

**The relation of textiles and fabric to popular fashion products that are promoted through social media platforms and influencers.**

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**Abstract:**

This research revolves around social media platforms and influencers and the ways in which textiles and materials impact fashion advertisements and influencer profiles. Social media has become one of the largest forms of promotion for various brands and for the fashion industry. With available apps such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Pinterest, etc. companies are able to target the individuals present on these sites in order to showcase their products. This has led to jobs and collaborations that are offered to those who hold accounts that maintain a large following. Social media influencers and employees take it upon themselves to devote videos and content to specific brands and products in order to advertise them to different communities online. However, the brands and content that influencers promote tend to be a reflection of their opinion and morals, which leads to the importance of selecting the appropriate companies to work with. Textiles and materials play a large role in this decision due to the fact that influencers must note that the products that are seen on their page relate to their social media presence. Followers can easily be lost from these profiles if individuals are advertising products that are not good quality or appear differently than they truly are. This research provides background information that relates textiles and materials to the fashion industry, the ways in which textiles impact product decision-making for influencers as well as the impact on sales for the brand, and how the product/company selected to be advertised reflects on the morals and personality type of the individual that is promoting through social media.

**A. Background**

Textiles, materials, and fabrics make up the fashion industry. Woodhead Publishing Limited provides the Oxford dictionary definition of fashion as a “currently popular style of

clothing, or behavior, etc. or the production and marketing of new styles of clothing and cosmetics,”(Sinclair, 2014). It defines textiles as “a type of cloth or woven fabric or relating to fabric or weaving,” (Sinclair, 2014). The relation between the two is direct, however, the text *Textiles and Fashion, Materials, Design, and Technology* published by Woodhead Publishing Limited in association with The Textile Institute discusses the weight that the term fashion holds as well as the misunderstanding by the public eye. According to this text, “in an ever-increasing consumer-lead world, more weight is given to ‘fashion’ and its impact, on our everyday lives, yet the acknowledgment should be that textiles and fashion coexist and cannot exist without each other, and the need to understand how these areas coexist and the frameworks of operation are therefore an important part of the repertoire of the twenty-first-century textile or fashion designer, practitioner, technologist or those who engage with fashion and textiles,” (Sinclair, 2014). Textiles and materials create the necessary products for the fashion industry, as well as various industries outside of fashion. All products result from textiles and fibers, whether they are natural or synthetic.

One important consideration and relation with fibers and textiles in the fashion industry is when specific materials are most appropriate and how they are going to benefit not only the qualities of the product but the customer who purchases it. Different types of apparel require different fibers and textiles in order to achieve the most successful version of the garment. Common categories of clothing are business attire, casual wear, formal wear, activewear, and lingerie wear. Each of these forms of fashion requires different materials and has separate requirements, and all materials are made from natural and synthetic fibers.

Natural fibers are those made from plants or animals, and some of the most common include cotton, wool, silk, and linen. These fibers are extremely popular and useful in fashion

and they also have less negative impacts on environmental factors. Naturally made fibers are reusable and recyclable and tend to take less energy to produce. They also have a sense of comfort to the skin and are less likely to cause allergic reactions when worn on the body.

Synthetic fibers are also very common in fashion and include many popular types such as nylon, polyester, rayon, and spandex. These options have widened the fashion industry and allowed more materials to be mass-produced for customers. Activewear is a prime example of synthetic-based apparel as most athletic products are made with spandex, polyester, and blends of the two with other fibers such as nylon. It is common for fibers to blend in order to create the desired product, and this is seen in active wear as well. Cotton is oftentimes mixed with polyester to provide extra comfort and benefit from the advantages of both individual fibers. However, synthetic fibers have had controversial issues due to the fact that they have more negative effects on the environment as they are not biodegradable in most cases, which results in long-term pollution and waste.

Textiles, fibers, and materials have not only created the fashion industry but have also created long-term effects on environmental factors and society as a whole. As trends and styles continue to change and evolve, textiles remain a constant for fashion and can be used in various forms to produce a desired product.

## **B. Relation of Textiles to Fashion Selection, Product Sales, and Social Media.**

Textiles and fibers that are used to create apparel can oftentimes be the primary reason why customers purchase certain pieces. It is important to choose products that are appropriate for various conditions, such as weather, needed durability, activity, etc.

In 2017, Tsoutseos Athanasios and Priniotakis Georgios performed research on the topic of fibers and fabric that are useful for extreme conditions for individuals in the military in their article *Military Textile Materials for Extreme Weather Conditions*. Athanasios and Georgios said that “military textile materials are an essential, yet often neglected, factor that protects the soldier and enables his or her actions in varying fields around the globe,” (Athanasios & Georgios, 2017). The article points out the importance of protection when it comes to the battle between extreme weather conditions and attempting to bring comfort to soldiers in combat. The authors found that “research in performance textiles has given rise to various forms of multilayered clothing and functional membranes with several commercial trade names,” (Athanasios & Georgios, 2017). Specific textiles that are useful in performance help with extreme activities that take place in combat, as well as less extreme situations like running, jogging, hiking, etc. Some popular fibers included in military uniforms as well as other activewear are cotton, polyester, and linen. Cotton and linen are included in this form of apparel primarily for conditions of heat, as they are breathable and lightweight which brings comfortability along with useful attributes. Furthermore, polyester contributes in a different way, as it helps with durability and the convenience of drying quickly when in wet conditions.

Choosing the correct fibers and textiles when creating or purchasing apparel is essential not only for reasons of being appropriate for various conditions but for the rate of sales and prices as well. Angela Velasquez explained a study performed by “IFM-Première Vision Chair, a research partnership between Institut Français de la Mode (IFM) and the trade show organizer” that utilized a survey in America, Germany, France, Italy, and the U.K. (Velasquez, 2022). Results showed that 90.5 percent of the individuals agree that they were intent on altering the way that they purchase clothes, as well as changing their reasons and mindset before making a

purchase. Velasquez states that “materials matter to conscious consumers wanting to make environmentally responsible clothing purchases,” (Velasquez, 2022). Each fiber has various ways of benefiting apparel for the customer, making it critical to choose the best options in order to increase sales and ensure the making and selling of a quality product.

Social media has become a major platform for apparel advertisement and has also become one of the largest influential sources when increasing or decreasing sale rates. Media influencers who promote products share their opinions and reviews with a following, which evidently alters the opinion of the viewer. E-commerce company BigCommerce stated in 2021 that, “social media is a powerful platform for sharing and purchasing new trends, with 84% of shoppers consulting at least one social media platform before making a purchase,” (Heuritech, 2022). One of the most common topics to discuss when reviewing clothing items on social media is the value of the item. Most review-styled videos and advertisements share opinions of the softness, durability, color, style, aesthetic, and overall quality of the clothes. With social media outlets growing as a form of influencing society to purchase or not purchase items, it becomes even more important to ensure that the products being created are made with the appropriate materials in order to increase sales and obtain a valued reputation for the brand.

### **C. The Reflection of Textile Advertisement on Influencer Profiles and Public Appearance**

Social media is one of the key sources of advertisement on an international level. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Pinterest, Twitter, and many more reach various countries and allow users to upload content at any given time or place. Companies and brands began to use these apps to their advantage through the help of individuals who obtained a large

following on these profiles. For most social media influencers, this has become a full-time job. Brands will send individuals on these platforms products in exchange for a paid partnership and collaboration to promote the item that is received. TikTok has grown into one of the largest apps to review and advertise products through video formats. When reviewing fashion online, the material, style, and trends are crucial to a successful video and positive review for the company.

One primary reason to emphasize the importance of textiles and fibers in relation to promoting products through social media platforms is the effects that are harming the environment. Synthetic fibers have allowed brands to mass-produce products at a low cost, which then results in the apparel being sold at a cheaper rate as well. This has created an opportunity for buyers of all incomes to purchase clothes that duplicate higher-end items and match the styles that are trending. However, with the mass production of cheaper products made with less expensive materials and fibers, the environment has suffered severe consequences regarding mass waste and overflowing landfills. The American Chemical Society found that “since the 2000s, fashion production has doubled and it will likely triple by 2050; one survey found that 20 percent of clothing in the US is never worn; in the UK, it is 50 percent,” (Cho, Luddeni, Susow, & Walsh, 2021). There is also a concern for water usage, as Renee Cho found that “global fashion also consumes 93 billion metric tons of clean water each year, for example, one kilogram of cotton used to produce a pair of jeans can consume 7,500 to 10,000 liters of water—the amount a person would drink over 10 years,” (Cho, Luddeni, Susow, & Walsh, 2021).

Recent generations have emphasized the importance of a healthy environment, and certain brands such as American Eagle have become more popular and respected by making this a priority. This company, as well as many others, uses recycled fabric and blends to create their

apparel, while also attempting to avoid mass production at extremely low prices. Many companies that set their target market as middle-income customers do so in order to produce quality products that will not result in waste.

The brands and products that social media influencers choose to promote are a direct reflection of their presence and platform. A large fashion company known as Shein has grown as a strictly online store through TikTok alone. This brand produces apparel for an extremely low price with cheap materials and is now known as the head of fast fashion. Fast fashion has become a negative topic on social media platforms, as it refers to the mass production of products and waste in regard to the negative impacts that this has on the environment. Shein grew at a very fast rate and, according to Dilys Williams, a writer for The Guardian, even “overtook Amazon as the most downloaded shopping app in the US last year, underlining how its use of digital marketing has helped it overtake rivals so adeptly,” (Williams, 2022). TikTok content creators began to get backlash from posting Shein and other similar fast-fashion brands such as Zaful and Romwe, as their followers started to change their opinions on the morals of those who supported these brands. In her article, Williams stated “There are much better ways of making a living and representing yourself than through clothes that are environmentally and socially destructive,” (Williams, 2022). .

## **Conclusion**

Textiles, fabric, fibers, and materials have created the fashion industry and today’s society has been extremely affected by new forms of advertisement through social media. The textile industry has become a crucial aspect of sale rates, as well as public appearances for influencers that promote various products. The importance of textiles and materials goes beyond



comfort and aesthetic, especially when being promoted on social media through such large platforms. The effects that these fibers have on the environment have become a pressing issue in the fashion industry, which has made individuals desire more knowledge of the textile industry before making a purchase. The relationship between textiles and fashion is direct, and the influence that social media advertisement has had on both industries is expected to continue to grow. Both natural and synthetic fibers have contributed to apparel, and it is necessary for the customer and the producer of the product to evaluate the most appropriate material when acquiring clothing.

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