Defining Gender Neutral Fashion

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Defining Gender Neutral Fashion

INTRODUCTION

Gender nonconforming individuals are not represented by mainstream fashion, which primarily seeks to serve cisgender people and enforce a rigid binary in clothing. Gender neutral clothing creates space for this grossly underserved population, but most mainstream gender neutral lines miss the mark in some way, either being inaccessible in price, too basic, or not truly androgynous and instead too masculine.

The previous work of this study, titled *Market Opportunity Research for Gender Neutral Fashion*, involved qualitative interviews with 16 trans, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming people with questions generated from the literature review. These interviews were transcribed and coded using Lamb and Kallal’s Functional Expressive, and Aesthetic Needs model to determine design elements and principles that should go into successful gender neutral fashion (Lamb & Kallal 1992). The design criteria developed from the study included apparel design elements such as angular shape, high value contrast, symmetrical balance, emphasis on waist, emphasis on arms and legs, and use of various silhouettes.

The proposed research further define what gender neutral fashion should look like by testing these criteria with a broader population of transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people. This was done through a survey pertaining to gender expression, the retail environment, and design elements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A 2018 UROP project included a thorough literature review from a variety of sources including apparel theory, social psychology, and queer theory. The concept of gender neutral
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clothing was also analyzed and grounded through a historical lens. These sources were used to best determine the types of interview questions to ask people who are transgender, nonbinary, or otherwise gender nonconforming to determine how gender neutral apparel should be designed, in order to best fit their personal and social needs while achieving aesthetically androgynous fashion.

**History of Gender Nonconformity**

Gender nonconformity has existed for centuries before the bourgeois takeover in the 19th century, with distinct ties to sexuality (Steele, 2013). Irregardless of whether historical evidence of gender nonconformity showcases queerness, transness, or both, gender nonconforming fashion has existed for centuries, often being cause for violence or social outcast (Steele, 2013). Therefore, coding was used as a way for people to express themselves while remaining safe and unnoticed as outside the norm.

**Fashion as Communication**

“Fashion and dress [tell] others something about our gender, class, status and so on; on the other, our clothes cannot always be ‘read’, since they do not straightforwardly ‘speak’ and can be open to misinterpretation” (Entwistle, 2015, p. 112). This concept links to the fact that apparel acts as a powerful communication tool, meaning that “‘Clothing, right from our first direct evidence twenty thousand years ago,’ notes Elizabeth Wayland Barber, ‘has been the handiest solution to conveying social messages visually, silently, continuously’” (Felshin, 2015, p. 9). Gender neutral clothing allows for the wearer to communicate their ideal self with those around them, without socially imposed gender markers being attributed to them through their clothing.

**Survey Design**
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Research over the nature of surveys and how to conduct a successful one was conducted. This was done by analyzing materials based in apparel design research as well as sources focused solely on survey design. First, multiple sources referenced the importance of beginning with a clear objective. From *Survey Design: Getting the Results You Need*, Collie and Rine begged the question, “What are you trying to learn?” (2009, p. 3). Moreover, “A crucial part of good research design concerns making sure that the questionnaire design addresses the needs of the research” (Burgess, 2001, p. 1). This means that questionnaires must begin with a clearly defined objective in order to be successful.

The means of gaining information from respondents is the question. According to *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, the question acts as a motivating tool that pushes respondents to “provide the information being sought” (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996, p. 230). Questions are grouped into a number of categories including factual questions, which seek objective information, and subjective experience questions, which seek information informed by attitudes. Moreover, questions can also be defined as either closed-ended or open-ended, which either give “a set of answers” or no “specified choice,” instead recording a written answer (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996, p. 233). The third type of defined question is the contingency question, which only pertains to a subgroup of respondents, often identified by a filter question.

The *International Handbook of Survey Methodology* went in depth on factors that determine a successful questionnaire. According to De Leeuw, Hox, and Dillman, “the major steps of the question answering process” are “understanding the question, recalling information, forming a judgment, formatting the judgment to fit the response alternatives, and editing the final
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answer” (n. d., p. 19). As for understanding the question, “language comprehension is not about words per se, but about speaker meaning” (De Leeuw, Hox, and Dillman, n. d., p. 19). This means that both the respondents and the survey developer should prioritize the clarity and relevance of their responses or questions. Moreover, there are a number of ways to avoid bias in questionnaire development, including careful wording of the question, avoiding response sets, avoiding leading questions, avoiding double-barreled questions, and avoiding threatening questions (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996).

“Reporting on one’s behaviors” can be especially difficult due to a number of factors (De Leeuw, Hox, and Dillman, n. d., p. 23). One is “autobiographical memory” which is the phenomena where “people forget events in their lives as time goes by, even when the event is relatively important and distinct” (De Leeuw, Hox, and Dillman, n. d., p. 23). However, this piece of literature finds that “researchers can improve the likelihood of accurate recall by restricting the recall task to a short and recent reference period” (De Leeuw, Hox, and Dillman, n. d., p. 24).

In order to best understand how to develop surveys, multiple examples were researched. One “explored sustainable clothing consumption” (Nielsen & Gwozdz, 2017, p. 2). Its purpose pertained to “consumption and psychological differences across markets and cultures”, analyzing consumers in four different countries (Nielsen & Gwozdz, 2017, p. 2). The main goal of the survey was to “[assess] consumers’ current attitudes, intentions, and goals relating to sustainable clothing consumption in order to identify critical intervention points” (Nielsen & Gwozdz, 2017, p. 3). To reach this goal, “consumers reported how many clothing items they had acquired and how much money they spent on clothing in the previous three months. During this period, the
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average consumer acquired 5.74 clothing items worth €153.79” (Nielsen & Gwozdz, 2017, p. 13). This means that this study recorded numerical data from the questionnaire to develop the analysis of the results, which found that the four countries researched had vastly different expenditures in terms of clothing consumption.

Another study focused on “the attributes sought by males and females in sports apparel” (Fowler, 1999, p. 81). In this questionnaire, respondents used a ranking system to record their perspective. According to Fowler, “the respondents completed an attributes importance ranking exercise where they ranked eight characteristics in terms of how important or influential the attributes were to the purchase decision for sports apparel” (1999, p. 84). The study found that “Comfort and fit were the 2 most important factors” (Fowler, 1999, p. 84).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study centers around a nation-wide survey of transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people that yields both qualitative and quantitative results to gain a comprehensive understanding of the target population. The study takes into account sources ranging from queer theory, apparel design theory, communication theory, social psychology, and survey development. Questions about self image as it relates to gender identity and the retail experience were open ended, while questions about the retail market were scaled. Some questions related to gender expression used Likert scales. There are three hypotheses used in this study:
● Hypothesis 1: Participants will dress to communicate gender, to themselves and the world around them.

● Hypothesis 2: Participants will be dissatisfied with the current retail market.

● Hypothesis 3: Participants will prefer angular shape, high value or hue contrast, symmetrical balance, emphasis on the waist, emphasis on the arms and/or legs, and variety of silhouettes.

**Measures**

Means of measuring qualitative and quantitative data were generated. Expression-based questions were measured using rated responses, or Likert scales (Burgess, 2001, p. 10). Scaled questions pertaining to the retail market were graphed based on response. Questions pertaining to self image, questions pertaining to the retail experience, and questions pertaining to specific design elements were coded using the FEA Model (Lamb & Kallal, 1992).

**Research Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you want to express through your fashion (Emotion, Gender, Personality, Belonging to a social group, Sexuality, Functionality)?</td>
<td>Likert Scale (VI=Very important; I=Important; N=Neutral; U=Unimportant; VU=Very Unimportant)</td>
<td>(Burgess, 2001, p. 10) (Entwistle, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In terms of apparel, how do you wish to see yourself (Free)</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>Taken from survey pilot. (Felshin, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>flowing, pat together, masculine, feminine, androgynous, retro, classic, modern, traditional, trendy?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In terms of apparel, how do you wish to be seen by others/society?</td>
<td>FEA Model (Functional, Expressive, and Aesthetic Characteristics)</td>
<td>(Lamb &amp; Kallal, 1992)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Felshin, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following to you chose to portray (Masculinity, Femininity Neutrality)?</td>
<td>Likert Scale (VI=Very important; I=Important; N=Neutral; U=Unimportant; VU=Very Unimportant)</td>
<td>(Burgess, 2001, p. 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(Workman &amp; Caldwell, 2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you shop (Online, In store, Both)?</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>(Mera, n.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the current retail market?</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>(Mattsson, 2009)</td>
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<td>Why are you satisfied or dissatisfied?</td>
<td>FEA Model (Functional, Expressive, and Aesthetic Characteristics)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>What CAN'T you find in the current retail market (T-shirts, Long</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>(Mattsson, 2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>sleeve shirts, Tank tops, Button up shirts, Sweatshirts, Sweaters,</td>
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<td>Jeans, Pants, Shorts, Jumpsuits, Skirts, Dresses)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeans, Pants, Shorts, Jumpsuits, Skirts, Dresses)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What garments do you most often wear (T-shirts, Long sleeve shirts,</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>(Workman &amp; Caldwell, 2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tank tops, Button up shirts, Sweatshirts, Sweaters, Jeans, Pants,</td>
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<td>What color schemes do you gravitate towards (Neutrals (white, black, gray, Jewel tones (magenta, teal, emerald), Primary colors (red, yellow, blue), Pastels (pale yellow and pale pink))?</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>(“Color Theory”, n.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What prints do you gravitate towards (Polka dots, plaid, stripes, floral)?</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>(DeLong, 1987)</td>
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<tr>
<td>What textures do you gravitate towards (Smooth, shiny, thick, crisp, sheer fuzzy)</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>(DeLong, 1987)</td>
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<tr>
<td>What shirts do you wear (T-shirts, long sleeve shirts, tank tops, button ups, sweatshirts)?</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>(DeLong, 1987)</td>
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<tr>
<td>What pants do you wear (Jeans, khakis, cargo pants,</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>(DeLong, 1987)</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>leggings, trousers, capris, I don’t wear pants?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What skirts do you wear (A-line, skater, mini, pleated, pencil, circle, I don’t wear skirts)?</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>DeLong, 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>What dresses do you wear (shift, A-line, bodycon, empire, strapless, halter, wrap, maxi, I don’t wear dresses)?</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>DeLong, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What layering garments do you wear (Jackets, vests, cardigans, coats)</td>
<td>Graphed based on Response</td>
<td>DeLong, 1987</td>
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<td>Do you prefer the 1st garment or the 2nd garment?</td>
<td>A/B Testing</td>
<td>DeLong, 1987</td>
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Defining Gender Neutral Fashion
| Do you prefer the 1st garment or the 2nd garment? | A/B Testing | (DeLong, 1987) | (Workman & Caldwell, 2007) |
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- **Do you prefer the 1st garment or the 2nd garment?**
  - **A/B Testing**
  - *(DeLong, 1987)*
  - *(Workman & Caldwell, 2007)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image 1</th>
<th>Image 2</th>
<th>Image 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Garment 1" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Garment 2" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Garment 3" /></td>
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<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Garment 5" /></td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Garment 6" /></td>
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Respondents were also asked their age, race, gender, location, and area.

**Results**
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The results of the study are summarized below. First, participants were asked various demographic questions, including age, race, gender, location, and area.

*Participant Age*

![Participant Age Chart](image)

*Figure 1. Age of survey participants.*

*Participant Race*

![Participant Race Chart](image)

*Figure 2. Race of survey participants.*
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**Participant Gender**

![Graph showing participant gender distribution](image1)

*Figure 3. Gender of survey participants.*

**Participant Location**

![Graph showing participant location distribution](image2)

*Figure 4. Location of survey participants.*
Next, participants were asked to choose between two figures. The first question related to angular or curvilinear shapes. The second look, which represented curvilinear shape, was preferred by 51%.

*Figure 5. Area of survey participants.*

*Figure 6. Angular shape versus curvilinear shape.*
Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The second question related to angular or curvilinear shapes. The second look, which represented curvilinear shape, was preferred by 69%.

Figure 7. Angular shape versus curvilinear shape.

Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The third question related to angular or curvilinear shapes. The second look, which represented curvilinear shape, was preferred by 75%.

Figure 8. Angular shape versus curvilinear shape.
Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The fourth question related to emphasizing or deemphasizing the arms and legs. The second look, which represented deemphasizing the arms and legs, was preferred by 69%.

*Figure 9.* Emphasizing verses deemphasizing the arms and legs.
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Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The fifth question related to emphasizing or deemphasizing the arms and legs. The first look, which represented emphasizing the arms and legs, was preferred by 50%.

![Figure 10. Emphasizing verses deemphasizing the arms and legs.](image)

Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The sixth question related to symmetrical or asymmetrical balance. The second look, which represented asymmetrical balance, was preferred by 51%.

![Figure 11. Symmetrical versus asymmetrical balance.](image)
Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The seventh question related to symmetrical or asymmetrical balance. The second look, which represented asymmetrical balance, was preferred by 65%.

Figure 12. Symmetrical versus asymmetrical balance.

Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The eighth question related to symmetrical or asymmetrical balance. The second look, which represented asymmetrical balance, was preferred by 53%.

Figure 13. Symmetrical versus asymmetrical balance.
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Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The ninth question related to high or low value contrast. The first look, which represented high value contrast, was preferred by 58%.

Figure 14. High versus low value contrast.

Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The tenth question related to high or low value contrast. The second look, which represented low value contrast, was preferred by 57%.

Figure 15. High versus low value contrast.
Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The eleventh question related to high or low value contrast. The second look, which represented low value contrast, was preferred by 72%.

*Figure 16. High versus low value contrast.*
Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The twelfth question related to silhouette variety in a collection. The first collection, which represented variety of silhouettes, was preferred by one vote, at 50%.

*Figure 17. Variety versus lack of variety of silhouettes.*
Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The thirteenth question related to silhouette variety in a collection. The first collection, which represented variety of silhouettes, was preferred by 64%.

*Figure 18.* Variety versus lack of variety of silhouettes.
Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The fourteenth question related to silhouette variety in a collection. The first collection, which represented variety of silhouettes, was preferred by 63%.

*Figure 19. Variety versus lack of variety of silhouettes.*
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Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The fifteenth question related to emphasis or de-emphasis of the waist. The first look, which represented waist emphasis, was preferred by 66%.

Figure 20. Waist emphasis or deemphasis.

Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The sixteenth question related to emphasis or de-emphasis of the waist. The second look, which represented waist deemphasis, was preferred by 52%.

Figure 21. Waist emphasis or deemphasis.
Participants were again asked to choose between two figures. The seventeenth question related to emphasis or deemphasis of the waist. The first look, which represented waist emphasis, was preferred by 58%.

*Figure 22. Waist emphasis or deemphasis.*

Participants were then asked what shirts they wear. The results are graphed below.

T-shirts were most preferred.

*Figure 23. Shirt preference.*
Participants were then asked what pants they wear. The results are graphed below. Jeans were most preferred.

Figure 24. Pant preference.

Participants were then asked what skirts they wear. The results are graphed below. The most common answer was that the participant didn’t wear skirts, followed by A-line.
Figure 25. Skirt preference.

Participants were then asked what dresses they wear. The results are graphed below. The most common answer was that the participant didn’t wear dresses, followed by A-line.

Figure 26. Dress preference.

Participants were then asked what layering garments they wear. The results are graphed below. The most common answer was jackets.

Figure 27. Layering garment preference.
The participants were asked whether they shop online or in store. The results are shown below. Most stated that they shop in store.

*Figure 28. How participants shop.*

Next, participants were asked how satisfied they were with the current retail market. Their responses are shown below. The majority of participants were moderately dissatisfied.

*Figure 29. How satisfied participants were with the retail market.*
Participants were then asked why they were satisfied or dissatisfied. The results are shown below. The most common issues were poor fit, difficulty shopping for their size, and lack of gender neutral options.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fit too boxy /1</td>
<td>Proportions off /2</td>
<td>Lack of variety /1</td>
<td>Lack of hip emphasis /1</td>
<td>Not enough color /3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Size variation /1</td>
<td>Not masculine /1</td>
<td>Boring options /2</td>
<td>Lack of shoulder deemphasis /1</td>
<td>Hard to find style /2</td>
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<td>Low quality /5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack of gender neutral options /16</td>
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<td>Not enough neutral color /1</td>
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<td>High price /15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shopping in public is hard /2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nice styles /2</td>
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<td>Poor fit /28</td>
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<td>Found neutral clothes /1</td>
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<td>Graphic t’s /1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficult to find in size /23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethical issues /3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor fit muscular body /1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retailers coupling struggles /1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tight in shoulder /1</td>
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<td>Triggers dysphoria /3</td>
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<td>Sensory issues /1</td>
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<td>Only options are in mens section /1</td>
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<td>Small arms /1</td>
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<td>Pants too long /2</td>
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<td>Shirts tight on chest /1</td>
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<td>Small waist /1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeves too short /1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wide hips /2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Broad shoulders /1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeves to tight /1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time consuming /2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 30. Why participants were satisfied or dissatisfied.*
Respondents were asked what they could find while shopping. The results are shown below. The most common answer was t-shirts.

*Figure 31.* What participants could find.
Respondents were asked which items they couldn’t find in the current retail market. The results are shown below. Most participants said that they couldn’t find jumpsuits or button up shirts.

*Figure 32.* What participants couldn’t find in the retail market.
Participants were then asked what garments they most commonly wear. The results are shown below. The most common responses were t-shirts and jeans.

**Figure 33.** What garments participants wear most often.

Respondents were asked what colors they most commonly wear. The results are graphed below. The most common response was neutrals.

**Figure 34.** What colors participants wear most often.
Respondents were asked what prints they most commonly wear. The results are graphed below. The most common responses were plaid, stripes, and floral.

*Figure 35. What prints participants wear most often.*

Respondents were asked what textures they gravitate towards. The results are graphed below. The most common response was smooth.

*Figure 36. What textures participants gravitate towards.*
Defining Gender Neutral Fashion

Next, participants were asked what they like to express through their fashion. The results are shown below. People were most interested in expressing their personality and dressing for functionality, followed by gender.

### Figure 37. What participants dressed to express.

Participants were then asked how they wished to see themselves. The results are shown below. Most participants wanted to be seen as put together and androgynous.

### Figure 38. How participants wished to see themselves.
Participants were asked how they want to be seen by others. The responses were coded using the FEA Model and are shown below. The most common answers were masculine, androgynous, feminine, queer, and put together.

**Figure 39.** How participants wished to be seen by others.

Participants were asked which of the following they chose to portray. The results are shown below. Most respondents chose to portray neutrality.

**Figure 40.** Which characteristics the participants portrayed.
Participants were then asked what was important to them in their clothing. The results were coded by the FEA Model and are shown below. The most common answers were comfort, fit, and style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort /68</td>
<td>Practical /6</td>
<td>Professionality /5</td>
<td>Femininity /4</td>
<td>Style /26</td>
<td>Versatility /9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality /5</td>
<td>Ethics /3</td>
<td>Expression /4</td>
<td>Masculinity /5</td>
<td>Color /6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durability /14</td>
<td>Shows personality /2</td>
<td>Hides curves /3</td>
<td>Cute /5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionality /15</td>
<td>Modesty /2</td>
<td>Androgyny /1</td>
<td>Stand out /3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good fit /38</td>
<td>Confidence /2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trendy /2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability /12</td>
<td>Minimize dysphoria /4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexy /1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pockets /6</td>
<td>Breaks gender norms /4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black /1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat regulation /3</td>
<td>Affirms gender /4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unique /2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Washability /1</td>
<td>Queerness /1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Simplicity /1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low maintenance /3</td>
<td>Personality /3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Texture /1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural materials /1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Doesn’t pill /1</td>
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*Figure 41. What was important to respondents in their clothing.*
Participants were then asked if their clothes fit, and if not, what needs improvement. Their answers are summarized below. 16 people said their clothes fit, while 21 said they didn’t.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pants too long /11</td>
<td>Hard to fit masculine pants /3</td>
<td>Lack of gender neutral options /1</td>
<td>More color /1</td>
<td>Hard to find good fit along with good aesthetics /1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good fit /16</td>
<td>Hard to find clothes fit to trans women /2</td>
<td>Dysphoria /3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pants don’t fit (plus size) /4</td>
<td>Need masculine clothes for shorter bodies /2</td>
<td>Lack of variety /1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chest doesn’t fit /9</td>
<td>Emphasizes chest/hips /2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pants too tight in thigh /4</td>
<td>Shirts too low, binder shows /1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Button downs don’t fit /11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Broad shoulders /10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No, plus size /5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeans gap at waist /3</td>
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<td>Sleeves too short /2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shirts too long /4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor fit /21</td>
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<td>Hips don’t fit /3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midsection doesn’t fit /6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shirts too short /2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shorts ride up /1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not enough room in crotch /1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strapless items don’t stay up /1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neckline too high /1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 42. Whether clothes fit, if not, why.*
Next, participants were asked whether they could find clothes that meet their style needs. The results are shown below. The most common answers were yes, at 52 responses, sometimes, at 24 responses, and no, at 23 responses.

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not affordable /5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dysphoria /2</td>
<td>Yes /52</td>
<td>Shopping difficult /6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in size /5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not that fit /4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No pockets /1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 43.* Whether participants can find clothes in their style.

**CONCLUSION**

Gender neutral fashion seeks to serve transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people. Through a survey of 211 participants, this study worked to define the design needs of the target population so that gender neutral fashion can be more effective.

**Summary of Results**

This study utilized three hypotheses. The first was that participants will dress to communicate gender, to themselves and the world around them. Participants instead said that they dress to communicate their personality, at 80 responses, followed by functionality, at 77 responses and then gender, at 66 responses. However, to the world around them, most participants said that
they chose to convey masculinity, at 20 responses, or androgyny, at 18 responses. The second hypothesis was that participants will be dissatisfied with the current retail market. Most participants were moderately dissatisfied, as stated by 45 responses. The third hypothesis was that participants will prefer angular shape, high value or hue contrast, symmetrical balance, emphasis on the waist, emphasis on the arms and/or legs, and variety of silhouettes. Angular shape was preferred by 64% of participants. Low value contrast was preferred by 58% of participants. Asymmetrical balance was preferred by 56% of participants. Emphasis on the waist was preferred by 57% of participants. De-emphasis on the arms and/or legs was preferred by 60% of participants. Lastly, a variety of silhouettes was preferred by 59% of participants.

Limitations

The aim of this study was to record responses from people of diverse genders, sexualities, dis/abilities, races, ages, and locations. For age, 63% of participants were between the ages 18 and 34. However, 10 participants were under 18 and two were between the ages of 64 and 75, making for a diverse range of ages. In terms of race, this study lacked in capturing a broad picture of the target market. 80% of respondents were white, but all racial groups listed were represented in some capacity. As for gender, a more diverse picture was shown. The largest category of participants were nonbinary at 30%, but all but one gender category listed were represented. For location, the majority of participants were from the midwest, at 45%. All other areas of the U. S. were represented except Hawaii. In terms of area, most participants lived in urban spaces, at 54%.
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CITATIONS


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