WWW.IJRPR.COM

International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Fluidity in Fashion: An Analysis of Generational Shift

Priti Jhawar[1], Dr Rahul Kushwaha[2]

[1]PG Scholar, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Daman
[2]Assistant Professor, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Daman

ABSTRACT:

Fashion industry has always been very vigorous with its trends and designs. Gender fluid fashion is nothing new. Throughout history, different cultures and eras have always experimented with gender expression through fashion, reflecting their own ideas about gender. People of different age groups, genders find interest in this sector especially the younger generations. This study aims to understand how the consumers of different generations perceive unisex labels on items of fashion and how they are getting motivations to adapt to this change. This study targeted the population of some establishments including some NIFT campuses, with a sample size calculated with the help of Yamane's formula. This research paper investigates the gender-fluidity in this industry and the factors that lead to its impact on the targeted population through a mixed method approach. The results indicating how the use of gender inclusive labels makes more consumers to have a higher intention to buy from the brand, therefore establishing a positive opinion about that brand. The result of this research might help brands to identify and understand how to manoeuvre gender labels in order to appeal to different generations.

Keywords- *Gender-Fluid Fashion, Unisex Clothing, Generational Perceptions, Consumer Attitudes, Inclusivity in Fashion, Fashion Identity, Mixed-Method Research.*

Introduction:

Gender-fluid fashion refers to clothing designed to be worn by people of any gender. It's also known as unisex or gender-neutral fashion. It's a powerful movement that challenges and transcends traditional gender roles and stereotypes through fashion to a more comfort and versatile fashion. The design and marketing have long been influenced by gender, a notable factor in this industry. Yet, there has been a rising trend in fashion that is gender-fluid in recent years. In unisex, the prefix 'uni' is from the Latin word unus, meaning 'one' or 'single'. The term 'unisex' was first coined in the 1960s. This term was used to describe clothing and other items suitable for both genders, reflecting the era's increasing social interest in gender fluidity and blurring the gender boundaries in fashion. Icons like Yves Saint Laurent and Halston helped popularize this style in 1960s and 70s. These designers were not just dressing women in menswear; they were dressing them as themselves, in classic pieces that reflected their own gender-neutral wardrobes. Unisex clothing was a baby-boomer corrective to the rigid gender stereotyping of the 1950s, it was a reaction to the perplexing new roles imposed on men and women alike by World War II (Sex and Unisex: Fashion, Feminism, and the Sexual Revolution, Jo B. Paoletti. Indiana University Press, 2015). Young children had worn gender-neutral clothing and played with gender-neutral toys for decades before "unisex" became a buzzword.

In ancient India, we can observe the gradual transformation of clothing due to the influence of different rulers and sultans. And, if we drive back to the Vedic times, we can see that the clothing during that time was more towards adornment and ornamentation, often known as Shringar. It shares a mutual link not only with auspicious trends and traditions of the contemporary times but also has an intense meaning towards exploring oneself (Gender Neutral or Androgynous Fashion and Its History in India, Usha K, 2022). From the visuals of these times, we can see that the clothing was not very elaborate but very much had a fluidity that came into light as 'draped' clothing used by both genders. Throughout history, it can be clearly seen that men and women both celebrated 'shringar' equally and that reflected through monuments, scriptures and carvings across the era and in the upcoming eras also. Over the course of centuries, from the ancient to Mediaeval Era in India, we can again find fusion clothing and dressing originated with a blend of indigenous Indianness and the foreign influence that came along with the invasion of outsiders. India was going through a massive change and this change was brought by the westerners. This was the time when Indians were getting dressed to impress their English superiors. This liberalization towards clothing made the difference and that's where clothing became a gender game. The concept that humans are either male or female was deeply ingrained in Western Culture.

However, the terrain of fashion is undergoing a profound transformation, provoking and redefining these historical associations. In recent years, a change can be seen where designers are embracing the concept of gender-fluid fashion more openly leaving behind rigid definition of clothing as either feminine or masculine. Unisex clothing is an expanding market. Today, generations are willing to choose and style for themselves. It was also noticed that women were buying at men's department and vice-versa.

The fashion industry has been using gender binary as a market segmentation strategy for success for a long time. However, with the rising number of young generations view on gender identity, fashion brands require more information regarding consumer preferences about neutral clothing. With the shift in gender roles, the industry is experimenting with agender fashion. It also becomes a tool that will result in self-awareness which will eventually lead to gender-equality. If people can wear the same clothes, then they can also have same income, opportunities and recognition. With this, a generational shift can be seen and this shift moves away from historical limitation towards a more inclusive, fluid era driven by gen-z and millennials who regard gender as a customizable construct.

With the help of this research, we can see that the older generations have a more deep-rooted understanding of fashion as divided by gender. Whereas, the millennials and gen-z have grown up with digital environments and a more pliable view of identity, which naturally extends to their approach to fashion.

Objectives:

- To study the adaptation of gender-fluid fashion among consumers.
- To examine brands' influence on consumers' perception of unisex clothing.
- To compare attitudes of gen-z, millennials and gen-x towards gender-fluid fashion.

Literature Review:

According to Akdemir (2018), fashion is being used to break down out-of-date ideas about gender. It basically shows that when people wear clothes that aren't strictly "for men" or "for women," it challenges society's stiff rules. Fundamentally, fashion becomes a commanding tool for voicing your true self, beyond just male or female tags.

Usha K (IIAD,2022) described in her paper that while tracing the history of gender-fluidity in fashion, gradual transformation of clothing to distinctive gender clothing can be seen.

Song Jing (2023) enlightens in their paper that unisex clothing has become a powerful way to break down the physical blocks between genders. While society has become comfortable with women borrowing from the "men's" section, it still gets uncomfortable when men try the same with "women's" clothing, revealing a persistent double standard. But thanks to global culture and bold designers, the unisex drive is growing. Eventually, the future of fashion is moving toward more freedom and equality, where there are less rules for 'him' or 'her' and allowing clothes to be just about personal expression and what feels authentic to you, not gender.

Suradkar N (2024) wrote in her paper that gender-neutral fashion isn't a new movement in India—it's a return to tradition. While colonial rules later imposed sterner clothing norms, India's history is full of fluid styles that blurred gender lines. Today, designers are reviving this tradition, making clothes that let people express their true selves, not just follow old rules. It's a movement pushing fashion toward independence and inclusivity, one outfit at a time.

According to K. Archana Ranjan's Unisex Clothing Trends & Rationale, the unisex clothing trend is driven by growing gender roles and consumer desires for self-expression. For women, adopting masculine-coded styles imitates societal equality and a postmodern pursuit of independence and uniqueness, allowing them to personalize their identity. At the same time, men are increasingly engaging with fashion due to weakened gender stereotypes, leading to the rise of the metrosexual consumer who seeks authenticity and diversity through his clothing choices. Hence, unisex fashion aids as a tool for both genders to challenge traditional norms and articulate their own identity.

Priyadarshini Paitandy in "The Hindu" (2023) quoted Pranav Mishra, an advocate for gender-neutral fashion, "A dosa doesn't ask if a man or woman is going to eat it. Food is gender-neutral. It's the same with clothes. Fashion is also gender-neutral," and "We have been trained in design and it's the only medium through which we could communicate our voice"

With the help of Kınalı İ.'s article (2023, October 22), it was observed that in recent years the gender fluidity in fashion has gained momentum, emerging from the shadows to be normalised across the entire spectrum of genders. While embracing this change, gender-fluid fashion is breaking down barriers, fostering acceptance and reforming the world's discernment of beauty and individualism.

Janet Pearson (2020) said, the word, metrosexual, was being used frequently in Europe which was meant to describe that it's not about one's sexual orientation but rather a lifestyle choice It's all about selfcare and personal style, which is not limited to any particular gender.

Research Methodology:

To explore the purpose of this study comprehensively, a mixed method approach i.e. both quantitative and qualitative is being opted.

For the primary data, the study targeted a population from different establishments that includes some NIFT campuses as the main source as well as other fashion institutes including students, faculties and staff members. According to Yamane's formula, sample size of 329 has been collected which is sufficient for this study. Samples were collected for the survey through structured questionnaire, google forms.

And, for the secondary data, the study collected information or data from academic articles, online blogs, fashion trend reports, google scholar, press release and some other reliable sources. These sources helped build the conceptual framework and support the findings from primary data.

Data Analysis:

Statistics of Demographics:					
		Your generation:	**Gender identity:**	**Occupation:**	**Locality:**
N	Valid	329	329	329	329
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.13	1.25	1.29	1.81
Median		1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00
Mode		1	1	1	1
Std. Deviation		.396	.482	.714	.903
Skewness		3.172	1.707	2.404	.943
Std. Error of Skewness		.134	.134	.134	.134

(Table no. 1 Statistics wise respondents)

The data was collected from 329 respondents, with no missing answers for the variables "Your generation," "Gender identity," "Occupation," and "Locality." The average mean value is close to 1 matching the values of median and mode which are also 1. This suggests that the data is heavily concentrated in the first category of all four variables. The standard deviation values are low, especially for Generation (0.396), Gender (0.482), and Occupation (0.714). this means the responses were generally clustered around the first category and not very spread out but Locality (0.903) shows a bit more diversity. The skewness is positive for all four variables, which indicates the data is highly skewed to the right, meaning very few people chose higher numbered categories. In essence, the sample is not diverse and the data is strongly clustered around option 1 for all demographic variables.

Generation wise respondents:					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Gen-Z (born 1997-2012)	293	89.1	89.1	89.1
	Millennials (born 1981-1996)	29	8.8	8.8	97.9
	Gen-X (born 1965-1980)	7	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	329	100.0	100.0	

(Table no. 2 Generation wise respondents)

Most of the samples are Gen-Z, making up a large majority with 89.1% (293 people). This shows that the sample is heavily dominated by younger participants born between 1997 and 2012. A smaller portion, 8.8% (29 people), are Millennials, while only 2.1% (7 people) fall into Gen-X. Overall, the data clearly indicates that the survey responses mainly reflect the views and experiences of Gen-Z, with very limited representation from older generations.

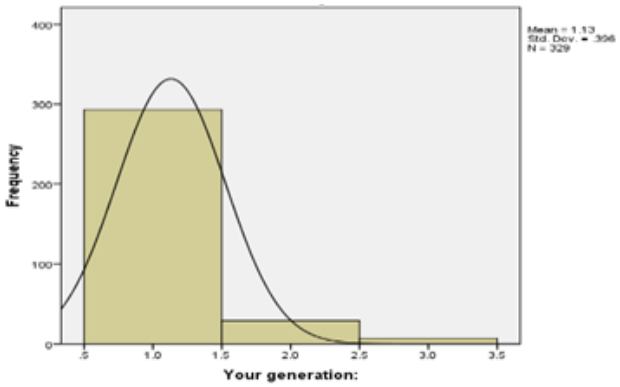

Figure 1 - Generation wise respons

Gender wise respondents:					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Female	253	76.9	76.9	76.9
	Male	69	21.0	21.0	97.9
	Prefer not to say	7	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	329	100.0	100.0	

(Table no. 3 Gender identity wise respondents)

The survey was mainly responded to by female respondents, who make up 76.9% (253 people) of the total sample. Male respondents account for 21% (69 respondents), forming a smaller portion of the group. A very small number of participants, 2.1% (7 respondents), chose 'Prefer not to say'. Overall, the data shows that the survey responses are largely inclined towards female perceptions, with males and non-disclosed gender identities being significantly less represented.

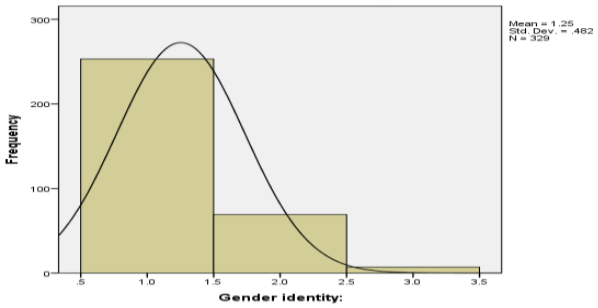

Figure 1- Gender identity wise response

Occupation wise respondents:					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Student	278	84.5	84.5	84.5
	Faculty or staff	15	4.6	4.6	89.1
	Other profession	29	8.8	8.8	97.9
	Unemployed	7	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	329	100.0	100.0	

(Table no. 4 Occupation wise respondents)

Most respondents in the survey are students, taking up a majority with 84.5% (278 people). 4.6% (15 people) are faculty or staff, and 8.8% (29 people) belong to other professions. A very small group, 2.1% (7 people), reported being unemployed. Overall, the data shows that the survey largely reflects the opinions of students, with limited representation from other professionals and unemployed individuals.

Figure 2- Occupation wise response

Locality wise respondents:					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Metropolitan	150	45.6	45.6	45.6
	Urban	115	35.0	35.0	80.5
	Semi-urban	42	12.8	12.8	93.3
	Rural	22	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	329	100.0	100.0	

(Table no. 5 Locality wise respondents)

Most of the respondents live in metropolitan areas, making up 45.6% (150 people) of the sample. Another 35% (115 people) are from urban areas. Smaller portions of respondents come from semi-urban regions 42 people (12.8%,) and rural areas 22 people (6.7%,). Overall, the data shows that the survey largely captures the perspectives of people living in metropolitan and urban areas, with moderately fewer responses from semi-urban and rural populations.

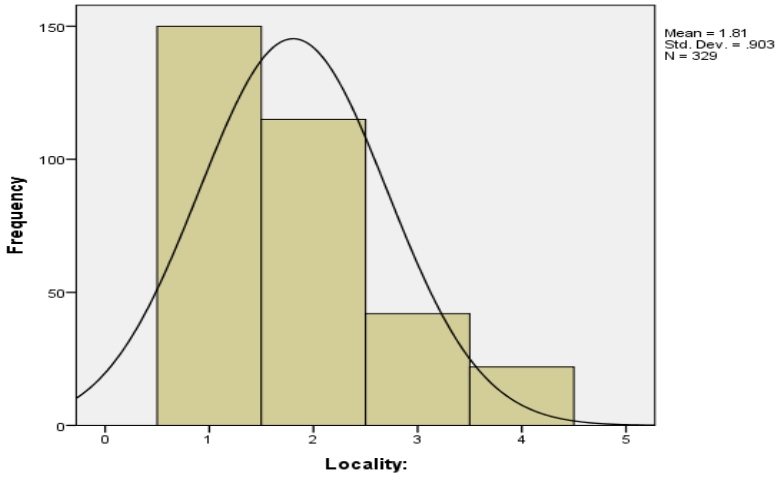

Figure 3- Locality wise response

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Generation and Impression on Unisex Fashion

		When you hear 'unisex fashion', what's your first impression?				Total
		Fashion for everyone, regardless of gender	Comfort/Fit	A marketing trend	Affordable	
Your generation:	Gen-Z (born 1997-2012)	253	30	7	3	293
	Millennials (born 1981-1996)	21	6	2	0	29
	Gen-X (born 1965-1980)	4	1	2	0	7
Total		278	37	11	3	329

(Table no. 6 Locality wise respondents)

Most of the people from all the generations associate unisex fashion with "fashion for everyone, regardless of gender." 253 out of 293 Gen-Z respondents chose the above-mentioned option. 21 out of 29 Millennials showed a similar pattern. Though Gen-x responses are very few in number, 4 out of 7 respondents share the same perception. Overall, all age groups, especially Gen-Z have a consistent belief that unisex fashion is primarily about inclusivity not trends or pricing.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	19.448[a]	6	.003
Likelihood Ratio	10.976	6	.089
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.391	1	.004
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 7 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square test shows a Pearson Chi-Square value of 19.448 with a p-value of .003, which is indicating a statistically significant (below 0.05) relationship between the variables. In other words, the responses were not random.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Generation and Where They Mostly Come Across The Idea of Unisex Fashion

		Where do you mostly come across the idea of unisex fashion?				Total
		On social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, YouTube etc.)	Through friends/family	In magazine/TV	While shopping (in stores or online)	
Your generation:	Gen-Z (born 1997-2012)	214	20	9	50	293
	Millennials (born 1981-1996)	21	2	3	3	29
	Gen-X (born 1965-1980)	2	0	1	4	7
Total		237	22	13	57	329

(Table no. 8 Locality wise respondents)

Among all the options, social media is the main place where most of the respondents from all the generations encounter the idea of unisex fashion. 237 out of 329 respondents which is over 72% selected the first option. Among Gen-Z respondents, 214 chose it. 57 people came across the concept while shopping, mostly consists of Gen-Z respondents again. Only few came across the concept through friends or family (22 people) or through magazines/TV (13 people). Overall, the table shows that social media is the dominant and most influential channel through which unisex fashion gets most exposure.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	15.054[a]	6	.020
Likelihood Ratio	12.124	6	.059
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.880	1	.049
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 9 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square test results show a Pearson Chi- Square value of 15.054 with a p-value of .020, indicating a statistically significant (below 0.05) relationship between generation and where people come across unisex fashion.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Generation and Intentionally Choosing a Unisex Item Over a Gender Specific One by Them

		Have you ever intentionally chosen a unisex item over a gender specific one?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Your generation:	Gen-Z (born 1997-2012)	179	58	56	293
	Millennials (born 1981-1996)	9	10	10	29
	Gen-X (born 1965-1980)	1	5	1	7
Total		189	73	67	329

(Table no. 10 Locality wise respondents)

Most respondents have intentionally chosen a unisex item over a gender specific one. Out of 293 Gen-Z respondents, 179 selected Yes, which makes them the most open to unisex choices and 58 selected No and 56 selected Not sure, which shows some variation within the generation. Responses from millennials are more evenly split, with 9 selecting Yes, and 10 each choosing No and Not sure. 5 out of the 7 Gen-X respondents selected No. In short, the younger generations, especially Gen-Z, are far more likely to intentionally choose unisex fashion.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	20.041[a]	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	18.145	4	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.697	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 11 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square test result shows a Pearson Chi-Square value of 20.041 with a p-value of 0.000, which indicates a highly significant (below 0.05) relationship between generation and whether people intentionally select unisex items.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Gender Identity and Their Familiarity With The Term 'Gender-Fluid Fashion'

		How familiar are you with the term 'gender-fluid fashion'?					Total
		Extremely familiar	Moderately familiar	Neutral/Unsure	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar	
Gender identity:	Female	78	93	41	25	16	253
	Male	20	19	12	4	14	69
	Prefer not to say	6	0	1	0	0	7
Total		104	112	54	29	30	329

(Table no. 12 Locality wise respondents)

With the help of this table, it can be seen that most of the respondents, irrespective of their gender identity, have at least some levels of familiarity with the term 'Gender-fluid Fashion'. 93 out of 253 female respondents are moderately familiar with the term and 78 are extremely familiar which shows strong awareness. Though in smaller numbers, males also show familiarity with 20 extremely familiar and 19 moderately familiar. A noticeable portion of both males and females fall into the neutral/unsure category (41 females and 12 males), indicating that some respondents are still uncertain about the concept. Slightly higher among females (16) than males (14), few people are not at all familiar. Participants who selected "prefer not to say" mostly reported being extremely familiar (6), with almost no responses in other categories. In essence, the data suggests that females show higher familiarity, while males show moderate awareness and only few are unfamiliar.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	24.442[a]	8	.002
Likelihood Ratio	23.930	8	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	.444	1	.505
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 13 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square results show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 24.442 with a p-value of 0.002, which indicates a statistically significant (below 0.05) association between gender identity and familiarity with the term gender-fluid fashion.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Gender Identity and Visibility of Unisex Fashion in their Local Environment

		How visible is unisex fashion in your local environment (e.g. city, campus, community etc.)?			Total
		Very visible (people wear it openly)	Somewhat (notice it occasionally)	Not very visible (it's rare or subtle)	
Gender identity:	Female	112	115	26	253
	Male	18	40	11	69
	Prefer not to say	3	4	0	7
Total		133	159	37	329

(Table no. 14 Locality wise respondents)

The visibility of unisex fashion differs across gender identities but most of the respondents feel it is at least present int their environment. Among female respondents, 112 out of 253 (44.3%) think unisex fashion is very visible, 115 (45.5%) think it is somewhat noticeable, while 26 (~10.3%) feel it is not very visible. Among male respondents, 18 out of 69 (26.1%) find it very visible, 40 (~58%) notice it occasionally and 11 (15.9%) feel it is not very visible. For those who chose not to disclose their gender, 3 out of 7 (42.9%) say it is very visible and 4 (57.1%) say it is somewhat noticeable. Out of all

the respondents, 133 (40.4%) see unisex fashion as very visible, 159 respondents (48.3%) notice it occasionally, and 37 (11.2%) think it is not very visible, which shows that unisex fashion is recognized in most local environments.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	8.668[a]	4	.070
Likelihood Ratio	9.708	4	.046
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.823	1	.051
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 15 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square test result shows a Pearson Chi-Square value of 8.668 with a p-value of 0.070, indicating that the relationship between gender identity and the visibility of unisex fashion is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Gender Identity and How Often Gender-Fluid Items are Worn by them

		How often do you wear gender-fluid items?					Total
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Gender identity:	Female	21	116	79	34	3	253
	Male	1	9	19	24	16	69
	Prefer not to say	1	4	2	0	0	7
Total		23	129	100	58	19	329

(Table no. 16 Locality wise respondents)

Among female respondents, 116 out of 253 (45.8%) say they wear gender-fluid items often, and 79 (31.2%) wear them sometimes, while only 3 (1.2%) say they never wear them. Male respondents show a slightly different pattern: only 9 out of 69 (13.0%) wear gender-fluid items often, while 19 (27.5%) wear them sometimes, and a notable 16 (23.2%) say they never wear them. Those who prefer not to say their gender identity mostly wear them often (4 out of 7, 57.1%) or always (14.3%). Overall, out of all 329 respondents, 129 (39.2%) wear gender-fluid items often, 100 (30.4%) wear them sometimes, and only 19 (5.8%) say they never do. This table shows clearly that gender-fluid items are worn frequently, mostly by females.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	81.033[a]	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	74.394	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	35.953	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 17 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square test result shows that the Pearson Chi-Square value is 81.033 with a p-value of 0.000, which clearly indicates a strong and highly significant relationship between gender identity and how often people wear gender-fluid items.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Gender Identity and Challenges that Prevent them from Wearing Unisex Items.

		What challenges prevent you from wearing them?			Total
		Social judgement	Fit/sizing/availability	Price	
Gender identity:	Female	39	165	49	253
	Male	25	36	8	69
	Prefer not to say	1	5	1	7
Total		65	206	58	329

(Table no. 18 Locality wise respondents)

Among the female respondents, the biggest challenge is fit/sizing/availability, chosen by 165 out of 253 (65.2%), followed by price at 49 respondents (19.4%), while 39 (15.4%) thinks social judgment is the issue. For male respondents, social judgment is a much bigger concern: 25 out of 69 (36.2%) selected it, compared to 36 (52.2%) who chose fit/sizing/availability, and 8 (11.6%) who chose price as a challenge. Those who preferred not to disclose their gender also mostly reported fit/sizing/availability issues (5 out of 7, 71.4%). Overall, across all 329 respondents, the most common challenge is fit/sizing/availability (206 people, 62.6%), followed by social judgment (65 people, 19.8%), and then price (58 people, 17.6%).

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	15.465[a]	4	.004
Likelihood Ratio	14.036	4	.007
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.146	1	.004
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 19 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square test results show the Pearson Chi-Square value is 15.465 with a p-value of 0.004, which indicates a statistically significant (below 0.05) relationship between gender identity and the challenges that prevent people from wearing gender-fluid items.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Occupation and The Visibility of Unisex Fashion in Local Environment.

		How visible is unisex fashion in your local environment (e.g. city, campus, community etc.)?			Total
		Very visible (people wear it openly)	Somewhat (notice it occasionally)	Not very visible (it's rare or subtle)	
Occupation:	Student	122	127	29	278
	Faculty or staff	3	11	1	15
	Other profession	7	17	5	29
	Unemployed	1	4	2	7
Total		133	159	37	329

(Table no. 20 Locality wise respondents)

Among students, who form the major group, 122 out of 278 (43.9%) say unisex fashion is very visible, 127 (45.7%) notice it occasionally, and 29 respondents (10.4%) say it is not very visible. Among faculty or staff, most (11 out of 15 i.e., 73.3%) notice it occasionally, while only 3 (20%) see people wear it openly. For those in other professions, 17 out of 29 (58.6%) say it is somewhat noticeable, with smaller numbers seeing it as very visible (24.1%) or not very visible (17.2%). Among the unemployed, 4 out of 7 (57.1%) notice it occasionally, while 2 (28.6%) say it is rare. Overall, across all 329 respondents, 40.4% see unisex fashion as very visible, 48.3% notice it occasionally, and 11.2% find it not very visible.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	11.787[a]	6	.067
Likelihood Ratio	11.891	6	.064
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.248	1	.004
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 21 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square test result shows a Pearson Chi-Square value of 11.787 with a p-value of .067, which means the relation between occupation and the visibility of unisex fashion is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Occupation and Their Comfortability While Wearing Gender-Neutral Clothing

		How comfortable are you with wearing gender-neutral clothing?					Total
		Very comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Neutral	Somewhat uncomfortable	Very uncomfortable	
Occupation:	Student	113	46	45	28	46	278
	Faculty or staff	2	3	5	5	0	15
	Other profession	11	6	4	3	5	29
	Unemployed	3	0	1	3	0	7
Total		129	55	55	39	51	329

(Table no. 22 Locality wise respondents)

Among students, about 40.6% or 113 feel very comfortable, 16.5% or 46 feel somewhat comfortable, and neutral at 16.2% or 45, while around 10.1% or 28 feel somewhat uncomfortable and 16.5% or 46 feel very uncomfortable. Among faculty or staff, about 33% comfortable, 33% neutral, and 33% somewhat uncomfortable, and none reporting strong discomfort. Among those in other professions, 11 (3.3%) were very comfortable, 6 (1.8%) were somewhat comfortable, and 4 (1.2%) were neutral; a smaller number felt somewhat uncomfortable (3; 0.9%) or very uncomfortable (5; 1.5%). Among the unemployed respondents, 3 (0.9%) were very comfortable, 1 (0.3%) was neutral, and 3 (0.9%) felt somewhat uncomfortable.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	22.964[a]	12	.028
Likelihood Ratio	23.643	12	.023
Linear-by-Linear Association	.180	1	.672
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 23 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square test result shows a statistically significant relationship between occupation and comfort with wearing gender-neutral clothing, because the p-value for the Pearson Chi-Square is 0.028, which is less than 0.05.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Occupation and How Often Gender-Fluid Items are Worn by Them

		How often do you wear gender-fluid items?					Total
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Occupation:	Student	19	119	85	43	12	278
	Faculty or staff	0	4	1	6	4	15
	Other profession	2	5	13	6	3	29
	Unemployed	2	1	1	3	0	7
Total		23	129	100	58	19	329

(Table no. 24 Locality wise respondents)

Among the students, 119 students (43%) said they wear gender-fluid items often, 85 (31%) said sometimes, and 43 (15%) said rarely. Only 19 students (7%) always wear them, while 12 (4%) said never. Among faculty/staff, only 4 people (27%) said often, and 6 (40%) said rarely, with 4 (27%) saying never, while 1 said sometimes. For respondents from other professions, 13 (45%) wear them sometimes, and the unemployed respondents are in small numbers but a few wears gender-fluid items always (n=2) or often (n=1), 3 wear it rarely.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	38.775[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	33.429	12	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.196	1	.013
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 25 Locality wise respondents)

The chi-square test result shows, The Pearson Chi-Square value is 38.775 with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between occupation and how often people wear gender-fluid items.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Locality and Visibility of Unisex Fashion in Their Local Environment

		How visible is unisex fashion in your local environment (e.g. city, campus, community etc.)?			Total
		Very visible (people wear it openly)	Somewhat (notice it occasionally)	Not very visible (it's rare or subtle)	
Locality:	Metropolitan	76	62	12	150
	Urban	38	62	15	115
	Semi-urban	11	25	6	42
	Rural	8	10	4	22
Total		133	159	37	329

(Table no. 26 Locality wise respondents)

In metropolitan areas, 76 respondents (50.7%) said unisex fashion is very visible, 62 (41.3%) notice it occasionally and 12 (8%) said it is not very visible. In urban areas, 38 out of 115 (33%) find it very visible, 62 (53.9%) see it occasionally, and 15 (13%) say it's not very visible. In semi-urban locations, only 11 out of 42 (26.2%) see people wear it openly, 25 (59.5%) notice it occasionally, and 6 (14.3%) say it's rare. Rural areas show the lowest visibility: 8 out of 22 (36.4%) say it's very visible, 10 (45.5%) see it occasionally, and 4 (18.2%) say it's not very visible.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	14.046[a]	6	.029
Likelihood Ratio	14.107	6	.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.022	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 27 Locality wise respondents)

The chi-square test result shows a significant relationship between locality and how visible unisex fashion is in local environments, because the Pearson Chi-Square value is 14.046 with p = 0.029, which is below 0.05.

Crosstabulation of Respondents' Locality and What They Hope to Not Get Lost, if Unisex Fashion Became a Standard

		If unisex fashion became the standard in fashion brands, what would you hope doesn't get lost in the shift?					Total
		Personal expression	Cultural identity	Unique fits for different body types	Fashion as art, not just utility	Nothing - you think fashion should evolve this way	
Locality:	Metropolitan	34	23	55	29	9	150
	Urban	17	17	56	12	13	115
	Semi-urban	10	9	12	7	4	42
	Rural	3	2	5	6	6	22
Total		64	51	128	54	32	329

(Table no. 28 Locality wise respondents)

Personal expression was selected by 34 people (22.7%) from metropolitan areas, 17 (14.8%) from urban areas, 10 (23.8%) from semi-urban and 3 people (13.6%) from rural areas. From metropolitan areas 23 (15.3%), urban 17 (14.8%), semi-urban 9 (21.4%) and from rural areas 3 (13.6%) respondents chose cultural identity. 55 (36.7%) respondents from metropolitan areas, 56 (48.7%) from urban areas, 12 (28.6%) from semi-urban areas, and 5 (22.7%) from rural areas chose option 3. 29 people (19.3%) from metropolitan areas, 12 people (10.4%) from urban, 7 people (16.7%) from semi-urban and 6 people (16.7%) from rural areas selected option 4. And for option 5, 9 people (6%) from metropolitan areas, 13 (11.3%) from urban, 4 people (9.5%) from semi-urban and 6 people (27.3%) from rural areas chose this.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	24.381[a]	12	.018
Likelihood Ratio	22.733	12	.030
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.732	1	.053
N of Valid Cases	329		

(Table no. 29 Locality wise respondents)

The Chi-Square test result shows that there is a significant relationship between locality and what people hope doesn't get lost if unisex fashion becomes the standard. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 24.381 and the p-value is .018, which is below 0.05.

Findings

- The respondent group is largely dominated by Gen Z, who make up 89.1% of the sample. Millennials account for 8.8%, while Gen X contributes only 2.1%. This shows that the dataset is heavily youth-skewed.
- Most participants identify as female, with 76.9% selecting this option. Male respondents make up 21%**.** The gender distribution is clearly imbalanced, leaning strongly toward female respondents.

- A large majority of the respondents are students, making up 84.5%. Faculty or staff members form 4.6%, while 8.8% belong to other professions and 2.1% are unemployed. This indicates that the sample is mainly student-centred.
- Participants mostly belong to metropolitan and urban areas, with 45.6% from metros and 35% from urban locations. Semi-urban 12.8% and rural 6.7% respondents form a much smaller share.
- Across all age groups, the most common impression of unisex fashion is “fashion for everyone.” This is especially strong among Gen Z, where 76.9% chose it.
- Gen-Z respondents mostly come across unisex fashion on social media, with 65% of total respondents.
- Gen-Z is the most likely to intentionally choose unisex clothing, with 54.4% saying “yes.”
- Female respondents show the highest familiarity levels, with 23.7% extremely familiar and 28.27% moderately familiar.
- Females tend to perceive unisex fashion as more visible in their surroundings, with 34% females reporting it as “very visible.”
- Females wear gender-fluid clothing more frequently, with large numbers choosing “often” 35.26% or “sometimes” 24%.
- Females report fit and sizing issues 50.15% as their primary barrier, while males struggle more with social judgement 7.6%.
- Students find unisex fashion the most visible in their environment, with 37.1% reporting it as very visible**.**
- Students show high comfort levels with gender-neutral clothing, with 34.35% saying “very comfortable.”
- Students wear gender-fluid items more often than other groups, with 36.17% choosing 'often' and 25.84% choosing 'sometimes'.
- Visibility is highest in metropolitan areas, where 23% said unisex fashion is “very visible.” Urban areas see more “somewhat visible” responses 18.84%.
- Across all localities, the biggest concern is keeping unique body-type fits alive, chosen by 38.91%.

Limitations:

1. The study was conducted within a set time limit; responses were collected from the participants available during that time and do the analysis accordingly.
2. While collecting data, it was difficult to find samples from all genders more equally. The survey was slanted more towards female than others.
3. While collecting data, it was difficult to find samples from all generations more equally. The survey was slanted more towards Gen-Z and Millennials than Gen-X.

Conclusion:

This survey clearly shows a shift in different generations, how people view and adopt gender-fluid fashion. gender-fluid fashion is booming among younger, urban students, which is driving higher brand attraction through inclusive labelling, though challenges like fit and societal standards continue, brands should prioritize this to seize the Gen-Z, Millennial markets while addressing generational and gender gaps for broader adoption. Sample limitations suggest caution in generalizing to older or rural groups. Overall, this study highlights that gender-fluid fashion is not just a passing trend but a reflection of evolving identity expression, mostly driven by the younger generations who prioritise comfort, inclusivity.

References:

1. Sex and Unisex: Fashion, Feminism, and the Sexual Revolution Jo B. Paoletti. Indiana University Press, 2015. (2017). The Journal of American Culture.
2. Iiad. (2025, January 27). *Introduction to androgynous clothing & fashion & its History | IIAD*. IIAD. https://www.iiad.edu.in/the-circle/gender-neutral-or-androgynous-fashion-and-its-history-in-india/
3. Akdemir, Nihan. (2018). Deconstruction of Gender Stereotypes Through Fashion. European Journal of Social Science Education and Research. 5. 185. 10.26417/ejser.v5i2.p185-190.
4. Song, Jing. (2023). The Development of Unisex Clothing. Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences. 8. 2543-2547. 10.54097/ehss.v8i.5028.
5. Suradkar, N. (2024). Ancient Drapes to Modern Statements: A Comprehensive Study of Gender-Neutral Fashion in India. Ideas.
6. RANJAN, K. A. R. C. H. A. N. A. Unisex Clothings Trends & Rationale.

7. Paitandy, P. (2023, June 16). *Gender-neutral fashion: The next big thing in India*. The Hindu. https://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/gender-neutral-fashion-the-next-big-thing-in-india/article66963610.ece

8. Kınalı, İ. (2023, October 22). *BREAKING THE RULES: GENDER INEQUALITY IN FASHION INDUSTRY.* Prev. https://prev.shop/blogs/plant-revolution/breaking-the-rules-gender-inequality-in-fashion-industry

9. Pearson, Janet. (2020). Smart, Casual, Unisex: Can We Have Gender Equality in Twenty-First Century Fashion and Dress?. 10.1007/978-3-030-26570-0_11