

# THE EMOTIONAL VALUE OF TROUSER SILHOUETTE: FROM GEN Z AND GEN Y CONSUMER PERSPECTIVES

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RESEARCH PROBLEM  
& GAP

**Understanding consumer emotional responses to clothing is crucial for the fashion industry. This study addresses a gap in contemporary fashion psychology by examining how trouser silhouettes influences the emotional value derived be Generation Z (ages 13 to 28) and Y (ages 29 to 44) (Beresford Research, 2025), two majorly influential consumer demographics (NIQ, 2024; Buchholz, 2024). Trouser silhouettes have evolved significantly over recent decades, with shifts in popularity from skinny to wider styles.**

Although existing research highlights the general influence of clothing on psychological state and behaviour (Moody et al., 2010; Adam and Galinsky, 2012), there is a distinct deficit in contemporary studies examining the nuances of these effects among younger generations,particularly pertinent regarding the rapid evolution of fashion trends and socio-cultural contexts shaping these generational cohorts (Sierra,2023). Furthermore, literature on symbolic meaning (Kawamura, 2023) and aesthetic appeal (Fublis, 2024) show limited exploration of the specific emotional reactions derived from specific design elements such as silhouette, emphasising the need to explore these studies overarching question.

This research explores the underlying psychological responses related to perceived comfort, trendiness, practicality, and body image.

RESEARCH AIM  
& OBJECTIVES

This study aims to identify both shared and distinct emotional associations with specific trouser styles across two generations. This analysis will provide insights into how generational cohort theory (Mannheim, 1952), trend cycles, and encllothed cognition (Adam and Galinsky, 2012) shape consumer preferences.

This study seeks to answer the central research question: How do the responses of Generations Y and Z differ in emotional value when presented with different trouser silhouettes?

RESEARCH METHOD

Building upon the identified research gap, a focussed study is utilised to investigate and compare the emotional value derived from specific trouser silhouettes by Gen-Z and Gen-Y. This is achieved by conducting quantitative surveys with 40 participants.

FINDINGS  
& DISCUSSION

This study provides crucial insights into the distinct emotional landscapes of Gen Z and Gen Y concerning trouser silhouettes. The identified preferences and aversions, particularly the move away from skinny styles and the embrace of wider, more comfortable options, alongside nuanced generational views on specific silhouettes like flares and balloon trousers, offer actionable intelligence for the fashion industry.

To effectively cater to these key consumer demographics, businesses must move beyond broad generalisations and adopt targeted strategies in product design, marketing, and retail that directly addresses the emotional values and associations uncovered in this research.

By embracing these generation-specific emotional drivers, brands can foster stronger connections with their target audiences, optimise their product offerings, and enhance their competitive advantage in a dynamic and emotionally driven market.

FUTURE RESEARCH  
DIRECTION

Future research could expand upon this study in several ways. Firstly, a larger, more diverse sample size, incorporating a wider range of demographics and geographical locations, could enhance the generalisability of the findings. Secondly, qualitative investigation including alternate sampling methods, interviews and focus groups, could enable deeper appreciation of the nuanced emotional experiences associated with different trouser silhouettes.