influences, and therefore any fashions that were nonconforming to traditional masculinity were discouraged. Peacock styles, in their

direct relationship with femininity, became something to distance from in the era of conservative "Dress for Success."

The Contemporary Approach to Menswear

Following the conservative menswear styles in the last decades of the 20th century, the shift towards more androgynous styles first manifested itself in the appropriation of typically feminine silhouettes in luxury brands' runway collections. This more experimental form of dress, while previously restricted to female styles, signaled a new relationship between fashion and the body in the realm of 21st century men's fashion. Pivotal to this change was the group of young creatives that championed them, including Raf Simons, Tom Ford, and Helmut Lang, among others. Millennium designers introduced a new aesthetic to the luxury menswear scene that was more glamorous and varied than in previous decades. This variation in dress emphasized individuality and an alternative to the generally accepted version of the ideal man. Paired with amplified media coverage for menswear and the financial crisis of 2008 bringing about a yearning for authenticity, this new emphasis on individuality through dress gave rise to the metrosexual and hipster movements, ultimately leading to the diversity seen in contemporary menswear as the new century progressed (Bowstead, 2018).

Elements of Dress. In opposition to the formula of oversized suits and brawny bodies of the 1980s and 1990s, the millennium designers' runway looks were characterized by a form-fitting silhouette, fabrications with rich colors and textures, and tailoring reminiscent of the Dandies' fashion (Bowstead, 2018). The growth of gender fluid collections with a display of hedonic presence allowed men to display power in the form

of attraction and adornment (Bennett, 2019). As these styles trickled down into streetwear, a broader range of men began to reclaim inventiveness and freedom in their fashion choices. Contemporary menswear increasingly included clothing methodologies and details borrowed from womenswear in a range of categories.

Modifications of silhouette include the introduction of more revealing garments such as skinny jeans, crop tops, and corseting elements. Accessories and jewelry as well as heeled or platform shoes are also prevalent in experimental contemporary menswear. Fashion forecasting agency WGSN predicts #softmasculinity as a trending topic for the upcoming 2023 and 2024 fashion seasons. According to their predictions, menswear styles will reclaim softness and vulnerability by rethinking the male identity. Details for these fashions include softer colors, delicate accessories and detailing, and incorporating a more varied palette into long-established styles to recontextualize traditional elements of menswear (Paget, 2022). Another forecast highlights anti-conformity and radical self-acceptance in menswear through the incorporation of luxe and ostentatious materials and silhouettes inspired by 1970s glam rock styles, but with more laid-back and wearable capabilities (Zagor, 2021). New elements in menswear are not limited to the incorporation of traditionally feminine elements; there is an increase in men wearing what society considers explicitly female clothing such as non-bifurcated garments like dresses and skirts. According to Rob Smith, founder and CEO of The Phluid Project, almost 60 percent of Gen Z shops across gender lines (Velasquez ,2022). Similar to the eras previously discussed, there seems to be a stronger emphasis on personal grooming, with a third of men reportedly spending more time on their personal care routine as

compared to a year ago (Wagner, 2022). Also present is a wider variety of hairstyles, makeup, and other elements of adornment that complete the contemporary look.

Motivations and the Concept of Masculinity. The rise of third-wave feminism has heavily contributed to the motivation behind bringing contemporary androgynous menswear looks into the mainstream. Choice, freedom, and individuality, partnered with the amplification of LGBTQIA+ visibility and anti-homophobia, are all movements associated with the modern feminist approach. Rather than focus only on the liberation of women, contemporary feminism attempts to dismantle the rigid patriarchal structure in order to liberate all people, including men, from their previously strictly enforced gender roles. This reform of masculinity is impactful because it is attacking the root of the problem; presenting one specific male identity as ideal. Androgyny in male fashion offers sensuality and individuality, causing a man's look to be attractive and attention-grabbing through the lens of the female gaze (Bowstead, 2018). Critics of new menswear styles often center their point of view through the lens of the traditional male gaze and condemn those who fail to conform to orthodox masculinity. Their accusations include claims of more feminine menswear having roots in narcissism, inauthenticity, and pretension. However, it is important to note that the same elements of dress are not criticized in the same manner when they appear in womenswear.

The popularization of modern progressive movements related to LGBTQIA+ inclusion present an additional factor in the increasing variation within menswear. A decrease in homophobic sentiment and the removing of homophobic statues from law destigmatizes the fear of being perceived as effeminate (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Today, a record-high number of 7.1% of Americans identify as LGBTQIA+, with 21% of Generation Z adults identifying as LGBTQIA+ (Jones, 2022). The contemporary LGBTQIA+ movement specifically emphasizes a shift away from the gender binary, addressing concepts of fluidity and identity rather than being limited to inclusion of different sexualities.

Genderfluid styles, while previously confined to a subculture space, are more publicized and incorporated into the mainstream, which motivates a broader range of men to adopt fashions that may have previously been considered exclusively feminine. At the conception of the modern menswear movement in the early 21st century, men who dressed in a more fashion forward manner were labeled "metrosexual". Although seen as frivolous and criticized by traditionally masculine peers, the metrosexual showed a variation in the type of man existing within the heteronormative masculine sphere. Nontraditional menswear was further brought into the mainstream through contemporary pop culture icons such as Lil Nas X, Harry Styles, Jaden Smith, Jared Leto, and Billy Porter, among others. According to global shopping platform Lyst, "pop culture icons are paving the way for a more inclusive fashion future" (Velasquez, 2021, para. 12). Lyst noted a direct correlation between celebrity dress and consumer interest. Searches for pearl necklaces, popularized by mainstream artists Harry Styles and A$AP Rocky, increased up to 150% and searches for "men's wedding skirts" have increased by 26% every year since "Schitt's Creek" character David Rose sported one at his wedding in the series finale (Velasquez, 2021).

On a more personal level, the emergence of social media platforms in the last two decades have provided a way of sharing niche styles with others. According to global audience research company GWI, one third of Generation Zs, the generation born after 1996, now use social media to see what is trending, which is more than any other generation. Fashion theorist Rian Phin supports this data from an inside perspective as a content creator on YouTube and TikTok by explaining how niche aesthetics reach different audiences through these platforms. "That's one of the differentiators between social media criticism and traditional media," she noted to Vogue Business. "Audiences can hear about trends from people within their community and subculture, who better understand the trend's context" (Maguire 2022, para. 6). Social media increases connectivity to other users who desire experimentation in fashion. In the pre-social media era, these individuals could have experienced socially isolation and barriers to gain confidence and sense of community from interactions with like-minded people.

As contemporary fashion increasingly blurs the line between genders and propels forward ideas of gender fluidity, it also encourages a narrative of masculinity that offers variety, possibility, and alternative expressions of manhood. While it is unsure whether the social environment of today's society will support long-term acceptance of feminine garments and details, further exploration of past and present sentiments and patterns towards these styles will allow for a more comprehensive outlook on the subject. This study seeks to understand the climate surrounding these trends and if there is potential for a longer lasting impact than has been seen in previous examples.

Summary

Feminine qualities present in menswear have been historically introduced as connected to wealth, status, and sociopolitical identity. While originally restricted to a smaller subset of society, over time the styles have become more accessible as well as more widely accepted as they become integrated into global subcultures. Feminine traits present in menswear of different eras include a form-enhancing silhouette that showcases male anatomy, materials considered delicate and luxurious that come in brighter hues, and ornate embellishments to clothing and accessories. Additionally, the outfits are often completed with an attention to detail in hair, makeup, or both. It is this attention to detail that elevates and differentiates nontraditional menswear from traditional menswear. Throughout the aforementioned eras, men used the incorporation of traditionally feminine elements into their clothing as a way to display their own perception of masculinity, which is constantly changing and evolving to match the outlooks and meet the needs of contemporary society.

Methodology

Genderfluid fashion designer Harris Reed remarked on fashion and gender expression, "Fashion is one of the easiest things to push the conversation forward around gender, around queer identity, around self-expression… it starts to change the way we interact with each other, and how we grow as a society" (Dolan, Burnell & Pursley, 2022, para. 9). To determine modern consumer perceptions of gender within menswear, this study explored whether or not men categorize certain style and aesthetic elements as masculine or feminine as well as measured the extent of how masculine or feminine they perceived those elements to be. A survey provided data for classification and an analysis of consumer behavior regarding both personal dress decisions and views of those of other men. Gender fluidity is a significant long-term trend. It is important for fashion brands to understand and identify persisting and newly emerging ideas regarding the concept of masculinity and gender expression as a whole. This research aims to capture a snapshot of the notable shift in perception of gender identity through appearance. Lessening or even abandonment of rigid gender roles signifies a change in the sociological landscape of society. Studying this change as expressed in consumer perception of themselves and others is imperative to predicting the future of men's fashion and, its reflection of the structure of gender roles as our society progresses.

After the literature was reviewed, a survey was developed that included a number of style and aesthetic elements in menswear to address the research question previously

introduced. The goal of this survey was to gain more thorough insight into the sentiment of male-identifying consumers and how this sentiment, paired with differing identifying demographic characteristics, affects men's patterns of behavior and perceptions of others as it relates to gender self-expression through clothing. The instrument was crafted to make inquiries regarding relevant demographic data and key fashion characteristics related to the topic of feminine and masculine expression in menswear. The study focuses on a convenience sample of men ages 18 and above from various demographic backgrounds. While the results cannot be generalized to all men, the goal was to gain as much of a comprehensive and representative participant pool. Including men of various ages, orientations, and geographic locations adds understanding of identity and masculinity as shown through contemporary menswear fashions and the perception of such styles. The input of the individuals surveyed complements the information found in the literature previously reviewed, informs the present, and acts as a catalyst for developing future research initiatives.

Measurement Instrument

"Consumer Perceptions of Menswear" is a qualitative survey developed by the researcher in order to support findings in the literature review, address the aforementioned research question, and collect data from a variety of participants. Questions in the survey were curated to make inquiries about specific elements that are popular in today's menswear but are traditionally considered to be a part of the women's fashion sphere. The first section focused on basic demographic information of the respondents, their attitudes and behaviors regarding traditionally

feminine elements existing in menswear, and the underlying motivations behind these perceptions.

The survey consisted of 28 items that were formatted as matrix tables, both single and multiple-answer multiple choice questions, and open-ended prompts. For a question excluding Generation Z respondents, those who indicated their age as being a part of Generation Z were not shown this question as they participated in the survey. At the end of the survey, participants were given the option to type a response and add any additional thoughts about the survey topic to give researchers further insight into their perceptions, behaviors, and motivations. The question blocks were separated and presented in the order of demographic information, preferences and shopping behavior, and perceptions relating to traditionally feminine elements present in today's menswear.

For the section considering demographic information, questions were formulated to provide a background for each participant that may help researchers understand underlying factors in their answers for subsequent questions. Information requested included gender identity, the generation to which the participant belongs, race, sexual orientation, occupational field, living environment, and political affiliation. The items were asked as multiple-choice questions with the exception of political affiliation, which was formatted as a matrix table ranging from conservative to liberal with the option to indicate political leanings in the middle of this scale. The survey automatically ended for those who did not identify as male or chose not to answer the question.

The preferences and shopping behavior block asked questions about participants' thoughts on the following elements; shopping in the women's section of a store; having

long hair styles; wearing jewelry; wearing form-fitting apparel; wearing the color pink; using grooming products; wearing garments made out of materials such as silk, lace and velvet; carrying purses and handbags; wearing platform and heeled shoes; wearing makeup; wearing outfits with embellishments; and wearing non-bifurcated garments such as skirts and dresses. Participants were able to indicate that they: 1) have participated directly in these styles or activities, 2) have not participated but would consider it, 3) would not consider participating but that it would not bother them if another man did so, or 4) that seeing men participating in these styles or activities would make them uncomfortable. The variety in options for answering these questions exist in order for researchers to differentiate between those who have and have not tried these fashions as well as if the participants have more of a positive or negative sentiment towards the existence of these styles worn by other male-identifying persons.

The last set of questions further surveyed participants' perceptions and the influence of the perceptions of others. Aspects included asking respondents to describe why they felt discomfort with wearing or seeing certain styles if they had previously indicated a negative response towards a specific element in the questionnaire. Another set of inquiries explored whether participants would let their children wear such styles, a matrix table asking to rate aforementioned style and aesthetic elements on a scale from masculine to feminine, and a matrix table ranking consumer sentiment based on statements measuring others' perceptions of them based on their expression through clothing. To measure change in perceptions in different cohorts, this section included one question directed towards older generations that was not visible to participants who

indicated that they were a member of Generation Z. It asked respondents "if you were to have been born in this generation (Gen Z), do you think that you would wear more outfits that have qualities generally considered to be more "feminine?". This item directly addressed perceptions of changing norms in menswear. Additionally, the end of the survey had a write-in question to allow for any additional information or sentiment that the respondents wished to share with the researchers.

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board Protocol #22-043, researchers conducted a pilot test of the survey. See Appendix A for the recruitment script, informed consent statement, and complete survey. The pilot test was sent out to a select group of individuals that provided suggestions to improve the survey. This group consisted of different consumer perspectives in order to ensure that the verbiage and elements explored in the survey were easily understood and seen as relevant information across varying demographics.

Validity. The validity of the measurement instrument was confirmed by a pilot test distributed to a small sample prior to the primary data collection. This pilot test was intended to ensure clarity and relevance in the questions and their subject matter as well as reveal any potential problems with the logistics of the system used to analyze and sort the data. Based on results, minimal modifications were made to ensure that participants would understand the questions to the fullest extent. This includes changing "LGBTQ" to "LGBTQIA+" to ensure inclusivity and defining what LGBTQIA+ means. Researchers also added a question regarding being an ally to the LGBTQIA+ community if the respondents indicated that they were not a member of the community

itself. Verbiage was added to the question regarding men wearing jewelry, describing it as "ornamental" to be more specific regarding the elements discussed. For the question "if you have or if you were to have a son, would you let your son wear more feminine-presenting clothing/makeup if he expressed that he wanted to?", researchers changed the response "I don't know" to "yes, but it depends on the specific clothing/makeup".

Reliability. The survey's reliability is strengthened by variability in demographic backgrounds of respondents. Results of the survey are meant to be representative of society as a whole. The survey was shared through a variety of media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat in order to be accessible and visible to many different persons. Participants were also encouraged to share the survey with others to increase its visibility. The respondents of the survey would most likely have an interest in men's fashion if they felt inclined to participate, which indicates that the makeup of the responses represents those who are more active in the menswear sphere. While this had the potential to skew data, the platforms in which the instrument was distributed allowed for a wide variety of responses from individuals with differing perspectives.

Procedure

After the necessary changes were applied following the administration of the pilot test, the researchers distributed a link to the survey "Consumer Perceptions on Menswear" created through the Qualtrics system via various social media platforms (found in Appendix A). The survey gathered information regarding consumers' attitudes towards popular menswear elements that were previously considered feminine as well as

their behavior in relation to the increasing adoption of these styles. In the social media posts, the researchers utilized the recruitment script which explained the purpose of the study and details regarding the general research topic as well as how the information would be used. The survey was distributed via multiple social media platforms from Monday October 10, 2022 to Sunday October 30, 2022. After that Sunday, the survey was closed for researchers to begin their analysis of the findings.

Sample

In a statement regarding their contemporary menswear exhibition, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art identified that "the fashionable man has always been present, constantly reinventing himself and often borrowing from his forefathers" (Takeda et. al, 2016, p. 11). To gain a sense of the scope of differing perceptions regarding men's fashion, it was important for the researchers to ensure that the survey was accessible to a diverse audience, especially diversity in age and gender expression/identity, to show nuances between communities and more large-scale shifts in perception throughout time. Connecting and disconnecting these views from each other allows for further exploration and critical analysis. The criteria for selecting participants, therefore, was broad, and obtained with snowball sampling through social media. The only requirement to participate in the research was to be a male-identifying person over the age of 18. Non-male-identifying persons were not included in the study results, and if a user indicated that they did not identify themselves as male or that they declined to respond to this question, the survey terminated, and results were not included in the data

collection. However, these persons were encouraged to share the survey with those who met the criteria for the study.

The study was not meant to have a concentration on a certain demographic group, but instead, ideally would contain a sample representative of contemporary society to allow for a holistic approach to the research. It was hoped that participants would have varied knowledge of and engagement in contemporary fashion trends and different levels of consciousness relating to their participation or lack thereof. Finally, the eligibility of participants was left to a broader audience to differentiate the research results and enhance the field of study through accurate representation. Input can provide valuable information for identifying the current consumer landscape and future possibilities of trends in menswear.

Data Analysis

Following the closure of the survey, results were immediately available for researchers to begin their analysis through the data analytics capabilities of the Qualtrics system including tools such as data sorting via graphs, statistical measurement, and percentages for the responses collected. The reported results for each question were available in multiple formats, including bar graphs, a table detailing the distribution of participant answers to each question, and a table displaying various quantitative data such as mean, standard deviation, variance, and count for the questions. Responses were able to be grouped and analyzed based on participants' demographic characteristics and commonalities within responses. This way, data can be isolated and analyzed for respondents with different age groups, political affiliations, and occupational fields,

among other factors. This was done to see if these classifications revealed different attitudes and behaviors due to varying concepts of masculinity among groups of people.

The results of this study have potential to contribute valuable insight into contemporary behaviors and attitudes regarding elements in menswear that have been traditionally considered to be feminine. This information is essential to answering research question presented in the study and strengthening the understanding of the future of menswear as it relates to gender identity and expression.

Results

The survey conducted allowed researchers to collect quantitative data with opportunity for comments from male-identifying consumers who were at least 18 years of age. This data gives insight into the participants' demographic characteristics, shopping preferences and behaviors, and perceptions of the fashion elements traditionally considered feminine. Each survey item was designed to answer the research question: How can past examples and current perceptions inform a future prediction of the persistence of feminine qualities in fashionable menswear? The survey was distributed through social media channels including Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram. Users were encouraged to participate in the survey as well as spread it through social media and word-of-mouth. Data collection was conducted online through the Qualtrics platform. It was shared several times on the platforms within these two weeks to maximize reach and participation. Potential participants had nearly three weeks to complete the measurement instrument.

The beginning of the survey included an informed consent form which gave participants insight into the survey subject, the identity of the investigators, and the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study. All 214 persons who completed the survey selected yes to the informed consent statement. After removing those who did not fit the age and gender identity criteria, data was analyzed from 169 responses. Response data is expressed as a percentage of the total. Results depicted include the mean, standard

deviation (*SD*), and the number of respondents to the question, which is referred to as *N*.

For questions formatted as Likert-type scales, the mean indicates a codified answer

choice on a scale, which will be further described in the results of these question

types. The results of the data collection are summarized in this section.

Demographic Data and Eligibility

Eight demographic questions were created to provide a background for

respondents and assist researchers with understanding context behind responses. This

information also allowed researchers to isolate data for various demographic groups for

analysis. The first question in this section, detailing gender identity, determined

eligibility for the study. If participants did not meet the requirements for the survey, it

automatically ended, and their partial response was recorded, but excluded from

analysis.

The first and qualifying question asked participants to indicate their gender

identity. Of the 214 total respondents, 153 individuals (78.46%) identified as cisgender

male, 11 individuals (5.64%) identified as nonbinary or gender fluid but male presenting,

5 individuals (2.56%) identified as transgender male, 6 individuals (3.08%) preferred not

to respond, and 20 individuals (10.26%) did not identify as male. Those who did not

identify as male or preferred not to identify were thus removed from the investigation

along with those who did not answer this question, leaving researchers with 195

responses considered valid for analysis. Of the remaining data after excluding the invalid

responses, 90.53% of participants identified as cisgender male, 6.51% identified as

nonbinary or gender fluid but male presenting, and 2.96% identified as transgender male.

The second item defined the generational cohort to which participants belong, as defined by the Pew Research Center (Dimock, 2019). The majority of participants, 53.85%, were Generation Z (born 1997-2012) which was expected due to the distribution via social media platforms. This was followed by 25.44% in the Millennial cohort (born 1981-1996) and 12.43% were Generation X (born 1965-1980). While fewer participants were from the elder two generations, there was still representation for individuals born before 1965 with 7.10% of respondents Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) and two respondents, making the Post War generation (born 1928-1945) 1.18% of the total participants as seen in Figure 1.
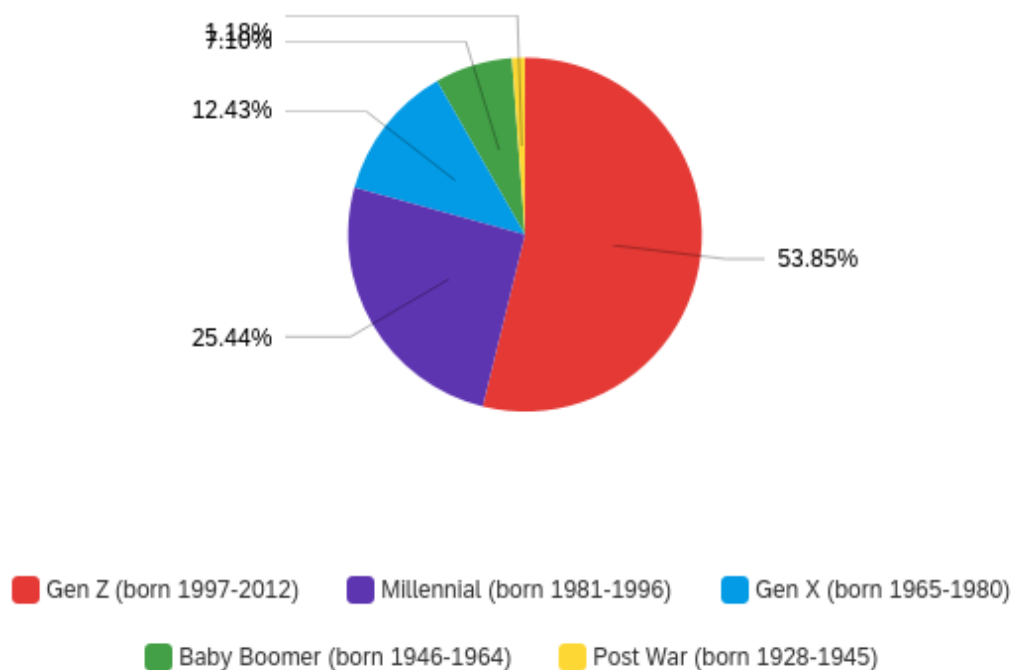
Figure 1. Generational cohort distribution. Pie chart of the distribution of respondents' indicated generational cohort.

     The next question displays the racial makeup of the respondents which was based on definitions of the U.S. Census (2022). The overwhelming majority of participants (83.82%) self-selected White. Other responses included 6.36% identifying as Asian, 4.62% as Hispanic or Latinx, 2.89% as Black or African American, and 2.31% choosing not to disclose (Figure 2). None of the participants identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native nor as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

2.31%

6.36%
2.89%
4.62%

83.82%

■ Asian (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.)

■ Black/African American (A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.)

■ Hispanic/Latinx (Hispanics or Latinx refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.)

■ American Indian or Alaska Native (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.)

■ Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.)

■ White/Caucasian (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.)
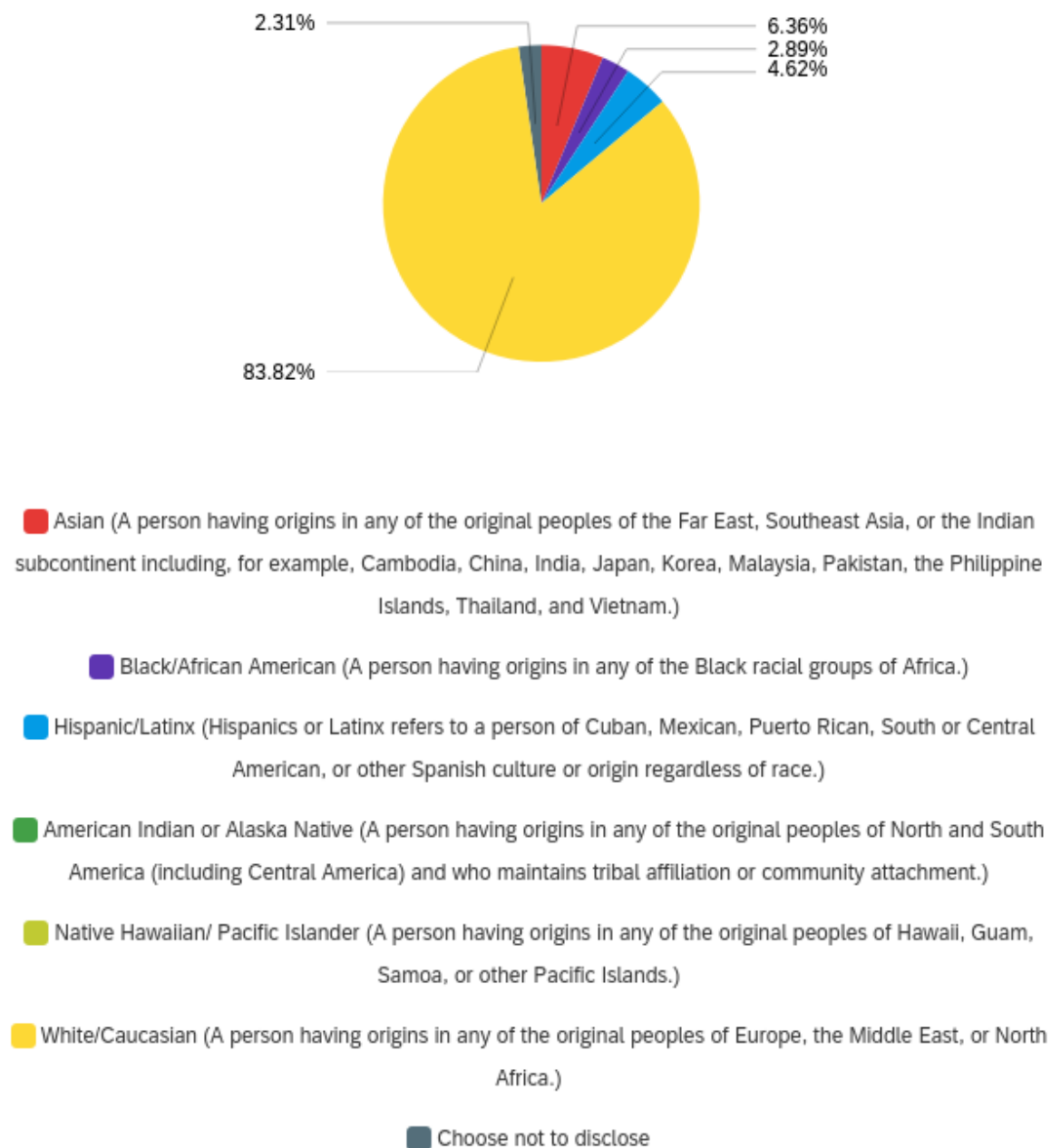
■ Choose not to disclose

Figure 2. Racial distribution. Pie chart of the distribution of respondents' indicated racial category.

Question four of the survey asked participants if they identify as a part of the LGBTQIA+ community and defined what this means. Of the total sample, 24.26% answered yes, 71.60% answered no, and 4.14% preferred not to respond. For those who did not specify that they identify as a part of the LGBTQIA+ community, the survey generated a question asking if they consider themselves an ally of the community. Out of 126 respondents to the ally question, 71.43% said yes, 19.05% said no, and 9.52% preferred not to respond.

Subjects were then asked to categorize their occupation, or field of study if they were a student, into one of a range of fields adapted from Carnevale, Fasules, Porter, and Landis-Santos (2016) and seen in Figure 3. In alphabetical order, 1.20% of subjects worked with agriculture and natural resources, 16.17% in architecture and engineering, 8.38% in the arts, 5.39% in biology and life sciences, 16.17% in business, 4.19% in communications and journalism, 5.99% in computers, statistics, and mathematics, 7.78% in education, 6.59% in health, 1.20% in humanities and liberal arts, 3.59% in fashion or a related area, 4.79% in the industrial arts, consumers services, or recreation, 4.19% in law and public policy, 1.20% in physical and social work, 2.40% in social sciences, and 10.78% in a different category, represented as "other".
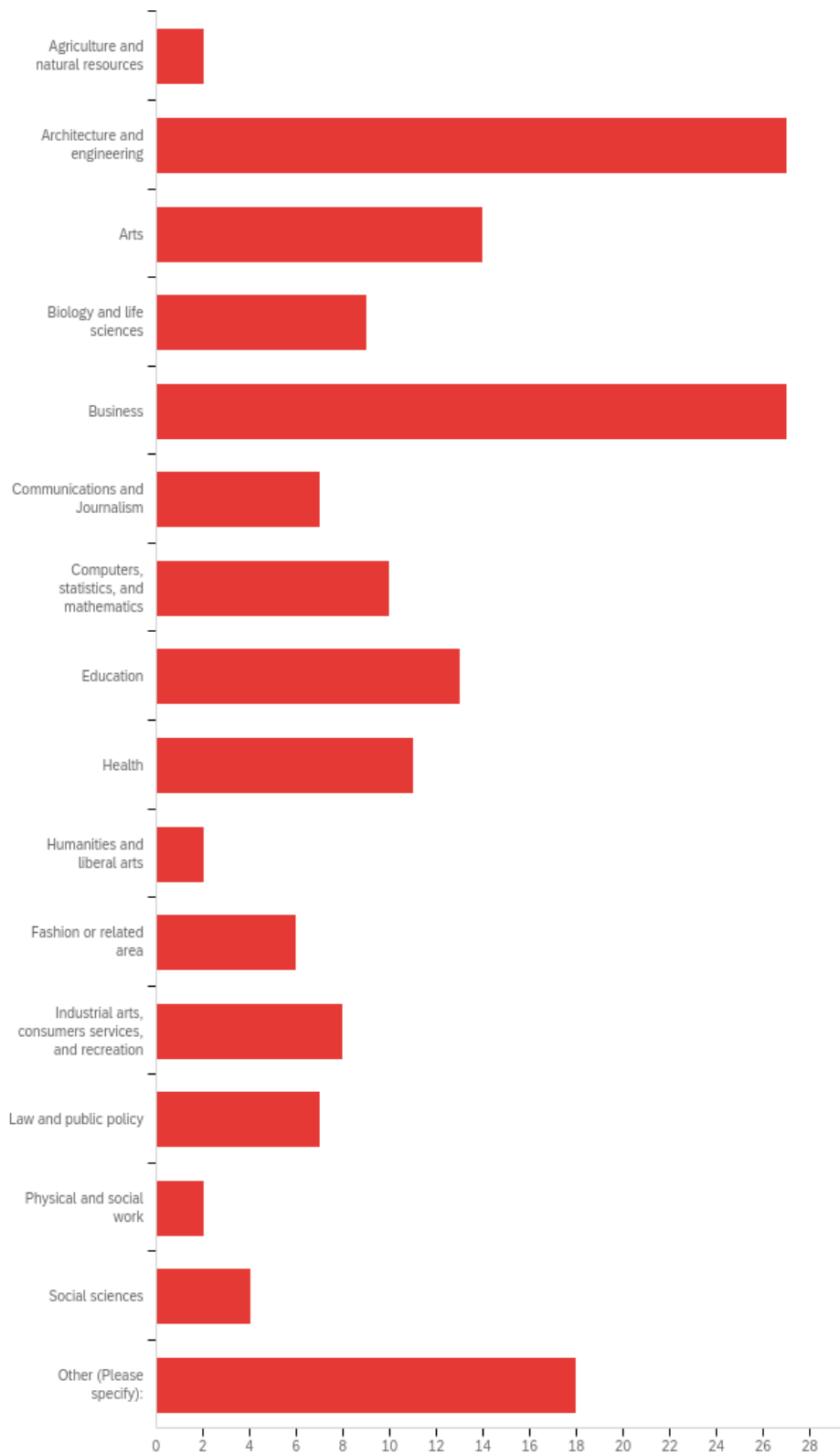
Figure 3. Occupation distribution. Bar chart of the distribution of respondents'

occupational fields or fields of study.

The next two items surveyed participants with regards to their living situation and

political leanings. Out of the respondents, 31.74% lived in an urban area, 61.08% lived

in a suburban area, and 7.19% lived in a rural area. There was variation in the sample for

the survey question regarding political affiliation with 5.99% of respondents identifying

as conservative, 10.78% as moderately conservative, 17.37% as moderate, 20.36% as

moderately liberal, 39.52% as liberal, and 5.99% who chose not to respond to this

question.

Shopping Preferences and Behaviors

The following survey questions were developed to inquire about consumer

perceptions of feminine qualities in menswear. Gauging sentiment from the male-

identifying population is crucial to identifying patterns that can help researchers make

accurate forecasts regarding the future of menswear.

The questions in this section were coded numerically. A 1 represents that the

respondent has used or worn the design/aesthetic elements mentioned in the question or

have participated in the behavior described. A 2 indicates that they have not participated

in the behavior or worn the element described but would consider doing so. A 3

represents that the respondent has not participated and would not consider doing so but

would not judge another man if he chooses to do so. A 4 indicates that the respondent

would be uncomfortable with a man participating in the related shopping behavior or

wore the element described. These questions were asked regarding a variety of behaviors

and fashion elements revealed in the literature and traditionally associated with femininity that exist today within the realm of menswear.

The first question in this block asked respondents if they have or would shop in the women's section of a store to buy clothing or accessories for themselves (Table 1.1). Out of the participants whose responses were included in the data collection, 158 answered this question, as the survey was designed while keeping in mind that every respondent may not want to answer every item. Of these respondents, 27.85% answered positively to this behavior and 17.09% said that they have not but would consider it. Around half of the respondents, 50.63%, said that they have not and would not, but that it would not bother them if another man did so. Only 4.43% said that men shopping in the women's section of a store to buy items for themselves would make them uncomfortable. The mean for this question was 2.32 on a four-point scale, which hovers between the participants considering and not considering these elements for themselves, but not being bothered when others do. The standard deviation for this question was 0.93 reflecting variability in the sample.

Table 1.1

Have you ever or would you ever shop in the women's section of a store to buy clothing or accessories for yourself?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N

Yes, I have shopped in the women's section of a store to buy clothing or accessories for myself	28.03%	44	2.31	0.93	157
I have not shopped, but would consider shopping, in the women's section of a store to buy clothing or accessories for myself	17.20%	27			
I have not and would not consider shopping in the women's section of a store to buy clothing or accessories for myself, but it would not bother me if another man did so	50.32%	79			
I am uncomfortable with men shopping in the women's section of a store to buy clothing for themselves	4.46%	7			

The second item in this block surveyed participants on how they felt regarding men having longer hairstyles. The researchers found that 48.10% have had a longer hairstyle, 22.15% have not but would consider it, 28.48% would not but would not be bothered if another man did so, and only 1.27% were uncomfortable with this. Out of

158 responses seen in Table 1.2, the mean hovered between having a longer hairstyle and considering it. The standard deviation for this question was 0.89.

Table 1.2

What are your thoughts on men having longer hairstyles?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have had a longer hairstyle	47.77%	75	1.83	0.89	157
I have not had, but would consider having, a longer hairstyle	22.29%	35			
I have not had and would not consider having a longer hairstyle, but it would not bother me if another man did so	28.66%	45			
I am uncomfortable with men having longer hairstyles	1.27%	2			

The next survey item addressed wearing ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting with 43.04% indicating that they have worn ornamental jewelry, 20.89% would consider it, 33.54% would not consider it but would not mind if another man did so, and 2.53% would be uncomfortable with others making this fashion choice. The mean, at 1.96, shows researchers that the responses fell between wearing jewelry and considering

it (Table 1.3). The standard deviation was consistent with the responses to earlier survey

questions at 0.93.

Table 1.3

What are your thoughts on men wearing ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have worn ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting	43.31%	68	1.96	0.93	157
I have not worn, but would consider wearing, ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting	20.38%	32			
I have not worn and would not consider wearing ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so	33.76%	53			
I am uncomfortable with men wearing ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting	2.55%	4			

Respondents' preferences in silhouette was addressed in a question regarding

form-fitting apparel with 51.27% of respondents reporting to have worn form-fitting

apparel, 8.23% would consider it, 34.18% would not consider it, and 6.33% would be

uncomfortable with men wearing this type of garment. The mean at 1.96 is consistent

with earlier questions' data, while the standard deviation at 1.05 indicates that there is

slightly more variation in response to this item (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4

What are your thoughts on men wearing form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an

everyday setting?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have worn form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an everyday setting	51.59%	81	1.96	1.05	157
I have not worn, but would consider wearing, form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an everyday setting	7.64%	12			
I have not worn and would not consider wearing form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so	34.39%	54			

I am uncomfortable with men wearing form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an everyday setting	6.37%	10

As seen in Table 1.5, the next question asked respondents for their opinion on wearing the color pink. The vast majority, 72.15%, have worn pink in their outfits, 8.86% would consider it, 16.46% would not consider it but do not mind if another man does so, and 2.53% are uncomfortable with this clothing color for menswear. The mean at 1.49 displays evidence that more men have made this fashion choice as compared to earlier survey items. The standard deviation was 0.85.

Table 1.5

What are your thoughts on men wearing outfits that are pink in color?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have worn outfits that are pink in color	71.97%	113	1.5	0.86	157
I have not worn, but would consider wearing, outfits that are pink in color	8.92%	14			

| I have not worn and would not consider wearing outfits that are pink in color, but it would not bother me if another man did so | 16.56% | 26 |
| I am uncomfortable with men wearing outfits that are pink in color | 2.55% | 4 |

When asked their opinion on men using skincare, haircare, and other grooming products, 89.24% of respondents replied that they use these products, 5.06% would consider it, 4.43% would not consider it, and 1.27% are uncomfortable with men using these types of products (Table 1.6). The mean was 1.18 and a small standard deviation of 0.56, which were both the lowest of the data set indicating more consistency in responses than other items.

Table 1.6

What are your thoughts on men using skincare, haircare, and other grooming products?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have used skincare, haircare, and other grooming products	89.17%	140	1.18	0.56	157

I have not used, but would consider using, skincare, haircare, and other grooming products	5.11%	8
I have not used and would not consider using skincare, haircare, and other grooming products, but it would not bother me if another man did so	4.46%	7
I am uncomfortable with men using skincare, haircare, and other grooming products	1.27%	2

The next survey question asked subjects their thoughts on men wearing garments made of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting. Results show that 27.85% of subjects have worn this type of garment material, 31.01% have not but would consider it, 37.97% would not consider it but would not mind if another man did so, and 3.16% were uncomfortable with this fashion choice as seen in Table 1.7. The mean for this question was higher than previous responses at 2.16, falling between considering and not considering wearing this type of garment. The standard deviation was 0.87.

Table 1.7

What are your thoughts on men wearing garments made out of materials such as silk,

lace, or velvet in an everyday setting?

	%	N	Mean	SD	Total N
I have worn garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting	27.85%	44	2.16	0.87	158
I have not worn, but would consider wearing, garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting	31.01%	49			
I have not worn and would not consider wearing garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so	37.97%	60			
I am uncomfortable with men wearing garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting	3.16%	5			

The following survey item gave participants opportunity to indicate their thoughts on men carrying purses or handbags with 15.82% responding they have done this. Another 20.25% would consider it, 56.33% would not consider this but would not be bothered if another man did so, and 7.59% would be uncomfortable if a man carried a purse or handbag. Out of 158 responses to the question seen in Table 1.8, the mean fell at 2.56 with a standard deviation of 0.85.

Table 1.8

What are your thoughts on men carrying purses or handbags in an everyday setting?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have carried purses or handbags in an everyday setting	15.82%	25	2.56	0.85	158
I have not carried, but would consider carrying, purses or handbags in an everyday setting	20.25%	32			
I have not and would not consider carrying purses or handbags in an everyday setting, but it woiuld not bother me if another man did so	56.33%	89			
I am uncomfortable with men carrying purses or handbags in an everyday setting	7.59%	12			

The next element assessed was the participants' views on men wearing shoes with platforms or heels in an everyday setting. Responses showed 10.76% have worn platforms or heels, 8.86% have not but would consider it, 67.72% would not consider it but would not mind if others did, and 12.66% would be uncomfortable with men wearing platforms or heels in an everyday setting. Table 1.9 outlines these results with a standard deviation of 0.78.

Table 1.9

What are your thoughts on men wearing platforms or heels in an everyday setting?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have worn platforms or heels in an everyday setting	10.76%	17	2.82	0.78	158
I have not worn, but would consider wearing, platforms or heel in an everyday setting	8.86%	14			
I have not worn and would not consider wearing platforms or heels in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so	67.72%	107			

I am uncomfortable with men wearing platforms or heels in an everyday setting	12.66%	20

Next, participants were asked their thoughts on men wearing makeup with 13.92% indicating they have worn makeup, 12.03% would consider it, 63.29% would not consider it but would not be bothered by others doing so, and 10.76% would be uncomfortable with men wearing makeup. The mean was higher than other items at 2.71 and the standard deviation was 0.84 (Table 1.10).

Table 1.10

What are your thoughts on men wearing makeup in an everyday setting?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have worn makeup in an everyday setting	13.92%	22	2.71	0.84	158
I have not worn, but would consider wearing, makeup in an everyday setting	12.03%	19			
I have not worn and would not consider wearing makeup in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so	63.29%	100			

I am uncomfortable with men wearing makeup in an everyday setting	10.76%	17

The next survey item gauged consumer behavior and perceptions regarding wearing outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting. Less than a tenth (6.96%) of respondents have worn these elements, 17.72% would consider it, 65.19% would not consider it but would not be bothered by it, and 10.13% would be uncomfortable with these elements. The mean once again fell between considering and not considering, but leaned towards not considering, at 2.78. The standard deviation was 0.71, indicating that answers had less variation than some of the earlier survey items as seen in Table 1.11.

Table 1.11

What are your thoughts on men wearing outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have worn outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting	6.96%	11	2.78	0.71	158

I have not worn, but would consider wearing, outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting	17.72%	28
I have not worn and would not consider wearing outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so	65.19%	103
I am uncomfortable with men wearing outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting	10.13%	16

Finally, the last question in the consumer preferences and behaviors block asked the subjects their thoughts on men wearing skirts or dresses as seen in Table 1.12. While only 4.43% responded that they have worn these types of garments and 12.03% would consider it, 63.92% said that it would not bother them to see others wear these items. Another 19.62% said they would be uncomfortable with men wearing skirts or dresses.

The mean was 2.99, the highest of the data set, and the standard deviation was the second

lowest of the data set at 0.70.

Table 1.12

What are your thoughts on men wearing skirts or dresses in an everyday setting?

	%	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Total N
I have worn skirts or dresses in an everyday setting	4.43%	7	2.99	0.7	158
I have not worn, but would consider wearing, skirts or dresses in an everyday setting	12.03%	19			
I have not worn and would not consider wearing skirts or dresses in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so	63.92%	101			
I am uncomfortable with men wearing skirts or dresses in an everyday setting	19.62%	31			

Consumer Perceptions

The next survey block sought to explain the perceptions that motivate consumer behavior and preferences, which helps researchers to answer the research question "how can past examples and current perceptions inform a future prediction of the persistence of feminine qualities in fashionable menswear?" The first part of this section consisted of multiple-choice items. The survey asked participants to best classify the reasoning behind their response if they had previously indicated for any question that they would not wear a certain style but would not mind if another man did so. This item permitted selection of multiple responses. Of the 213 responses, 117 selected "it's just not my style", 51 selected "I don't think I could pull it off", 10 selected "I do not want to be seen by others as too feminine because I am a man", 11 selected "I am afraid that people would think I am gay" and 17 responded "people where I am from do not dress like this, so I would be the only one". Those who selected "other" mainly reiterated sentiments similar to "it's just not my style" and a few remarked on how comfortable or uncomfortable certain elements are to the wearer. This is visually represented in Figure 4.
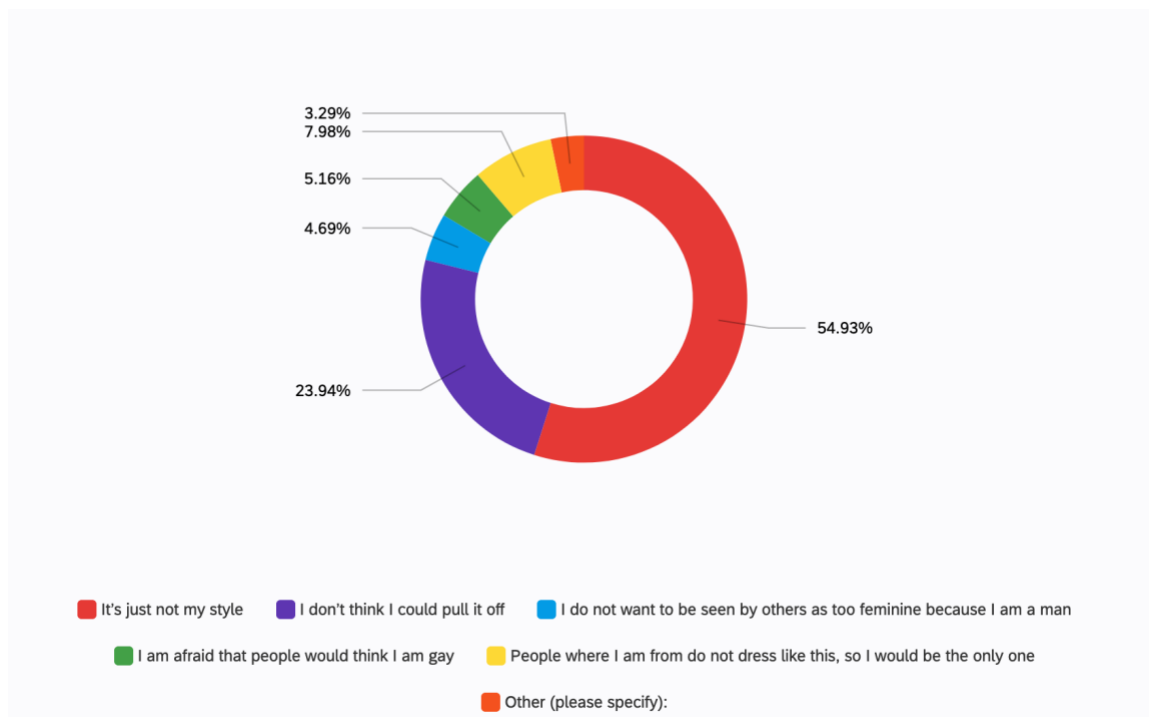
Figure 4. Visual representation for the survey item "if for any question, you selected that you would be uncomfortable seeing another man wear a certain style, which of the following best describes why? (select all that apply)." Pie chart of the distribution of respondents' given answers.

Subjects were then asked to best explain their answers for those who responded that they would be uncomfortable with men wearing the styles mentioned in the previous question block. For this question which permitted multiple responses, 12 selected "I would be uncomfortable because he is dressed too feminine and should not do so because he is a man", 3 selected "I would be uncomfortable because I believe that he is gay", and 25 selected "I would be uncomfortable because people where I am from do not dress like this and I am not used to seeing it". For those who marked "other", most commented that they did not indicate being uncomfortable for any previous questions and a few remarked

on visual attractiveness of wearing these elements as well as functionality of these types

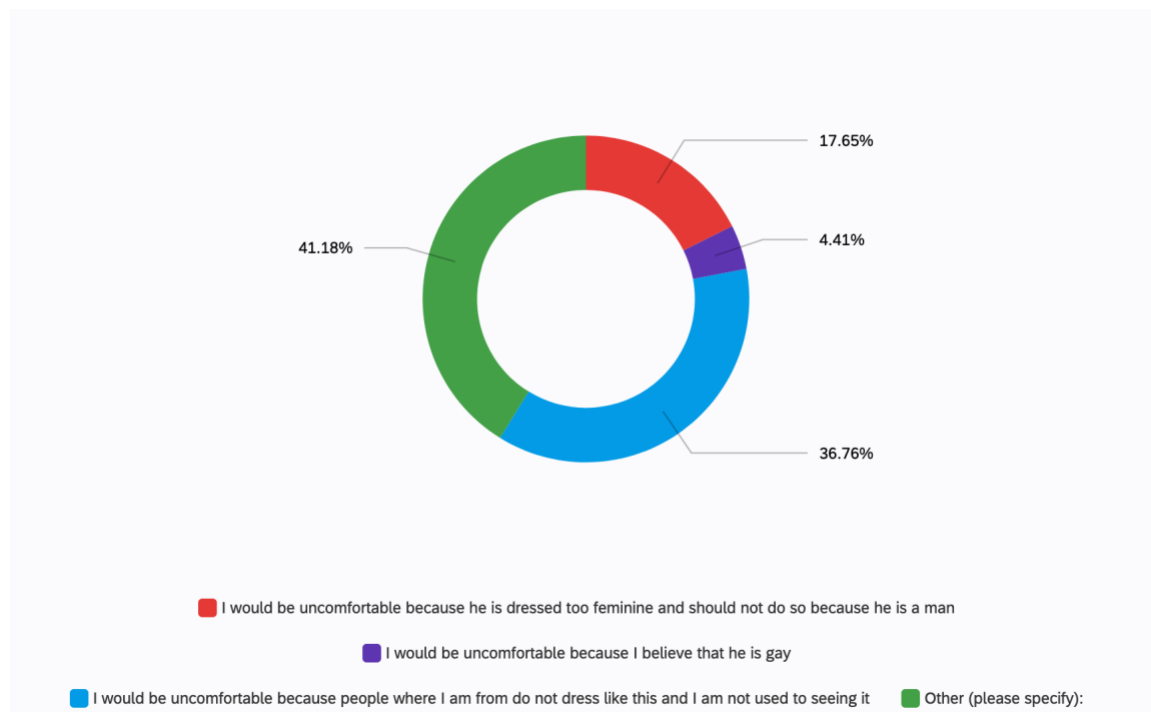of garments. This is visually represented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Visual representation for the survey item "if for any question, you selected that

you would be uncomfortable seeing another man wear a certain style, which of the

following best describes why? (select all that apply)." Pie chart of the distribution of

respondents' given answers.

Next, participants were asked if they have a son or were to have a son, if they

would let him wear more feminine-presenting clothing or makeup if he expressed that he

wanted to. Of the 148 responses, 89 (60.14%) responded yes, 36 (24.32%) responded

yes, but it depends on the specific clothing or makeup, 19 (12.84%) responded no, and 4

(2.70%) preferred not to respond. The mean for this question was 1.58, falling between

"yes" and "yes, but it depends" and the standard deviation was 0.81.

To better understand consumer perception of these particular elements, the instrument then included 5-point Likert-type scales where participants ranked each previously discussed element from 1 to 5 with 1 being "not feminine at all" and 5 being "extremely feminine". Table 1.13 shows the mean, standard deviation, and count for each. Long hair, jewelry, form fitting apparel, and skincare, haircare, and other grooming products were on average perceived as not feminine at all, with form-fitting apparel and jewelry leaning relatively close to being not necessarily feminine. Materials such as silk, lace and velvet, purses and handbags, makeup, and outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments were on average also considered not necessarily feminine, with purses and handbags and makeup hovering close to being considered somewhat feminine. Platforms and heels and skirts and dresses were considered on average to be somewhat feminine. Based on the means, skincare, haircare, and other grooming products were generally considered to be the least feminine and skirts and dresses were considered to be the most feminine. Skincare, haircare, and other grooming products had the lowest standard deviation between answers at 0.68 and outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments had the highest standard deviation at 1.21. This indicates less variability, more agreement in perceptions of grooming products and more variability, less agreement in perceptions of embellishments in terms of feminine-leaning.

Table 1.13

On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least feminine and 5 being the most feminine), how

do you perceive the following fashion qualities?(Mean, SD, total N)

	Mean	SD	Total N
Long hair	1.62	0.7	148
Jewelry	1.83	0.77	148
Form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans)	1.85	0.87	146
The color pink	1.76	0.88	148
Skincare, haircare, and other grooming products	1.39	0.68	148
Materials such as silk, lace, or velvet	2.20	1.03	148
Purses and handbags	2.93	1.09	148
Platforms and heels	3.22	1.17	148
Makeup	2.91	1.16	148
Outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar Embellishments	2.68	1.21	148
Skirts and dresses	3.59	1.13	148

Table 1.14 shows a breakdown of answers by the number of responses indicated for each

level of femininity associated with the individual elements.

Table 1.14

On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least feminine and 5 being the most feminine), how do you perceive the following fashion qualities? (N)

	Not feminine at all (1)	Not necessarily feminine (2)	Somewhat feminine (3)	Very feminine (4)	Extremely feminine (5)
Long hair	71	65	10	1	1
Jewelry	52	74	19	1	2
Form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans)	55	68	16	4	3
The color pink	70	52	20	4	2
Skincare, haircare, and other grooming products	103	35	8	1	1

Materials such as silk, lace, or velvet	42	57	30	16	3
Purses and handbags	13	39	56	25	15
Platforms and heels	12	30	42	41	23
Makeup	15	45	42	30	16
Outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments	27	47	34	27	13
Skirts and dresses	5	23	38	43	39

Another Likert-type scale was included to understand consumers' level of

agreement with various statements regarding masculinity in dress, with 1 indicating that

they strongly agreed and 5 indicating that they strongly disagreed. The following

statements had an average that fell in the category "neither agree nor disagree"; "if more

men wore outfits that have qualities I consider to be more "feminine", I would be more

willing to do so as well", "if I was free from the judgment of others, I would wear more

outfits that have qualities I consider to be more 'feminine' in comparison to how I

currently dress", and "proving/showing my masculinity to others is important to me". As

seen in Table 1.15, on average, the participants indicated that they agree with the

statements "I believe that other men would judge me if I chose to wear outfits that have

qualities generally considered to be more 'feminine'" and "I care about how others view

me based on the way I dress". The standard deviations for these items were all over 1.00

indicating considerable variability in the sample for these statements.

Table 1.15

On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree), how do

you feel about the following statements? (Mean, SD, Total N)

	Mean	SD	Total N
If more men wore outfits that have qualities I consider to be more "feminine", I would be more willing to do so as well	3.28	1.34	148

If I was free from the judgment of others, I would wear more outfits that have qualities I consider to be more "feminine" in comparison to how I currently dress	3.49	1.33	148
I believe that other men would judge me if I chose to wear outfits that have qualities generally considered to be more "feminine"	2.11	1.02	148
Proving/showing my masculinity to others is important to me	3.5	1.12	148
I care about how others view me based on the way I dress	2.7	1.17	148

Table 1.16 shows the number of responses for each level of agreement to each of the statements.

Table 1.16

On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree), how do

you feel about the following statements? (N)

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Choose Not to Respond
If more men wore outfits that have qualities I consider to be more "feminine", I would be more willing to do so as well	18	28	33	33	36	0
If I was free from the judgment of others, I would wear more outfits that have qualities I consider to be more "feminine" in comparison to how I currently dress	17	16	37	35	42	1

I believe that other men would judge me if I chose to wear outfits that have qualities generally considered to be more "feminine"	40	74	20	6	8	0
Proving/showing my masculinity to others is important to me	5	26	41	42	34	0
I care about how others view me based on the way I dress	17	64	30	21	16	0

The next item was designed to capture potential generational differences, specifically between the youngest and other cohorts. Researchers used survey logic to present a single question to participants who indicated they were not a member of Gen Z that inquired "if you were to have been born in this generation (Gen Z), do you think that you would wear more outfits that have qualities generally considered to be more "feminine"? Out of 64 responses, 8 (12.50%) said yes, 26 (40.63%) said no, and 30 (46.88%) said that they don't know.

Finally, the last question was an optional open-ended response for participants to share any additional insight related to the survey topic. Remarks included the observation that fluid masculinity could help provide a more accepting culture, the presence of unconscious internalized biases, and the potential problem of mixed signaling for the gay community due to changing ideals concerning dress. One respondent commented that even more conservative styles like dress clothes are leaning towards new elements, such as slim cut suits. Many also commented on the functionality and practicality of men's dress while expressing concerns over these subjects if men's fashion were to adopt more traditionally feminine elements. One participant also called out the typically higher expense associated with womenswear and feminine clothing as opposed to menswear.

Summary

The survey conducted by researchers found that the majority of the sample identified as cisgender male, but other gender identities were represented. Despite half of the participants being Gen Z, all age groups were present in the sample. Around 80 percent identified as white with other races included in the data collection as well. A quarter of the group identified as being a part of the LGBTQIA+ community and seven out of 10 non-LGBTQIA+-identifying individuals expressed that they consider themselves allies to the community. There was variation in occupation with the largest percentage in architecture and engineering as well as business. The data reveals what these largely suburban and liberal male fashion consumers perceive about feminine

elements in menswear and can aid in a prediction of future fashion trends for certain market segments.

In the shopping preferences and behaviors question block, most of these male-identifying individuals had not shopped in the women's department, but it would not bother them if another man did so. Nearly half of the respondents had had a longer hairstyle with only two percent uncomfortable with that element. Four of ten had worn ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting. This is the same number of participants who were uncomfortable with men wearing the color pink, yet seven out of ten had worn outfits in that color. The vast majority of respondents had used skincare, haircare, and other grooming products. A smaller percentage have worn garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting, yet forty percent would not mind if another man did so. Half of the respondents have worn form-fitting apparel, while less than sixteen percent have carried handbags or purses. More than half of those surveyed indicated that they have not and would not consider carrying purses or handbags or wearing platforms or heels but would not mind if another man did so. Similar sentiments were expressed for the questions regarding wearing makeup, embellished garments, and skirts or dresses. Skirts and dresses were the fashion elements that caused respondents the most discomfort, with nearly twenty percent of those surveyed indicating that they would be uncomfortable with men wearing skirts or dresses in an everyday setting.

The questions on consumer perception gave further insight into subjects' views on the previously discussed fashion elements. More than half of the respondents would not

consider wearing certain fashion elements because it simply isn't their style. For those who indicated they would be uncomfortable with men wearing certain elements, the most commonly seen response was that the respondent would be uncomfortable because people in their area do not dress in this way and therefore they are not used to seeing it. Six out of ten respondents would let their son wear more feminine-presenting clothing or makeup if he expressed that he wanted to. While long hair, jewelry, form-fitting apparel, and grooming products were not seen as feminine at all, purses and handbags, makeup, outfits with embellishments, and materials such as silk, lace and velvet were seen as not necessarily feminine. Platforms and heels and skirts and dresses were on average considered to be somewhat feminine.

The highest frequency of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that they would wear more feminine outfits if more men did this or if they were free from the judgement of others. However, the vast majority of men agreed or strongly agreed that they believed other men would judge them if they chose to wear more feminine outfits. Most respondents indicated that they care about about how others view them based on the way that they are dressed. There was variation in response to the statement "proving/showing my masculinity to others is important to me", with an approximately equal number of respondents neither disagreeing nor agreeing and agreeing. Additional aspects expressed included concerns over comfort and utility when incorporating more feminine elements into menswear. The most common sentiments expressed were that while men would not consider certain styles for themselves, they would not mind if others chose to express themselves through fashion elements that could be considered

feminine. Findings also support that while the vast majority of men surveyed were accepting of others wearing more feminine fashion styles, they still believed that others would judge them for choosing to wear outfits with these qualities.

Discussion

This research was conducted to examine perceptions as they relate to the appearance of traditionally feminine elements within menswear. Understanding consumer patterns as well as their views is important to the future of the industry. The men's fashion sphere is a dynamic field and if newly arising patterns are not closely investigated, industry leaders risk becoming obsolete. Examples presented in this research of changing habits and viewpoints of masculine and feminine in dress, demonstrated that what is considered *status quo* shifts based on the cultural values and norms of a given time period.   Conventions of what is proper or fashionable swings back and forth in a pendulum motion between conservative and experimental styles. In some instances, general acceptance of certain fashion elements is often concluded after aspects of given previously-considered feminine style have been incorporated into the mainstream. In other cases, styles that are prominent will fall from favor, with a backlash of hyper-masculine appearance ideals. This research sought to gain insight into existing sentiment to better inform a more accurate forecast for future business actions and directions. Changes in perceptions now can lead to changes in shopping behavior in the future.

Where there is considerable documentation of changing fashions over time, including instances when men's styles incorporated feminine elements, yet few studies have directly made inquiries to male-identifying individuals regarding gender expression

through fashion. To address this gap, researchers developed and conducted a survey to make suggestions for how these thoughts and behaviors will influence the future of menswear. Because more the fashion elements addressed are more widely accepted within the high fashion market as opposed to the mass market, data was gathered directly from a male-identifying population consisting of a wide variety of demographic backgrounds. This was done to measure how prevalent or widespread the feminine-associated elements presented in the survey are reflected and perceived by mainstream male consumers.

The Generational and Political Divide

When determining the potential for the persistence of traditionally feminine elements occurring within menswear, it is essential to look to the past. As addressed in the literature review, the subcultures of the late 20th century declined largely due to the polarization between older conservatives and young liberals. Researchers can use the data to draw conclusions on whether today's fashion movements will suffer the same fate. The majority of survey respondents (53.85%) were members of Generation Z, having been born between 1997 and 2012. While every generational cohort had representation in the survey, researchers can isolate the data to compare the variation in results between older and younger consumers. When comparing data from the youngest respondents (Generation Z cohort) with data from the oldest respondents (Baby Boomer and Post-War cohorts), researchers discovered that the difference in responses was less drastic than expected. Out of the 12 questions presented in the "Shopping Preferences and Behavior" block, the average Generation Z response indicated that they have

participated in six of the 12 fashion elements discussed and would consider participating

in the other six elements. The oldest two cohorts, on average, have only participated in

two of the 12 elements discussed, but have considered participating in five of the

elements and would not consider participation in five of the twelve elements, but

indicated that it would not bother them if another man did so. Researchers found that

even in the oldest two generational cohorts, the average member of these groups did not

show extreme levels of discomfort with feminine fashion elements appearing within

menswear. This demonstrates that perceptions of menswear are not necessarily strictly

divided among age groups.

Often associated with viewpoints based on age is the political lens with which one

views the world around them. In the late 20th century and still today, generations were

primarily divided based on their political beliefs. However, the survey shows different

results for today's consumers. Researchers found that survey respondents who indicated

liberal political beliefs on average have either participated in each of the shopping

patterns discussed or would consider them. In contrast, participants categorized as

conservative, on average has participated in few of the shopping patterns discussed, but

would consider five of the 12 items. These respondents would not participate in the

remaining five behaviors discussed, but would not be bothered if another man did so.

Again, this demonstrates that although there are certainly cultural differences between

age and political groups, they do not necessarily directly correlate with or strongly

influence perceptions of the elements addressed in this survey. While there is variation,

these results do not indicate intense polarization. The findings can guide researchers to

understand that counterculture fashion today, as opposed to subcultures of the past, does not necessarily serve as a direct reflection of political or generational ideals. This allows for these styles to be considered by a wider audience and gives them the opportunity to be adopted as a part of the mainstream. A general indication from this research is that there is an openness to a greater presence of feminine-associated elements in menswear among a variety of consumers. Moreover, even as Generation Z ages and their political opinions change, there does not appear to be indication of future strong pendulum shift to traditionally masculine menswear styles. Because the patterns reflected by the subject group as a whole tend to align closely with Generation Z values of open-mindedness and experimentation through gender expression, the data suggests the possibility that Generation Z is influencing older cohorts to integrate these ideas into their value set.

LGBTQIA+ Impact

A significant factor in the acceptance of feminine styles is the acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community. Historically, because feminine behaviors present in men were often acknowledged as an indication of homosexuality, feminine elements in menswear declined in eras where homophobic views were prevalent within society. As LGBTQIA+ identification became more highly scrutinized, so did the styles associated with this group. The survey conducted in this study was completed by 24.26% of respondents who identified as LGBTQIA+, which is closely related to the statistics for Generation Z. This identification supports the literature including Jones (2022) since the majority of respondents for this survey were Gen Z. Moreover, a greater acceptance of gender identity and sexual orientation was reflected in the survey with 71.43% of the

respondents who did not identify as LGBTQIA+, considered themselves allies to the community. With an increase in LGBTQIA+ identification and a large percentage of allyship, in addition to the Respect for Marriage Act being signed into law by United States President Joe Biden, the results indicate that fashions associated with being LGBTQIA+ are, among these participants, no longer considered taboo, confirming social trends with LGBTQIA+ identification itself becoming part of the mainstream.

When asked why they would not wear certain styles, only 11 survey respondents indicated the reason was because they were afraid people would think they were gay. This is potentially a reflection of internalized homophobia, but also could be a concern of heterosexual men not wanting to use dress as a signal of their sexuality, which was a common way to identify other LGBTQIA+ community members in the past. This was a sentiment mentioned by a survey participant. When asked why respondents were uncomfortable with other men wearing certain styles, only three people responded that they were uncomfortable because they believe that the other person is gay. This is an extremely small percentage of respondents reflecting homophobic tendencies as the root of their perceptions and behaviors when it comes to men's fashion. Therefore, the data supports the researcher's claims that the de-stigmatization of the LGBTQIA+ community allows for the continuation of traditionally feminine fashion elements to exist within menswear and even further expand into heteronormative spaces.

Feminism and Its Effect on Gender Expression in Menswear

The survey found that there is a direct correlation between men's adoption and consideration of fashion elements and their perception of femininity. On average, the

elements more men were willing to adopt (the use of grooming products, wearing the color pink, and having longer hairstyles) were the items they also perceived as the least feminine. However, the items men were least likely to adopt (wearing heels and platform shoes, wearing skirts and dresses) were the items they perceived to be the most feminine. This indicates that overall, while the men who participated in this study are somewhat open to experimentation with fashion, this experimentation does not occur until the element is further integrated into the masculinity concept. That is, there are some feminine-leaning elements that have already become more mainstream from previous fashion eras where men adopted grooming products, wore the color pink, and sported longer hair styles, most recently in the Peacock Revolution which coincided with the Second Women's Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Within the lifetimes of all of the participants, the blurring of gender lines has been present in the fashion world, including the use of "androgynous", "genderfluid", "nonbinary" and other agendered terms in the fashion industry today. Brands know that using strictly feminine language fails to appeal to a wider male audience, but there is receptiveness to more openness in choice of style. This initiative of expanding the boundaries of masculinity is a relatively new concept that is a focus of modern feminism, a main differentiation between the feminist movement of the late 20th century.

Regardless of generational cohort, contemporary men have been exposed to new feminist perspectives that highlight and seek to counter internalized misogyny within today's men. Subsequently, there is a greater awareness among men that the restrictiveness on their own gender expression is part of the gender inequality problem.

This deeper investigation shifts the focus of the feminist agenda so that contemporary social activists address the ways in which a strict heteronormative patriarchal society is detrimental to not just women, but to male-identifying individuals as well.

Recent initiatives address gender inequalities in fashion and work to challenge the restrictive gender norms that have historically prevented men from using fashion as a tool for gender expression in the way that women have. When given the option to comment on the fashion elements discussed in the survey, several participants remarked on the elements' lack of utilitarianism. In women's fashion, it is common to wear fashion elements such as heels, dresses, and embellishments in certain settings despite occupation or lifestyle. Participant comments reflect a long-standing convention that the purpose of dress that has been traditionally observed and ingrained in male philosophy of appearance is that the purpose of clothing is purely utilitarian. While women can use fashion for both utilitarian and gender expression purposes, there has not been similar freedom for men. Throughout the majority of western fashion history, men have not been encouraged or allowed to use fashion as a form of self-expression; when they do, as seen in the past examples presented in this study, they are often seen as unruly, frivolous, and hedonistic.

Media, Subcultures, and Mass Acceptance of Non Traditional Styles

Interestingly, researchers found that close to eighty percent of respondents indicated that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "I believe that other men would judge me if I chose to wear outfits that have qualities generally considered to be more 'feminine'". However, for each of the questions presented in the "Shopping Preferences and Behavior" block, less than one-fifth of respondents selected that they

were uncomfortable with the given "feminine" fashion elements. This gap is a key finding of this research. It shows that while the majority of male-identifying individuals participating in this study believe that others would judge them for their fashion choices, the statistics show that this is most definitely not the case. The survey indicates that men overestimate the judgment of their peers, despite not harboring these tendencies themselves.

It is important to acknowledge that wearing more experimental fashions is not necessarily an indication of liberation in men's fashion. This is expressed via the survey's mixed results on wearing more feminine fashion garments if one was to be free from judgment of others. Similarly, participating men who did not consider these fashions mostly attributed it to feminine elements not aligning with their personal style or the belief that they would not be able to "pull off" these garments. Exploring the possibilities within men's fashion through expanding the boundary of the rigid gender binary does not mean that it is essential for every man to adopt these new styles. Rather, these results indicate that style and confidence are important components beyond pure gender expression. This indicates the fashion industry could strengthen communication within the male-identifying community to ensure awareness and encourage mass acceptance of more feminine elements in menswear.

The majority of survey subjects did not fully agree with the statement "if more men wore outfits that have qualities I consider to be more "feminine", I would be more willing to do so as well", citing discomfort with a certain fashion due to a lack of exposure for these types of styles. Therefore, increased visibility of traditionally

feminine elements being incorporated into menswear will not directly encourage a wider

segment of men to adopt these styles, but can increase comfortability in society as a

whole. These results suggest the industry can foster a more accepting environment by

increasing consumer exposure to variation in menswear fashions. Increased integration

of more feminine elements by mass brands can be a catalyst for more general acceptance

and normalization of alternative ways to express gender identity and personality for male-

identifying individuals. It is crucial not only for pop culture style icons, such as the

celebrities mentioned in the literature review, to boldly express themselves through

experimentation in dress; it is also necessary for ordinary people to actively renounce the

strict masculinity codes that have dictated men's fashion for much of Western history.

This study shows potential for fashion brands to offer a greater assortment of feminine

elements in menswear product lines, using communication tools to inform and educate

the public.

The wide use of social media, especially among younger consumers, and the

plethora of subcultures that are present on these platforms is a driving force behind

increased acceptance and awareness of gender expression that deviates from the

traditional gender binary. In addition to moving away from traditional "masculine"

clothing, social media platforms generate subculture styles on an expedited timeline,

forever altering the 20-year trend cycle that has existed for centuries in Western culture.

Niche style tribes, deemed "aesthetics", have extremely fluid membership. Unlike the

20th century subcultures defined by a certain dress style, these "aesthetics" are merely a

costume; they can be worn one day and interchanged for another style the next day. It is

not necessary to conform one's entire wardrobe to a certain aesthetic, nor does dressing

in a certain aesthetic indicate that you are a member of a given subculture group. This

variation in dress, spread through social media, makes new styles both accessible and

desirable to a wider range of people because they do not have to commit to membership

in a specific social group in order to dress a certain way. A *Mr. Porter* article

summarized the relationship between Gen Z fashion and subcultures in the following

statement:

> You don't have to be punk or indie to wear Dr. Martens anymore. If you wear
> Dickies and Dunks, it does not necessarily mean you skate. You don't have to
> conform to a specific style of clothing just because of your work and hobbies, and
> you have the social freedom to alternate and pull from different aesthetics as you
> please. The same man can own a Balenciaga x adidas tracksuit, vintage Carhartts
> and a Brunello Cucinelli cashmere sweater without raising eyebrows (Dana, 2022,
> para. 2).

The full impact of style experimentation starts much earlier than when a child is

granted access to social media. Gender expression is largely controlled by parents during

the formative years of childhood, frequently governed by a binary that cements what is to

be considered masculine and feminine. These concepts influence how individuals

interact with the world around them in order to be accepted by their peers. When asked if

they would let their son (real or hypothetical) dress in feminine presenting clothing or

makeup if he expressed a desire to do so, less than 13% of survey respondents stated a

clear "no". This indicates that among these participants, there is a strong possibility that

home can be a safe space for young male-identifying individuals to openly experiment

with their style without the fear of judgment. This finding shows promise for the future

of gender expression as it relates to men's fashion, but also as it relates to mental health.

To meet the future needs of male customers, the fashion industry can move toward more feminine elements as there is considerable acceptance of gender fluidity in dress among the mainstream customers who participated in this study.

Summary

While researchers identified key similarities between the contemporary menswear landscape and several men's style movements from the past few centuries, there are key differences, supported by the survey method, that suggest a different outcome for the persistence of traditionally feminine elements within menswear. The lack of strong correlation between dress and political identity as well as the absence of strong generational polarization on views of the discussed elements cause researchers to conclude that popularity of these nontraditional menswear items will not fade as political landscapes change and members of Generation Z age. Increased presence and acceptance of identifying members of the LGBTQIA+ community allows these styles to be more readily accepted as well. Due to their integration into the mainstream, a number of these styles have begun to appeal to a wider audience by no longer necessarily being an indication of one's sexual or gender identity, therefore being integrated into the heteronormative space. Results show a generally favorable perception by these respondents for men adopting skincare, haircare, and other grooming products; long hair; the color pink; jewelry; form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans), materials such as silk, lace, or velvet. On the other hand, some feminine elements have less acceptance and may indicate areas where mainstream brands should offer trials, followed by slow introduction in the assortment. These include outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or

other similar embellishments; makeup; purses and handbags; and platforms and heels. Finally, participants in this study generally were not ready to be purchasing and wearing skirts and dresses. There was not indication of high aversion to others wearing the style, but still the results indicate ambivalence among these men in adopting non-bifurcated clothing styles.

Finally, the prevalence and expansion of feminine-leaning styles within media strengthens visibility, creating spaces for increased experimentation. Individuals can emulate the looks of popular mainstream celebrities showcased in fashion media publications as well as find inspiration from their peers within niche fashion subcultures that reach social media users through platforms like TikTok. However, while more traditionally feminine fashion elements are becoming further integrated into menswear, it does not mean they will be worn by the majority of male-identifying individuals. While their popularity may decrease as the fashion-forward trend cycle continues, these styles will continue to be present within a significant portion of the population. This persistence of non-traditionally masculine dress can be attributed to the rise of individuality and expression as a cultural value, especially within the Gen Z fashion sphere, and the surprisingly wide acceptance of others' style choices as seen in the survey.

The key to changing the narrative of self-expression through dress is increased communication of normalization of previously considered feminine elements. The survey revealed a gap to exists between perception of judgment as a barrier and actual perceptions of menswear. While most men who participated thought others will judge

them for fashion choices, this research showed an extremely small percentage indicated they would be uncomfortable with other men wearing traditionally feminine clothing. The fashion industry can facilitate conversations to ensure that individuals are aware of existing safe spaces for self-expression and experimentation. This allows the focus of menswear to shift from purely utilitarian purpose to a more open interpretation, which leaves room for male clothing to be used as an art form and tool for self-identification, as is more openly visible in women's fashion.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study collected important information regarding the shopping behavior and consumer sentiment towards traditionally feminine fashion elements within menswear, there were several limitations. The first is relative to the sample which was limited in reach due to the distribution of the survey through social media platforms. While there were representatives of each age cohort among survey respondents, the majority were from Generation Z, white, suburban, and leaning toward liberal on the political spectrum. Having a more diverse demographic group could alter the data. Within the segment captured in this study, there is a relatively even distribution and data could be isolated by cohort.

Another potential limitation is related to the motivations of those who self-selected to participate in the survey. Because the survey is regarding men's fashion, it may have appealed to those interested in this subject and sample may therefore lack respondents who do not hold fashion or art as a special interest. Furthermore, those who are interested in the fashion industry may be more open to traditionally feminine fashion

elements because they are early adopters of style trends. Despite this, the demographic data shows that the respondents hold occupations in many different fields and there was not a high concentration in the art and fashion industries.

A third limitation was related to the Qualtrics system used for data collection. Because researchers did not require all questions to be answered, some survey items did not collect data from every participant, as some respondents refused to answer certain questions. This may give researchers a more limited understanding of these questions when the data was analyzed.

It is important to note that the terminology "acceptance" is used in this study to indicate a more neutral viewpoint when referring to consumer perceptions of traditionally feminine fashion elements. Based on the wording of the survey, respondents who stated that they would "not be bothered" if another man participated in wearing a certain garment have been considered "accepting", but this terminology may indicate a positive bias. Whether or not respondents' exact feelings lean towards acceptance or true neutrality could be further examined in another study. While this wording could indicate a positive bias, researchers do not believe the effect would make a large impact on the overall conclusions.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study results yield several opportunities for potential future research related to this topic. Because the previously outlined limitations to this research do not significantly diminish the validity of the survey results, the following recommendations

include ways in which the subject of the study can be further developed or examined from an alternative perspective.

While this particular research focused on Western contemporary men's fashion, it does not take into account the dress of Eastern cultures. Focusing on femininity and masculinity as a concept within traditional Asian and African cultural dress is an additional topic that could be explored. This is especially significant in how the concept of masculinity in Eastern versus Western dress historically contributes to and intersects with racism and colonialism.

A future study could expand upon the Generation Z data collected by the survey and reevaluate changing views as this cohort ages. This would gauge whether Gen Z follows a path of changing sociopolitical sentiment similar to that of the Baby Boomer generation. While these generations are often compared, it would be interesting to compare and contrast their perspectives on nontraditional dress to see how their different environments and cultural values impact their perspectives and behaviors.

Because it is a significant factor in the increase of dynamism in menswear, researchers could also do a study with a specific focus on Fourth Wave feminism and how the contemporary feminist movement and viewing men's fashion through a female lens has an impact on the differentiation of men's fashion. While this study focused on male-identifying individuals, the nonbinary community and the rise of agendered fashion could also be a related topic of interest.

Conclusion

Overall, the study results support the literature by showing previously discussed trends and patterns which add to the understanding that while perceptions of menswear differ, they are more accepting than the previous fashion eras of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The most common sentiments expressed were that while men would not consider certain styles for themselves, they would not mind if others chose to express themselves through fashion elements that were previously considered to be feminine. Additionally, a notable quantity of men in this study either considered themselves to be a member of the LGBTQIA+ community or an ally to this community. The existence of these fashions outside of political- and sexual identification-related subcultures allows for them to be further integrated into the mainstream, providing support for their persistence as a part of the range of men's fashion.

Findings also support that while the vast majority of men surveyed were accepting of others wearing more feminine fashion styles, they still believed that others would judge them for choosing to wear outfits with certain qualities. Creating more opportunities for expression through clothing is the most significant factor when it comes to increasing comfortability with experimentation and the integration of non-traditional styles into the heteronormative space. It is through this acknowledgement of acceptance that we can push the boundaries of creativity in menswear and allow for more style variation. For contemporary men, fashion no longer needs to be a utilitarian tool, but instead can be a mirror of one's personality and individuality.

If gender is indeed a performance, as described by Judith Butler's Theory of Gender Performativity (Bennett, 2019), men are on their opening night; because of their

inexperience with a different type of performance, the restriction and judgment of an audience causes them to falter. Afraid to improvise or add personalization to their routine, they instead perform exactly as they believe their audience desires, assuming that meeting the expectations of their critics will bring them success. This lack of trusting their own instincts diminishes the performer's creativity and fails to push the boundaries of the craft. However, with a more accepting audience, there is now an opportunity to communicate that there is both acceptance and encouragement to deviate from historical societal expectations. While it will take time for more men to try these styles, this research shows a generally welcoming environment that can allow individuality to shine through the performance, creating the best art form of all; the unapologetic joy of the authentic self.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

Survey Recruitment Script

Informed Consent Statement

Survey Items

IRB Approval

RE: Protocol entitled "Exploring Concepts of Femininity & Masculinity: Consumer Perspectives on Gender Expression in Menswear"

We have assigned your application the following IRB number: 22-043. Please reference this number when corresponding with our office regarding your application.

The Kent State University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your Application for Approval to Use Human Research Participants as Level I/Exempt from Annual review research. Your research project involves minimal risk to human subjects and meets the criteria for the following category of exemption under federal regulations:

- Exemption 2: Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, Public Behavior Observation

This application was approved on September 26, 2022.

***Submission of annual review reports is not required for Level 1/Exempt projects. We do NOT stamp Level I protocol consent documents.

For compliance with:

- DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects (Title 45 part 46), subparts A, B, C, D & E

Survey Recruitment Script

Hello! My name is Kristen Kubek and I am a senior Fashion Merchandising student at Kent State University. I am working on my Honors Senior Thesis with the subject of "Exploring Concepts of Femininity & Masculinity; Consumer Perspectives on Gender Expression in Menswear" and am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in an anonymous survey that should take no more than 20 minutes conducted through the platform Qualtrics. The survey will be made up of questions that cover your perceptions of different fashion garments and accessories, your views on masculinity, and basic demographic information. If you are a male-identifying person who is 18 years of age or older, I believe that you can make a positive contribution to this research. If you do not fall under this demographic, feel free to share this survey with others who you believe would be interested in helping me with my research.

If you are interested in participating, please follow the link below before October 24th, 2022. I also welcome any questions you may have about the survey or research (kkubek@kent.edu)

Thank you for your consideration.

Kristen Kubek

Informed Consent Statement

Welcome to "Exploring Concepts of Femininity & Masculinity; Consumer Perspectives on Gender Expression in Menswear". This study was created to further understand consumer perspectives of gender expression in menswear as shown in the contemporary fashion climate.

Before taking part in this study, please read the consent form below and select "Yes" at the bottom of the page if you understand the statements and freely consent to participate in the study.

This study involves a brief survey in which male-identifying persons that are at least 18 years of age answer questions about their perceptions of different fashion garments and accessories, their views on masculinity, and basic demographic information.

The study is being conducted by professor Dr. Catherine Leslie and Kristen Kubek of Kent State University, and it has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board Protocol #22-043. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life).

Participation in the study typically takes 20 minutes and is strictly anonymous. All responses are treated as confidential, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only.

Participation is voluntary, refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled. Although all of the questions you will be asked are important, you may skip any question that you do not want to answer.

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complaint or concern, they may contact the principal investigator, Dr. Catherine Leslie (cleslie1@kent.edu, 330-672-0169) or Kristen Kubek (kkubek@kent.edu, 216-308-5601) or the Kent State University Institutional Review Board, at 330-672-2704.

By checking "Yes" on the survey, you are indicating your consent to the above procedures and acknowledge you have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks. You are also acknowledging that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study and are not waiving any of your legal rights. You may request a copy of this Consent Form for your records.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the study, check "Yes" button.

YES _____   **NO** _____

Consumer Perceptions on Menswear Survey

[INSERT CONSENT FORM]

Q1 If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the study, click on the "Yes, I Agree" button to begin the survey.

◯ Yes, I Agree

◯ No, I Do Not Agree

The first section will ask you some demographic questions.

NOTE: None of your personal information will be identified. All collected data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only.

Q2 This study is focused on male-identifying persons. With what gender do you identify?
- Cisgender male (assigned male at birth)
- Non-binary/Genderfluid but male-presenting
- Transgender male
- Prefer not to respond
- I do not identify as male

Survey ends for participants of "prefer not to respond" or "I do not identify as male" is selected.

Q3 Which generation are you a part of?

- Gen Z (born 1997-2012)
- Millennial (born 1981-1996)
- Gen X (born 1965-1980)
- Baby Boomer (born 1946-1964)
- Post War (born 1928-1945)

Q4 Please indicate your race/ethnicity (select all that apply)

- **Asian**
  A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Black/African American**
  A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic/Latinx**
  Hispanics or Latino refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.
- **American Indian or Alaska Native**
  A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander**
  A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **White/Caucasian**
  A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
- Choose not to disclose

Q5 Are you a member of the LGBTQIA+ community? (LGBTQIA+ is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity)

○ Yes

○ No

○ Prefer not to respond

The following question is only displayed if "yes" is not selected as an answer to the question "are you a member of the LGBTQIA+ community?":

Q6 Do you consider yourself to be an ally of the LGBTQIA+ community?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Prefer not to respond

Q7 Which industry best describes your occupational field? (If you are a student, indicate which industry best describes your major)
- Agriculture and natural resources
- Architecture and engineering
- Arts
- Biology and life sciences
- Business
- Communications and Journalism
- Computers, statistics, and mathematics
- Education
- Health
- Humanities and liberal arts
- Fashion or related area
- Industrial arts, consumers services, and recreation
- Law and public policy
- Physical and social work
- Social sciences
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q8 Which environment would best describe that in which you currently reside?

○ Urban

○ Suburban

○ Rural

Q9 Which best describes your political views?

	Conservative	Moderately Conservative	Moderate	Moderately Liberal	Liberal	Choose not to respond
I would describe my political views as...	○	○	○	○	○	

The next section will ask you some questions regarding fashion preferences and habits.

NOTE: None of your personal information will be identified. All collected data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only.

Q10 Have you ever or would you ever shop in the women's section of a store to buy clothing or accessories for yourself?

○ Yes, I have shopped in the women's section of a store to buy clothing or accessories for myself

○ I have not shopped, but would consider shopping, in the women's section of a store to buy clothing or accessories for myself

○ I have not and would not consider shopping in the women's section of a store to buy clothing or accessories for myself, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men shopping in the women's section of a store to buy clothing for themselves

Q11 What are your thoughts on men having longer hairstyles?

○ I have had a longer hairstyle

○ I have not had, but would consider having, a longer hairstyle

○ I have not had and would not consider having a longer hairstyle, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men having longer hairstyles

Q12 What are your thoughts on men wearing ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting?

○ I have worn ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn, but would consider wearing, ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn and would not consider wearing ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men wearing ornamental jewelry in an everyday setting

Q13 What are your thoughts on men wearing form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an everyday setting?

○ I have worn form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn, but would consider wearing, form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn and would not consider wearing form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men wearing form-fitting apparel (such as skinny jeans) in an everyday setting

Q14 What are your thoughts on men wearing outfits that are pink in color?

○ I have worn outfits that are pink in color

○ I have not worn, but would consider wearing, outfits that are pink in color

○ I have not worn and would not consider wearing outfits that are pink in color, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men wearing outfits that are pink in color

Q15 What are your thoughts on men using skincare, haircare, and other grooming products?

○ I have used skincare, haircare, and other grooming products

○ I have not used, but would consider using, skincare, haircare, and other grooming products

○ I have not used and would not consider using skincare, haircare, and other grooming products, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men using skincare, haircare, and other grooming products

Q16 What are your thoughts on men wearing garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting?

○ I have worn garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn, but would consider wearing, garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn and would not consider wearing garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men wearing garments made out of materials such as silk, lace, or velvet in an everyday setting

Q17 What are your thoughts on men carrying purses or handbags in an everyday setting?

○ I have carried purses or handbags in an everyday setting

○ I have not carried, but would consider carrying, purses or handbags in an everyday setting

○ I have not and would not consider carrying purses or handbags in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men carrying purses or handbags in an everyday setting

Q18 What are your thoughts on men wearing platforms or heels in an everyday setting?

○ I have worn platforms or heels in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn, but would consider wearing, platforms or heels in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn and would not consider wearing platforms or heels in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men wearing platforms or heels in an everyday setting

Q19 What are your thoughts on men wearing makeup in an everyday setting?

○ I have worn makeup in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn, but would consider wearing, makeup in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn and would not consider wearing makeup in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men wearing makeup in an everyday setting

Q20 What are your thoughts on men wearing outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting?

○ I have worn outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn, but would consider wearing, outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn and would not consider wearing outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men wearing outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments in an everyday setting

Q21 What are your thoughts on men wearing skirts or dresses in an everyday setting?

○ I have worn skirts or dresses in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn, but would consider wearing, skirts or dresses in an everyday setting

○ I have not worn and would not consider wearing skirts or dresses in an everyday setting, but it would not bother me if another man did so

○ I am uncomfortable with men wearing skirts or dresses in an everyday setting

The next section will ask you some questions regarding your perceptions and perceptions of others regarding men's fashion previously discussed in the survey.

NOTE: None of your personal information will be identified. All collected data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only.

Q22 If for any question, you selected that you would not mind if another man wore a certain style but that you would not do so yourself, which of the following best describes why? (select all that apply)
- It's just not my style
- I don't think I could pull it off
- I do not want to be seen by others as too feminine because I am a man
- I am afraid that people would think I am a part of the LGBTQ+ community
- People where I am from do not dress like this, so I would be the only one
- Other (please specify): _____

Q23 If for any question, you selected that you would be uncomfortable seeing another man wear a certain style, which of the following best describes why? (select all that apply)
- I would be uncomfortable because he is dressed too feminine and should not do so because he is a man
- I would be uncomfortable because I believe that he is a part of the LGBTQ+ community
- I would be uncomfortable because people where I am from do not dress like this and I am not used to seeing it
- Other (please specify): _____

Q24 If you have or if you were to have a son, would you let your son wear more feminine-presenting clothing/makeup if he expressed that he wanted to?

◯ Yes

◯ Yes, but it depends on the specific clothing/makeup

◯ No

◯ Prefer not to respond

Q25 On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least feminine and 5 being the most feminine), how do you perceive the following fashion qualities?

	Not feminine at all (1)	Not necessarily feminine (2)	Somewhat feminine (3)	Very feminine (4)	Extremely feminine (5)
Long hair	○	○	○	○	○
Jewelry	○	○	○	○	○
Form fitting apparel	○	○	○	○	○
The color pink	○	○	○	○	○
Skincare, haircare, and other grooming products	○	○	○	○	○
Materials such as silk, lace, or velvet	○	○	○	○	○
Accessories such as purses or heels	○	○	○	○	○
Makeup	○	○	○	○	○
Outfits with feathers, sequins, ruffles, or other similar embellishments	○	○	○	○	○
Skirts and dresses	○	○	○	○	○

Q26 On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree), how do you feel about the following statements?

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Choose Not to Respond
If more men wore outfits that have qualities I consider to be more "feminine", I would be more willing to do so as well	○	○	○	○	○	
If I was free from the judgment of others, I would wear more outfits that have qualities I consider to be more "feminine" in comparison to how I currently dress	○	○	○	○	○	
I believe that other men would judge me if I chose to wear outfits that have qualities generally considered to be more "feminine"	○	○	○	○	○	
Proving/showing my masculinity to others is important to me	○	○	○	○	○	
I care about how others view me based on the way I dress	○	○	○	○	○	

The following question is only displayed if "Gen Z (born 1997-2012)" is not selected as an answer to the question "which generation are you a part of?":

Q27 If you were to have been born in this generation (Gen Z, born after 1997), do you think that you would wear more outfits that have qualities generally considered to be more "feminine?"

○ Yes

○ No

○ I don't know

○ Prefer not to respond

Q28 Is there anything else you would like to share about your views of masculinity or what you think about men's fashions that people consider to be more feminine in nature?
WRITTEN RESPONSE

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.