

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON FASHION

This study examines the influence of social media on fashion trends, particularly the speed at which they spread and evolve. It traces the evolution of fashion from the dominance of designers and fashion runways to the modern impact of social media platforms, such as TikTok, in shaping new trends. The focus is placed on the phenomenon of microtrends—short-lived but widely popular style directions that gain traction through content-sharing platforms. Styles such as "old money," "coquette," and "Y2K" are discussed as examples of trends that thrive on TikTok, creating new communities with distinct visual codes and cultural norms. The article also highlights the negative aspects of the rapid pace of fashion in the social media era, such as overconsumption and the loss of individuality. It calls for a more conscious approach to fashion consumption in the digital age.

Fashion is a form of self-expression that reflects the preferences of a society at a certain period of time through clothing, style, colors, and silhouettes. Historically, the sources of influence on fashion have varied according to social, economic, and cultural conditions: in ancient times, fashion was dictated by monarchs and the aristocracy, as clothing was an indicator of status and belonging to the upper class. In the 19th century, fashion began to be shaped by fashion designers such as Charles Worth, who is considered one of the first couturiers. Fashion runways, dressmakers and forecasters have played a key role in forming and changing the direction of fashion over time. After all, it is on the runways that new ideas are officially presented, which can set the tone for the entire upcoming season. Designers, as creators of aesthetics and visionaries, convey their own vision of relevance through their collections, sometimes being ahead of the time and offering non-standard approaches to shape, colour or pattern that can later become mainstream. Their name, reputation and influence help shape the tastes of both the professional industry and the general public. Fashion forecasters, or trend forecasters, study social, cultural, and economic processes and analyze changes in consumer behavior and public sentiment to predict what colors, fabrics, or styles will be relevant in the coming years.

In the 20th century, fashion was increasingly influenced by cinema, magazines, music icons and subcultures, which created new styles and aesthetics. With the advent of television and later the Internet, fashion sources have become even more accessible and diverse. In the 21st century, fashion trends are defined by globalization, street style, celebrities, bloggers, and especially social media, which have shifted the center of influence from professional designers to a wide audience of users capable of creating and spreading trends in real time.

However, modern fashion is no longer a one-way process dominated by catwalks, famous designers and analysts' predictions — today, social media plays a pivotal role in shaping trends, changing the very dynamics of the fashion industry. This shift was especially pronounced with the arrival of TikTok, a platform that has become a powerful trendsetter due to its speed, visual format, and ability to create viral content. On TikTok, fashion is not only demonstrated but also discussed, copied, adapted and modified directly

in real time, where every user can become influential with a single video. This is where microtrends emerge and disappear — short-lived but vibrant phenomena that can reach millions of people in just a few days. Styles such as "old money", "coquette" and "Y2K" have gained immense popularity through TikTok, often accompanied by a certain visual code, music, lifestyle and even speech, which creates communities with their own slang and spirit. The "old money" style is associated with minimalism, a well-groomed look, shiny skin, smooth hair, basic clothing in neutral colours, and the idea of elegance and sophistication — it is a visual language of self-discipline, tasteful simplicity, and quiet luxury. "Coquette" is a romanticized, flirty style inspired by retro images, pastel colors, bows, lace and an emphasis on femininity in its soft, slightly naive, but sexualized form, which often echoes the aesthetics of Tumblr. And "Y2K" is a nostalgia for the fashion of the early 2000s: low-rise jeans, glitter, pink glasses, strapless tops, denim looks, and the general vibe of pop culture from the era of Britney Spears and Paris Hilton [1].

While social media fashion provides unsurpassed opportunities for self-expression, it also causes social consequences and risks, such as stimulating overconsumption when consumers try to constantly update their wardrobes in pursuit of rapidly changing microtrends. This is not only harmful to the environment but also imposes pressure to conform to certain visual standards, often causing one to lose their own style in favor of algorithmic fashion. As a result, social media is shaping a new fashion reality in which self-expression is becoming widespread and risks being unified, and trends are changing faster than ever before, requiring a more conscious approach to both consumption and personal style.

REFERENCES

1. Hyland V. What TikTok Gave Fashion and What It Took Away. ELLE. URL: <https://www.elle.com/fashion/a63424453/tiktok-fashion-impact-explained/> (date of access: 06.04.2025).