

Young-Jin Hur (London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London);  
Nancy Etcoff (Harvard Medical School; Massachusetts General Hospital); Emmanuel Silva (LCF; Glasgow Caledonian University)

Email: [y.hur@fashion.arts.ac.uk](mailto:y.hur@fashion.arts.ac.uk)

Twitter: [@yjhur1885](https://twitter.com/yjhur1885)

### Executive Summary

- The preference for everyday clothing styles boils down to four factors (Feminine, Essential, Comfortable, & Trendy<sup>1</sup>), i.e. Everyday Clothing Preference Factors (ECPF)<sup>2</sup>.
- Each of the four ECPF correlates with certain individual differences measures and with certain color preferences.
- The work is published in *Empirical Studies of the Arts* (Hur, Etcoff, & Silva, 2023; please scan the QR code).

### Introduction

- Clothing oneself is one of the most common aesthetic activities. Also, the systematic, empirical study of preference dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fechner, 1876<sup>3</sup>). However, there is limited empirical research on clothing preference.
- Research aim:** to explore the preference structure of cut-based clothing styles and its correlations with certain person characteristics (e.g. personality) and clothing characteristics (e.g. preferred clothing color).
- The broad question:** "What does it mean that one likes (a certain style of) fashion, and how can this be predicted?"

### Methodology (Online Survey)

#### Sample

- Recruited via Prolific, a participant recruitment website.
- 500 adults living in the UK (307 female, 191 male, & two undisclosed gender).

#### Materials and Procedure

- Everyday clothing preference (yes/no):** 34 everyday clothing styles pooled from two online-shopping websites, inclusive of both men's and women's sections.
- Clothing color preference (yes/no):** 18 colors from Bakker, van der Voordt, Vink, de Boon, & Bazley (2015), plus beige.
- Individual differences:** fashion orientation, aesthetic activities, Big 5 personality traits, political orientation, and demographics.

### Footnotes and References

<sup>1</sup> The terminologies were derived with the advice of a female fashion expert with 5+ years of experience in the fashion and costume industry. They are intended to be descriptive and not prescriptive.  
<sup>2</sup> The ECPF is currently in the process of further validation.  
<sup>3</sup> Full references are available in the link to the published study (QR code).

### Results

- Across all participants, there was a range of preferences in terms of clothing style (Figure 1).
- Exploratory factor analysis (via varimax rotation and tetrachoric correlation) revealed the presence of four preference factors: Feminine, Essential, Comfortable, and Trendy, i.e. Everyday Clothing Preference Factors (ECPF; Table 1).
- The factor scores of the ECPF correlated with certain measures of individual differences and color preferences (Tables 2a & 2b).
- The results of the exploratory factor analysis were confirmed via confirmatory factor analysis, based on alternative measures of preference (see published paper for full results; QR code).

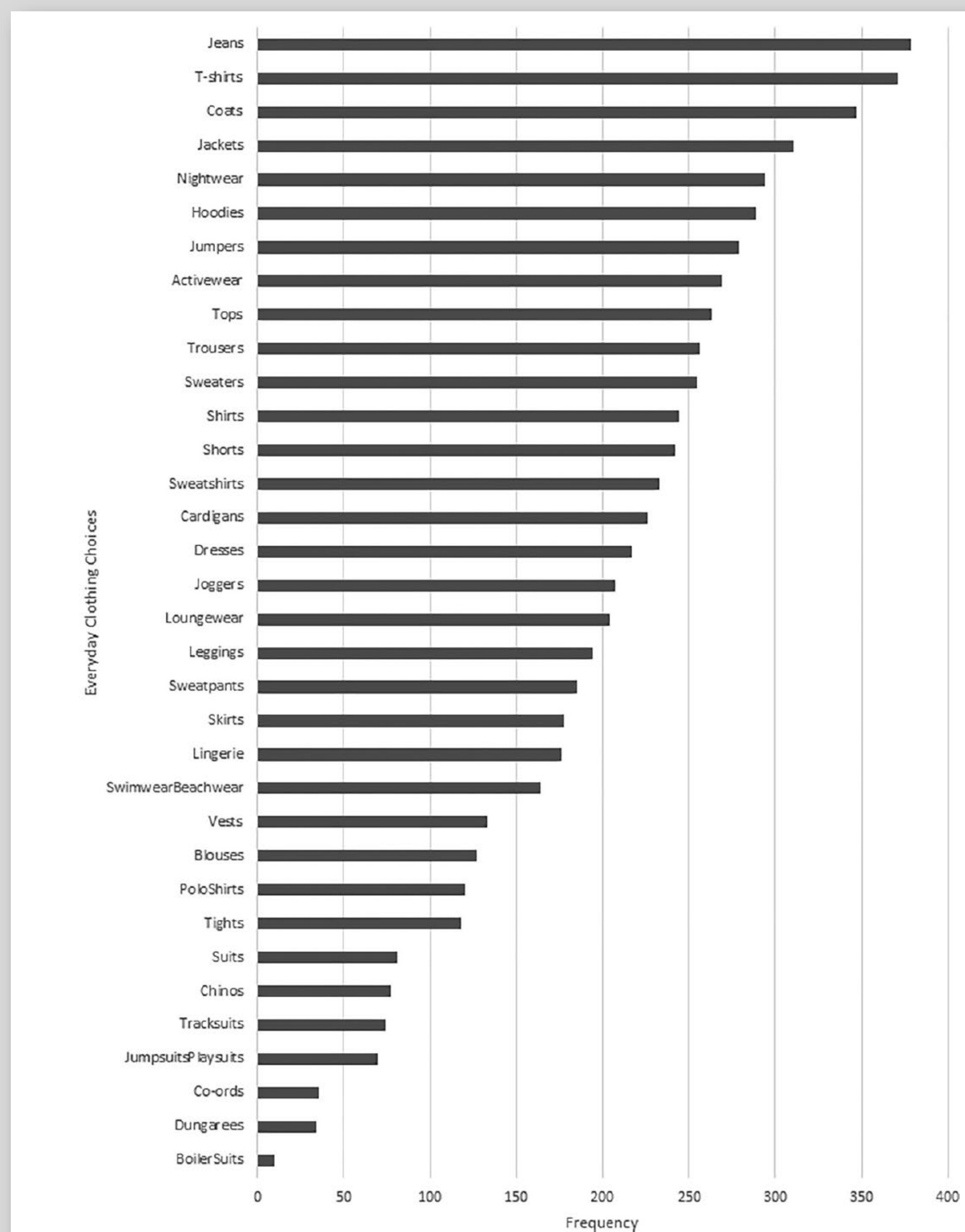


Figure 1. Frequencies of the various clothing one likes and owns.

Table 1. Rotated Factor Structure (Factor Loading) of Clothing one Likes and Owns (Exploratory Factor Analysis).

	Feminine	Essential	Comfortable	Trendy	Communality
Dresses	<b>.91</b>	-.08	.00	.19	.87
Skirts	<b>.86</b>	-.04	.09	.01	.76
Lingerie	<b>.83</b>	.03	.10	.07	.71
Tights	<b>.83</b>	.01	.16	.12	.73
Leggings	<b>.79</b>	-.13	.31	-.04	.73
Cardigans	<b>.78</b>	.03	.04	.01	.60
Blouses	<b>.77</b>	.21	.03	-.08	.64
Tops	<b>.75</b>	.23	.22	.05	.66
Polo Shirts	<b>-.64</b>	.47	.06	-.37	.77
Jumpsuits/Playsuits	<b>.63</b>	-.01	.39	.42	.72
Nightwear	<b>.62</b>	.01	.22	.04	.43
Co-ords	<b>.59</b>	.34	.03	.39	.61
Vests	<b>.51</b>	.20	.13	.10	.33
Jumpers	<b>.51</b>	.42	.21	.03	.48
Shirts	<b>-.17</b>	<b>.70</b>	.13	-.05	.54
Suits	<b>-.33</b>	<b>.67</b>	.00	.06	.56
Jackets	<b>.27</b>	<b>.65</b>	.19	.07	.54
Trousers	<b>.31</b>	<b>.64</b>	.10	.14	.54
Chinos	<b>-.36</b>	<b>.61</b>	.05	.11	.52
Coats	<b>.54</b>	<b>.59</b>	-.02	-.04	.64
Swimwear/Beachwear	<b>.51</b>	<b>.53</b>	.15	.13	.58
T-shirts	<b>.27</b>	<b>.52</b>	.34	-.28	.54
Jeans	<b>.20</b>	<b>.51</b>	.22	-.34	.47
Sweaters	<b>.30</b>	<b>.48</b>	.34	.17	.47
Shorts	<b>-.02</b>	<b>.48</b>	.31	.06	.33
Hoodies	<b>.16</b>	<b>.05</b>	<b>.81</b>	.05	.68
Sweatpants	<b>.15</b>	<b>.10</b>	<b>.81</b>	.02	.68
Joggers	<b>.09</b>	<b>.14</b>	<b>.80</b>	-.03	.68
Sweatshirts	<b>.21</b>	<b>.31</b>	<b>.66</b>	-.06	.58
Tracksuits	<b>-.02</b>	<b>.24</b>	<b>.63</b>	.13	.47
Activewear	<b>.06</b>	<b>.23</b>	<b>.55</b>	.14	.37
Loungewear	<b>.45</b>	<b>-.08</b>	<b>.51</b>	.06	.47
Boiler Suits	<b>.11</b>	<b>.21</b>	<b>.06</b>	<b>.83</b>	.75
Dungarees	<b>.30</b>	<b>-.08</b>	<b>.38</b>	<b>.65</b>	.66

Note. Marked in bold are loadings that are larger than .50. These bolds are for emphasis purposes only, to underscore the degree to which certain individual clothing items are particularly associated with particular Everyday Clothing Preference Factors. For the correlation analyses following this exploratory factor analysis, clothing items were not categorized into one of the four Everyday Clothing Preference Factors.

Table 2a. Correlates of the Everyday Clothing Preference Factors.

		Feminine	Essential	Comfortable	Trendy	
Color	White	<b>.20***</b>	<b>.19***</b>	<b>.18***</b>	-.04	
	Beige	<b>.16***</b>	<b>.17***</b>	<b>.14**</b>	.09*	
	Lilac	<b>.29***</b>	-.03	.06	.00	
	Violet	<b>.23***</b>	.00	-.02	.08	
	Dark blue	-.03	<b>.15***</b>	-.08	-.07	
	Blue	<b>.04</b>	<b>.20***</b>	.00	-.11*	
	Light blue	<b>.15***</b>	<b>.24***</b>	.11*	.02	
	Turquoise	<b>.16***</b>	.03	.03	.03	
	Green	.08	<b>.15**</b>	-.01	.08	
	Light green	<b>.14**</b>	.07	.02	.03	
	Yellow	<b>.18***</b>	.07	.05	.10*	
	Orange	<b>.14**</b>	.06	.09*	.07	
	Pink	<b>.39***</b>	.03	.07	.02	
	Red	<b>.14**</b>	.10*	.03	-.07	
	Dark red	<b>.16***</b>	<b>.13**</b>	.01	.01	
	Brown	<b>.14**</b>	<b>.17***</b>	.01	.13**	
	Gray	.06	.10*	.14**	.02	
	Black	.03	.05	.09*	.00	
Fashion Orientation	Brightness	.07	.05	.08	.03	
	Saturation	<b>.15***</b>	-.05	-.14**	.04	
	Color number	.07	-.04	-.04	.10*	
	Fashion leadership	<b>.21***</b>	.08	<b>.17***</b>	.10*	
	Fashion interest	<b>.30***</b>	.11*	<b>.20***</b>	.05	
	Importance of being well-dressed	<b>.16***</b>	<b>.15***</b>	.02	-.01	
	Antifashion attitude	-.10*	<b>-.16***</b>	-.04	-.01	
	Aesthetic Activities	Overall	-.09*	-.09	-.02	-.14**
		Popular music	<b>-.22***</b>	<b>-.14**</b>	-.10*	-.01
		Classical music	.10*	-.03	.05	-.13**
Visual arts		-.06	-.08	-.03	-.17***	
Literature		-.10*	-.03	.02	-.08	
Others	Performance art	-.04	-.01	-.02	-.08	
	Political orientation	-.11*	.14**	-.10*	-.11*	
	Age	.00	.06	<b>-.39***</b>	<b>-.18***</b>	
Gender	<b>.78***</b>	<b>-.27***</b>	.02	-.01		

Note. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001. Marked in bold are correlations significant at p < .001. For Aesthetic Activities, lower scores indicate a higher frequency of engagement. For Gender, male is coded as 1 and female as 2.

Table 2b. Correlates of the Everyday Clothing Preference Factors (Big 5).

		Feminine	Essential	Comfortable	Trendy
Extraversion	Overall	.04	<b>.22***</b>	.09*	-.02
	Sociability	<b>.16***</b>	<b>.17***</b>	.04	-.04
	Assertiveness	-.07	.14**	.08	.02
Agreeableness	Energy level	.00	<b>.21***</b>	.10*	-.03
	Overall	<b>.13**</b>	-.01	.00	-.05
	Compassion	<b>.19***</b>	-.08	.00	-.05
Conscientiousness	Respectfulness	.14**	.01	.00	-.07
	Trust	.01	.03	.00	-.01
	Overall	.08	<b>.18***</b>	-.05	-.13**
Negative emotionality	Organization	.04	<b>.17***</b>	-.02	-.12**
	Productiveness	.05	<b>.15***</b>	-.08	-.08
	Responsibility	.13**	.11*	-.02	-.12**
Open-mindedness	Overall	<b>.19***</b>	<b>-.24***</b>	.13**	.11*
	Anxiety	<b>.24***</b>	<b>-.21***</b>	.11*	.08
	Depression	.04	<b>-.23***</b>	.12**	.11*
Open-mindedness	Emotional volatility	<b>.23***</b>	<b>-.21***</b>	.12**	.10*
	Overall	.08	.11*	.04	.08
	Aesthetic sensitivity	.13**	.06	.02	.11*
	Intellectual curiosity	.02	.14**	.01	.03
Creative imagination	.02	.08	.08	.04	

Note. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001. Marked in bold are correlations significant at p < .001.

### Discussion: Towards an Empirical Aesthetics of Fashion

- Recently published in *Empirical Studies of the Arts* (Hur, Etcoff, Silva, 2023), the work presents one of the first studies to systematically explore style/cut-based fashion preference, based on a sizable number of participants and a representative range of everyday clothing styles.
- Contributions:** expands the scope of empirical aesthetics, where previous works explored preference behavior in a wide range of aesthetic and artistic activities (e.g. music, painting, film, etc.) but rarely fashion; expands understanding into (sustainable) buying behaviors.
- Limitations:** sampling scope limited to UK participants may limit generalizability; the ECPF can be further validated on a separate sample and by having an extended list of styles/cuts.
- Future directions:** may explore stimulus and social factors in experimental settings to explore the mechanisms of fashion preferences.

