University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

ScholarWorks @ UTRGV

Marketing Faculty Publications and Presentations

Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship

12-14-2022

Extending the diversity conversation: Fashion consumption experiences of underrepresented and underserved women

Lena Cavusoglu

Deniz Atik

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/marketing_fac

Part of the Marketing Commons

Received: 25 February 2021 | Revised: 12 November 2022 | Accepted: 25 November 2022

DOI: 10.1111/joca.12504

RESEARCH ARTICLE

the journal of consumer affairs WILEY

Extending the diversity conversation: Fashion consumption experiences of underrepresented and underserved women

Lena Cavusoglu[1] | **Deniz Atik**[2]

[1]Department of Management, Marketing, and International Business, Thomas School of Business, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Pembroke, North Carolina, USA

[2]Department of Marketing, Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Brownsville, Texas, USA

Correspondence
Lena Cavusoglu, Department of Management, Marketing, and International Business, Thomas School of Business, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Pembroke, NC, USA.
Email: lena.cavusoglu@uncp.edu

Abstract

This research brings in the voice of underserved and underrepresented women of various racial or ethnic origins and social classes, who have differing buying powers, sexual orientations, body shapes, and physical appearances, into the conversation of fashion diversity. Through a qualitative inquiry with 38 semi-structured in-depth interviews, the researchers analyzed the consumption experiences of diverse women to expose what the fashion scene is lacking. The study's main contribution is the depiction of overlooked diversity categories in fashion, such as the non-White and non-Black women of color, women of average sizes, and women with characteristics that the fashion industry has long seen as flaws. For women's physical and psychological well-being, the authors of this study hope to lead fashion producers and researchers into a new era of diversity and minimize certain consumer groups' exclusion through discrimination, isolation, and segregation.

KEYWORDS

fashion consumption, fashion diversity, underrepresented consumers

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2022 The Authors. *Journal of Consumer Affairs* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of American Council on Consumer Interests.

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

1 | INTRODUCTION

The shift of clothing from purely functional to fashion with expressive capacities has morphed dress into a tool used to establish and convey multiple meanings concerning identity and culture (Smith, 2012). Although many differences exist between people globally in terms of culture, tradition, fashion, and aesthetics, these differences have been assimilated by the fashion and beauty industries due to the influence of globalization. The Westernization of fashion and beauty has eroded beauty standards for women other than Caucasians (Isa & Kramer, 2003). Mainstream fashion media establish beauty standards, which include a narrow face with high eyebrows; large, round, light-colored eyes; high cheekbones; a thin and small nose; bigger and fuller lips; and straight hair (Cunningham et al., 1995). These features are also associated with Whiteness, such as having lighter skin (Taylor, 1999). Furthermore, thinness is seen as a prerequisite for feminine beauty (Mussell et al., 2000). As a result, women who fall outside the beauty standards, particularly those who have historically been socially stigmatized (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), are neglected in the fashion industry.

Although researchers from various academic disciplines, including sociology, psychology, and fashion theory, have investigated the concept of diversity in fashion, the main focus has been on the racial and size diversity of models on the catwalk and in mainstream media (e.g., Mcdermott & Pettijohn II, 2011; Mears, 2010; Schopf, 2016). The meaning of diversity in fashion has become stuck between discussions of White versus Black and skinny versus plus sized, and a holistic consumer research with a diverse sample still does not exist.

Nearly all of the very few consumer studies on race and size diversity that have been conducted have underlined the need for more studies on the experiences of diverse consumer groups (e.g., Christel, 2014; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013; Shin, 2013). Following this lead, our study examines the experiences of a greater range of female fashion consumers—not only in terms of body size and skin color, but also ethnicity, age and sexual orientation. Specifically, this study aims to answer the question: Regarding diversity, based on the experiences of female consumers, what are the deficiencies in the contemporary fashion scene, and how these gaps and shortcomings affect women? The fashion notion is discussed in more detail in the following sections, but it is important to also note here that this study concentrates solely on modern apparel and beauty/cosmetic routines (including makeup, hair, and skin care).

Women who are underserved lack access to products that meet their needs. For example, two-thirds of Americans are plus size. According to the New York Times, annual spending on larger-sized clothing accounts for barely 16% of sales in the $112 billion US apparel market (McKinnon, 2018). This is due to a scarcity of supplies. This also implies that plus size consumers do not have as many choices as their standard size counterparts. Even when the industry tries to cater to this consumer group, clothing tends to be less stylish because most attention is focused on apparel designed for standard size consumers (Colls, 2004). Therefore, this study is not just concerned with representation in terms of being able to see similar images of oneself in fashion magazines and advertising or on runways, but also with being properly served by the fashion market.

Our research's novelty derives from outlining the fashion consumption experiences of a divergent group of women who have not been studied before as listed above. The contextual limitations of the previous studies that did not employ a broad enough sample in terms of diversity allow this research to reveal the previously overlooked dynamics. In terms of originality and phenomenological contribution, studying a broader diversity sample allows us to better

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

define fashion diversity and understand the fashion consumption experiences of underrepresented and underserved women.

As the fashion industry has mainly targeted women throughout history, women have struggled for the burden of fitting in with the ideal beauty norms, more than men (Barnard, 2002). Therefore, we limited our study with the experiences of a diverse group of underrepresented and underserved women, with differing buying power, of various racial and ethnic origins, social classes, lifestyle characteristics, sexual orientations, body shapes, and physical appearances. Based on these consumers' experiences, we aim to extend the conversation on diversity and reveal areas of lack in today's fashion scene. By doing so, we hope to lead consumer researchers and industry professionals into a more inclusive conversation, and bring in the voice of underrepresented and underserved female consumers.

The following sections introduce fashion as the context of this research, the overall problem, and the problem's significance in consumer research. To tighten the focus, we define the concept of fashion and its scope in this study. After a thorough review of the previous studies on the discriminatory practices in the fashion industry, a brief synthesis of the literature followed by the literature gap and the contribution of this research are presented. Then, we delve into explaining the methodology, the data collection, and the analysis processes. After revealing the findings on the experiences of a broader range of diverse women in fashion, we conclude with the phenomenological contributions, practical implications, and future research suggestions.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 | The significance of fashion as the research context

As a result of modern consumers' desires for products to invent and reinvent their identities (Gabriel & Lang, 1995), fashion took on a new meaning, becoming all about belonging, being noticed, and self-expression (Adam & Galinsky, 2012). The primary function of self-expression is to identify the nature of a social situation (Goffman, 1959), facilitate social interaction, minimize social conflict, and relieve societal tension (DePaulo et al., 1996). The desire to obtain financial and social rewards (or avoid economic and social losses) drives another function of self-expression (Jones, 1990, p. 175). Furthermore, self-expression is self-construction, which involves forming a unique identity for oneself (Baumeister, 1982; Rosenberg, 1979), and self-verification, which consists in confirming an already established identity through specific consumption patterns (Swann, 1990).

Smith (1990) suggests that consumers subvert and re-appropriate current fashion trends by imagining, perceiving, presenting, and crafting a distinct positive identity using raw materials or the basis of outstanding pieces in their closet (Guy & Banim, 2000). This concept is referred to as "flourishing style crafting" by Baron (2013, p. 9), which is defined as "consciously investing time and effort in visually communicating our strengths, goals, tastes, and physical assets to the world." According to identity theorists, clothing is a kind of self-expression that reflects our character and impacts how others perceive our attitudes and behaviors, as well as how we perceive ourselves (e.g., Johnson & Downing, 1979; Zimbardo, 1969). Therefore, the seductiveness and importance of fashion as a research context derive from its power to offer consumers the possibility of becoming different, more attractive, or more potent through social and characteristic indicators (Crane, 2012).

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Since fashion presents such creative self-expression tools, it is especially important for individuals who have been marginalized due to factors such as gender, class, sexuality, race, and ethnicity (Wilson, 1985). As a result, it is critical to document underrepresented women's consumption practices by situating their everyday experiences with their bodies, selves, and identities at the center of the fashion context.

2.2 | The fashion concept

Before proceeding with the literature review on the lack of diversity in fashion, it is crucial to define "fashion" and its connotations in this study. Although several scholars tried to define fashion, still today, there is no stand-alone definition. In the twentieth century, the term consisted of all consumer goods, and things worn or applied on the bodies (Baudrillard, 1993). For instance, the fashion theorists Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) defined "fashion" as an assemblage of direct modifications of the body, which includes activities such as hair styling, skin coloring, tattooing, scarification and cicatrisation, ear piercing, breath scenting and hygienic activities, and supplements to the body by adding items such as garments, jewelry, and accessories. Therefore, Barnard (2002) suggested that all these practices are part of fashion, cannot be distinguished from each other and cannot be studied separately, apart from their relations to one another. However, historically, fashion has been associated mainly with clothing and personal adornment (body altering and enhancing practices), which are important tools for constructing one's desired look (Davis, 1992). Thus, in studying fashion diversity, the scope of this empirical research is narrowed down and limited to cosmetic products for makeup, hair and skin practices, and especially modern apparel.

2.3 | Lack of diversity in fashion

The overwhelming lack of representation of women who do not possess the specific qualities defined by the standards of the fashion and beauty industries causes a significant disparity and results in tremendous struggle for minorities and other women. A thorough review of the literature on fashion diversity reveals six major categories related to the lack of diversity in fashion: (1) social class, (2) body image, (3) race and ethnicity, (4) age, (5) limited abilities, and (6) sex and gender. In the next sub-sections, we briefly present these categories.

2.3.1 | Social class

Historically, dress has been a tool to display privilege and distinctions between social classes (Ewen, 1985). The fashion industry's ambition to separate superior high-end fashion from the lower-end mass market has always been prevalent. The high-end market has been considered as the editorial look with high prices and the small elite segment being the primary target while the undervalued mass-market fashion has been regarded as the commercial look with affordable prices and wide availability to the larger population (Mears, 2011). If lower-income individuals are willing to spend their limited funds on aspirational purchases from the editorial world, they have the chance to participate in the high-end fashion market. However, eventually, due

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Vallley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Vallley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

to their financial limitations, these lower-income individuals cannot participate in fashion to the same extent as those in the upper class (Schopf, 2016).

Fast fashion, which is currently dominating the fashion industry, is argued to diffuse the fashionable look to mass consumers, even to lower-income classes, by offering low-cost clothing collections that imitate the current luxury fashion trends (Joy et al., 2012). However, to access a cheaper version of high fashion does not necessarily provide the elite look. Elite groups that are affiliated with the editorial look often wear the perfect fitted apparel, expensive fabrics, high fashion brand name clothing and accessories, such as shoes, handbags, eyeglasses, and watches (Schopf, 2016) while mass consumers can only afford the cheaper and lower quality versions of fashionable products offered by fast fashion brands. Therefore, mass consumers do not really have access to high fashion due to budgetary concerns; social class differences are still prominent, and the fashion industry's ambition to separate superior high-end fashion from the lower-end mass market is persistent. Furthermore, fast fashion industry is also known to negatively influence consumer welfare by creating artificial newness and obsolescence, by putting an emphasis on material values, and by promoting idealized fashion beauty images, which, for many, result in reduced self-esteem, body image distortions, and reduced quality of life (Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik, 2020).

Regarding appearance, White and ultra-thin bodies are considered the editorial look, which is exclusively populated with middle- to upper-class consumers and producers. A stylish look, through haircut, makeup, perfectly lined-up teeth, and particularly a slender body, became more of a social class signifier than the dress itself. On the other hand, the commercial look is identified with the mass market and associated with the diversity of multiples races, classes, and body types (Schopf, 2016). Mears (2011) defined the commercial look as "slightly older, slightly more racially diverse, and ever so slightly fuller in figure" (p. 178). Therefore, fashion industry, whether fast fashion or high fashion, still promotes social class distinction, and the above-mentioned sharp contrast of the commercial and editorial looks leads to the next area that lacks diversity in fashion and discussed in the next section.

2.3.2 | Body image

The fashion industry is one of the most size/weight-biased institutions against fatness. Such biases include the limited presentation of larger bodies in fashion magazines, windows, advertisements, and runway shows; isolated plus-sized clothing sections in top or basement levels of retail stores; and dressing rooms that are designed for small-sized consumers (Colls, 2004). Through glamorized interpretations, the world of fashion presents beauty ideals that are fascinating for consumers while promoting instructions for weight management and physical appearance, and reinforcing these ideals as essential for women's self-esteem and social success (e.g., Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Wolf, 2002).

The availability of well-fitted female clothing for different body shapes and proportions is another problem (Howarton & Lee, 2010). As body shape is directly related to the fit of apparel products (Park et al., 2009), it is inevitable that consumers who do not possess the standardized, ready-to-wear body shape and proportions will have fitting concerns. Varying body shapes and dimensions among women result from age, gain or loss of body weight, diet and lifestyle changes, and ethnicity (Lee et al., 2007). Although women's body shape, size, proportions, and appearance range dramatically between different races and ethnicities (Lee et al., 2007), apparel

manufacturers primarily produce women's clothing that fit solely to the Western standard (a healthy-thin body) (Rice, 2010) or ideal figure (Makhanya et al., 2014).

In the fashion industry, the word "ideal" refers to desirable body shapes as a "standard of perfection" (Business Bliss Consultants FZE, 2018). From the Gibson girl figure of 1910 through the Hollywood starlet figure (small waist) of the 1950s to the super model figure of the 1980s, each decade witnessed the idealization of different body shapes. Since 2010, the ideal body form got inspired from the Kardashians and has been "bootylicious," which involves having a large bottom and a tiny waist (Grogan, 2017). More specifically, the "ideal" woman is 5′5″ tall, weighs between 121 and 130 pounds, and has a 25 or 26-inch waist (Hoff & Hancock, 2022). These arbitrary ideals are promoted by the fashion industry, and women who struggle to adhere to these rigorous body measurements are set up for body dissatisfaction.

A body that differs in shape and size from the standardized ideal not only experience body dissatisfaction but also problems with finding and wearing well-fitted, fashionable clothing (Park et al., 2009). African American women, for example, often have wrong fitting in the waist and hips, Hispanic women frequently have improper fitting in the hips, and both Hispanic and Asian women have fit problems in pants length due to manufacturers' conventional height assumptions (Shin & Istook, 2007). As evident in literature, there are certain physical characteristics specific to and sometimes dominant in each ethnic group, which need to be served and represented separately in the industry.

2.3.3 | Race and ethnicity

Another ongoing global critique toward the fashion industry involves the lack of race and ethnic diversity found in the mainstream fashion media. On the runway, the idealization of Whiteness remained constant when it comes to the ethnicity of models. For instance, the proportion of White models on the runways during the spring 2017 season in New York, London, Paris, and Milan was 74.6%, while the figure for non-White models was 25.4%. Among the non-White models, 10.33% were Black, 7% were Asian, 3.36% were Latina, 0.40% were Middle Eastern, and 4.27% belonged to other races and ethnicities (Tai, 2016). A blond-haired, blue-eyed Caucasian ideal is promoted by the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the fashion industry (Jones, 2008). Similar to the majority of fashion models, model bookers and fashion producers are most often White. Thus, these groups create and reproduce a fashion culture that overwhelmingly values Whiteness (Schopf, 2016).

Throughout history, and even today, the mainstream culture has overvalued European female aesthetics while undervaluing and rejecting the aesthetic and beauty of other racial and ethnic groups, except for the purpose of exoticizing them (Banks, 2000). Women of color are portrayed "in stereotypical garb, accentuated phenotypic traits, stereotypical contextual cues, facial traits, body traits or environmental related to racial categorization" in the visual imagery used by the fashion media to generate a vivid mental picture for the audience (Johnson, 2015, p. 4). In other words, the media portrayals circulated to our everyday life reinforce cognitive linkages between women of color and stereotypes (Covert & Dixon, 2008).

According to Johnson (2015), among the 278 fashion magazine covers reviewed, Latinas and Black women were portrayed with the most hyper-sexualization attributes, such as being partially and mostly naked in sexy body positions, while Asian women were portrayed with intensified exoticism stereotypes, such as wearing cultural clothing (e.g., kimonos) and up-do hairstyles, with fair skin colors in more passive body positions. However, no Indian, Pacific

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Islander, or Native American women were featured on the covers of any of the magazines examined.

The display of models of color in editorial fashion ranges from "looking White" to the opposite end of the spectrum, exoticism (Schopf, 2016). For example, in a 1976 Essence Magazine article, Marcia Gillespie, the editor-in-chief, defined the ideal image of Black women in the fashion business by referring to the model, Iman, as "a white woman dipped in chocolate" (Oliver, 2015). The exotic woman of color depicted, who has White female features in Black skin, promotes racism by "othering" women of color and implies that a woman of color who resembles her ethnicity is not desirable.

As a result, the problem of the lack of racial diversity in fashion dramatically influences the well-being of society as a whole (Padula, 2016). The fashion industry fails to embrace the culturally diverse world we live in by defining ideal beauty based on a narrow segment of the female population and by encouraging aesthetic sameness. Women of color of all ages feel left out from the fashion scene because of the inadequate representation.

2.3.4 | Age: Women over 45

Women are continually bombarded with advertisements and commercials for weight-loss programs and cosmetic products promoting a younger look (e.g., Bordo, 1993; Wolf, 2002). One of the most underappreciated consumer segments, which is almost invisible in mainstream fashion, is women over the age of 45. According to The Fashion Spot's (2018) diversity report, the number of models over 45 who walked the New York, London, Milan, and Paris runways in spring 2019 was 27, which constituted 3.0% of total castings.

As women age, their bodies undergo physiological changes, such as decreased arm span, sitting height, pelvic breadth, trunk height, skin elasticity, and weight (Schewe, 1988)—changes that require different designs of fashion garments. However, studies have revealed that mature women are dissatisfied with brands that offer ready-to-wear ranges because designers tend to overlook the consumers' changing physique and postures (Holmlund et al., 2011). Although some retailers have recently recognized this growing market, such as ZARA with its Timeless collection (Ekall, 2017), 45-plus models have been disregarded in fashion communication campaigns throughout history (Gantz et al., 1980; Greco & Paksoy, 1989; Langmeyer, 1993; Zhou & Chen, 1992).

Different factors cause the lack of attention to this mature female segment. Marketers associate older consumers with negative stereotypes, such as aging, senility, disability, and unattractiveness (Lee, 1997; Long, 1998; Tunaley et al., 1999), and, therefore, avoid targeting the older consumer group because this mature market is viewed as a low-value sales opportunity (Nam et al., 2007). One advertising executive explained the view of how mature consumers offer a small return on investment with the comment "because they [will]...all die soon" (Miller, 1993). These negative and stereotypical associations on ageism are unacceptable and call for criticism from an ethical standpoint.

2.3.5 | Limited abilities and visible differences

Society labels anyone who does not fit the definition of "normal" (Cusforth, 1951). Therefore, people with disabilities and visible differences carry a burden associated with their physical or

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

mental condition due to society's expectations surrounding normalcy (Chan & Lempp, 2018). This normalcy expectation within social interactions places huge stress on their ability to accept their condition, which negatively affects their quality of life associated with physical, social, psychological, and financial status (Farquhar, 1995). For instance, people with visible physical differences, such as a disfigurement or a scarred/marked face or body from congenital or other conditions, although not disabled, face a social stigma that results in body dissatisfaction, depression, and anxiety, which is considered a psychiatric disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Swift & Bogart, 2021).

Considering fashion's link with self-confidence, social significance, and emotional empowerment, especially for consumers with limited abilities, clothes play an even more critical role in their relationship with their immediate environment (Entwistle & Wilson, 2001). However, only a handful of examples in the global fashion industry ensure representation of such individuals as the faces of runways, brands, magazines, or billboards. For instance, Winnie Harlow became the first model with vitiligo—a visible skin disorder that causes loss of pigment from random areas of the skin (Mayo Clinic, n.d.)—to walk in the Victoria's Secret runway show (Lauriello, 2019) while Madeline Stuart, an 18-year-old Australian with Down syndrome, became the face of GlossiGirl cosmetics and walked at New York Fashion Week (NYFW) in September 2015 (Waxman, 2015). It is important to note that NYFW runways did not feature a model with a disability until Madeline Stuart in 2015 (Burnett, 2018).

People with disabilities are underrepresented and underserved in the market, which acts as a reminder that they cannot be a part of the mainstream fashion. Developments in adaptive clothing are still minimal. For instance, among major retailers, Target announced its adaptive and sensory-friendly clothing line in 2018 (Heasley, 2018), and Tommy Hilfiger launched its adaptive clothing capsule collection for people with limited physical mobility in 2019 (Hilfiger, 2019). Given adaptive clothing choices are limited in the market, women with disabilities must settle for a small range of available pieces. The lack of choice marginalizes such consumers and forces them to face increased social stigma (Chan & Lempp, 2018).

2.3.6 | Sex and gender

Due to dress' intense intimacy with the body, a profound connection to gender and sexual identities is created. Wilson (1992) describes this connection as "when fashion underlines sexuality or when…they go in for gender-bending, many of us may feel threatened and insecure. For women especially, the exaggerated and often arbitrary standards of "beauty"…can be disempowering and even offensive" (p. 34).

Berger (1972) argues that fashion was primarily the concern of women rather than men because the creation and maintenance of looks were considered the primary feature of femininity. Similarly, today, in the twenty-first century, women's fashion considers women as frivolous and decorative beings, who are not suitable to work in industry and commerce, as are men. While men's clothing and fashion are reproduced to be ideal for the office and marketplace, women's fashion and gender identity are still frivolous and decorative (Barnard, 2002).

The conventional fashion styles were designed based on gender identity; however, with the arrival of genderless fashion trends, masculinity and femininity have diversified (Kim et al., 2022). Fashion producers recognized the need of consumers to establish and express their gender identity (Kopf, 2019). While genderless fashion has recently received global attention from fashion brands, efforts to provide genderless fashion have been inconsistent.

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

For example, what was once known as the tomboy style, a women's version of menswear, is renamed as androgynous style that refers to clothing items, which defy traditional “male or female” gender roles. Men wearing skirts and women wearing ties are two common examples. According to the psychoanalyst Dianne Elise, gender expression is not always linked to sexual orientation (Elise, 1999). Any woman may want to adopt a feminine, tomboy, or androgynous style. However, most retailers ignore the genderless fashion demand and produce the traditional “Man” and “Woman” styles. Being underserved forces tomboy or androgynous women to shop from the men's section of a store for more masculine products and to face the challenge of not finding clothing that is suited to feminine body shape. Lacking gender diversity in fashion serves as a historical precedent for today's fight for gender equality across the gender range.

On the other hand, the famous fast-fashion brand ZARA made a confusing attempt to be gender neutral. The Independent noted that ZARA “join[ed] the gender-blending movement by releasing a 16-piece collection of unisex items including jeans, shirts, sweatshirts, shirts, and jumpers—all in neutral colors (black, white and grey)” (Illingworth, 2017). The collection was entitled “unisex” and “ungendered,” however, the clothes were presented only on male and female, rather than non-binary, models. ZARA's inconsistent attempt suggests that clothes are still primarily designed for and represented by cisgendered men and women and do not include LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning) individuals. Supporting this inconsistency in the fashion industry, the appearances of openly transgender or non-binary models in the New York, London, Milan, and Paris spring 2018 runway shows were only 1.3% (The Fashion Spot, 2017). Thus, there are attempts to promote sexuality and gender diversity in fashion, but they are still not only insufficient but also misunderstood.

3 | LITERATURE GAP

Previous research on diversity in the consumer research domain has, to a limited extent, studied fashion diversity in relation to social class, body image, race and ethnicity, sexuality and gender, age, and disability (e.g., Henry & Caldwell, 2006; Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013) and emphasized the need to better understand underrepresented and underserved fashion consumers' experiences, challenges, and quests for change.

Moreover, previous studies suggested further research that examines the previously studied diversity categories in more depth. For instance, as explained in detail previously, most studies on racial and ethnic diversity have focused on Black versus White. However, there are other women of color. Also, most studies related to body image have concentrated on plus size versus thin bodies despite the existence of different body shapes and sizes. Therefore, our study's main contributions can be listed as the revelation of (1) the fashion consumption experiences of a much broader range of diverse female consumer groups, (2) the problem of lack of diversity in fashion and its impact on female consumers, and (3) other diversity types that shed light on what diversity in fashion truly entails. The following section concentrates on our methodology, data collection, and analysis techniques.

4 | METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative—precisely hermeneutic (interpretative) phenomenological—approach that is concerned with generating a broader understanding of how individuals

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

perceive a particular situation and their personal and social experiences and with gaining rich insights into participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Hermeneutic (interpretative) phenomenological approach is especially ideal when investigating sensitive topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, physical ability, and appearance to convey minimize distrust toward the research and the researcher (Davies et al., 2009). Furthermore, empirical dynamics, including but not limited to individuals' motivations, intentions, and experiences, are not easily accessible through experiments, surveys, or database modeling (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Since this study investigates the fashion consumption experiences of a diverse group of women from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds, with different sexual orientations, ages, and body types, a qualitative inquiry was suitable. More precisely, semi-structured in-depth interviews, which allowed informants to freely express their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and motivations were used (Berg, 2001).

A total of 38 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with a diverse group of female consumers. The output of this empirical study entailed 25 h of recorded data, which amounted to 384 pages of transcript. Beforehand, the interview protocols were prepared to help direct the conversation toward essential topics, formulate the critical questions and necessary probes. Although the interview guide shed light to the questions for stimulating the conversation during the interviews, the order of questions was tailored according to each interviewee's responses and the conversation's natural flow. As recommended by Creswell (1998), each participant was informed about the research's nature and purpose beforehand. Additionally, confidentiality and anonymity were assured to create a relationship based on trust, so the participants could feel at ease revealing personal information. The data were collected and held anonymously. No identifying information that could link the data to the participants is used in this paper. Only one of the two researchers performed the interviews. The interviews lasted between 30 to 90 min and were tape recorded with the interviewees' consent. The recording of the interviews helped to give full attention to the respondent and ensure that no information was missed during the interview. The interviews were manually transcribed verbatim. No software was used for either transcribing, or analysis of data.

Glaser and Strauss's (1967) stated that almost all qualitative research studies recruit participants exclusively based on personal ties. Following their supposition, informants were identified through purposeful sampling. Interviewees were chosen based on their willingness to participate in the study and their ability to communicate experiences and opinions expressively and reflectively (Bernard, 2002). After conducting the interviews from researchers' social network, exponential snowball sampling, which allowed to reach the target population, was employed. Participant selection bias limits data trustworthiness, and, when using purposive and snowball sampling, generalizability may be a concern (Van Meter, 1990). However, research has demonstrated that sampling bias can be addressed by obtaining a large enough sample size so that data is saturated (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Therefore, each new referral has been investigated until the study reached data saturation (Vogt, 1999). Although we could not reach every possible diversity group though our snowball sampling, such as women with limited abilities, our data reached a saturation point within the novel diversity categories we discuss in our findings below. We mention the diversity groups we could not interview as the limitation of our research and suggestion for future research, in our conclusion.

Even a small sample of in-depth interviews with an emphasis on defining key themes can provide up to 90% of the information available from a broad collection of interviews, as Zaltman and Coulter (1995) suggest. Nevertheless, data collection proceeded until rich insight was obtained to address the research query, and no new concepts or themes arose from the

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

interviews (Mason, 2002). Table 1 summarizes the profile and the background information of the participants and the interview durations.

Two researchers, who are also the authors of this article, first independently analyzed the data, applying some of the most advised steps for qualitative data analysis (e.g., Kvale, 1996). During the open-coding process, tentative labels were created for themes that emerged from the data. The major findings of each interview were grouped after the labeling process. During the axial coding, authors cross-checked the transcripts for similar patterns and irregularities and grouped the similar themes, which eventually became categories and sub-categories. For instance, one of the themes that was emerging through the open-coding process was that pregnant women could not find stylish and trendy clothing during pregnancy since maternity clothing tends to be loose-fitting with baby graphics and pastel colors. Through the axial coding (which is the process of relating open codes of data to each other), we found out that not being able to look stylish affect pregnant women's self-esteem and this is a shared concern among our participants who are pregnant, have been pregnant, want to be pregnant, or plan to get pregnant. Through the selective coding process, we could then associate this emerging theme with our research question and observe that pregnant women could be underserved in the fashion industry.

While examining a mass of raw textual data, we were meticulous about not ignoring any parts that initially seemed outside the categories. Researcher triangulation in data analysis, through comparison of the findings, enabled to see the fuller picture of the phenomenon, avoid bias, add depth to the coding process, and gain multiple perspectives (Ritchie, 2003). In the following sections, we present our core findings illustrated with excerpts of our participants that are representative of the main themes, which emerged from the data.

5 | FINDINGS: EXPERIENCES OF UNDERREPRESENTED AND UNDERSERVED FASHION CONSUMERS

The literature review showed that the meaning of diversity in the fashion industry is trapped between White versus Black, skinny versus plus-sized, young versus old, revealing versus conservative, female versus male, and disabled versus abled (which is considered normal). However, our empirical data revealed novel categories of diversity such as skin shades other than Black and White, women of average sizes, and women with characteristics the fashion industry has long perceived as flaws, such as being shorter or pregnant. These newly identified diversity categories are discussed in detail in the sub-sections that follow.

5.1 | Skin shades other than black and white

Although there has been considerable research on Black and White female consumer experiences in the fashion market, a literature gap exists concerning the experiences of non-White and non-Black women of color, who are almost invisible in the fashion industry.

> We are outsiders of the fashion industry. They do not target us because we are not beautiful enough to be targeted. They prefer to ignore brown-colored skin. It is either White or Black. And of course, whiter is better and always prettier. In India, if you have white skin like the ones we see in magazines, you are considered

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

TABLE 1 Participant's background information

No.	Name	Age	Marital status and household	Height	Clothing size (in US numeric)	Sexual orientation	Race/ethnicity	Country of origin
1	Victoria	24	Single	5′3″	8–10	Heterosexual	Hispanic	PR[a]
2	Adriana	24	Single	5′5″	2–4	Heterosexual	Hispanic	PR
3	Grace	24	Single	5′6″	10	Heterosexual	Hispanic	PR
4	Latavia	25	Single	5′4″	8–10	Homosexual	Black	USA
5	Yaritza	26	Single	5′7″	6	Heterosexual	Hispanic	PR
6	Angela	26	Single	5′4″	4–6	Heterosexual	Hispanic	PR
7	Mila	26	Single	5′4″	4	Heterosexual	Black/Hispanic	USA
8	Petra	26	Single	5′5″	2–4	Heterosexual	Asian	India
9	Julia	27	Single	5′4″	8–10	Heterosexual	Hispanic	Colombia
10	Beril	29	Married	5′4″	4–6	Heterosexual	White	Turkey
11	Divya	29	Single	5′3″	6	Heterosexual	Asian	India
12	Wendy	29	Single	5′2″	0–2	Heterosexual	Asian	Taiwan
13	Kara	29	Single	5′0″	2	Heterosexual	White	USA
14	Viviana	30	Married	5′3″	4–6	Heterosexual	Hispanic	Colombia
15	Zaira	30	Married, 1 kid	5′5″	4–6	Heterosexual	Hispanic	PR
16	Maya	31	Married	5′8″	12–14	Heterosexual	White	Egypt
17	Lulu	31	Married	5′6″	8–10	Heterosexual	Hispanic	PR
18	Juanida	31	Single	5′7″	2–4	Homosexual	Black/White	USA
19	Pooja	31	Single	5′2″	2–4	Heterosexual	Asian	India
20	Laura	32	Married	5′2″	0–2	Heterosexual	Asian	China
21	Ping	32	Single	5′1″	2–4	Heterosexual	Asian	China
22	Nina	32	Single	5′4″	8–10	Heterosexual	White	Australia
23	Sophia	33	Married, 1 kid, pregnant	5′3″	0–2	Heterosexual	Hispanic	Colombia
24	Nicole	33	Married	5′4″	14–16	Heterosexual	Hispanic	Colombia
25	Dannie	33	Single	5′5″	10–12	Homosexual	Black	USA
26	Megan	33	Single	5′3″	8–10	Heterosexual	Asian	Pakistan
27	Amy	33	Single	5′8″	10–12	Heterosexual	White	Australia
28	Clara	35	Single	5′8″	14–16	Heterosexual	White	USA
29	Angela	36	Married, 1 kid	5′2″	4–6	Heterosexual	Black	USA
30	Jossie	38	Married, 1 kid	5′6″	12–14	Heterosexual	Hispanic	PR

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

TABLE 1 (Continued)

No.	Name	Age	Marital status and household	Height	Clothing size (in US numeric)	Sexual orientation	Race/ ethnicity	Country of origin
31	Chloe	45	Married, 2 kid	5′7″	8	Heterosexual	Pacific Islander	Hawaii
32	Pamela	47	Married, 1 kid	5′4″	4	Heterosexual	White	Italy
33	Miranda	48	Married, 2 kids	5′6″	12	Heterosexual	White	USA
34	Rykie	55	Married, 1 kid	5′2″	4	Heterosexual	White	USA
35	Ruth	56	Single	5′10″	18–20	Heterosexual	White	USA
36	Dorothy	57	Widow	5′6″	14–16	Heterosexual	Black	USA
37	Charlotte	61	Divorcee, 1 kid	5′1″	10	Heterosexual	White	Australia
38	Maria	65	Married, 1 kid	5′9″	14	Heterosexual	White	Greece

[a]PR stands for Puerto Rico.

> attractive. Sometimes I think there should be a pill or cream that bleaches your skin color a couple of shades" (Petra, 26).

From Black to Indian, from Hawaiian native to Asian, each participant in this study had her personal story recalling the feeling of "not being beautiful enough" due to the perpetuated standards of the industry. Some, such as Petra, desired to bleach their brown-colored skin to fit in the society's definition of beauty. TV shows, fashion commercials, magazine advertisements, celebrity culture, and mainstream media significantly influence how women perceive beauty. Women of color are forced to feel that their skin colors are all wrong because of the industry's idealized beauty standards. Being underrepresented in mainstream fashion media for having different skin tones creates a one-way colorism that favors Whiteness (Hunter, 2002) while simultaneously informing women of color that they should have lighter skin.

> "As a Hawaiian woman, the biggest problem is bras, underwear, and pantyhose. My skin tone is definitely not either White or nude. Bras and underwear, or pantyhose that claim 'skin tone' were way too light, and the ones made for Black women were way too dark. I feel all races and skin tones that do not fit nicely into White, pink, or Black have a bit of a hard time finding exactly the right color for 'skin tone,' whether it is makeup or underwear" (Chloe, 45).

The women of color other than Black and White are not only underrepresented but also underserved in the fashion market. Aside from makeup products, locating any so-called "nude" clothing items, from underwear to shoes, is a problem for women of varying skin tones. Regardless of whether it is in the form of clothing, accessories, or shoes, the term nude means that a

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

product should match a person's skin color and give the illusion of bare skin (Suh, 2017). Our participants such as Chloe mentioned the lack of skin-tone choices in pantyhose and lingerie as a source of frustration in their fashion shopping experience. The majority of fashion products labeled as nude are a specific kind of light beige, which is designed to cater to a small demographic segment of women worldwide. As a result, mainstream fashion's current definition of nude not only allows a small number of women to buy products that match their skin tone, but functions as a mnemonic of Whiteness as the beauty norm.

> "Seeing more models of color gives me a feeling of recognition/freedom and makes me proud to be recognized as a woman of color. We are gaining strength in numbers, and we are no longer allowing ourselves to be invisible to the public eye" (Dorothy, 57).

Black women such as Dorothy celebrate the increasing visibility of women of color, through celebrities like Lupita Amondi Nyong'o, Iman, Naomi Campbell, and Halle Berry, not only because it is rare for Black women to be in the public eye, but also because it is even rarer for their physical features to be accepted as beautiful. The concept of beauty itself holds such a confining power that women tie their inner peace and self-worth to their appearance. As in the case of Dorothy, while more representation and visibility in the mainstream fashion media has positive consequences for women of color, underrepresentation causes a devaluation of the self.

5.2 | In-between sizes and ethnic body shapes

Despite 14 being the average size of American women, prior research has revealed that more than 60% of women who wear size 12 or above face difficulty finding clothing of the same caliber as standard-sized versions (Corrigan, 2013). Sizes 12 and 14, which are in-between sizes, are found to be the most underrepresented and underserved clothing sizes for women. Clothing bigger than a size XL, or sometimes 16W, is regarded as plus-sized and is presented separately in retail stores (Keiser & Garner, 2012). On the other hand, as many fashion brands make 12 as the maximum size, and plus-sized brands begin with size 16, women who wear size 12 and 14 face considerable frustration finding the right fit.

> "Fashion is still talking only about very thin models or 'plus-size' models, which seem to encompass a range of different meanings—often obese. It would be nice to see more models that are average size, like size 12, rather than large or small. I remember recently seeing someone with a similar body shape to mine, hourglass, which means she had larger hips and chest and smaller waist. Sometimes this shape is considered plus-size. I do not think it is plus-size. It is fit and curvy" (Nina, 32).

As Nina mentioned, being a curvy woman does not equate to being a plus-sized woman. Women who wear size 12 and above want to be considered curvy in average size rather than being labeled as plus-sized. Plus-sized is considered the politically correct term for being obese and/or fat. Given the term "plus sized" is the reclaimed word of "fat," its exact definition is still confusing for female consumers such as Nina.

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

> "I have a typical Latina body shape. I am not a plus size and not a regular size. Sometimes I go to a regular store and I do not find size 14. If I go to a plus-size store again I do not find a regular 14. I do not want to go to a plus-size store anyways. I am just thick and curvy. I mean I see myself as a voluptuous woman not a plus size. So, it is very difficult for me to shop and find something that actually fits" (Nicole, 33).

Similar to Nina, women with ethnic body figures like Nicole identify themselves as curvy rather than plus sized. For them, the concept of curvy evokes positive imagery and has the connotation of femininity in the form of sexiness, which is related to their ethnic identity as Latina in Nicole's case. However, size identification is not the sole problem. In conjunction with increasing diversity in the US population, America's racial and ethnic composition in body figures and size has shifted, and standard clothing sizes have become an increasing problem for women with diverse ethnic backgrounds (Clifford, 2011).

> "I hate shopping because finding the right size is so difficult for me. I am usually 10 or 12. Sometimes for some clothing, I do not even fit into 12. So, it is always very frustrating even to try on clothes in a store. I think stores do not have the right fit for my body type. Sometimes I wear a medium, sometimes it is large or extra-large. It depends on the brand and the clothing piece. It is even more frustrating when you like something in a store, ask for your size and the salesperson tells you that the brand does not produce for 'bigger' sizes. They literally segregate bigger bodies" (Julia, 27).

The sizing and fit problem that both Nicole and Julia experience originates from the size charts developed in the 1940s (e.g., Kasambala et al., 2016; Simmons et al., 2004) when the National Bureau of Standards (now known as American National Institute of Standards and Technology) used US Airforce women to create a series of universal body size measurements (Loechner, 2018). In other words, the rigid definitions and measures of women's sizes have been problematic since the beginning, particularly for minorities such as Nicole and Julia.

The concept of small, medium, and large continues to hold iconic meaning for female consumers such as Julia, as a way to describe fit and obtain symbolic reassurance. However, the primary problem all women face is not only the generic nature of size charts but also the inconsistencies in size and fit between brands. The primary reason for size variations between brands and retailers is vanity sizing, which is "the practice of altering measurement specifications for garments to enable consumers to fit into smaller sizes" (Hoegg et al., 2014, p. 70). To put it another way, businesses reduce their size metrics to make consumers feel slimmer, to the point that a woman who wore a size 12 in 1958 wears a size 6 today. By the late 2000s, vanity sizing went so far that designers had to introduce new smaller sizes such as 0 and 00 to make up for the difference (Dockterman, 2016).

The fashion industry's lack of conformity with standard sizing has created an inconsistency of fit, which twists consumers' perceptions of size (Kennedy, 2009). Studies have demonstrated that due to idealized beauty standards promoted by the fashion industry, female consumers purchase intentions increase when they fit into a clothing item that is labeled with a smaller size because it generates positive mental imagery of the self while mental imagery about being a larger size is destructive to self-worth (Aydinoglu & Krishna, 2012). As she expressed above, our participant, Nicole, finds the practice of shopping in the plus-sized department as an insulting

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

and demoralizing experience due to her self-view. Clothing is considered a part of self-view (Belk, 1988), and the brand label can be considered the reflection of the desired identity (Berger & Ward, 2010). Furthermore, most designers and brands including but not limited to Karl Lagerfeld and the CEO of Abercrombie and Fitch Mike Jeffries equates fashion with thinness and refuse to make clothes for women who are larger than size 10 (Gunn, 2016).

Vanity sizing underrepresents women by preventing them from embracing their actual bodies (by promoting the appearance of thinness) through deceptive clothing sizes. As a result of fashion producers' discriminative sizing practices, all women, particularly minority women with ethnically diverse body types like Nicole and Julia, compare themselves to sizing charts that are designed based on standard Western women and determine their self-worth.

5.3 | Ordinary women with imperfections and flaws

> "Least represented women are 'real'—no airbrush, body as it exists, and in a variety of ages, with flaws. I would love to see a proliferation of 'real me' body images. The shaming that we feel for not having the body type or skin is devastating" (Ruth, 56).

From fashion scenes to social media, female images are heavily edited, filtered, retouched, and airbrushed, which dictates to women around the world how they should look. As retouched body figures and airbrushed skin have become more blatant in magazines, ordinary consumers have begun to react to photo manipulations. Consumers such as Ruth voice the damaging effects on women's self-esteem of not depicting "real" women in fashion media. Women want to embrace their so-called flaws and imperfections, be represented, and not aspire to what the industry proposes as perfection.

> "I think to be fashionable, you have to be over 5′8″, skinny, have glowing skin and hair with colorful eyes. So, your body has to be flawless to rock the fashion items. Otherwise, even if you have the funds to buy the expensive, stylish clothing, you are just mediocre, and clothes are the items to cover up. They tell the rest of the world that you are just ordinary women with common style because your body, face, your look in general, do not allow to be more than that. You can't be unique. I guess only with Instagram filters, I can look unique and have that perfect look, smooth skin, big glowing eyes and so on" (Kara, 29).

Participants such as Kara consider perfection to be smooth, tanned skin, free of fine lines, freckles, moles, scars, blemishes, acne, warts, zits, visible veins, body hair, razor bumps, cellulite, and stretch marks. In other words, these aforementioned physical traits are considered socially undesirable. The retouched images of high-fashion models presented in both fashion scenes and social media create an imaginary and impossible beauty ideal that results in women such as Kara feeling inadequate because flaws are communicated to be damages, defects, and glitches.

The retouching and airbrushing of pictures have become common not only in fashion magazines but also on social media platforms such as Instagram, due to the popularity of selfies. Instagram introduced photo filters that allow consumers to adjust contrast and lighting in order to airbrush imperfections. In a society where female bodily perfection is not only required but

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

expected, the beautification of selfies before posting on social media platforms has become so much the norm that some smartphone brands, such as Samsung, have embedded automatic selfie-editing into their front camera settings (Cosslett, 2016). Following the development of photo-editing smartphone apps such as Beauty Plus, FaceTune, Golden Beauty Meter, and Perfect365, young women began to compare their physical appearances not only with models and actresses in magazines, but on their own phone screens. Using filters, women can make their nose narrower, their face slimmer, their skin tone smoother, their eyes larger, and more. However, all of these retouching activities to achieve the stereotypical perfection create deep psychological problems, including but not limited to body shaming and self-hatred for women of all ages, as Ruth and Kara expressed in the interviews.

5.4 | Less than ideal height: Petite women

In fashion linguistics, the term petite refers to height. The fashion industry considers women petite if they are five feet, four inches tall or under, and have narrower shoulders and shorter neck-to-waist, arm, and leg lengths (Lauren, 2010). According to the National Center for Health Statistics (2011–2014), the average height of American women aged 20 or older is five feet, four inches while women who are five feet, eight inches or taller represent only 3.9% of the population. Ironically, in the fashion industry, this very small minority of the female population is represented dominantly with runway models being five feet, nine inches or taller and the standard boutique mannequin being six feet (Darwin, 2015). Thus, it is not surprising that petite women feel isolated from the fashion scene.

> "I am envious when I see someone tall wearing a cute swing dress because they look so comfortable, but I can't wear something with that little shape because of my height. Also, skinny jeans and leggings are undoubtedly produced for taller girls because I never find skinny jeans with the right length that do not stack at the ankles. Although dresses zip up just fine, they hug in all the wrong places and drag on the ground. I think I belong to the demographics that retail industry wants to ignore. So, as a smaller-framed woman, who is a size 2, I shop at Junior's section, but I do not want to shop in the Junior's section anymore. Like any other women, I want to wear apparel for women because I am a woman—a bona fide woman! I am a regular-sized customer…only shorter. Sometimes, I go to Loft, Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, but the selections of petite clothing are minimal, and the sales representatives are usually confused about how to deal with short women, which makes me so angry. Sometimes, I just want to shout at their face 'Hey, we're just small female adults, not Thumbelina complexes'" (Kara, 29).

Although women who are 5′4′ tall constitute 50% of the female population in the United States (Schlossberg, 2016) and hold 10 billion dollars of buying power in the fashion industry (Lauren, 2010), very few retailers carry petite clothing lines explicitly designed to fit shorter women. The disparity of petite clothing options and the lack of industry concern for petite female consumers is noteworthy.

Petite women are assumed to be tiny in every category, including physical shape and size, because they are short (Darnell, 2018). However, although the literal meaning of "petite" is small, a petite woman can be plus-sized or regular-sized yet voluptuous. Therefore, pant length

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

is not the only consideration for petite women. For instance, Kara stated that she needs regular-sized adult clothing to fit her developed female figure without any alteration, which means sleeves, skirts, tops, should also be shorter in length, armholes should be higher, shoulders should be narrower, and pants should have a shorter rise. According to Kara, as a petite woman, wearing trendy fashion styles can require an extra budget for tailoring to fit (e.g., hemming jeans, dresses, skirts; shortening straps, etc.), or forsaking comfort by wearing heels. Petite women feel physically inadequate and emotionally deflated as a result of the difficulties to fit into the fashion norms.

5.5 | Life stage, pregnancy and postpartum

Liminal transitions, which are periods of transition that cause instability and ambiguity, occur throughout the lifespan, and might suspend an individual's identity (Noble & Walker, 1997). Research has proposed that an individual may utilize consumption and possessions that hold symbolic meaning representing the self when the identity is in flux, in order to ease changes and transitions during times of liminality (Belk, 1988). Pregnancy is considered a significant liminal transition for women when the self is redefined while the body experiences dramatic changes; sometimes women feel a "loss of identity" due to the role transition from being a woman to mother (Upton & Han, 2003). Therefore, although pregnancy is often considered one of the most exciting times in a woman's life, it can also be a period of vulnerability and stress due to both a lack of representation and limited options in the fashion market for pregnant women (Sohn & Bye, 2015).

> "I do not want to spend tons of money on loose and outdated clothing that I will wear only three–four months. Capris, leggings, t-shirts, or oversized dresses with full of ribbons and silly baby graphics…That's what you can find in the market. I don't like to be separated. I don't want to wear maternity-only clothing, forced to change the way I dress in my everyday life and sacrifice my taste. I like to wear miniskirts, skinny jeans, fashionable tops, and cute dresses. I want to feel sexy, cute, and chic when I am pregnant too. I want body flattering clothing for pregnancy, which is very hard to find in affordable prices. Currently, I can only shop from a few online stores" (Sophia, 33).

Historically, in Western Europe, since regular clothing was easily adaptable to the baby bump, women from all social classes wore everyday clothing during pregnancy (Baumgarten, 1996). From the sixteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century, maternity clothing was designed to hide pregnancy by constricting the pregnant belly with boning corsets, bodices, or drapery, so it was very restrictive. After World War II, specifically designed maternity styles, such as skirts with elastic panels to cover and hide pregnant bellies and unnecessarily full tops, were introduced to the market. This maternity clothing had nothing in common with regular clothing because the fashion industry dictated to women that pregnancy needs to be hidden (Poli, 1997). Body-conscious culture and feminism changed these maternity styles, leading pregnant women to adopt clinging styles in public instead of draping (Baumgarten, 1996).

The increased visibility of the pregnant bodies through celebrities, such as Kate Middleton and Kim Kardashian, in mainstream media has ascribed significance to maternity fashion in

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Vallley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

contemporary societies (Goodwin & Huppatz, 2010). Some specialized boutiques, such as Storq and Rosie Pope, and big retailers, such as Topshop, H&M, The Gap, and ASOS, have adopted the maternity clothing movement and begun to offer small maternity lines (Raphael, 2016). However, although the maternity market has improved compared to the 1990s, women such as Sophia still think that looking good requires more effort and money during pregnancy. According to Sofia, maternity fashion tends to identify the mother-to-be with baby graphics, pastel colors, bowties, and ribbons. She wants to find more stylistic variety in the market, and she wants to see pregnant models who advertise the clothing. Sophia highlighted that, due to the minimal options on the market, she must shop online, and the garments to her liking are usually available only at higher prices. Therefore, Sophia feels abused by the fashion industry in this stage of her life because of the cost she pays to be her everyday self.

> "Now that I am pregnant, it is supposed to be the best time of my life. Actually, I like being pregnant, but when it comes to dressing up, it is a nightmare. Shopping when pregnant has been so stressful and frustrating, especially in the last three months. I am a size 2 woman. When I am pregnant my upper body is still size 2 or 4 but I have a baby bump, which I do not want to hide under loose, ugly, outdated clothes, which make me feel like I am huge. I want people to see that I have pot-belly because I am pregnant, not because I am fat. I want to wear stylish clothes and be proud of my body, baby, and style. I want to be chic and fabulous when I am pregnant too. Why it has to be so difficult to find stylish and comfortable maternity clothing that give you confidence and make you feel like yourself in this stage of your life?" (Lulu, 32).

During pregnancy, women face bodily shifts, which affect identity and the self and, eventually, arouse ambivalence and frustration concerning appearance (Earle, 2003). Prior research has discovered that, due to the discrepancy between the actual and ideal selves, women see the body as obdurate and out of control during pregnancy and postpartum (Ogle et al., 2011). Therefore, in today's weight-stereotyped culture, because of the body and weight changes occurring during pregnancy as well as the construction of a negative self-image, pregnant women often feel excluded from the cultural norm of beauty.

Previous research has shown that women were taught to camouflage their bodies during pregnancy using maternity clothing (Tiggemann & Lacey, 2009). In contrast, this study shows that pregnant women such as Sophia and Lulu desire more fitted clothes that showcase their bodies to celebrate pregnancy. They believe that the maternity apparel should not hide the pregnant body; instead, it should be comfortable and fashionable while making one feel good about herself.

6 | DISCUSSION: WHY IS EXTENDING THE DIVERSITY CONVERSATION IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY CRITICAL?

Previous discussions about diversity have been polarized by consumer categories such as White versus Black, slim versus plus-sized, and young versus old. With a much broader sample group in terms of diversity, our findings contribute to the literature by identifying previously overlooked diversity gaps in the fashion industry that are not commonly explored in earlier studies and bringing in the voice of minority women into the fashion conversation. In

this section, we discuss the three main effects of these diversity shortcomings on female fashion consumers.

First, we observe that non-White women, petite women, in-between-size women with ethnic body types, and women with imperfections who are in different life stages do not have the privilege of reaffirmation of their physical features from the fashion media and thus, are afraid of being socially excluded. Due to the lack of diversity, underrepresented and underserved women of all categories revealed in the findings section perceive that their look is not the kind of beauty that is worth celebrating. The assumption of being perceived as ugly and different leads to the fear of social and romantic discrimination, lack of access to economic and social power, and, overall, the dismay of social exclusion.

Greene (1994, p. 18) stated that "the United States idealizes the physical characteristics of White women and measures women of color against this arbitrary standard." Therefore, to fit in with society, non-White women modify their physical appearance using cosmetics, skin-lightening lotions, hair straightening and teeth whitening chemicals, dieting, plastic surgeries, and many other consumption practices. For instance, Hispanic and Black consumers have a history of outspending other ethnic groups (Nielsen, 2021). Unsurprisingly, Black women spent $54.4 million on ethnic hair and beauty products, out of $63.5 million total industry spending in 2017 (Nielsen, 2018). While Asian American women invest 70% more the average US consumer on skin-care products (Nielsen, 2015), Hispanic women were the only ethnic group to drive color cosmetics volume in 2020 with a spending of 13% more than the typical consumer (Nielsen, 2021). On the other hand, Hispanics experience more body-image dissatisfaction, engage more in weight loss behaviors such as dieting and exercising, and suffer more from eating disorders than Black women (David et al., 2002).

Consequently, women of color carry higher levels of beauty-product related chemicals in their bodies than White women due to the use of more cosmetic products to comply with Western beauty ideals (Zota & Shamasunder, 2017). These figures support our findings that especially non-White women, in-between-size women with ethnic body types, and women with imperfections have a proclivity to alter their physical appearance in order to achieve unrealistic beauty standards that favor Western ideals, experience social inequality due to their natural appearance, and face a physiological threat to their well-being.

Regardless of race, all women who participated in our study described the social consequences of not complying with the dominant fashion trends as ostracization. Therefore, the mainstream fashion is populist and lacks imagination, rejects individual expression, and does not embrace originality and longevity. The marginalization of women who do not fit into the socially constructed stereotypical images of beauty and fashion damages perception of the self-concept by lowering self-esteem and increasing feelings of body dissatisfaction and shame.

Second, all women are heavily exposed to unrealistic images, from both traditional and social media, which dramatically influence their beauty standards and their sense of body dissatisfaction. Due to the socially constructed and conventional standards of beauty, as discussed above, women of larger-than-standard sizes with ethnic body types feel body dissatisfaction, shame, and self-hatred, which leave psychological scars from a young age well into their adulthood. It must be acknowledged that body shame and self-hatred do not emerge due to "troubled individual psyches," but are "systematically taught through processes of socialization in white supremacist society" (Hooks, 1995, p. 131).

Women compare their physical appearances with what they see as dominant in traditional or social media. The comparison between the socially constructed ideals of beauty and the actual-self causes insecurities, which are, eventually, destructive for self-esteem. Therefore,

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Vallty, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

women strive to change their bodies based on what they read is socially acceptable and desirable.

Third, non-White women feel exoticized due to features that are different than ideal. Intensified exoticism is the hyper-accentuated presentation of women of color with a strong emphasis on cultural backgrounds (Cahill, 2011)—black women presented in African apparel, tribal patterns, and animal print; Latinas depicted as sexy and fiery; and Asian women portrayed as submissive and wearing a bun are examples of intensified exoticism in the fashion industry (Millard & Grant, 2006).

The relentless hyper-sexualization or de-sexualization of non-White women in fashion results in women of color feeling that their bodies are not quite right or normal. For instance, in the context of the fashion media, through exoticism, Black women are represented as otherworldly creatures to be admired and observed due to their hyper-sexuality and lascivious nature.

The othering and exoticizing practices of the fashion industry are not limited to Black women but involve all non-White women with different skin shades. Women of color are defined as exotic because they look different than the mainstream beauty ideal, which is dominantly White. Thus, women of color are estranged and othered from the idealized beauty standards and are never truly accepted as beautiful on their own terms. Therefore, the racial identities of non-White women become subjects of Western cultural appropriation, and their races are treated as styling choices rather than social identities.

7 | CONCLUSION: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Dominant fashion trends and the definition of beauty based on Western ideals are historically constructed and socially accepted phenomena. This study demonstrates the industry's discriminative fashion practices based on producers' learned aesthetic preferences and revealed that the dominant academic and professional discourse regarding the lack of diversity has surrounded limited explorations of social class, body image, race, age, gender, and physical ability in the context of fashion. Critical discriminative fashion practices, such as failing to consider skin colors other than Black and White, height, in-between average sizes, visible physical differences, gender identities, and pregnancy, have been consistently overlooked.

Underserved consumers who are also underrepresented do not feel seen, validated, or respected, and they are also denied access to trendy items and participation in fashion. As a result of being underserved and underrepresented in the fashion industry, certain groups of women face severe societal, physiological, social, and psychological consequences, such as the fear of being socially excluded, body shaming, self-hatred, and sexism and exoticism from racism.

The findings reveal that the fashion industry still recognizes old standards, mostly Caucasian, as the ideal beauty and attempts to be politically diverse by including a limited number of women from the trending categories mentioned in the literature review. This research's contribution to the existing literature on fashion diversity is the discovery of other attributes that have been ignored. These neglected categories of diversity shed light on the fashion challenges underrepresented and underserved women face and underscore the diversity perception gap between fashion consumers and producers. Furthermore, this study outlines the physical,

social, and psychological implications associated with the industry's assumption that fashion becomes aspirational and admirable because it is ultimately unattainable.

7.1 | Practical implications

Inclusivity implies that women can comfortably express their cultural backgrounds and physical appearances without feeling the need to downplay their differences. The diversity understanding on the part of producers in booking a limited number of models of color or plus-sized women who carry similar features to the dominant and Caucasian beauty standards is ineffective without inclusivity. Producers should acknowledge that diversity is not a trend solely about race and skin color, but it is concerned with differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, and physical abilities. The homogeneity of the industry offers a lack of opportunity and access to fashion for underrepresented and underserved women.

The fashion industry's diversity problem extends far beyond the featured people on runways, magazine covers, and ad campaigns. The Council of Fashion Designers of America (2019) criticized the lack of diversity in the fashion industry from entry-level to the boardroom. This results in a self-perpetuating imbalance in the fashion industry's culture, in which those in authority maintain their status while minorities struggle to reach the top. Top leaders' support is required for a meaningful long-term solution to be implemented. Individual-level diversity and inclusion training and organizational-level activities focused on policies and practices should be provided at all levels, beginning with the C-suite executive team. Acquisition and talent management systems can detect biases that may be roadblocks for some while providing a bridge for others.

Policymakers should offer multi-faceted incentives to create structural change in the fashion industry, including but not limited to mentorship and internship programs that place underrepresented women in established fashion companies. This is not about placing a few minority women to achieve diversity, but it is about the concoction that sparks new and fresh ideas and perspectives through diversity.

Furthermore, little is spoken about how much the lack of diversity costs to fashion companies. Research shows that when diversity is done correctly, the return on investment is substantial. Fashion companies with above-average management diversity derived 19% more earning from improved or new goods/services than companies with below-average leadership diversity (Binkley, 2019).

On the other hand, fashion brands that do not embrace diversity are losing significant potential revenue. For instance, over 70 million women in the United States are of a "special size," with 50% of the population being petite (under 5′4″) (Schlossberg, 2016), and 67% of American women are size 14 or larger (Lamare, 2018). While petite women have $10 billion in purchasing power (Lauren, 2010), plus-size women represent $20 billion worth of buying power, and Baby Boomer women who are 45-plus spend upwards of $20 billion each year on clothing (Girl Power Marketing, 2020).

Similarly, the global maternity wear market is expected to grow from US$10.426 billion in 2019 to US$13.742 billion in 2025 (Business Bliss Consultants FZE, 2018). Pregnancy fashion and the growing number of pregnant women in the working population in emerging countries are predicted to stimulate demand for trendy products. Regarding genderless fashion, there has been a 52% increase in internet searches for the keyword "genderless fashion," (Lyst, 2019), and

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

56% of Gen-Z shoppers, with a combined buying power of over $140 billion, shop outside the gendered area that is assigned for them (genderless fashion) (Marci, 2020).

Moreover, According to Disability Statistics and Demographics Rehabilitation Research and Training Center's (2018) annual disability statistics compendium, over 40 million people live with disabilities, including, but not limited to, hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, and self-care, in the United States, which equals 12.7% of the total population. Among these, approximately 20 million are working-age adults with a discretionary income of $21 billion, which is greater than the Hispanic and African American segments combined in the United States (Yin et al., 2018). Also, the US Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) reported that disabled individuals constitute "the third largest market segment in the United States" (ODEP, 2012). All of these statistics show that disabled individuals represent a hidden but remarkable consumer market for high-quality adaptive fashion products. Therefore, disabled consumers represent a hidden but remarkable consumer market for high-quality adaptive fashion products.

Moreover, when companies receive flak for cultural appropriation or misrepresentation, the cost of exclusion is vast. For instance, Gucci, Prada, and Moncler have all had to remove products from shelves that evoked blackface in 2018. Dolce & Gabbana has canceled a major Shanghai fashion show after a series of racist ads, which disparaged China and Chinese people (Farley, 2019). These blunders have resulted in product recalls and faced major criticism on social media, which negatively impacted such companies' brand image and sales. Instead, companies, by promoting inclusivity, could take advantage of the potentials offered by untapped consumer segments such as ethnic and racial minorities, plus-size, petite, tall, over 45 years old, gender fluid, pregnant, disabled, differently abled and lower-income buyers.

Since underrepresented and underserved women wield significant economic power, their exclusion from the fashion scene has far-reaching ramifications for market revenue. Therefore, companies should acknowledge that these demographics are not highly specialized corners of the economy, but rather ecosystems in and of themselves. Lastly, fashion companies that adopt gender fluidity and racial, ethnic, body, age and social class diversity in advertising, packaging, and production will effectively demonstrate to the next generation of consumers that their brand understands who they are and how they self-identify.

7.2 | Future research suggestions

As mentioned in the literature review, fashion has historically and primarily targeted women, and this paper focused explicitly on female consumers' experiences and did not include men's fashion consumption experiences. An interesting future avenue of study may be to conduct similar research with male consumers of different cultural backgrounds and characteristics and investigate their experiences and perceptions of fashion diversity. Furthermore, although we attempted to create a diverse sample of participants, another limitation of this study was the lack of sufficient number of interviews with disabled and differently abled women, non-binary, transsexual, or queer women, women over the age of 45, and pregnant women. For instance, although our sample demonstrated a desire for form-fitting apparel during pregnancy, future studies examining the clothing preferences of pregnant or would-be pregnant women may reveal different fashion market deficiencies. Similarly, despite the fact that the majority of our sample is younger than 45 years of age, our participants expressed concerns regarding their future fashion shopping experiences based on current market observations. They described the

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

frustrations of their moms, aunts, friends who are over 45 years old, interested in fashion but could not find stylish apparel or are only depicted in media through stereotypical narratives.

Another shortcoming of our sample group is tall women. Although, our sample group consists of women ranging in height from 5 feet to 5 feet 10 inches, tall women's challenges were not mentioned during our interviews. As a result, while this study reveals the challenges confronting petite women because of a lack of diversity in fashion, it fails to address the plight of those who are tall. More research is needed on women who feel underrepresented because they are taller than standardized ideals and have difficulty accessing fashion products because of their height. Therefore, a continuation of this study with a specific focus on gender, physical abilities, age, or pregnancy is needed.

Since research on fashion diversity is scarce, further research is essential to better understand how the fashion industry can become more diverse, inclusive, and equitable, with a special focus on talent acquisition and retention. By extending the diversity conversation, industry professionals and academics, due to their leadership and knowledge, can establish a strong and compelling fashion scene for everyone.

In conclusion, this study is a powerful reminder for fashion professionals to promote diversity and for academia to conduct scholarly work on the subject. It shows why representation in every form of beauty is essential for women's physical and emotional well-being. Fashion producers should consider that beauty lies in differences and that no women should be ashamed of their uniqueness. It is time to leave the conventional beauty standards of the past behind—for good.

ORCID

Lena Cavusoglu https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7194-7179

REFERENCES

Adam, H. & Galinsky, A. (2012) Enclothed cognition. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48, 918–925.

Arnould, E.J. & Thompson, C.J. (2005) Consumer culture theory (CCT): twenty years of research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31, 868–882.

Atkinson, R. & Flint, J. (2001) Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations—snowball research strategies. *Social Research Update*, 33.

Aydinoglu, N. & Krishna, A. (2012) Imagining thin: why vanity sizing works. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22, 565–572.

Banks, I. (2000) *Hair matters: beauty, power, and black women's consciousness*. New York and London: New York University Press.

Barnard, M. (2002) *Fashion as communication*, 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.

Baron, G.J. (2013) Curating the self: a proposed intervention for positive identity crafting through self-presentation and clothing. *Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) Capstone Projects*, 51.

Baudrillard, J. (1993) *Symbolic exchange and death*. London: Sage.

Baumeister, R.F. (1982) A self-presentational view of social phenomena. *Psychological Bulletin*, 91, 3–26.

Baumgarten, L. (1996) Dressing for pregnancy: a maternity gown of 1780-1795. *Dress: The Journal of the Costume Society of America*, 23(1), 16–24.

Belk, R.W. (1988) Possessions and the extended self. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15, 139–168.

Berg, B.L. (2001) *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, 4th edition. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of seeing*. London: Penguin.

Berger, J. & Ward, M.K. (2010) Subtle signals of inconspicuous consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37, 555–569.

Bernard, H.R. (2002) *Research methods in anthropology: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Binkley, C. (2019) Fashion's lack of diversity has real costs. Available at: https://www.voguebusiness.com/companies/fashion-diversity-councils-innovation-revenue.

Bordo, S. (1993) *Unbearable weight: feminism, western culture, and the body*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Burnett, K. (2018) Is the fashion industry finally starting to recognize disability? Available at: https://www.Womensmediacenter.Com/Fbomb/is-The-Fashion-industry-Finally-Starting-To-Recognize-Disability

Business Bliss Consultants FZE. (2018). Evolving fashionable body shape ideals through social representation in the fashion industry. Retrieved from https://ukdiss.com/examples/fashionable-body-shape-ideals-history.php?vref=1

Cahill, A. (2011) *Overcoming objectification: a carnal ethics*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Chan, A. & Lempp, H. (2018) Garment+: challenging the boundaries of fashion for those with long-term physical disabilities. *The Journal of Dress History*, 2(1), 26–43.

Christel, D.A. (2014) It's your fault you're fat: judgements of responsibility and social conduct in the fashion industry. *Clothing Cultures*, 1(3), 303–320.

Clifford, S. (2011) One size fits nobody: seeking a steady 4 or a 10. Available at: Http://www.Nytimes.Com/2011/04/25/Business/25sizing.Html?_R=0

Colls, R. (2004) Looking alright, feeling alright: emotions, sizing and the geographies of women's experiences of clothing consumption. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 5(4), 583–596.

Corrigan, N. (2013) 72 percent of U.S. women wear size 12 and above—Gabriella Rossetti launches high-end collection for 12–22. Available at: http://Www.Prweb.Com/Releases/2013/7/Prweb10922959.Htm

Cosslett, R.L. (2016) Thinner, smoother, better: In the era of retouching, that's what girls have to be. Available at: https://Www.Theguardian.Com/Commentisfree/2016/Sep/08/Thinner-Retouching-Girls-image-Manipulation-Women

Covert, J.J. & Dixon, T.L. (2008) A changing view: representation and effects of the portrayal of women of color in mainstream women's magazines. *Communication Research*, 35(2), 232–256.

Crane, D. (2012) Fashion, identity and social change. In: *Fashion and its social agendas: class, gender and identity in clothing*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 1–25.

Creswell, J.W. (1998) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Cunningham, M.R., Roberts, A.R., Barbee, A.P., Druen, P.B. & Wu, C.-H. (1995) Their ideas of beauty are, on the whole, the same as ours: consistency and variability in the cross-cultural perception of female physical attractiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68(2), 261–279.

Cusforth, Z. (1951) Academic value of research participation by undergraduates. *American Psychologist*, 41, 317.

Darnell, P. (2018) What petite means in women's clothing? Available at: https://Www.Liveabout.Com/Petite-Meaning-in-Womens-Clothing-2658374

Darwin, L. (2015) Just how skinny are store mannequins? Available at: https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/store-mannequins-womens-body-shape

David, P., Morrison, G., Johnson, M.A. & Ross, F. (2002) Body image, race, and fashion models: social distance and social identification in third-person effects. *Communication Research*, 29(3), 270–294.

Davies, B., Larson, J., Contro, N., Reyes-Hailey, C., Ablin, A.R., Chesla, C.A. et al. (2009) Conducting a qualitative culture study of pediatric palliative care. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(1), 5–16.

Davis, F. (1992) *Fashion, culture, and identity*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

DePaulo, B.M., Kashy, D.A., Kirkendol, S.E., Wyer, M.M. & Epstein, J.A. (1996) Lying in everyday life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(5), 979–995.

Disability Statistics and Demographics Rehabilitation Research and Training Center. (2018) Annual disability statistics compendium. Available at: https://Disabilitycompendium.Org/Sites/Default/Files/User-Uploads/2018_Compendium_Accessible_Abobereaderfriendly.Pdf

Dockterman, E. (2016) *Inside the fight to take back the fitting room*TIME. Available at: Http://Time.Com/How-To-Fix-Vanity-Sizing/

Earle, S. (2003) Bumps and boobs': fatness and women's experiences of pregnancy. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26(3), 245–252.

Ekall, P. (2017) *ZARA is now featuring models over 40 in their new timeless collection* HUFFINGTON POST. Available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/zara-timeless-collection_uk_59a81737e4b07e81d355ad61

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Elise, D. (1999) Tomboys and cowgirls: the girl's disidentification from the mother. In: Rottnek, M. (Ed.) *Sissies and tomboys: gender nonconformity and homosexual childhood*. NY: New York University Press, pp. 140–152.

Entwistle, J. & Wilson, E. (2001) *Body dressing*. Oxford, England: Berg.

Ewen, E. (1985) *Immigrant women in the land of dollars: life and culture on the lower east side, 1890–1925*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Farley, A. (2019) How the Diet Prada cofounders became the fashion industry's most influential watchdogs? Available at: https://www.fastcompany.com/90345174/most-creative-people-2019-diet-prada-tony-liu-lindsey-schuyler

Farquhar, M. (1995) Definitions of quality of life: a taxonomy. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 22, 502–508.

Gabriel, Y. & Lang, T. (1995) *The unmanageable consumer: contemporary consumption and its fragmentation*. London: Sage Publications.

Gantz, W., Gartenberg, H.M. & Rainbow, C. (1980) Approaching invisibility: the portrayal of the elderly in magazine advertisements. *Journal of Communication*, 30, 56–60.

Girl Power Marketing. (2020) Statistics on the purchasing power of women. Available at: https://girlpowermarketing.com/statistics-purchasing-power-women/

Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Goffman, E. (1959) *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books.

Goodwin, S. & Huppatz, K. (2010) *The good mother: contemporary motherhoods in Australia*. Sydney, Australia: Sydney University Press.

Greco, A.J. & Paksoy, C.H. (1989) Profiling the mature fashion-conscious apparel shopper. *Akron Business and Economic Review*, 20, 7–23.

Greene, B. (1994) African American women. In: Comas-Díaz, L. & Greene, B. (Eds.) *Women of color: integrating ethnic and gender identities in psychotherapy*. New York: The Guilford Press, pp. 10–29.

Grogan, S. (2017) *Body image: understanding body dissatisfaction in men, women and children*. London: Routledge.

Gunn, T. (2016) Tim Gunn: designers refuse to make clothes to fit American women. It's a disgrace. Available at: https://Www.Washingtonpost.Com/Posteverything/Wp/2016/09/08/Tim-Gunn-Designers-Refuse-To-Make-Clothes-To-Fit-American-Women-its-A-Disgrace/?Noredirect=Onandutm_Term=.3367fd0f2087.

Guy, A. & Banim, M. (2000) Personal collections: Women's clothing use and identity. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 9(3), 313–327.

Heasley, S. (2018) Target adding clothing for adults with special needs. Available at: https://Www.Disabilityscoop.Com/2018/01/31/Target-Adding-Clothing-Adults/24661/

Henry, P.C. & Caldwell, M. (2006) Self-empowerment and consumption: consumer remedies for prolonged stigmatization. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(9–10), 1031–1048.

Hilfiger, T. (2019) Tommy adaptive. Available at: https://Usa.Tommy.Com/En/Tommy-Adaptive

Hoegg, J., Scott, M.L., Morales, A.C. & Dahl, D.W. (2014) The flip side of vanity sizing: how consumers respond to and compensate for larger than expected clothing sizes. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 24(1), 70–78.

Hoff, V. & Hancock, O. (2022) This survey suggests and "ideal" body type—here's why that's problematic. Available at: https://www.byrdie.com/body-standards-survey

Holmlund, M., Hagman, A. & Polsa, P. (2011) An exploration of how mature women buy clothing: empirical insights and a model. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 15(1), 108–122.

Hooks, B. (1995) *Killing rage: ending racism*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Howarton, R. & Lee, B. (2010) Market analysis of fit preferences of female boomers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 14(2), 219–229.

Hunter, M.L. (2002) If you're light you're alright: light skin color as social capital for women of color. *Gender and Society*, 16, 175–193.

Illingworth, G. (2017) Can fashion be truly subversive when it comes to gender? Available at: https://www.Notjustalabel.Com/Editorial/Can-Fashion-Be-Truly-Subversive-When-it-Comes-Gender

Isa, M. & Kramer, E. (2003) Adopting the Caucasian look: reorganizing the minority face. In: Kramer, E.M. (Ed.) *The emerging monoculture: Assimilation and the model minority*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 41–74.

Johnson, C. (2015) How women of color are portrayed on the cover of magazines: a content analysis on the images of black/African, Latina, Asian and native American (BALANA). All Eses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects. Paper 438.

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Johnson, R.D. & Downing, L.L. (1979) Deindividuation and valence of cues: effects on prosocial and antisocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37(9), 1532–1538.

Jones, E.E. (1990) *Interpersonal perception*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Co.

Jones, G. (2008) Blonde-and blue-eyed? Globalizing beauty, C.1945-C.1980. *Economic History Reviews*, 61(1), 125–154.

Joy, A., Sherry, J.F., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J. & Chan, R. (2012) Fast fashion, sustainability, and the ethical appeal of luxury brands. *Fashion Theory*, 16(3), 273–296.

Kasambala, J., Kempen, E. & Pandarum, R. (2016) Female Consumers' perceptions of garment fit, personal values and emotions considering their body shapes. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 40(2), 143–151.

Keiser, S.J. & Garner, M. (2012) *Beyond design*. New York: Fairchild Books.

Kennedy, K. (2009) What size am I? Decoding women's clothing standards. *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress Body & Culture*, 13(4), 511–530.

Kim, H., Cho, I. & Park, M. (2022) Analyzing genderless fashion trends of consumers' perceptions on social media: using unstructured big data analysis through latent Dirichlet allocation-based topic modeling. *Fashion and Textiles*, 9(1), 6.

Kopf, D. (2019) Generation Z's views on gender are what set it apart in the US. Available at: https://qz.com/1528752/generation-zs-views-on-gender-set-it-apart-in-us/

Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Lamare, A. (2018) The $20-billion plus-size fashion market is a missed opportunity. Available at: https://www.businessofbusiness.com/articles/plus-size-fashion/

Langmeyer, L. (1993) Age role portrayals in magazine advertisements: a content analysis. In: Summery, J.H. et al. (Eds.) *Theories and concepts in era of change*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Marketing Association Proceedings, 1983, pp. 286–289.

Lauren, A. (2010) What defines a petite woman? Height, weight or both? Available at: Http://Bellapetite.Com/What-is-A-Petite-Woman-Height-Weight-Or-Both.Html

Lauriello, S. (2019) Winnie Harlow had the best response when a fan made an ignorant comment about her vitiligo. Available at: https://Www.Health.Com/Condition/Skin-Conditions/Winnie-Harlow-Vitiligo

Lee, R. (1997) The youth bias in advertising. *American Demographics*, 19, 46–50.

Lee, Y.M., Istook, C.L., Nam, Y.J. & Park, S.M. (2007) Comparison of body shape between USA and Korean women. *International Journal of Clothing Service and Technology*, 19(5), 374–391.

Loechner, J. (2018) Media post. Available at: https://Www.Mediapost.Com/Publications/Article/313609/107-Billion-Lost-in-Returns.Html

Long, N. (1998) Broken down by age and sex: exploring the ways we approach the elderly consumer. *Journal of the Market Research Society*, 40, 73–91.

Lyst. (2019) The year in fashion. Available at: https://www.lyst.com/year-in-fashion-2019/

Makhanya, B.P., Klerk, H.M., Adamski, K. & Mastamet-Mason, A. (2014) Ethnicity, body shape differences and female consumers' apparel fit problems. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 38(2), 183–191.

Marci, K. (2020) The need for gender fluidity in fashion beyond pride. Available at: https://edited.com/resources/the-need-for-gender-fluidity-in-fashion-beyond-pride/

Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative researching*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Mayo Clinic. (n.d.) Vitiligo. Available at: https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/vitiligo/symptoms-causes/syc-20355912

Mcdermott, L.A. & Pettijohn, T.F., II. (2011) The influence of clothing fashion and race on the perceived socioeconomic status and person perception of college students. *Psychology and Society*, 4(2), 64–75.

McKinnon, T. (2018) The size 14+ clothing market: underserved but in demand. Available at: https://www.indigo9digital.com/blog/the-opportunity-is-real-and-consumers-are-clamouring-for-it

Mears, A. (2010) Size zero high-end ethnic: cultural production and the reproduction of culture in fashion modeling. *Poetics*, 38, 21–46.

Mears, A. (2011) *Pricing beauty: the making of a fashion model*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Millard, J. & Grant, P. (2006) The stereotypes of black and white women in fashion magazine photographs: the pose of the model and the impression she creates. *Sex Roles*, 54(9/10), 659–673.

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Miller, C. (1993) Image of seniors improves in ads. *Marketing News*, 27(25), 8–11.
Moustakas, C. (1994) *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Mussell, M.P., Binford, R.B. & Fulkerson, J.A. (2000) Eating disorders: summary of risk factors, prevention programming, and prevention research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 28, 764–796.
Nam, J., Hamlin, R., Gam, H.J., Hye, K.J., Kim, J., Kumphai, P. et al. (2007) The fashion-conscious behaviors of mature female consumers. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31, 102–108.
Nielsen. (2015) Beauty is more than skin deep for Asian-Americans. Available at: https://Www.Nielsen.Com/Us/En/insights/News/2015/Beauty-is-More-Than-Skin-Deep-For-Asian-Americans.Html
Nielsen. (2018) Black impact: Consumer categories where African Americans move markets. Available at: https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2018/black-impact-consumer-categories-where-african-americans-move-markets/
Nielsen. (2021) Multicultural consumers are set to drive beauty growth amid continued category shifts in 2021. Available at: https://nielseniq.com/global/en/insights/analysis/2021/multicultural-consumers-are-set-to-drive-beauty-growth-amid-continued-category-shifts-in-2021/
Noble, C.H. & Walker, B.A. (1997) Exploring the relationships among liminal transitions, symbolic consumption, and the extended self. *Psychology and Marketing*, 14(1), 29–47.
Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). (2012) Business strategies that work: a framework for disability inclusion. Available at: https://Www.Dol.Gov/Odep/Pdf/Businessstrategiesthatwork.Pdf
Ogle, J.P., Tyner, K.E. & Schofield-Tomschin, S. (2011) Jointly navigating the reclamation of the 'woman I used to be': negotiating concerns about the postpartum body within the marital dyad. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 29(1), 35–51.
Oliver, D. (2015) Iman opens up about deeply upsetting career moment. Available at: https://Www.Huffpost.Com/Entry/iman-Racism-Fashionindustry_N_55f02b31e4b002d5c0775000
Ozdamar Ertekin, Z. & Atik, D. (2020) The logic of sustainability: institutional transformation towards a new culture of fashion. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(15–16), 1447–1480.
Padula, V. (2016) Whitewashed runways: employment discrimination in the fashion modeling industry. *Berkeley Journal of African-American Law and Policy*, 17(1), 117–141.
Park, J., Nam, Y., Choi, K., Lee, Y. & Lee, K. (2009) Apparel consumers' body type and their shopping characteristics. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 13(3), 372–393.
Poli, D. (1997) *Maternity fashion*. Drama Publishers.
Raphael, R. (2016) Niche maternity retailers surge as millennial moms redefine the category. Available at: https://www.Fastcompany.Com/3063624/Niche-Maternity-Retailers-Surge-As-Millennial-Moms-Redefine-The-Category
Rice, C. (2010) Exacting beauty: exploring women's body projects and problems in the 21st century. In: Mandell, N. (Ed.) *Feminist issues: race, class, and sexuality*. Toronto: Pearson Canada Inc., pp. 131–160.
Ritchie, J. (2003) The applications of qualitative methods to social research. In: Lewis, J.R. (Ed.) *Qualitative research practice*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, pp. 24–46.
Roach-Higgins, M.E. & Eicher, J.B. (1992) Dress and identity. *Clothing and Textiles Journal*, 10(4), 1–8.
Rosenberg, M. (1979) *Conceiving the self*. New York: Basic Books.
Sandikci, O. & Ger, G. (2010) Veiling in style: how does a stigmatized practice become fashionable? *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(1), 15–36.
Scaraboto, D. & Fischer, E. (2013) Frustrated fatshionistas: an institutional theory perspective on consumer quests for greater choice in mainstream markets. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(6), 1234–1257.
Schewe, C.D. (1988) Marketing to our aging population: responding to physiological changes. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 5(3), 61–73.
Schlossberg, M. (2016) I'm part of a huge demographic that retailers largely ignore—here's why it's so frustrating. Available at: https://www.businessinsider.com/petite-problem-story-2015-12
Schopf, S. (2016) White, white, white, black: how U.S. vogue balances diversity and homogeneity: an investigation of racial and body type representation in the high-end fashion industry. Honors program in sociology at Boston College, Boston.
Shin, E. (2013) Exploring consumers' fit perceptions and satisfaction with apparel fit in general. Master Thesis: Iowa State University.

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Shin, S.-J.H. & Istook, C.L. (2007) The importance of understanding the shape of diverse ethnic female consumers for developing jeans sizing systems. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31, 135–143.

Simmons, K., Istook, C.L. & Devarajan, P. (2004) Female figure identification technique (FFIT) for apparel part I: describing female shapes. *Journal of Textile and Apparel, Technology and Management*, 4(1), 1–16.

Smith, D. (1990) *Texts, facts and femininity: exploring the relations of ruling*. London: Routledge.

Smith, N. (2012) Clothing and the communication of culture: The sociology of fashion. Available at: Http://www.Articlemyriad.Com/Clothing-Communication-Culture-Sociology-Fashion

Sohn, M. & Bye, E. (2015) Pregnancy and body image: analysis of clothing functions of maternity wear. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 33(1), 64–78.

Suh, S. (2017) 7 brands that offer nude products for women of color. Available at: https://Www.Allure.Com/Story/Brands-That-offer-Nude-Products-Women-of-Color

Swann, W.B. (1990) To be adored or to be known? The interplay of self- enhancement and self-verification. In: Sorrentino, R.M. & Higgins, E.T. (Eds.) *Motivation and cognition*, Vol. 2. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 408–448.

Swift, P. & Bogart, K. (2021) A hidden community: facial disfigurement as a globally neglected human rights issue. *Journal of Oral Biology and Craniofacial Research*, 11(4), 652–657.

Tai, C. (2016) Report: The spring 2017 runways were the most diverse in history. Available at: Http://Www.Thefashionspot.Com/Runway-News/717823-Diversity-Report-Spring-2017-Runways/

Taylor, P.C. (1999) Malcolm's conk and Danto's colours; or four logical petitions concerning race, beauty, and aesthetics. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 57(1), 16–20.

The Council of Fashion Designers of America. (2019) Inclusion and diversity in the American fashion industry. Available at: https://www.pvh.com/~/media/pvh/files/news/cfda_pvh_dagoba_id_briefing.ashx?la=en

The Fashion Spot. (2017) Diversity report: Every runway at New York fashion week featured at least 2 models of color for spring 2018. Available at: Http://Www.Thefashionspot.Com/Runway-News/765783-Diversity-Report-Every-New-York-Fashion-Week-Spring-2018/

The Fashion Spot. (2018) Diversity report: One out of every three models in the spring 2018 fashion ads were women of color. Available at: https://Urlzs.Com/Vultf

The National Center for Health Statistics. (2011-2014) Anthropometric reference data for children and adults: United States. Available at: https://www.Cdc.Gov/Nchs/Data/Series/Sr_03/Sr03_039.Pdf

Thompson, C.J. & Haytko, D.L. (1997) Speaking of fashion: Consumers' uses of fashion discourses and the appropriation of countervailing cultural meanings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24, 15–42.

Tiggemann, M. & Lacey, C. (2009) Shopping for clothes: body satisfaction, appearance investment, and functions of clothing among female shoppers. *Body Image*, 6, 285–291.

Tunaley, J.R., Walsh, S. & Nicolson, P. (1999) I'm not bad for my age: the meaning of body size and eating in the lives of older women. *Ageing and Society*, 19, 741–759.

Upton, R.L. & Han, S.S. (2003) Maternity and its discontents: "getting the body back" after pregnancy. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 32, 670–692.

Van Meter, K. (1990) Methodological and design issues: techniques for assessing the representatives of snowball samples. In: Lambert, E.Y. (Ed.) *The collection and interpretation of data from hidden populations (NIDA Research Monograph, 98), Rockville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services*, pp. 31–43.

Vogt, W.P. (1999) *Dictionary of statistics and methodology: a nontechnical guide for the social sciences*. London, UK: Sage.

Waxman, O.B. (2015) Model with down syndrome treads the catwalk in New York. Available at: https://Time.Com/4033572/Down-Syndrome-Model-New-York-Fashion-Week-Madeline-Stuart/

Wilson, E. (1985) *Adorned in dreams: fashion and modernity*. London: Virago.

Wilson, E. (1992) Fashion and postmodern body. In: Ash, J. & Wilson, E. (Eds.) *Chic trills: A fashion reader*. London: Pandora Press, pp. 3–17.

Wolf, N. (2002) *The beauty myth*. New York: Harpercollins Publishers.

Yin, M., Shaewitz, D., Overton, D. & Smith, D.-M. (2018) A hidden market: The purchasing power of working-age adults with disabilities. Available at: https://www.Air.Org/System/Files/Downloads/Report/Hidden-Market-Spending-Power-of-People-With-Disabilities-April-2018.Pdf

Zaltman, G. & Coulter, R.H. (1995) Seeing the voice of the customer: metaphor-based advertising. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 35(4), 35–51.

Zhou, N. & Chen, M.Y.T. (1992) Marginal life after 49: a preliminary study of the portrayal of older people in Canadian consumer magazine advertising. *International Journal of Advertising*, 11, 343–354.

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

Zimbardo, P.G. (1969) The human choice: individuation, reason, and order versus deindividuation, impulse, and chaos. In: Arnold, W.J. & Levine, D. (Eds.) *Nebraska symposium on motivation*. University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, pp. 237–307.

Zota, A.R. & Shamasunder, B. (2017) The environmental injustice of beauty: framing chemical exposures from beauty products as a health disparities concern. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 217(4), 418.E1–418.E6.

How to cite this article: Cavusoglu, L., & Atik, D. (2022). Extending the diversity conversation: Fashion consumption experiences of underrepresented and underserved women. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12504

APPENDIX A

A.1 | Introduction

1. Introduce yourself and inform the interviewee about the purpose of the research. Make sure the informant acknowledges to be tape recorded and notify the respondent when the recorder is on.

A.2 | Inquiry process

A.2.1. | Warm-up to get the interviewee in the interviewing mindset

2. Get some background information on interviewees such as age, the higher degree of education, ethnicity, and occupation. Inform the respondents about the anonymity of the research by ensuring them that their names and any identifying information will not be used in final report or publications.
3. When I say “fashion,” what comes to your mind?
4. How about your clothing style? Can you describe your clothing style? How do you feel about your fashion style?
5. Can you tell me about your shopping routine? When do you prefer to shop? Who are you going shopping with? What are your favorite stores/brands?
6. What kind of pieces are appealing to you to wear? Why? How those pieces make you feel?
7. Are there any types of clothing that you avoid wearing? Why? Can you describe your feelings when you see this piece on someone else?
8. Can you tell me what does fashion means to you? Can you describe your thoughts and feelings when you think of fashion?
9. How do you feel about fashion/clothing shopping?
10. Can you remember any negative experiences with clothing shopping in a physical store or online? Any positive experience while shopping?

A.2.2. | Experiences and feelings about diversity in fashion

11. How do you evaluate people based on their clothing style/look? Do you remember any example of including/excluding someone based on her appearance?

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License

12. Can you remember any situation that you felt judged/excluded by others based on your clothing style? Can you give me more detail about the situation? How did you feel? How did you react?
13. Where do you see yourself in the fashion system? Do you feel represented? Do you ever feel underrepresented? Why? Can you please give me an example?
14. Can you remember a situation where you felt discriminated while clothing shopping due to your ethnicity, skin color, body type, culture, values? How did you deal with it?
15. Do you remember a situation that you canceled/rescheduled an event because you did not like your outfit/look? Can you tell me more about your feelings that day?
16. Have you ever experienced pressure because of the fashion/beauty system's ideals and standards? (e.g., dieting and working out, age-defying creams, plastic surgery… etc.)
17. What would you say is, from your perspective, the most commonly held misconception in fashion industry about women of your culture? Why do you think fashion industry make those assumptions? How did you notice that assumption about women of your culture?
18. When you think about the current fashion industry, do you say, fashion industry is diverse and it is representing all women? Can you give me examples of representation? What kind of women you see on runways, online catalogs, magazines?
19. How do you react to these? Do you do anything? Can you give an example?
20. When it comes to giving a reaction, social media is one popular place today to raise voice. Are you a social media user? What social media channels are you using?
21. When you face a positive or negative experience in fashion, do you share in social media? Can you give an example about sharing a fashion post on social media? Do you care about your outfit/look when you post on social media?
22. Do you follow any fashion bloggers on social media? Based on what you chose the blogger that you follow? Can you name them? Did social media change your fashion consumption? How?

A.2.3. | Suggestions and opportunities for improvement

23. What would make you happy to see that is changed in fashion industry? Can you please give me some examples?
24. What are consequences of not being fully represented in fashion industry for women of your culture, age, body type characteristics? If you see more women looking like you in media how would that have changed your consumption and perception of yourself?
25. Is there anything else you would like to add?

A.3 | Interviewer reflections

After the informant leaves, take some time to indicate your reactions and observations about the interview.

The date and place of Interview ....

Describe the respondent's attitude toward you and the interview questions.

....

Anything that has bearings on the research's objective or interview questions.

....

17456606, 0, Downloaded from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joca.12504 by The University Of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Wiley Online Library on [06/02/2023]. See the Terms and Conditions (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/terms-and-conditions) on Wiley Online Library for rules of use; OA articles are governed by the applicable Creative Commons License