

# Life Cycle of Fashion

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**Abstract-** Like any other product, Fashion also has its fashion life cycle. Fashions are temporary cyclical phenomena adopted by consumers for a particular time and situation. As a fact in the world of fashion, The fashion industry has been subject to pivotal trends over the last two to three decades. It all starts with fashion forecasting agencies, with their intensive analysis of everything starting from political events, musical hits, economic changes and even technological breakthroughs. They can predict the trends that will later on be walking down the catwalk. They identify what color palettes, fabrics and silhouettes that will be utilized for the next season. This gives a collection's direction for private label designers and commercial companies alongside with some private research to maintain their originality.

**Keywords-** Fashion, Customer, Manufacturers, Production, Peak of fashion, Fad.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Fashion often reflects society. Important personalities in history have also had an impact on fashion, but no matter how competitive and innovative the Fashion industry is, it actually has to follow what is called the "Fashion Cycle", which has no specific measurable time period. Some styles sustain for a longer period of time. Some die out soon, and some styles come back years after they were declined. So, we can say that fashion changes with time and has always been evolving to fit the taste, lifestyle and demands of society. The industry has evolved into a complex, fragmented, global system which at its very core is based on the notion of

continual consumption of the 'new' and the discard of the 'old'.

## II. WHAT IS A FASHION CYCLE?

Fashion cycle refers to the rise, wide popularity and then decline in acceptance of a style. Consumers are exposed each season to a multitude of new styles created by fashion designers. Some are rejected immediately by the press or by the buyer on the retail level, but others are accepted for a time, as demonstrated by consumers purchasing and wearing them. Therefore, Fashion life cycle is a lifespan of a particular fashion during which the fashion exists i.e., particular look, shape or type of apparel item. There are 5 stages in the life cycle of fashion. They are,

1. Introduction
2. Rise in popularity
3. Peak of popularity
4. Decline in popularity
5. Rejection

The cycle can reflect the acceptance of a single style from one designer or a general style such as the miniskirt.

Fashion cycle is a period of time or life span during which the fashion exists, moving through the five stages from introduction through obsolescence.

- When a customer purchases and wears a certain style, that style is considered accepted. The acceptance leads to the style becoming a fashion!
- Fashions DO NOT always survive from year to year.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>



## 2.1 INTRODUCTION STAGE:

Where new style, color, texture, and so forth are introduced as 'high fashion' to target customers. This new style may or may not appeal to the mass, and therefore be accepted by the consumers. New styles are usually introduced at a high price with minimum quantities, to test the market. Fashion leaders introduce new collections every season for the sake of being innovative and creative. Designers interpret their research and creative ideas into appeal or accessories and then offer the new styles to the public. Designers create new designs by changing elements such as line, shape, color, fabric, and details and their relationship to one another. New creations referred to as the "latest fashions" may not yet be accepted by anyone. At this first stage of the cycle, fashion implies only style and newness. Production in small quantities gives a designer more freedom, flexibility, and room for creativity. Celebrities, TV stars, models buy these clothes as they want to wear them in some events.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

## 2.2 INCREASE IN POPULARITY:

If new styles are seen worn by celebrities or famous personalities on TV or magazines it may attract the attention of buyers, the press, and the public. In this case viewers become interested in purchasing the new styles. Some designers or stylists may modify or copy a popular style. Manufacturers use less expensive fabric and modify the designs to sell at a low price. Mass production reduces the price of the fashion, and there are more sales. The adaptations are made for mass production. The popularity of a style may further increase through copying and adaptation. Some designers or stylists may modify a popular style to suit the needs and price range of their own customers.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

## 2.3 PEAK OF POPULARITY:

Styles at this stage are the most popular. When production of any style is in volume, it requires mass acceptance. The manufacturers carefully study trends because the consumer will always prefer clothes that are in the mainstream of fashion. Where the fashion is at its peak for sufficiently longer periods. When a fashion is at the height of its popularity, it may be in such demand that many manufacturers copy it or produce adaptations of it at many price levels. Some designers are flattered by copying and others are resentful. There is a very fine line between adaptations and knockoffs. Length at this stage determines if the fashion becomes classic or Fad.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

## 2.4 DECLINE IN POPULARITY:

In this stage, consumer demand is decreasing, going down the slope. A time comes after the mass production of a few styles people get tired and begin looking for new styles. They still wear the particular style but are not willing to buy them at the same price. With the launch of a new collection every season the popularity of the style of the previous season's declines. They are not willing to buy with regular price. Retail stores put such declining styles on sale racks, hoping to make room for new merchandise.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

## 2.5 REJECTION OF A STYLE OR OBSOLESCENCE:

It is the last stage of the fashion cycle. Where a strong distaste for style occurs, and sales is at its lowest level. In the last phase of the fashion cycle, some consumers have already turned to new looks, thus beginning a new cycle. The rejection or discarding of a style just because it is out of fashion is called consumer obsolescence. As early as 1600, Shakespeare wrote that "fashion wears out more apparel than the man". Since consumers are no more interested in buying, manufactures stop producing and the retailers will not restock the same styles. Now it's time for a new cycle to begin.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

## III. CONCEPTS OF FASHION ACCEPTANCE:



Fashion is first accepted by one society or group of people and goes on to be followed by other groups. There are three concepts related to the adoption of fashion. They are as follows:

### 3.1 DOWNWARD FLOW THEORY (TRICKLE-DOWN THEORY):

Here, fashion is first accepted by people at the top of the society who form the higher income group, and later on adopted by people at the lower-level group, who form the low-income group. 'Haute couture' is major fashion houses of

the world, run by internationally recognized famous designers. They show their collections – which are their own original creations – at international fashion shows and sell their garments for exorbitant prices.

### 3.2 HORIZONTAL FLOW THEORY:

Here, fashion is adopted by people at similar social levels or income levels. They are accepted by peers, friends and others who are of an equal status. These are also called the ‘designer wear’ or ‘prêt-à-porter’ and are ready-to-wear garments sold at exclusive department or specialty stores. Designs are not unique but are produced in limited numbers.

### 3.3 UPWARD FLOW THEORY (TRICKLE-UP THEORY):

Here, fashion is first accepted by the young low-income group, and moves to higher income groups (e.g., khaki pants, jackets, cowboy dresses, etc.). ‘Mass market’ or ‘street fashion’, as it is called, are cheaper versions of garments that are produced and sold to the people of lower income groups.

The more affluent will buy several haute couture outfits but turn to designer wear for every day. Women who mostly buy designer ready-to-wear may occasionally splash out on a couture dress for a very special occasion. Those who generally buy only mass marketing clothes may still buy designer wear occasionally if only from discount stores.<sup>[2]</sup>

## IV. CONCLUSION

Fashion always follows the same cyclic pattern. However, there is no measurable timetable for any fashion cycle, as some take a short time to peak in popularity and some take a longer period of time. Some decline slowly and some very fast. Some styles will sell in a single season and take several seasons to clear the shelves. Some fashion fades quickly, others never disappear. Fashion moves through different stages during its cycle of existence. Not only design but special features also go through a cycle such as color, texture, and fabric. The goal of the fashion cycle is the ability to gauge the timeliness, or occurrence at the right time, of a fashion is critical in the development and marketing of fashion products.

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