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**Psychology of subculture: Phenomenology and Contemporary
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**FEATURES OF METACOGNITION AND PERCEPTION OF
FASHION TRENDS AMONG YOUTH**

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Abstract

Metacognitions play an exceptional role in the individual's organization of internal activity, while social context has a significant impact on it. Fashion industry, as a social context manifestation, is a form of standardized mass behaviour and fashion trends are the "voices" that broadcast ideas. Differences in the preferences and evaluation of trends may indicate a distinction in the fashion industries impact on the individual. This distinction may be based on metacognitions. In our study, we aimed to understand how does an individual perceive fashion trends, what role do the features of metacognitions play in this process? We began with fashion trend analysis. Next, we investigated perceptions about trends, fashion industry and its meaning through qualitative analysis. To study features of metacognition, we chose methods to assess metacognitive involvement in the awareness of inner activity, as well as we diagnosed metacognitive beliefs. We used cluster analysis to create subgroups based on the level of metacognitive awareness. Our findings show that people with different levels of metacognitive awareness have diverse perceptions of fashion trends. The differences lie in the assessment and the attached meaning. Therefore, features of metacognition, namely metacognitive awareness and metacognitive beliefs, play a significant role in the perception of fashion trends.

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Keywords: Metacognition, metacognitive awareness, metacognitive beliefs, fashion trend, fashion industry, social context.



1. Introduction

Mental processes can be directed both to external and internal environment. The prefix "meta" means knowing and managing your own cognitive system, an orientation of one's mental processes on other mental processes at the meta-level of the psyche (Karpov & Skiteva, 2005).

Metacognitions include knowledge about cognition and its regulation (Flavell, 1979), while individual is a system containing self-reflexive mechanisms, for evaluation and re-evaluation of personal progress for change (Nelson & Narens, 1990).

Everyone is immersed into society, therefore, is exposed to external influence. Attention has already been drawn to the relationship between metacognition and the social context. "Inward orientation" largely depends on our personal and family history, group membership, socio-economic situations and cultural context.

The research on the role of metacognition in social interactions was conducted by Frith (2012), who divided metacognitions into implicit, that allow us to enter the group mode "we" and take into account knowledge and intentions of others automatically, and explicit, that allow us to evaluate and justify our behaviour in front of others. Fincher emphasizes the cultural component of metacognition (Fincher, Morris, & Savani, 2019). There are studies dedicated to the role of metacognition in the process of conviction in majorities and minorities (Horcajo, Briñol, & Petty, 2017). As well as, studies about the use of metacognition and beliefs to initiate and maintain social connections (Carlson, 2016). Metacognitions may also include normative ideas about how our minds should or should not work, where stereotypical or categorical judgments about others apply (Yzerbyt, Schadron, Leyens, & Rocher, 1994).

Metacognitive beliefs are a product of personal attitudes, social stereotypes, cultural constructs, but also they can be experimentally altered through social influence (Dweck, 1990). The transformation and the change of metacognitive beliefs are affected by the newly received information when it differs with previously accepted beliefs of the individual (Wolfe, 2018). The social context by its nature creates and accumulates information that appears spontaneously, which leads to a collision of individual beliefs and a shift of metacognitive beliefs. Therefore, social context has tools to impact and influence an individual's metacognitions.

Fashion is a form of standardized mass behaviour that occurs spontaneously under the influence of mainstream-prevailing trends in society (Beckwith, 1997). The individual included in the social context will be guided by his needs, motives and fashion trends are the "voice" of the industry, which broadcasts "products of consumption" to the masses.

Fashion trends are expressed directly in garments, that broadcast the ideas embedded in them. Thus, clothing is imparted with a new meaning, apart from its function, which was implemented through fashion trends. The experience of wearing clothes evokes related abstract concepts and their symbolic meanings. When a garment is worn, it influences the psychological processes of the wearer by activating related abstract concepts through their symbolic meanings (Hajo & Galinsky, 2012).

We are convinced that there is an interconnection between the social context, which in our study is presented through the fashion industry and broadcasted fashion trends, and metacognition. The interaction of these variables, the perception of broadcasted fashion trends and capacity at the meta-level and its specificity is the subject of our study.

2. Problem Statement

The topic of interaction of meta-level and social context is not sufficiently covered in psychology. Metacognitive components have not been studied through the prism of the fashion industry and the perception of fashion trends, which in our opinion, can be useful for both the consumer and the manufacturer.

3. Research Questions

How does an individual perceive fashion trends, what role do the features of metacognitions play in this process, is there specificity in the perception of fashion industry and fashion trends based on surrounding individual social context?

4. Purpose of the Study

Our research aimed to discover the internal activity of the individual through understanding the specific features of metacognition, to detect the level of metacognitive awareness and determine metacognitive beliefs, under the social environment impact, where fashion trends are referred as influencing factors.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 25 participants (women and men of young age, $M=27,7$, $Sd=3,6$), selected by the criterion of professional or personal interest in fashion (following fashion trends, involvement in fashion subcultures, occupation in the fashion).

5.2. Methods

The empirical study consisted of several stages. First stage was dedicated to the fashion trend analysis of marketing agencies trend-books (McKinsey&Company, WGSN, Ipsos, Smartshape) and publishing houses (Conde Nast and Hearst).

To study the specificity of the fashion trends perception interviews were conducted. The data was processed through a descriptive qualitative analysis using phenomenological method, where we defined categories (central topics) among participants answers.

To study features of metacognition, we chose methods to assess metacognitive involvement in the awareness of inner activity, as well as metacognitive beliefs. The Metacognitive Awareness Inventory questionnaire (MAI) (Schraw & Dennison, 1994) in the adaptation (Karpov & Skiteva, 2005), allows to assess the level of metacognitive involvement, to answer the question about the level of metacognitive awareness of the participant.

Also, we took a Short Form of Metacognitions Questionnaire: Properties of MCQ-30 (Wells & Cartwright-Hatton, 2004) with the approbation on Russian-speaking population (Sirota, Moskovchenko,

Yaltonsky, & Yaltonskaya, 2018). It gives us data about techniques of control and regulation in the information processing at the meta-level.

6. Findings

6.1. Fashion trend-book analysis

According to the trend-book analysis we elected value orientations and fashion trends in clothing, shoes and accessories. The significant value orientations of 2019 included:

Search for an authentic self includes the value of self-care, attention to your body and mental health, the search for contact with yourself (through mindfulness practices, work on self-acceptance, popularization of psychotherapy, body-positive).

Rethinking adulthood expresses a new understanding of adulthood, an escape from the tradition when young generations used to repeat steps of their parents. Self-sufficiency and adoption of society "to yourself", putting your interests first, instead of following traditions broadcasted by the senior generations.

Leaving the comfort zone emphasizes an active individuals position, creativity and self-expression, pushes to try new things and achieve dreams and desires, to say "Yes".

Joy of missing out accentuates that life's intensity is high, but powers and time are not infinite and there is not enough time for everything you want. Therefore, appreciate your time, plan, be wise and accept the idea that "missing on things" is a new norm.

Common ground. Everyone is unique and incomparable, but we are on the same planet, which means we already have something in common and it unites us. This trend is expressed through increasing the role of activism manifestations for equality, tolerance and charity work.

Less is better. According to many experts, our planet suffers from the presence of people on it, so the current trend is to take care of our "home". Being eco-friendly means embracing recycling, plastic rejection, separate garbage, conscious consumption, second life for things and etc.

Social isolation. The speed of life is high, which is not always beneficial to the person, so it is important to pay attention to yourself and use the online services, which help to meet needs without spending time, nor effort.

Online. Technology and speed of life allow and force us to use an increasing number of online services. As well as, brands and people have online-representations (digital personas) that are important part of modern life.

6.2. Quantitative analysis

The value of metacognitive awareness inventory (MAI) differ among the participants, with the minimum figure in 156 points and the maximum 233 (Mean=197.28; Sd=20.007). Differences in MAI values were identified as a factor dividing the sample by the level of metacognitive involvement. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a relationship between MAI level and metacognitive beliefs, a significant relationship between MAI and positive beliefs ($p=0.045$) was identified.

Pearson correlation revealed a significant relationship between MAI and cognitive self-consciousness ($p=0.004$), positive beliefs ($p=0.001$), and need to control thoughts ($p=0.049$).

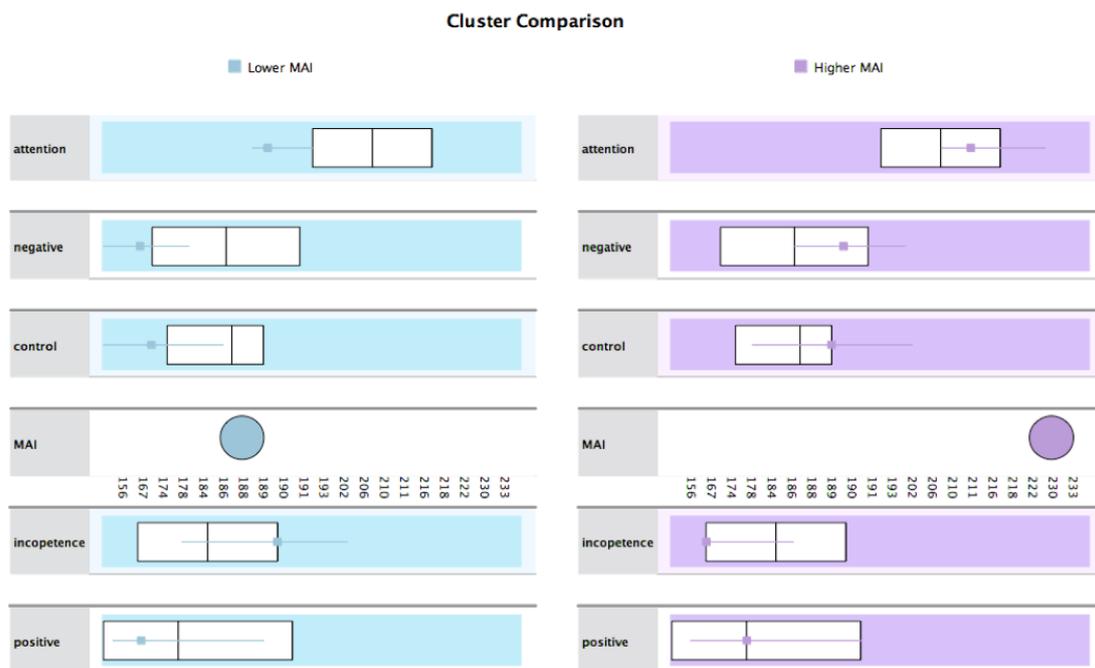


Figure 01. Cluster comparison¹

Through clustering method, the sample was divided into two clusters: with high and moderate values of MAI. Comparison of the clusters (Figure 01.) shows the detected dependencies through a boxplot diagram. Representatives with moderate MAI level show low value (interquartile range) with excluded over 25th percentile outliers of Negative Beliefs about Uncontrollability and Danger, Need to Control Thoughts; Positive Beliefs, Cognitive Confidence also show range of low indexes. Value of Cognitive Self-Consciousness between this representative group is mild to high, with outliers before 25th percentile value. Representatives of high MAI group show low to mild level of Cognitive Confidence, Need to Control Thoughts and Positive Beliefs based on interquartile range. Mild value of Negative Beliefs and mild to high value of Cognitive Self-Consciousness.

6.3. Fashion trend interview analysis

The majority of participants agreed with the list of fashion trends. The comments and clarifications about trends were important.

Search for an authentic self. Opinions towards this trend vary. The negative ones are not related to the content of the trend, thus to the fact, that this orientation is broadcasted to the masses and creates a situation of "forced contact with oneself", which does not have a positive connotation among everyone. For example, participants state: "When you don't have contact with yourself, you don't understand what you really want" or "Everyone is disputing about being natural and "being yourself", but is it really about "being honest with yourself"?"

¹ Figure 01. Cluster comparison description. Metacognitive beliefs: "Attention" - cognitive self-consciousness; "Negative" - negative beliefs associated uncontrollability and danger; "Control" - need to control thoughts; "Incompetence" - cognitive confidence; "Positive" - positive beliefs. "MAI" - metacognitive awareness inventory.

Rethinking adulthood. There is an agreement with the positivity of the idea “let’s adopt the world to oneself, rather than follow traditions of the past”. However, few participants expressed their concern about the responsibility and freedom that makes it possible not to follow the “proposed rules”: “Are we that empowered to stand against the past? Is it a better perspective?”

Leaving the comfort zone. Most participants agree with the realization of one’s potential through discovery of new experiences. Some disagree because of underlying pressure: “Comfort is important for achievements and self-expression, you can try new things and create in comfort, and not in stress. Comfort helps, I would replace “leaving the comfort zone” with “leaving the usual zone” and at the same time, you are in comfort”.

Joy of missing out. This trend caused the greatest resonance. The tendency “not to be upset when you missed something” is a difficult message to broadcast as a value to the masses. Also, the idea of giving responsibility away and withdrawal from obligations, that some participants noted as a part of this tendency, is considered negatively. For example: “We have the illusion of choice, but ability to choose doesn’t make it any better. The greater amount of options, the worse, because it’s confusing, fearful and horrible. The more choices you have, the harder it is to accept “the one”, “ the right one””.

Common ground. The majority gave a short answer “Yes, it’s important”. The trend reflects the social processes taking place in society, but different brands commercialize it, which brings a negative attitude. Participants state: “I disagree that charity is “fashionable.” We all live together and we are connected. Maybe it’s commercial nonsense, a “plastic trend”. Now, even Oscar is provided to vulnerable groups”. Awareness is at the collective level, and ones who can make on it picked it up in the sake of hype.

Less is better. It expresses socio-economic concerns about the ecological state of our planet, as well as it is successfully commercialized by brands, which also causes a negative attitude among the participants: “Conscious consumption and eco-friendly brands might be a facade, they claim, but not everyone does what they say”.

Social isolation. It captures modern day value, where a device replaced the real contact and often we are alone, but it’s our choice to pick up the phone and get back to “communication”. This trend normalizes the relation towards people with lack of social contacts and gives permission to be asocial. For example: “Everyone exists with an illusion of having a lot of contacts, and there is an effect, a trick, that you communicate with everyone, maintain contacts where all the information is with you, but you are alone”.

Online. From the position of replacing real communication with online – participants assess it negatively. On the other side, the opportunity to use the services and save your time (Joy of missing out) is perceived positively. The idea of “digital versions of oneself” has ambivalent responses. Some agree that it is important to emphasize and control your digital persona, but it’s energy-consuming and not worth the attention.

6.4.Results analysis

We obtained qualitative data through interviews and quantitative data through questionnaires, which leads us to general analysis.

Qualitative analysis gave us an opportunity to understand the subjective meaning of fashion for the participants. Quantitative analysis allowed us to divide participants into groups by the level of metacognitive awareness, that is used as a criterion for metacognitions specificity.

Thus, participants are separated in the group with high MAI, which is represented in the high ability to analyze their own mental strategies and the ability to manage knowledge, to understand the features of their own internal activities. The second group included participants with moderate MAI, which is represented in the ability to analyze and regulate their mental strategies in familiar and non-stressful situations.

Note that the differences in the metacognitive regulation reflect the level of self-adjustment of the individual, the ability to manage their internal activities.

We discovered (Table 01.) that members of groups with high and moderate MAI have different perceptions of fashion trends and they assess them differently.

Table 01. Significant trends for MAI levels

	Moderate metacognitive awareness	High metacognitive awareness
Valuable trends	Rethinking adulthood	Search for an authentic self
	Leaving the comfort zone	Rethinking adulthood
	Search for an authentic self	Joy of missing out
Ambivalent trends	Online	Less is better
	Common ground	Common ground
	Social isolation	Social isolation
	Joy of missing out	Leaving the comfort zone
	Less is better	Online

Here is the assessments (Table 02.) of the same trend (Leaving the comfort zone) where opinions are positive, however, used language, the way the explanation is constructed, the depth of giving the information away, shows the specificity of internal processes of representatives.

Table 02. Examples of moderate and high MAI direct speech

Moderate MAI	Leaving your comfort zone, well, if you want to do it, do it.
High MAI	I always challenge myself to leave my comfort zone, I try to taste new things and keep track of my desires and dreams. Creativity and self-expression are keys. But, it depends on why you missed certain things, why they became missed opportunities, maybe there's a reason.

The way participants with high and moderate levels of MAI state, explain and interpret fashion trends differs. Moderate MAI group often use categorical statements, refer more to their feelings or own experiences, more likely use short sentences. High MAI group: speak with detailed sentences, supplementing their thoughts, while being able to return to the beginning of the argument and explain it. Refer to authoritative figures, history, support or oppose the discussed constructs.

7. Conclusion

Presented arguments show that features of metacognition, namely metacognitive awareness and metacognitive beliefs, play a significant role in the perception of fashion trends.

People with different levels of MAI have diverse perceptions of fashion trends. The differences lie in the assessment and the attached meaning.

A participant with a high level of MAI will emphasize the importance of the process that formed the basis of the current trend (for example, a positive attitude to environmental and conscious consumption or approach to garbage disposal). However, this participant will also notice the fact that these trends are convenient and beneficial to the producers who commercialize them, they are only increasing their production and contradicting the broadcasted value.

Thus, high level of MAI makes it possible to review the issue from several sides, allows to process information in different ways and thereby gives a better understanding of the problem, which in turn leads to more meaningful and complete conclusions. The data shows that the individual analyses and synthesizes information received from inside and outside for a sufficient amount of time, therefore, the ability to manage information, make informed conclusions by using his own experience or the experience of others is growing.

Participants with moderate level of MAI often accept or reject the trend referring to their personal experience, especially emotional. Or, the trend acts as a reliable source that broadcasts the idea in a form that is beyond doubt and for this reason is accepted.

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