

RESEARCH PAPER

# Market trend for women outerwear : A study of preferences of customers, retailers and forecasters

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## ABSTRACT

Fashion market research and solutions for the apparel market have become very popular with the spread of consumer culture throughout the world. In recent years, high competitiveness, market complexity and technological advances allow the trend process to be rapidly developed. Leading brands rely on trend reports of such researches for comprehensive information and analysis about consumer spending and shopping behaviour plus customized solutions that drive better business decisions. A number of specialized organizations/agencies have come up to help understand who is buying apparel and other products, and how, why and where they are shopping. Their forecasts are generally reliable and this is the reason that apparel industry is spending huge amounts on trend reports. The present paper aims to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities between preferences of women customers in the age group of 21 to 25 years, trends of the retailers and forecasters of women outerwear fall/ winter of 2011-2012. Results based on the responses of 133 customers, five retailers and a famous forecasting website show that the fundamental relationship between retailers and customers (consumers) has changed. Power has now shifted to consumers who have different needs, enabled by web and mobile technologies and the influence of social media. Retailers are challenged to adapt to these changes to maintain customer loyalty and they have to keep all kinds of merchandise whether in forecast or not if their consumers demand for it.

**Key Words :** Women outerwear, Customer, Retailer, Fashion, Fashion forecasting trend, Merchandise

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