An Examination of Individual Differences in Italian and American Fashion Cultures: Past, Present, and Projections for the Future

Abstract
What does it mean for a nation to be a “global icon” in the fashion world and how exactly do they get there? Today, both the United States and Italy are part of the leading nations in the fashion world, yet the two countries have significantly different histories and cultures. By examining the individual histories, cultures, and global interactions of Italy and the United States, a pattern emerges for the manner in which a nation rises to power in the fashion industry. Important historical events tend to result in sociological and psychological responses and changes within a society. Consequently, individual differences in fashion culture correspond to the major political and cultural events throughout the course of a nation’s history. How can we use the histories of Italy and the United States to understand the method in which they came to be global fashion icons today, and how can this knowledge be used to make predictions for the future of the fashion industry? These are the questions this paper seeks to answer.

Fashion design has been used by various groups of people over the course of history to outwardly express their thoughts and emotions regarding political and social climates of the time. The United States and Italy are two nations that not only influence fashion for many others, but they also have a stronghold on the direction of current social and political climates. The first task is to examine the complete history of each nation, identifying the major political and cultural events that sparked changes in society and consequently influenced fashion design. The second task is to examine the present-day fashion cultures of Italy and the United States, while considering their global interactions and influences on each other. The third and final task is to use historical evidence to develop and propose predictions for the future of the fashion industry on a global scale and within each nation.

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Spaniards, Italians and Arabs will ignore the passing of time if it means that conversations will be left unfinished. For them, completing a human transaction is the best way they can invest their time. For an Italian, time considerations will usually be subjected to human feelings. "Why are you so angry because I came at 9:30?" he asks his German colleague. "Because it says 9:00 in my diary," says the German. Cultures observing both linear and cyclic concepts of time see the past as something we have put behind us and the future as something that lies before us. In Madagascar, the opposite is the case (see Figure 4.7). The Malagasy imagine the future as flowing into the back of their heads, or passing them from behind, then becoming the past as it stretches out in front of them. The present study sought to build on this work by examining the influence of individual difference traits on preference for contemporary heavy metal, operationalized by computing a composite index of liking for 10 heavy metal tracks by contemporary bands that fit the New Wave tag (Sharpe-Young, 2005). In a similar vein, there were no significant differences in preference for the clips between White and non-White participants, t(412) = 1.61, p = .109, d = 0.16. Second, future research would do well to include measures with improved validity and reliability (e.g., compared with our single-item measure of religiosity) and a wider range of individual difference traits.