

## “DUALITY OF FASHION” – A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO FASHION ADAPTABILITY

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### **Abstract**

Fashion is volatile. It is almost impossible to define Fashion as a concept, in spite of ample of research and explorations being held. Fashion as a collective concept takes vouch of being accepted and followed by a group of people by and large. Irrespective of its span, every fashion is accepted as new and individuals choose their approach towards it. Fashion as related to humans, has a deep deep-rooted association with human psychology. Clothes, colors, textures have a direct impact on minds and it communicates certain traits of the wearer. Therefore, fashion followers use it as a tool to express their qualities, status and personality on the whole. The approach towards fashion is usually in two ways – attribute of an individual combined with fashion and attribute of an individual contrasted with fashion. In both the cases fashion is the focus but they are adapted positively or negatively according to the psyche of an individual. This approach as a concept is well supported by theories in psychology called “The theory of Attention & Taxonomy of Psychology”. Fashion has DUAL traits, which can be used effectively to enhance individual’s attributes.

**Key Words: Fashion, Human Psychology, Attribute, Adaptability, Duality.**

### **1. Introduction**

“Duality is the rule of Nature”. Everything in nature exists in two forms, with two attributes. Day and night, good and evil, male and female, north and south pole, and so on, it is seen that there is a two value system that exists in nature. The concept of duality is very impetus, which has been considered in Indian spirituality – the “Dvait philosophy”, that believes in Duality. Therefore DUALITY can be defined as the two faces of a coin, which are not same and possess distinct features but exist together. This is not a topic of conflict, rather it is brain storming. A research was conducted to explore the concept of Duality in Fashion Arena. It is well established that Fashion is so much related to human psychology and socio-cultural aspects. An attempt was made to study, if Fashion was also adapted with a dual approach. Any fashion evolution takes place as a concept, which evolves through stages to become a widely accepted fashion. Therefore, initially fashion is a concept and a product at a later stage and the journey from concept to product involves many technicalities and intricacies. As per the human psychology, every human being craves for attention and enjoys attention from his environment. To facilitate this, normally they make use of their personal traits and qualities. Fashion is one such tool which is majorly used to grab the attention. According to Paschler, a famous psychologist, who proposed the theory of Attention, said that “Every human wants to gain all attention towards him in his society. This is achieved by various means and is void of gender and age groups”. According to Taxonomy of psychology, the need of a human being is influenced by personality, cognition, behavior and situation. The adaptability to a fashion and approach towards it is greatly influenced by the above mentioned theories and they can be well substantiated. An exploratory research held to understand the dual attributes of fashion. It was explored that fashion is adapted in two ways, personal attributes combined with fashion and personal attributes contrasted with fashion; in both the cases the focus is to have all the attention, this approach was well substantiated by the theories of psychology.

### **2. Aim and Objective of the Study**

1. Exploring the dual nature of fashion, based on the theory of attention and taxonomy of psychology.
2. To understand the approach and adaptability to fashion.

### 3. Limitations of the Study

1. The study was based on observations and explorations.
2. Majorly iconic personalities from various spheres were considered for study.

### 4. Review of Literature

• Attention is defined as the mental process of concentrating effort on a stimulus or mental event: the limited mental energy or resource that powers the mental system. Attention can also be defined as the cognitive process of selectively concentrating on one aspect of the environment while ignoring other things. Attention has also been referred to as the allocation of processing resources. Examples include carefully listening to what someone is saying while ignoring other conversations in a room (the cocktail effect) or listening to a cell phone conversation while driving a car. In 1898 William James, in his textbook *Principles of Psychology*, remarked that “Everyone knows what attention is. It is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration of consciousness is of its essence. It implies withdrawal from something’s in order to deal effectively with others, and is a condition which has a real opposite in the confused, dazed, scatter brained state which in French is called distraction, and *Zerstreuung* in German. **Anderson, John R. (2004). Cognitive Psychology and its implications (6<sup>th</sup> Ed). Worth Publishers. P. 519.**

• Scientists report after studying a phenomenon they call encloded cognition: The effects of clothing on cognitive processes. It is not enough to see a doctor’s coat hanging in your doorway, said Adam D. Galinsky, a professor at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, who led the study. The effect occurs only if you actually wear the coat and know it’s symbolic meaning — that physicians tend to be careful, rigorous and good at paying attention. The findings, on the Web site of The Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, are a twist on a growing scientific field called embodied cognition. We think not just with our brains but with our bodies, Dr. Galinsky said, and our thought processes are based on physical experiences that set off associated abstract concepts. Now it appears that those experiences include the clothes we wear. **April 3, 2012, on page D3 of the New York edition with the headline: Mind Games: Sometimes a White Coat Isn’t Just a White Coat.**

### 5. Research Methodology

Research Method:	Scientific Method.
Research Design:	
Study :	Empirical study.
Case studies :	20.
Data collection method:	Primary data – through observation,
Secondary data:	articles, journals and books.

### Research Process

The research was carried in the following observation process in the following phases:  
Twenty iconic personalities from various spheres were selected for the study. Their personal qualities, dressing and style statements were studied and the same was analyzed to understand their approach in adapting to fashion, based on the theories of attention and psychology.

### 6. Findings

It was found that out of 20, 12 people had adapted to fashion by contrasting fashion to their personal attributes, where rest of them had directly adapted to the prevailing trend. In spite of being contrast to trend, the 12 people have been successful in creating their impact and impression on the minds of the people.



Fashion is complimenting to their personalities - B. JAYASHREE & SHOBANA (Performers)



Fashion is in contrast -GIRISH KARNAD, AZMIS' & RAJKUMAR (Actors)

RAJA HASSAN – sa re ga ma pa icon singer.

BEFORE



MID-WAY



AFTER



Rekha & Tabu (actresses)

Fashion used as a contrast and a Complimentary.



## 7. Analysis

The reason for the above approach was interpreted in the following way:

*Human psychology* and the tendency of humans to highlight their positive attributes either by complimenting it or by contrasting it with fashion is the reason for this duality.

## “FASHION ADAPTABILITY EQUATION”

**HIGHLIGHTING AN ATTRIBUTE** = **ATTRIBUTE + FASHION**  
(Fashion being complimentary)

**OR**

**ATTRIBUTE – FASHION**  
(Fashion being contrast)

### 6. Conclusion

Fashion is Dual in nature. It either compliments or contrasts. Fashion when becomes monotonous creates some parameter to highlight and when it gets highly sophisticated, simplicity becomes a key parameter for distinction. Following “Fashion” and Being “fashionable” is all psychology” Everything is Dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but different in degree; extremes meet; and so with the fashion!

## “OPPOSITE VALUES ARE COMPLIMENTARY”

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