

UNDERSTANDING HOW WOMEN DEFINE AND CREATE THEIR  
PERSONAL SARTORIAL STYLE USING THE AESTHETIC, MATERIAL,  
ECONOMIC AND SYMBOLIC ATTRIBUTES OF CLOTHING

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

JULY 2021



Approval of the thesis:

**UNDERSTANDING HOW WOMEN DEFINE AND CREATE THEIR  
PERSONAL SARTORIAL STYLE USING THE AESTHETIC,  
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CLOTHING**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **UNDERSTANDING HOW WOMEN DEFINE AND CREATE THEIR PERSONAL SARTORIAL STYLE USING THE AESTHETIC, MATERIAL, ECONOMIC AND SYMBOLIC ATTRIBUTES OF CLOTHING**

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July 2021, 172 pages

The main objective of this research is to define what personal sartorial style is and explain in detail how professional women who are aged between 25 and 55 create their style, in emic level. My attitude in this study has been to determine what personal sartorial style means while analyzing the methods and strategies for creating a style by utilizing the aesthetic, material, economic and symbolic dimensions of clothing. Through repetitive analysis and interpretations, I was able to illustrate a holistic personal style creation as a dynamic process. My foundations are based on understanding from multi perspectives the sophisticated meanings and associations adopted by professional women while resolving the layers of patterns of how they benefit from those meanings and associations concerning their preferences, habits and practices in the creation process. This study consists of five intertwined dimensions which investigates the meaning and creation of style, formation process, outcomes and outside factors affecting style, respectively. As for meaning of style, dressing has a sophisticated standing in women's life namely, fulfilling desires, reflecting

identity along with authenticity and experiencing happiness. In the creation phase, women collect the necessary input which are classified as material and non-material. Material inputs represent physical items gathered through shopping while non-material inputs represent information and inspiration. Finally, women form their style by engaging with certain practices categorized as base practices including combining, aestheticizing, adorning and complementary practices including strategizing, harmonizing and authenticating, in order to reflect their personality, authenticity and taste as an outcome.

**Keywords:** Style, Fashion, Clothing, Adornment, Harmony

## ÖZ

### KADINLARIN KIYAFETLERİN ESTETİK, MATERYAL, EKONOMİK VE SEMBOİK ÖZELLİKLERİNİ KULLANARAK STİLİ NASIL TANIMLADIKLARI VE YARATTIKLARINI ANLAMAK

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Temmuz 2021, 172 sayfa

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, kişisel stilin ne olduğunu tanımlamak ve 25-55 yaş arası profesyonel kadınların, stillerini emik düzeyde nasıl oluşturduklarını ayrıntılı olarak açıklamaktır. Bu çalışmadaki ana tutum, giyimin estetik, maddi, ekonomik ve sembolik boyutlarından yararlanarak bir tarz yaratmanın yöntem ve stratejilerini incelerken kişisel tarzın ne anlama geldiğini belirlemek olmuştur. Bu araştırma, tekrarlayan analizler ve yorumlar sayesinde, dinamik bir süreç olarak, bütünsel bir kişisel stil yaratmayı gösterir. Çalışmanın temeli, profesyonel kadınların benimsedikleri karmaşık anlam ve çağrışımları çok yönlü olarak anlamak ve yaratım sürecindeki tercihleri, alışkanlıkları ve uygulamalarında, bu anlamlardan ve çağrışımlardan nasıl yararlandıklarına dair kalıpları çözmek üzerine kuruludur. Bu çalışma, sırasıyla kişisel stilin anlam ve yaratılışını, oluşum sürecini, çıktılarını ve stili etkileyen dış faktörleri araştıran, birbirine bağlı ve geçirgen, beş boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, giyim kuşamın kadınların hayatında arzuları yerine getirme, özgünlükle birlikte kimliği yansıtırma ve duygusal olarak destek sağlama gibi



sofistike bir yeri vardır. Stilin yaratımı aşamasında kadınlar, materyal ve materyal olmayan olarak sınıflandırılan gerekli girdileri toplarlar. Materyal girdiler, alışveriş yoluyla toplanan fiziksel öğeleri temsil ederken, materyal olmayan girdiler bilgi ve ilhamı temsil eder. Bu girdiler, kombin oluşturma, estetik değer katma, süsleme temel yöntemler ve stratejik uyarlamalar, uyum sağlama ve otantikleştirme gibi yardımcı süreçler ile harmanlanarak stil oluşturulur. Sürecin sonucunda kadınlar, kendi kişiliklerini, özgünlüklerini ve beğenilerini yansıtırılar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Stil, Moda, Giyim, Süslenme, Uyum

*Dedicated to my beloved family: my husband, mom, dad, sister, little brother and  
my lovely cats Uzi and Leona...*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis marks the last chapter of my Master in Business Administration at Middle East Technical University. I am deeply grateful for this experience which has thought me so much and will guide me through my whole life. There are some special people that I would like to express my gratitude.

Firstly, I would like to offer my honest and deepest gratitude to my supervisor Eminegül Karababa for her endless support, patience and guidance during this process by giving her critical point of view and sharing her valuable comments.

Secondly, I would like to thank my professors Prof. Dr. Özlem Özdemir and Assoc. Prof. Berna Tarı Kasnakoğlu who shared their knowledge and valuable comments by taking time to attend my thesis committee.

Thirdly, I am especially grateful to my dear friend Aytac Abbaszade for all her irreplaceable support during this amazing journey and for always being there when I need.

Last but not the least; I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents Ahmet and Hatice Dağcı, and my dear sister and brother Ayşe Asena and Mehmet for their unconditional love and support during this long journey.

My special thanks go to my beloved husband Refik Çağakan Alpaslan who has provided me with so much support, love and motivation in every aspect of my life as well as writing this thesis. I am deeply grateful for his presence and the spiritual support of our lovely cats Uzi and Leona; who did not leave my side in the long nights of writing this thesis.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

As a “social canvas”, body which is embellished through clothing and other sartorial decorations has semiotic and social implications (Saucier, 2011). By satisfying their variety of demands, clothes cater fulfillment to individuals. They act like the second skin of individuals which is assigned with also socio-psychological duties. Clothes are not worn solely with the protection concerns as it used to be but more sophisticated motivations emerge (Arora & Aggarwal, 2018). Based on the theory of clothing, four motives namely, modesty, immodesty protection and adornment emerge as the reasons one dresses (Kefgen & Touchie-Specht, 1986). Clothes have the role of managing allurements of the body, social presence, compliance with the common norms hence preserving and increasing confidence (Arora & Aggarwal, 2018).

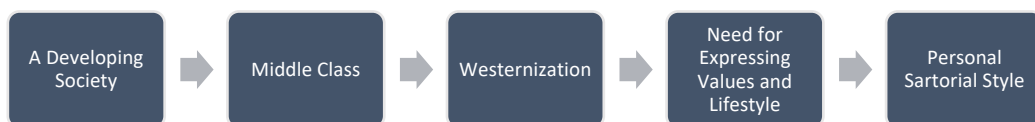
Until today, the word “style” has been employed in a variety of contexts while it is defined in many diverse ways, broadly (e.g., Inkpin, 2019). Based on studies of Marleau-Ponty, Inkpin (2019) defines style as the essence which merges and characterizes all the constitutional dimensions in the substantial world. Style represents one’s ability to reflect or mimic alternative embodied instruments. Distinctively, style is theorized to be the intuitive and intellectual tasks of materialized actors. Style also is attempted to be defined in a systematic and programmatic manner by benefiting from computerized visual methods (e.g., Takagi, Simo-Serra, Iizuka, & Ishikawa, 2017). Further, Saucier (2011), also employs style in order to grasp the realities behind subcultural practices and identity formation in the context of Cape Verdean community as he announces style as on the highest importance in terms of creating a subcultural identity.

Meantime, he gives a detailed information about the practices held in the process. However, his study is based on the foundations of fashion.

Sartorial practices are studied as well by the means of reducing them to specific notions and simple relationships (e.g., Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). Most studied subject in the literature is observed to be the notion of identity and its relationship with sartorial practices. For instance, Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) refers to these practices as plainly with the concept “dress”. According to the perspective of their study, exhausting meaning of dress covers also adjustments and additions made for the body. Based on the function of dress as a social communication tool, it affects the way identities are shaped in the society. Besides, identities are embodied through positions within the social schema, especially ones such mediates politics, religion and technology. This process is also affected by cultural norms and technology and certain variables of the process could evolve in time with regard to economic, demographic and social changes. Moreover, they compare the term dress with the other frequently used notions of sartorial practices such as appearance, ornaments, clothes, costume even fashion however, style is absent from the framework. In the same manner, Arora and Aggarwal (2018) also approaches to sartorial practices from the preferences aspect and analyzes differing physiological, psychological and social influences on the clothing choices of individuals. Practice is named as dressing behavior in this context. While grouping the factors as endogenous and exogenous, study acknowledges the effect of each factor without one being superior to other. Their work claims that these influences are very much sophisticated and pertinent to each other while the newly emerged psychological aspect is ascribed to cosmopolitanism supported with confidence. Mood also emerges as a significant determinant here. Additionally, in certain studies, style has been referenced as a notion which changes frequently as trends does by the way “things fall in and out of style” and as a complementary suffix for fashion in the form of “fashion styles” (e.g., Takagi et al. 2017; Allinson, 1916; Parsons, 2002; Willis, Jones, Canaan, & Hurd, 1990). Allinson (1916), also adverts to the

“democratization of style” as if style is a commodified notion similar to fashion which requires a collective act and adoption. Considering all, this study aims to identify what sartorial style is, by giving it a solid definition and intends to understand how women are creating their personal sartorial style, as a detailed process.

Looking from the context of Turkey, style is indeed a very important issue to consider today. Locally, Turkey and its society is a developing society. In developing societies, a middle class emerges which emulates to the practices of Western societies and modernity. That is why, modern, Western and global is valuable for this class. They try to create a lifestyle which includes these kinds of values and they try to express themselves through these notions. One of the ways of doing this is built through style. Style, becomes an inseparable part and a practice of their lives. Although consumption patterns of Turkish people have been considerably different compared to their European equals; signs of Westernization in the early modernization period were already visible (Karademir-Hazır, 2014; Tercüman, 2017). With the establishment of new republic in 1923, perspective of the new authority was supportive of Westernization and secularization which were reminiscent of European life style for many (Karademir-Hazır, 2014; Tercüman, 2017). For a long time, Turkey has been attributed with the supremacy of being the country which modernize the life of its female inhabitants, in the Middle East (Abadan-Unat, 1978).



**Figure 1.** Representation of style in developing countries (Karademir – Hazır, 2017; Üstüner & Holt, 2010).

Through this change and new perspectives, dressing evolved to a more meaningful phenomenon and became a central concern in life (Tercüman, 2017).

Consequently, for Turkish women, similar to their equals in other developing countries, their sartorial style evolved to a strong demonstration of the realized westernization (Karademir-Hazır, 2014). Women have taken on a crucial part to play in this process of modernization and the change they brought was recognized as a significant indicator of achievement in the path to realize modernity, westernization and advancement (Arat, 1994; 1999). Differing from Bourdieu's traditional tools which triumph in other settings, Turkey presents a remarkable position orchestrated from the combination of modern western attitude and classical Turkish perspective. Thus, it is solidly critical to assess each and every cultural information based on these particular contrasting determinants in order to grasp deeply the meanings presented (Karademir-Hazır, 2014). Karademir-Hazır's (2014) study provides a profound understanding of Turkish women's sartorial focus with regard to their taste and means in the framework of culture and class issues. Her analysis exposes the importance of sartorial practices for Turkish women who is guided by the westernization and in the path for modernization. That is why it is important to better understand their perspective and practice in a comprehensive manner as a notion holding a significant and substantial place in their lives.

However, in context of Turkey and Turkish consumers, there has not been a specific study carried out which examines the style experience and engagement processes of educated, professional Turkish women (local sample group) and how they interpret the notion of sartorial style. Besides, through a glance at the general literature, it is possible to see that there is not much study which aims to understand and conceptualize style and the way it is practiced, based on individuals' practices at emic level. Nature of the study being emic is especially important here. In anthropology, individuals are studied one by one in order to create an abstract understanding of the phenomena they practice and conceptualize the ideas emerged from the analyzes (Boas, 1904). In order to do this, there are two notions in anthropology, namely emic and ethic which are hired from the semantic studies (Fetvadjev & van de Vijver, 2015). Emic as a

notion analyzes the concept of how individuals perceive, understand and interpret their own behaviors, locally. As an attitude, it represents the formation and framework of a culture concerning its constitutional components and their purpose (Brown, 1993). Emic focuses on what is specific for the culture while focus of etic is extensive (Buckley, Chapman, Clegg, & Gajewska-De Mattos, 2014). Hence, emic perspective suggests that a notion should be examined based on its own cultural context (Fetvadjev et al., 2015).

Further, there are macro theories concerning style such as style and fashion and style in the context of identity however, style has not been studied as a sole practice alone. In general literature, only Kjeldgaard (2009) works on style and how it is formed. Kjeldgaard's (2009) study also states that there is a gap in the literature concerning the emic interpretation of style so that he bases his research on this foundation in the context of Denmark by also carrying out his research in the framework of subcultures. Kjeldgaard (2009) studies style and how it is practiced with an emic perspective in the Denmark's youth culture context however while aiming to define style, he focuses on subcultures. Thus, with this research, we would like to understand, on an emic level, how women who are professional, modern and guided by Western standards define and practice style and aim to fill this gap in the literature by enriching the field. The essential aim of this research is to understand how middle-class professional women aged between 25-55 define and practices style individually and practically, based on the fact that fundamentally style is not studied from an emic perspective.

In order to understand this daily life practice thoroughly, I have employed a qualitative study with in-depth interviews (Langley, 1999). 15 middle class, educated and professional women who are aged between 25 to 55 are interviewed in depth in order to understand their perception and practices in detail (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). I have also used the photo elicitation technique by showing them images which reflect different styles and asking participants to share the photos of their different combinations in order to

enhance my understanding concerning the study (Patton, 1980). My findings demonstrate in detail, what style means for these women and how it is practiced.

My findings reveal that women define style as a beautiful appearance, as a part of the lifestyle, a holistic concept, harmony, standing out, tool for communication, an experience and finally, compliance with the generic style codes. Based on this they practice style in three main stages: they first collect the sources which are material and non-material. Then they use these sources in order to create a style by utilizing certain practices. These practices are listed as base practices namely combining, aestheticizing, adorning and complementary practices namely strategizing, harmonizing and authenticating. Finally, by the synthesis of these resources and practices they achieve certain outcomes which are reflecting identity, taste and authenticity. It is important to note that the whole process is realized in the medium of factors age and culture.

To conclude, in the first chapter, I will talk about the literature review in detail in order to better understand the perspectives in this area. Then in the second chapter, I will give a brief explanation of the context in order to provide a better interpretation of notions. Then, I will explain my methodology throughout this research in order to better reflect the structure and foundations of this study. Further, the findings in this study will be presented in Chapter 5. Lastly, Chapter 6 will be focusing on the contributions of this study to literature and reflect a light on the future research opportunities.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Meaning of Style

##### 2.1.1. Definition of Style

Modern and known definition of style based on cultural practices, dates back to second period of 20<sup>th</sup> century in UK (Kjeldgaard, 2009). However, in consumer researches, it actually has been studied as a subtitle until now (Kjeldgaard, 2009). There are variety of definitions for style, each of them looking from different perspectives. Firstly, simply and broadly, Maffesoli (1996) defines style as the variety in carrying out things or shortly “manners”. Then, Kjeldgaard (2009) indicates that, for years, style is recognized inherently as a medium to conform to one’s greater environment. He also criticizes this continuing theory by focusing on individuality. From another viewpoint, Armstrong, Kang and Lang (2018) defines style as an intimate statement which is permanent, balanced and long lasting. Similarly, Welters and Lillethun (2007), also ascribes style with longer life span. However, there are also other studies which claim that style is a notion which could be changed and replaced expeditiously (e.g., Volonte, 2019; Mikkonen, Vicdan, & Markkula, 2014).

From the perspective of sartorial practices, Kjeldgaard (2009) defines style basically as blending a handful of chosen pieces. Similarly, Murray (2002) also bases his definition of style on mix and matching. According to him, style is composed of “identification with others, the commercial and creative use of stylistic effects, and situated performances” (p. 433). He explains that style is mixing the sartorial pieces and bodily embellishments based on an aimed fashion

style. However, he also offers another perspective by specifying his definition that style is an arena where opposite and internal issues such as contradictory subjective notions, distinction, and character governmental processes are clashed. Besides, Hebdige (1979) also maintains this idea by defining style as the zone where the antithetical definitions merge with an extensive power. He extends his definition by simply referring style as a shell for symbols and meanings against hegemonic notions, with the support of culture in the background. He goes on by defining style as a way of very intentional communication and created by people with the aim of giving a message. Here, style is delineated as a tool for communicating emotions and identity (Rafferty, 2011; Murray, 2002).

Supporting these views, Kjeldgaard (2009), stated that style is viewed as an essential tool which grasps the realities behind the personal characteristics and splintered construction of collective existence through the filter of consumer culture theories which define consumption with postmodern philosophy. Evaluated within the framework of style, three pillars outshine in his study. First of them is the notion of fragmentation which suggests that consumers' practices are more on more evolving into interim. Second idea is that style and identity are fluid forms which enables consumers to make alterations as they wish. Third idea explains the ever-extending world of signs, which represents the signals which that have lost their true meaning between signifier and signified, allowing a more extended use for typical words. Consequently, based on these capabilities style is afforded, Murray (2002), defines style as a tool which helps people disguise their certain insufficiencies and step forward with no need to other impression tactics, even though there are other difficulties which make implications for consumer culture. Such, the habit of being judged by the mere look creating a false impression concerning one's self and style. Finally, Hebdige (1979) defines style as a bricolage referring to the sophisticated and creative assemblage process behind which means style is a collective concept which emerges as the sum of personal practices and values.

### **2.1.2. Collective Style**

Other than its individualistic dimension, there is also a collective dimension to the style. Blumer (1969), suggests that in time, certain styles emerged could spread around the society and represent collective moods. These moods in turn, help new trends become known by crowds while creating an enthusiasm with newness (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). To clarify, short lived types of styles are referred as trends while reference style is a style which is honored with a longer life-span (Welters & Lillethun, 2007). Confirming this cycle, Murray (2002) introduces the idea that social evolutions are used to be led by systematic discrepancies; however, now the process occurs through fashion, style and identity and as Maffesoli (1996, p. 9) adds “emotional communities”.

One of the most obvious indicators of collective dimension of style is the concept of “street style” (Woodward, 2009). Indeed, starting from the ending period of 19<sup>th</sup> century, strong and pretentious styles have been outshined by fashion authorities (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). In the late 1900s, certain magazines reflected ordinary people as more authentic and real by putting the spotlight on them. This approach namely, street style, then followed by many other popular magazines. In fact, certain magazines such as Elle now have “street style” section which cast real people from streets who also wear accessible vintage or fast fashion pieces (Woodward, 2009). In particular, street style, represents the departure from the old and spreads until it loses its sharp and differentiating edge. It comprises of two contrasting aspects. One of them is represented by creativity which is formed through the reforms occurred in subcultures and the other is represented by followers who accept the rules readily and never challenge the status quo. Considering all, the concept “street style” is visible in many areas of life such as media, magazine and more since it could take many forms considering the imagery and practical world of today (Woodward, 2009).

From a broader perspective, Brickell (2002) also narrates the society wise aspect of stylistic practices in the light of fashion of that time and the effects of war. His study suggests that fashion and style always proceeded hand in hand with real life while transferring the mutual relationship among them with examples from war time. He explains how war being on the table, it affected the life of everyone and changed undeniably the lives of women as well as sartorial practices. As women starting to work on men's jobs, their style evolved through this new situation, collectively. Women started to wear more masculine outfits which provide them the ease and comfort while working. However, in 1947, Dior appeared on the fashion scene with its offer "new look", aiming to retrieve the old silhouettes and elegance to women's clothes back. The most distinctive elements of the new trend were a very narrow waistline, ruffle details, longer and tighter skirts and excessive fabric which are not compatible with the war time style of women at all (Brickell, 2002). The narrow waist, through all those years, has been the mark of different social worlds of men and women (Bordo, 1993). Looking back, current studies of the trend put implications such as satisfaction, rejection and defiance front and interpret it as a backward move. It also evokes contrasting feelings in society in terms of embracing it or refusing it since some of the people long for elegancy of women before war while others wish for being free with their fashion choices (Brickell, 2002).

### **2.1.3. Style, Information and Inspiration**

Mikkonen et al. (2014), believes that having a sense of style is something that could be learned, rather than a quality which comes with birth. Although media channels have serious impact on the world of signs and symbols; the individual's own experiences shape the way the body is fashioned (Murray, 2002). At the same time, it could be said that style has an informative potential through the fundamental semiotic cycles of choices and combinations (Barthes, 1957; Hebdige, 1979). Consequently, sense of style is both could be learned and taught.

Going through the pages of old magazines, which are sartorial information sources, 3 kinds of directions attract the attention. First one, encourages women about making conscious and critical decisions about what to wear and see fashion as just an advisor. Thus, it is left up to women whether to follow fashion or not. The aim here is, to support women as freely deciding individuals. Following this base idea, second principle recommends women to build their own style based on their personal taste and act creatively. Lastly, the final principle advises women to take a different perspective and turn the pathfinder to themselves, meaning that to base their practices by prioritizing themselves and their ideas first. Through these 3 rules, women realized themselves while discovering their own personal tastes, individuality and free will in a fashion system which still represent rules and limits (Delhaye, 2006).

#### **2.1.4. Style, Beauty and Taste**

Style oriented individuals look at the idea of a beautiful look from an entirely different perspective instead of focusing on trends and mainstream rules (Armstrong et al., 2018). As an essential notion for self-expression and identity reflection, aesthetics is a focal point for individuals who prioritize style as a philosophy. Beauty is a constitutional cause for human and it may evolve to taste when it is blended with experience. Through this taste, some gain the perception which interprets beauty in a profound scope (Armstrong et al., 2018). Moreover, taste could be better seen and acknowledged when pieces of clothes are presented on one's body (McQuarrie et al. 2013). Benefiting from certain colors, models, patterns, textures and tools, aesthetic perceptions are manipulated (Armstrong et al, 2018). For instance, there is a realness and a message in the choices of a person who walks the street with her choice of combination which gives away the mysteries of her taste, means and preferences which overall leading to a whole image reflecting her socially readable qualities (Hebdige, 2007).

## **2.2. Style and Identity**

Eco (1973) says “I speak through my clothes.” (Barnard, 2007, p. 256). People’s quest for identity has long been an issue drawing attention of scholars (e.g., Parmentier & Fischer, 2011; Rantisi, 2011; Delhay, 2006; Jayne & Ferencuhova, 2015; Saucier, 2011). After style, ability to build a specific identity over what one chooses to wear is one of the most studied subjects in literature (Saucier, 2011). First of all, according to Cordwell and Schwarz (1979) clothing satisfies more than just functional concerns. With clothing, the dressed body communicates our personal and social identities (Saucier, 2011; McNeill, 2018). Knowledge of fabric, understanding texture and quality, capability of combining certain pieces and creating an aesthetic look, understanding trends and having a distinctive personal style perspective all establish identity, by homogeneously merging (Isla, 2013). Together with emotional realm and cultural perception, style speaks for one’s communicative identity (Rafferty, 2011). Based on the ideas of Giddens (1991), Kjeldgaard (2009) states that in late contemporary social theory, as opposed to the class-based identity schemes of counter and subculture during the 1960s and 1970s; the style-identity connection is conjectured to be a statement of personalized identity projects.

Through our body, we do not only express our identities but also our values while strengthening our differences with others as well (Delhay, 2006). Thus, clothing has a distinctive power which could put one on the spotlight. Clothing becomes a means of differentiating point for identity and a hallmark (Rafferty, 2011; McNeill, 2018; Volonte, 2019). This differentiating power occurring from nuances between personal tastes of the individual and others, used in the identity building process in a constantly reviewed manner, reflecting the dynamic nature of the process (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). According to Entwistle (2015), costumes present us opportunities for being a part of social discourses and build our own personal existence through meanings occupied. It is possible for people

to build and reflect new identities every day from a cultural portfolio (Sobh, Belk, & Gressel, 2014).

Besides, according to Thompson and Haytko (1997), people tend to care about others' appearances. To illustrate, obvious differentiating and evolving aspects of taking care of one's look has an influencing effect based on the idea that it will leave an impact and reaction on others who are exposed. Meaning that, how one is dressed up has the ability to affect the surrounding people's behaviors and determine the one's place in society (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Solomon & Schoepfer, 1982; McNeill, 2018). An individual could be a part of a social class or group by simply choosing pieces reflecting the values or silhouettes of them in the identity (McNeill, 2018). This idea brings necessities of impression and image governance which turn the lights on to oneself in the social arena. Consequently, this kind of adoption of symbolism shows that sartorial styles are deciphered not as images of individual character and profound fundamental character attributes yet in addition as arranging people's positions in specifically social circles (Thompson & Haytko, 1997).

Moreover, through the desire of building a unique self, an individual creates identity considering norms and social environment (Thompson & Haytko, 2015). In order to uncover meanings in their lives, individuals gather appropriate values which are reflecting sense of self, from the world of culture. As much as this process is managed mostly by an individual's preferences, tastes and expressions; what they actively resist is also play a big role in the process. Built on the Thompson and Haytko's (1997) concept of "countervailing meanings", Murray (2002) suggests the idea that consumers benefit from oppositions in the case of finding a balance between the strata of individuality unfolding through society. Meaning that, there may be certain tensions which occur in the value appropriation process caused by the sophistication of cultural discourse however the process itself help managing these tensions by acting as a tool for communicating the self. This act of appropriation between tensions and values

help individual in building his/her identity (Murray, 2002). Hence, thinking through all of these rather than being a simple giving mechanism, we face meaning transfer method as a process which is “a diffuse, transformative, and consumer-centered undertaking” (Thompson & Haytko, 2015, p. 38). Meanwhile, it is important to note that, throughout these studies, focus has mostly been on establishing of desired identities with a postmodern perspective (e.g., Murray, 2002; Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Thompson and Haytko (1997) expressed that post-modernity gives consumers enough power to abide to rules, organize their own world of fashion and create a self-reflecting identity (Parmentier & Fischer, 2011). Identity within this postmodern world is liquid and changeable (Sobh et al., 2014). However, Negrin (1999), blames post-modernity with simplifying identity which is presented through consumption and self-fashioning (Isla, 2013).

Further, as a response to style being consistently overshadowed and being degraded to a to a simple conforming tool in society; Kjeldgaard (2009) aims to challenge the previous approaches by looking at style as a way of speaking your sense of self and identity. In order to explain the philosophy behind, he employs the folk theory based of popular culture, consumption, youth and style. His study enriches the literature by looking at style and the processes of managing it intuitively through folk theory from the customers’ perspectives (Kjeldgaard, 2009). Likewise, in order to highlight the means of expressing identity through appearance in practice, Sobh et al. (2014), prefers a different context. Their study analyzes the dressing habits of Qatari and Emirati women who most of the time wear covers called ‘abaya’ and ‘shayla’ and still have quite the style of their own with their “designer clothes, flamboyant high heels, expensive makeup and perfume, and designer jewelry” underneath (p. 396). Sometimes they even leave the abaya partially open in order to display their taste and style and in all-women gatherings they even wear transparent abayas or not wear abayas at all so that their expensive clothing could be seen (Sobh et al., 2014). The presentation of belongings is one manner by which an individual can communicate the



concept of self as a method for meaning transfer through symbols to others around (McNeill, 2018). These pieces under their covers give them a different self-confidence feeling and affect their behavior entirely (Sobh et al., 2014). Moreover, women find pleasure in attracting the attention and envy of other women through their purchases and possessions. Some even enjoy answering certain questions concerning their purchases since it gives them an opportunity to talk about their experience while purchasing that special item like travelling a foreign country. This type of conversations also covers other details and activities which are the markers of owner's abilities and capitals both economic and cultural. Travels to certain capitals such as Paris are always leave the listener in awe of the situation and cause the owner to feel more sophisticated (Sobh et al., 2014).

### **2.3. Style and Fashion**

“Fashion, style, la mode” (Welters & Lillethun, 2007, p. 19). Style as a concept, has extended its definitions to many aspects of life and fashion to begin with, while being more and more famous every day (Kjeldgaard, 2009). Based on its development through constant change (Rueling, 2000), fashion is defined as “changing styles of dresses and appearance that are adopted by a group of people at any given time and place” (Welters & Lillethun, 2007, p. 21). Slater (1997), suggests the concept of “system of rapid turnover of styles” in order to simplify the fashion's sophisticated world of creation (p. 19). Besides, Volonte (2019) adds that, because of fashion's nature which is obliged to change, styles are ended and replaced very quickly through trends. Moreover, fashion, which is an integrated industry with its many actors such as designers, consumers, brands, stylists and magazines; strives to satisfy the needs of people in a variety of social environments. The ‘look’ created in the process is not something stable and readily made but rather emerges from divergent set of relations between these actors and processes (Volonte, 2019). Hence, it is possible to say that fashion emerges from multiple points of view. First, worldly famous and preeminent

designers invent and establish novel creations for high class taste makers. Then head designers, magazine editors and all other fashion authorities watches these creations flow on the runway while recognizing what comes. Fast fashion industry, as well, builds collections as incorporating certain stylistic rules. At the end, all these efforts are appreciated and consumed by fashion enthusiasts. Indeed, the reverse influence is also possible like fashion adopting practices from subcultures or from past which is called vintage (Welters & Lillethun, 2007). Therefore, considering the diversity in its creation, fashion is a sophisticated language which may require soft explanations sometimes (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Thompson and Haytko (1997), suggests the idea that in order to make sense of the rules and values of fashion world surrounding them, consumers connect and blend a variety of unspoken theories in communities, by internalizing meanings.

Furthermore, Zanette and Brito (2019), defines fashion as a mindset, consists of know-how and related materials which complete each other in order to provide a sense of identity, comfort and belonging. The negotiation between self and outer world reflects one's struggle of marking a special place in the world by highlighting unique personal qualities (Zanette & Brito, 2019). Thus, consumers have the ability to manipulate fashion in order to resolve their identity issues, as well as, discovering and marking their perfect place (Murray, 2002). Murray (2002), defines fashion with "deep-seated cultural imperatives" while comparing it with style. According to him, in order to uncover meanings in their life, individuals benefit from fashion by choosing appropriate values which are reflecting sense of self, from the world of culture (Murray, 2002). To illustrate, with reference to Thompson and Haytko's (1997) perspective; Zanette and Brito (2019) delineates fashion as a tool in the consumers' processes of building and presenting a fashionable self to the world by creating a guidance with its symbolically and materially rich world. Based on this, Thompson and Haytko (1997), introduces a new idea by merging fashion concept with the philosophy of a bricoleur who takes socially convenient means in order to build something new

by the combination of them. Here, fashion is only a medium in the world represented by the sartorial appearance management. Consequently, fashion helps us finding our places and who we desire to be in society by reflecting on our dressing choices on different social occasions (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). It is an area where it is possible to create combinations which reflect different identities, evoking the feeling of choosing who you are going to be for the day from a catalogue (Sobh et al., 2014).

In addition, the way a person looks could deeply affect how others identify him/her (Solomon & Schopler, 1982). Building on this idea, Murray (2002), reflects fashion as an equalizing power based on Bourdieu's interpretation of how an impressive image could be a social signaling asset accepting the disproportionate dissemination of cultural and economic properties. Individual borders and social life have been negotiated through one's fashion choices and the way body looked so they could be used in order to manipulate certain attitudes. Thompson and Haytko (1997), confirm the idea that, one can get even with the obstacles of the past through fashion's powerful collaboration with a thorough image management, which is also the traditional acceptance of the society. Hence, creating a look is important in order to present a socially approved status (Armstrong et al., 2018). Fashion, enables the communication in society where class-based ordering still continues mostly focusing on personal fashion choices rather than signs and symbols. While creating self-identity, fashion supports the process by lending its world full of attitudes and meaning (Thompson & Haytko, 1997).

Further, when a person wants to build a style of his/her own by using fashion as an intermediary in order to mark a place in the society; three things affect their course of action: need for uniqueness, enforced rules and their mind (Zanette & Brito, 2019). Today, fashion is, more than ever, accessible and affordable with far too much options to choose from (Tokatli, 2008). Thanks to the developed system of information transaction in the production and selling parts, it is now

possible to reach a plenty of variable styles more often (Woodward, 2009). Through these offerings of fashion, women have a great deal of freedom and many alternatives thus they are expected to be more authentic and tasteful than ever before (Delhaye, 2006; Zanette & Brito, 2019; Thompson and Haytko, 1997). Considering all, it is easy for a typical consumer to shop for every kind of item such as both expensive and cheap together with the stimulation which comes from actors of the industry then finally by mix and matching, constructing a unique style (Tokatli, 2008).

Besides, this personality play of shopper motivates the system of fashion to consistently appoint style advancements. As a result, both manufacturer and purchasers have their limitations concerning their force, with the design's ceaseless requirement for originality and its determined creation of obsolescence. However, to the degree that purchasers have exercise over their practices and personality projects, they keep their natural right of dismissing prevailing rhetoric (Parmentier & Fischer, 2011). This duality between commodification and authenticity is also referred to by Thompson and Haytko (1997), with a reference to Giddens' (1991) study. Accordingly, based on Western consumerism, the essential problem of identity lays in the deep conflict between individual drives and materialized influences. Branding and materialization cause considerable problems in terms of creating and reflecting unique identity thus sometimes a conflict emerges between these two. Moreover, Mikkonen et al. (2014), claims that a woman who wears too much brand would not have a sense of style at all. Considering these, as a solution, Thompson and Haytko (1997) suggests eliminating de commodification from sartorial approach while mixing and blending brands and adding some pieces from oneself, since fashion world gives the perception of there is no room for authenticity with only mainstream options to choose between. Their study also draws the attention to the fact that all the work and creativity afforded by famous brands actually must be reflected and refined in a careful manner since adopting the well-known ready

to wear silhouettes and utilizing them as they are actually stand opposite to the style's essential notions such as originality and exclusiveness.

### **2.3.1. Fashion and Emotions**

According to consumer research, emotions are quite important part of consumption practice however this claim has transformed into a concept only in a few studies (Rafferty, 2011). Rafferty (2011), points out that there are limited numbers of researches have been made concerning the association between emotions, status and consumption. For instance, a variety of emotions such as anxiety and fear experienced towards one's physical appearance and others' reactions to it have been referred on the pages of researches (Rafferty, 2011). Besides, many women acknowledge that fashion covers a significant portion in their lives as well as influence their emotional well-being (Rafferty, 2011). Further, based on Gilles Lipovetsky's work, Evans (2003) suggests that, fashion is good in terms of reducing the effects of depression and enables discovering different identities besides facilitating growth. However, Rafferty (2011) suggests that while Bordo (1997) interpret women's attitude towards market's messages as passive, emotional aspect was not taken into account and he adds that consumers are definitely not easily influenced by the outer stimulants. If one wants to explain the fashion's appeal, then he/she should definitely take the social aspects of emotions into account (Rafferty, 2011)

### **2.4. Style and Ethics**

Armstrong et al. (2018), associates style-based consumption with the habits of slow-fashion consumers. Their study suggests that adopting a certain style means preferring sartorial pieces which pretty much line up with one's very own style. In consideration to Cho, Gupta and Kim's (2015) interpretations, shopping according to a certain style is perceived as the equal of being sustainable and economical (Armstrong et al., 2018). A strong and balanced sense of style

actually results in more sustainable tendencies which prioritizes a longer and fulfilled life for products such as recycling, creative use and decreased consumption. Hence, there is also an inclination towards immortal or exemplary dresses which hold on for a long time. Moreover, this idea elaborates on the practices of slow fashion shoppers who look for quality and timelessness with the less is more principle through a search for balance in lifestyle and their structured character (Armstrong et al., 2018). Lundblad and Davies (2016), indicates that for slow fashion adopters, there is a strong tendency for making a statement with your look while transmitting your philosophy and feelings and not giving up on comfort and relationship with yourself while doing that. Hence, consumers' aim of creating an authentic outer facade with the source of internal motives requires fashion word to alternate by the style notion (Armstrong et al. 2018). Nevertheless, consumers who are fashion focused give more importance to their appearance thus they consume for their image while people who embrace the style mantra mostly focus on the sustainable aspects of clothing like authenticity and uniqueness (Armstrong et al., 2018).

It should be noted that, as minor and differentiated practices are fitted to norms and promoted by market, then it becomes known and accepted by everybody (Sandıkci & Ger, 2014). Surely, a few researchers highlight innate economic and market-based structure of defiant practices as fuel for a fashion/commodity market, as the market commercializes styles on a worldwide scale (Heath & Potter, 2005). Although resistive acts, just like sustainable consumption, commodified and materialized like fashion nowadays by the market, Bly, Gwozdz and Reisch (2015), emphasizes that style and sustainability are recognized to be on the same side and supportive of each other while fashion, as we know it, highly contrasts them (Armstrong et al. 2018). Further, sustainability as a promoting power for style, unlike fast fashion, opens a way for notions such as self-realization, expression of creativity and reflection of identity regardless of fashion's accounts. Intrinsic motivations take the role while the need for novel

pieces decrease since the stories narrated by looks are more in line with the story teller's intentions (Armstrong et al., 2018).

## **2.5. Style and Culture**

Based on Abrams and Hogg (1988), McNeill (2018) discussed that context is a strong variable in determining the final self-concept of the individual. Meanings are re-shaped in the minds of the individuals through the filter of their cultural accumulation (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Consumers benefit from the personal interpretation of cultural rhetoric in order to build native and valid public personas (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Thus, it is possible to observe both societal and individual motivations in sartorial practices (Derrington, 2009). Besides, Upbringing, family and core environment growing up have a great impact on participants' sartorial choices of today (Saunders, 2014). Thompson and Haytko (1997), associate the individuals' use of fashion with a dance which is used in order to make sense of the actions of themselves and others around them. This dance provides tools for refusal of the societal norms, rules and impositions. Moreover, McNeill (2018) suggests that, if a woman with a solid sense of self, also shows a strong presence and stance in a social environment, then her choice of clothing and style has the possibility of being "riskier" compared to others. In addition, mixing regional customs with global structures, style blends contrasting cultural ingredients to create a unique identification (Murray, 2002).

The word woman is always mentioned together with fashion, grace and style (Zanette & Brito, 2019). The idealized woman is pictured and standardized by the contemporary excellence rules (Delhaye, 2006). Saunders (2014), sums up very well the ideas, judgments and biases which are behind the manners of society's interpretation of a woman's clothing choices. Based on a television series "Nosotras", she reflects the transformation of clothing style of a girl named Maria who happened to have a bohemian style at the beginning. As she

becomes a serious journalist her style also evolves through a more elegant look. Study narrates how a woman's sartorial practices changes according to the expectations and pre-defined roles in the society.

## **2.6. Practice of Style**

The notion of 'body' represents our defined places in the world (Roux & Belk, 2019). Saucier (2011), defines the body as "a social canvas" thus, it is embellished through signs, symbols and a variety of clothing pieces. Clothes actually act as 'means by which bodies are made social and given meaning and identity' (Entwistle, 2015[2000], p. 7). A realistic message is cleverly embedded in the choices of a person who walks the street in her builded combination which reveals the refinements of her taste, methods and preferences which in the end leading to a portrait reflecting her socially relevant attributes (Hebdige, 2007).

As reported by Cillo and Verona (2008) style is a concept which is closely related to combination. One could get an endless number of looks by mixing and matching all the pieces inside the wardrobe which "stores all the potential selves – past, present and future" (Bye & McKinney, 2007, p. 486). Sophie Woodward in her famous book 'Why women wear what they wear?' declare the wardrobe moment as a definitive and exposing moment in which greater concerns such as identity and society emerge. By collecting her own choice of sartorial pieces, a woman actually builds her very own aesthetic perception and define the rules of her relationship with outer world. Looking deeper from the preferred look, one must reach to the wardrobe moment which gives clues about dilemmas and tensions, in order to better grasp the sophistication behind those simple choices (Derrington, 2009). Woodward also benefits from Simmel's (1971) approach in the case of forces between individuality and conformity, declaring both as essential concepts within sartorial practices. Further, life itself, meaning that how women live actually affect their sartorial decisions more than commercial efforts. Thus, reflecting identity through sartorial practices has a dynamic nature which



sometimes enabling and inhibiting for the others. Notions such as status demographic issues and ethnicity affect the process (Derrington, 2009). Further, Mikkonen et al. (2014) suggests a self-help philosophy called “wardrobe self-help” which facilitates managing one’s look, embodying own unique features and listening what intimate sartorial instincts say. Referred as “WSH” in the study, this philosophy frees the consumers from imposed rules and standards of the industry. These industrial impositions can cause one to look like lacking an authenticity through all the fashionable labels and perceived as unprofessional. Tenets of “WSH” on the other hand offers a source of happiness and governance which flow from the inner world by taking the lead.

Moreover, based on Thompson and Haytko’s (1997) ideas, Kjeldgaard (2009) suggests that respondents’ approach of managing the communication to their preferred style types constitutes the essence of folk theory which has three strong pillars. First of them is the style’s identity aspect. It says that respondents stay loyal to the range they move while switching between different styles. Secondly, their movement is limited by the freedom which they deem for themselves. This freedom which accepted as artificial in traditional acceptances, gives authenticity to them as they could create their own perspective different than their peers. Thirdly, consumers are very aware that social life has a big limiting impact on their style choices. Thus, there is a strong sense of impulsivity is observed in total.

People behave in a certain way in order to adapt to the surrounding circumstances (McNeill, 2018). While shopping, consumers unintentionally administer the social implications resulted by style and the interpretations of their decisions of style for creating a personal-identity (Kjeldgaard, 2009). Giddens (1991), studies this idea of unconsciousness as a phenomenon occurring in the constantly changing social settings which requires continuous self-observation, control and adjustment. These impulsive processes are actually defined as technologies of self which are administered by consumers (Jantzen,

Østergaard, & Sucena Vieira, 2006). Conversely, past studies (e.g., Elliott & Davies, 2005) on the subject does not refer this process as reflexivity although there is an awareness towards different styles and evaluation of the self, compared to them (Kjeldgaard, 2009).

According to the study carried by Kjeldgaard (2009), two obvious patterns emerge concerning the style consumption. These are called “style switching” and “style code reflexivity” respectively, similar to experimentation and domination notions in Murray’s (2002) study. Murray (2002), introduces the ‘sign domination’ and ‘sign experimentation’ concepts which gives an insight to sartorial practices in the light of hypothetical and known essential positions with its industrialist structure, and the postmodern reasonableness of the innovative and beneficial array of signs into individualized styles. Differently in Kjeldgaard’s (2009) study, unintentional factors affected by social norms play a role in style codes rather than capitalist rules which forms a base for style domination. Kjeldgaard’s (2009) notion of style switching challenges the meaning and signs aspect of postmodern consumption theory by saying that although styles becoming freer and more disconnected from traditional forms, they still keep their connection. Consumers adopt numerous styles in order to build a personal but integrated image of identity. Findings suggest that, people, who subject to the study, perceives style as a something they exhaust. Meaning that, style alone does not signify a lot of things however the association with style, defines identity. Style here adopts an integrative role which stands for one’s relation with style as part of his/her personality (Kjeldgaard, 2009).

Builded on the theories above, based on their abilities and learning, women engage with fashion in their own unique ways. For example, many middle-class women would like to keep a unique position for themselves in their self-fashioning practices and they even go shopping alone in order to eliminate the risk of being copied by others (Rafferty, 2011).

With the opening of the first department store in Paris in 19<sup>th</sup> century then it has spread to Europe and America, it altered all customary perceptions about shopping. These stores followed a different path from others by keeping the prices low in order to attract more customers. This affected the way people dress and their style thus fast fashion became more visible while high priced, made to measure clothes became obsolete (Merlo & Belfanti, 2019). However, Johnson, Kim, Mun and Lee (2015) suggests that although not clearly yet abandoned, brick and mortar shopping is slowly losing its place to online methods. Yet, there are still significant motivations which direct consumers to shop from stores such as shopping enjoyment. Their study suggests that, shopping enjoyment is a significant dimension in the 'brick and mortar' shopping. Further, they claim that sartorial shops could enrich their customers' place attachment together with store loyalty of their stores by strengthening shopping enjoyment. Consequently, today, achieving a diversity of styles in more affordable ways frequently is pretty easy (Woodward, 2009; Tokatli, 2008). Hence, for a consumer, it is not challenging to acquire any kind of item in order to fulfill a personal requirement, disregarding the properties of the sought item, then finally by blending, aiming for creating a one-of-kind style (Tokatli, 2008).

Furthermore, Rafferty (2011), lists the motivations which lead to consumption as, authenticity, pure wish, delight of consumption and perception of self-worth, respectively. Very assorted in nature, many decisions take place critically in the consumption processes (Bye & McKinney). Quality, aesthetic, and sophistication are important characteristics for the purchase decision of a style-oriented person while in general there is an inclination towards items which hold on for a longer time (Armstrong et al. 2018). Individuals who are focused on style rather than trends and fashion, invest in more timeless pieces (Armstrong et al. 2018). Because clothes should be chosen according to one's style benefits instead of trendy ones (Mikkonen et al., 2014). Besides, Kjeldgaard (2009) suggests that style is an extended concept in many aspects of life. Based on Veblen's (1899) infamous Theory of Leisure Class, according to Delhaye

(2006), women's consumption habits and the way they are dressed were the symbols of their lifestyle. They were wearing resplendent and exaggerated dresses which in no way would let them work and this was their status symbol.

Moreover, persistence achieved through one's discovery of clothes which are best for her body type is the pillar of style together with timelessness and individuality, rather than following and practicing frequently changed latest looks. Displaying a stylish presence includes eliminating what does not befit to you as well as adopting what flatters you instead of just being a fashion follower. Focusing on what you wish to flaunt while cleverly disguising what you don't is what style proposes (Mikkonen et al., 2014). Hence, the ideal aimed identity must be being a woman who is aware of the special qualities of her body and dressing accordingly; not someone who unconsciously follow fashion or who does not care at all (Mikkonen et al., 2014).

### **2.6.1. Style and Meanings**

Through codes of meaning, one could choose the appropriate one in order to build a style. From this perspective, it is kind of like speaking a language. One must use his/her abilities of creativity while staying in the boundaries posed by the language itself and in the same way, should create a combination which is striking (Murray, 2002). Regardless of the intention and aim, every object could be accepted and interpreted as a sign (Eco, 1979). Sandikci and Ger (2014) explains the process as, the primary famous phenomenon loses its first meaning which belongs to a certain context and takes whole another forms and meanings with the internalization by the greater society such as in the cases of jeans leaving the context of motorcycle community and tattoos losing their association with the prisoners. Brands which are rich in terms of signs and symbols are also used in order to reflect the selfhood, as well (Lascity, 2018). Saucier (2011), supports this argument with the example of Timberland boots which are used by Cape Verdean community in harsh conditions, being also used by Americans.

American people also wear these boots not for war but in order to signal the meaning that they are facing the difficulties of the city life. Based on Hebdige's (1981) tenets, this shows the creation of a style by pressing play after carving something out from its traditional frame and placing it in a totally unfamiliar context (Saucier, 2011). Further, in order to integrate other meanings to their clothes and signal different messages about their personality, people often benefit from the elements of nature such as lion patterns which represent power and nobleness. Different animals are used as a metaphor and transfer meaning (Saucier, 2011).

With the aim of searching and signaling the true meanings, purchasers try to express the certain views of their casual sartorial lives which includes mainstream fashion rules, accepted stylistic approach according to certain factors, brands, idealized images, icons and classes through fashion styles, by benefiting from the blend and re-interpretation of contained folk theories (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). System of symbols has a great amount of power in the fashion world. (Murray, 2002). Since fashion has a nature full of values, symbols and contrasts, it gives individuals the ability to solve problems occurred because of the imbalance between the degree of autonomy or conformity in a social atmosphere through meanings provided (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Fashion especially stands as a great representation which clarifies how sartorial purchases are social devices that fill in as a way for meaning exchange (McNeill, 2018). Hence, fashion discourses act as means to construct new local meanings and interpretations. This method adopts the duty of explaining more sophisticated issues such as personality in relation to culture and society besides gender and class issues.

Fashion discourses, within their atmosphere, enclose social symbols which help consolidate meanings to adopter's variable aspects of life. The function of these localized mainstream notions is that they support the adopter as a dynamic and creative being of an exclusive style rather than a simple follower (Thompson &

Haytko, 1997; Saucier, 2011). However, from a different perspective, in the event that a specific apparel becomes popular, a fragment of the society will have a tendency towards items that fit that style. It isn't the genuine actual thing that the individual feels enthusiastic about but the idea of possibilities afforded and presented by that item. Social acknowledgment and self-fulfillment are the disguised main motives for person's intentional choice of acquisition of an item (McNeill, 2018, p. 84).

### **2.6.2. Style, Creativity and Authenticity**

Based on Kaiser (1997), Armstrong et al. (2018) suggest that, style is created with efforts of creative minds who look from an artistic window while playing with clothes. Unique personas who have authenticity in their style choices are the ones who are conscious about their identity and their desires thus the style confidence is essentially affected by authenticity. Certain group of people knows better how to create a stylistic look by matching different pieces in an unusual way thus others are content with themselves by buying the latest trendy item only to match it with cowboy boots and not regular shoes (Tokatli, 2008). Meaning that, because of the contradicting multidimensional nature of fashion, its interpretations could be used with the purpose of shining through the crowd or rather be a part of it (Thompson & Haytko, 1997).

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTEXT

A researcher certainly should understand the social and cultural ambience which the study is conducted in (Keegan, 2009, p. 76). In order to fully grasp the motivations behind respondent's decisions concerning her stylistic choices, her life as she experiences it must be determined as the context to be examined in because through an interaction between this context and outer social environment, style takes its shape sculpted by contradictory elements of culture (Murray, 2002). In this study, Turkish women who are involved in stylistic experiences and their opportunities and environment embody the context.

Although it is established in 1923 as a whole new soul, Turkey was naturally still carrying the cultural and habitual impressions from the early Ottoman Empire (Tercüman, 2017). Consumption patterns of Turkish people were divergent on a large scale from its European and American peers (Karademir-Hazır, 2014). Signs of early modernization period were visible and the most striking of them was the inclination towards Westernization (Tercüman, 2017). Westernization and secularization tendencies which came with the new authority's perspective were reminiscent of European life style for many (Karademir-Hazır, 2014) and in spite of this, with this new trend, dressing up became almost a focal point in life (Tercüman, 2017). For Turkish women, as in the case of their peers from other developing countries, their sartorial style became a quite solid manifestation of realized westernization (Karademir-Hazır, 2014). Although modernization has won the 1<sup>st</sup> place in the cultural domination play, other players such as; globalization, different economical views, religious factors, changing face of life from country to urban, have kept the play tough. On the contrary of Bourdieu's customary tools which prevail in other settings, Turkey

offers an uncommon hierarchy synthesized from the composition of modern western act and classical Turkish perspective. Thus, it becomes crucial to evaluate any cultural information emerging from the study, in the frame of these particular contrasting determinants in order to grasp deeply the meanings presented (Karademir-Hazır, 2014).



**Figure 2.** Turkey as the context of the research.

**3.1. Turkish Women**

For many years, Turkey has been referred as the lead country which modernize the life standards of its female inhabitants in the Middle East. Westernization which has started during the Ottoman Empire, found stronger and solid bases which have embedded by Atatürk’s visionary approach. Atatürk saw the potential Turkish women have and wanted women to take same roles as men in the life scene. In the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period which liberate women has started in Turkey. With this period, many things have changed in lives of women such as monogamy in marriage, right of education, right of divorce, free



will in matters such as clothing, private life and marriage. In time, women claimed their voice in other areas; they asked for an improved education and a professional life. They became teachers and editors of their very own magazine. With the acceptance of the Swiss Civil Code on October 4, 1926, stronger and considerable advancements entered to women's life (Abadan-Unat, 1978).

However, most of these changes occurred only on the higher steps of the hierarchy while urban middle-class women achieved those privileges only after the World War I. Women who live in rural areas had no chance to express their abilities or identity. Through constitutional changes took place in the scene such as urbanization, industrialization, migration and common availability of mass media provided a base for women to achieve desired change. Urbanization opened the way for higher and better education for women. This education together with the income level and changing family structure have had powerful impact on the process of reshaping Turkish women. Increased number of women professionals even in the male dominated areas, represent the evidences of this reality (Abadan-Unat, 1978).

There are still certain obstacles which limit women being active in their professional life (Yanar, Budworth, & Latham, 2009). Approximately %52 of Turkish society is women but they represent only the one fourth of the recorded work force (Sposito, 2013). As reported by State Institute of Statistics of Turkey in 2006, women account for only %26,9 of the workforce in comparison to %73.1 men (Yanar et al., 2009). According to world economic forum, only %12 of women is seated in chief executive positions and their presence on managerial positions decrease remarkably on higher ladders of the hierarchy. Considering the roles afforded to women in house, women always feel the urge to always choose between their family or careers. However, in Turkey, it is possible to get outside help for the housework and childcare through maids by paying small amounts (Sposito, 2013). These roles, norms and values affect the way how women make sense of themselves and adjusts their behaviors accordingly (Yanar

et al., 2009). While the necessary support being missing affecting this process negatively, self-confidence plays a positive role in beating the obstacles (Yanar et al., 2009).

After a general look at the journey of Turkish women finding their own voice, Karademir-Hazır's (2014) work gives deep and meaningful insights about Turkish women's stylistic perspective in the light of her tastes and practices which are naturally emerged from cultural and status related factors. Her analysis illustrates the effects of belonging to a class which is determined upon one's professional life and having a cultural accumulation on the degree, nature and consistency of commitment to stylistic processes. She looks at the picture of a Turkish woman's sartorial style in the light of Westernization while also considering the natural habitat features of the country.

Karademir-Hazır (2014), defines embodiment practices as “practices undertaken to maintain, modify, adorn and cultivate our bodies” (p. 2). At the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, these embodiment practices evolved into something which an individual identify herself with (Akman, 2009). Consumer culture and consumerism have experienced a huge increase lately because of the fact that the world is now a global arena in terms of travel, communication and media (Sobh et al., 2014). Today, our physical presence is continuously subject to external factors which insistently direct us to change in order to meet the needs of ambitious market (Karademir-Hazır, 2014). Through these developments, fashion offers women a great deal of freedom and many opportunities thus they are expected to be more authentic and tasteful than ever before (Delhaye, 2006).

### **3.2. Globalization and Fashion**

Today, in global world, Turkish women has a silhouette which is facing forward the Western consumption patterns. They use global brands as well as exposed to a global media. They are acquaintances with the global taste regimes and engage

with them. This reality brought the requirement of taking a look at the globalization and the situation of fashion in it. According to Appadurai (1990), the new global world has a disjunctive nature which makes it impossible to comprehend deeply by using existing methods; thus, he offers a set of dimensions in order to make sense of the sophisticated and manifold structure of the globalization phenomenon. These dimensions respectively go as mediascapes, financescapes, technoscapes, ethnoscapes and ideoscapes.

Looking at them in detail, the concept of ethnoscape covers the constantly moving people which we could exemplify such as tourists, expats, and even immigrants (Appadurai, 1990). Advancing from local to global, fashion has emerged in Europe and flourished in the metropolitans (Welters & Lillethun, 2007). Today, people travel across continents in order to shop for their sartorial passion pieces or aiming to discover newest trends and fashions. Other than fashion weeks held in fashion capitals, today cities like Amsterdam, Berlin and others are having their own (Rantisi, 2011). These shows are attracting all kinds of people from different cultures, professions and nationalities. Sartorial enthusiasts travel from Italy to France in order to be informed about the latest looks. Even certain beauty movements travel among cultures, influencing people from miles away such as African hair breads or French tuck.

Secondly, the dimension called as technoscape refers to the global and boundless composition of technology which enables cooperation between parties which are thousand miles away from each other (Appadurai, 1990). For example, social media and other channels are frequently benefited as the source of inspiration or a learning point such as getting some ideas about fashion from celebrities or trendsetters (Tse & Tsang, 2018). Today, Instagram has turned into a very popular fashion scene. The number of bloggers, influencers and tastemakers in the channel, is increasing very fast. It is possible to post pictures, ideas and feelings and communicate over them and even it is possible to shop through the business accounts. The application acts as an intersection point where buyers,

sellers, intermediaries, bloggers and influencers all come together and fulfill their needs. Not only needs are fulfilled, but also exchange of ideas about subjects such as beauty and aesthetics also occurs (Schöps, Kogler, & Hemetsberger, 2019).

Then he talks about mediascape which keeps a variety of information to circulate around the globe through certain sources, printed or online (Appadurai, 1990). Although an individual's own experiences shape the way the body is fashioned, these media channels have a serious impact on people's perceptions in terms of signs and symbols (Murray, 2002). For example, for all these years, magazines have been encouraging women about making conscious and critical sartorial decisions while seeing fashion as just an advisor, aiming to support women as freely deciding individuals. Following this base idea, women are advised to build their own style based on their personal taste and act creative, suggesting them a different perspective which prioritize the idea of self. Thus, women realize themselves while discovering their own personal tastes, individuality and free will in a fashion system which still represents rules and limits (Delhaye, 2006).

Similarly, based on images, he talks about ideoscapes at last. Ideoscapes symbolize the political world view and ideologies which shaped around different countries (Appadurai, 1990). Saunders (2014) illustrates the relationship between political ideologies and the sartorial choices perfectly well, based on mainly the four women characters of Marcela Serrano's famous book "*Nosotras que nos queremos tanto*" (1991). She explains how women were claiming their well-deserved place and establishing a ground for suppressed opinions through expressive power of sartorial preferences. Article emphasizes the decisive role one's physical appearance play in terms of understanding the political perspective (Saunders, 2014). Through the years, stylistic choices of political figures have been a focus point for the public eye such as dress choices of Jacquelyn Kennedy for important occasions or the bridal dress of Grace Kelly

whose style have been a source of inspiration for many. Today, political figures still use fashionable means in order to emphasize their stance.

Last landscape is called finanscape which stands for the complex world of currencies, stocks and assets traded globally in seconds (Appadurai, 1990). All these dimensions are fluid and always in interaction with each other while helping us to grasp the reality of our world a bit better (Appadurai, 1990).

### **3.3. Sector**

Diving directly into the fashion and clothing industry, Hacıola and Atılğan (2014) illustrates the general situation of the field very well starting with the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which clothing industry rapidly and globally expanded. Through structural changes in production and visionary developments both in the industry and fashion wise in general, dressing turned into something more than a basic human need. As a consequence of this rise, industry has evolved into a sophisticated, competitive and originative structure (Hacıola & Atılğan, 2014).

These major changes affected the minor variables of the field and caused drastic changes such as seasons which set up as 2 at the beginning being increased quickly to 8 or the expected life cycle of products getting noticeably shorter which is 4 to 6 weeks for fashionable goods and 3 to 7 months for essential items (Hacıola & Atılğan, 2014). Adding on to that, the most recent looks being accessible in the market with comparatively low prices and the obvious availability, fast fashion in a way enabled the democratization of fashion (Hacıola & Atılğan, 2014).

At the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, fast fashion boomed as industry became more developed and responsive. As parallel to industrial progress, living standards of the society also improved as economy stabilized and education spread. Through

these positive advancements, people found a way to steer for sparing more time and energy for dressing up and following fashion (Hacıola & Atılğan, 2014). According to Remy, Schmidt, Werner and Lu (n.d.), globally, although mature markets continue to keep their obvious critically important position, there is an undeniable shift towards emerging markets economically. Based on this shift, clothing market for women is expected to expedite its growth and reach %55 of total sales in the fields and claim %60 of growth. For the coming 12 years, %50 increase in market growth rate in women's clothing market in general is also anticipated. Emerging markets which represent %37 of the woman's clothing market in the middle segment until now is foreseen to claim %50 of the market by 2025 meaning that growth in this segment will be 3 times faster compared to mature segment.

In case of Turkey, fast fashion industry made its rise after 21<sup>st</sup> century with European brands entering in and settling down to the market. Its reflections were seen clearly after 2005 and after 2009, it established its place also on consumer side (Hacıola & Atılğan, 2014). With its strong bases in retail of textile and clothing, money spent to these items by consumers increased sharply since 2002. In 2019, domestic consumption for clothing reached a total of roughly 4.68 million Turkish liras per month. There are more than 30 thousand stores selling textile and closely 55 thousand stores which handle clothing (Shahbandeh, 2020). In parallel to these developments, technology and communication opportunities grew apace causing the information to be received and consumed very fast. This created a vicious circle of customers who want more and firms who offer more every other day (Hacıola & Atılğan, 2014).

### **3.4. Culture**

Individuals display distinct identities and connections changing from one context to another. This idea of social identity is associated with the feeling of belonging to a certain communal structure (Akman, 2009). How a woman presents her look

to the outer world is the result of the total of her choices concerning how to make use of her acquired stylistic tools (Karademir-Hazır, 2014). Modern forms of sartorial styles essentially observed as the choices of cultured people who live in the urban areas meaning that a distinction of category have been always visible (Karademir-Hazır, 2014). This means, in order to talk about cultural capital, a woman must be doing more than combining available stylistic opportunities (Karademir-Hazır, 2014).

Turkish people with a high cultural capital are very aware of the latest sartorial styles and do not afraid to experience those styles personally while adopting a cold stance against traditional embodiments. While passion for Westernization seeping down to lower levels, its cultural phenomena are held superior to Turkish customs (Karademir-Hazır, 2014).

Assigned directly to individuals' ego, there are certain set of roles which act as mirrors reflecting the way they see themselves from their own and others' perspectives. There is an interrelation between the dynamic social environment and one's identity which developed through these liquid roles as the one develops social capacity by experiencing a variety of cultural practices (Akman, 2009). Preferences in terms of appearance hold by regular working woman or housewives vary notably compared to women who occupy professional positions. It is also surprising that the confidence a woman has on her total look moves in a parallel way with the class she belongs. Women with higher status are less affected by the societal impositions. Unlike societies of countries like France and Britain which show more feminine style expressions in the working class, femininity becomes more visible in the modern side in the Turkey's context (Karademir-Hazır, 2014).

### **3.5. Society**

After 1980s, with the new economical arrangements favoring a freer market structure, suddenly there has been an increase in the possibilities for people to consume. Foreign brands took their well-deserved places in the market, giving access to almost everybody who did not have the opportunity to shop abroad or from limited sales of the black market. Then, the market for sartorial and beauty products, challengingly flourished (Karademir-Hazır, 2014).

With 90s, westernization came even stronger, changing all perceptions and practices about beauty and embodiment. Exercising and beauty rituals became very popular as the new examples of bodily practices. Through these new habits, bodily aesthetic nuances and the differentiating line among working and upper middle-class women became more visible (Karademir-Hazır, 2014).

With the 20<sup>th</sup> century coming to an end, worker profile of the industry also has gone through a serious evolution. Before, majority was formed by the blue-collar workers however with the emergence of the new service sector; Bell (1976) introduced the “post-industrial society” where ordinary agriculture is replaced by mind intense occupations such as banking or health. Through this transition from industrial society to post-industrial, white collars proclaimed their dominance through their literacy and standards (Akman, 2009).

According to Harvey (2014), neoliberalist mind stands for the freely discharged antecedent feelings of free will and choice of individuals who are functioning in an open market which has fewer rigid rules than other and transactions like acquisition is far easier. Individuals’ efforts concerning identity is dynamic and is fed from different contexts. For professionals, identity is highly affected from organizational or social rhetoric. It could be built with the help of factors such as one’s choice of brands, positions adopted in society and even what kind of recreational endeavors one takes up. Work environment and the organization



individual works for are the major determinants of identity which makes it crucial to understand working environment in order to make the interpretations right (Akman, 2009).

Today's professional life offers more elasticity and mobility considering the technological developments and globalization. "Rather than labor and manual skills, new businesses and work are based on knowledge" (Akman, 2009, p. 18). With an intense pressure on them, old-school professionals are currently replaced by brand new knowledge workers who redeem high value through their sophisticated and in demand capabilities and mobility. Their demands and expectations differ on a large scale from other competent characters as well as their resistance to traditional methods of getting things done. They demand challenge, elasticity, freedom and high standards while working smart and efficient (Akman, 2009).

According to Akman's (2009) extensive work on different professions and their lifestyle, Creative class workers whose job requires authenticity, have very different characteristics compared with classic organizational men. Creative class has more freedom and elasticity and they define themselves with their work rather than organization. Knowledge workers who work in financial areas on the other hand are subject to a handful of rules and regulations. Their bond with the organization is crucial. Creatives stand out with their less interest in conspicuous consumption and more authentic lifestyle. They prefer an experiential and meaningful lifestyle. Their dress code is very casual while knowledge workers interests and dress code depends on more strict concepts (Akman, 2009).

Under the light of this contextual information, I will be able to clarify and grasp thoroughly what style means in Turkish women's minds and how it is constructed with the input of diverse external and internal elements.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology which has guided me through my entire research process has been defined and explained, in detail. Preeminent purpose of this study is to define the concept of style and give it a solid place in the literature while illustrating the processes of creating personal style through composing a variety of materials. Through this study, we would like to understand, how professional Turkish women perceive and practice style, in an emic level.

With the aim of captivating the essence of the subject in question, qualitative approach was used in the process (Langley, 1999). Qualitative research has a way of integrating senses of the researcher such as harmonizing instincts, emotions and body language while being a reflection of self at the same time (Keegan, 2009). “It’s a bit like improvisational jazz, which is a whole-body experience, not just involving the conscious mind” (Keegan, 2009, p.19). For the practice, in-depths interview method was selected as the main research tool for the sake of acquiring rich and quality data (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). In order to ensure of the better grasp of the concepts, photo elicitation method was also employed. A portfolio of photographs composed from different styles was presented to the respondent’s liking and she was expected to choose the one which she felt closer in terms of style. In addition, respondents have shown me the photos of their different outfits for different occasions and we had the chance to talk about these looks in detail (Patton, 1980).

Since it is crucial to see and understand the concepts from the respondent’s own eyes, an interpretivist approach was adopted (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill,

2009). Meaning that, the questions were directed to the respondent in a way to catch a glimpse of her own reality within her immaculate world (Saunders et al., 2009). As the study follows a path of collecting valuable data and making meaningful inferences about it; an inductive process was employed and followed through the research, although deductive perspectives sometimes been useful as a supportive tool in terms of clarifying certain points in literature (Saunders et al., 2009). No single and particular theory was utilized as a bridge while constructing the pillars of this chapter by cause of following and observing the natural path of formation of the processes examined and composing a pattern out of it (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 425-426).

#### **4.1. Data Collection Methods**

In the data collection phase, a detailed and planned path was followed in order to collect the data in a systematical way. Since the research question requires a sophisticated data, qualitative method which “embodies the messiness, contradiction and partial truths that are inherent in all human communication” employed with an interpretivist approach (Keegan, 2009, p. 23). This approach questions the idea that there is one certain truth which is same for everybody and is expecting to be discovered (Keegan, 2009, p. 22). Through the dimension of social constructionism, it rather suggests that knowledge is personally perceptive and emerges from our reciprocal social interactions, meaning that “we construct our world, rather than perceiving reality, by interpreting the world in terms of our past experience and the context we are in” (Keegan, 2009, p. 22).

Within the scope of qualitative research, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were carried out. There were 22 questions prepared beforehand but the natural direction of the conversation is preserved during the interviews through probing and follow-up questions. The Turkish version of my interview guide is attached to appendix for further understanding of the processes. In order to prevent any possible bias or subjectivist intervention, questions are crosschecked in terms of

wording, and meaning with a peer and practiced a few times. While preparing the interview questions, literature review guided as a roadmap concerning the types and contents of the questions (Belk, 2017, p. 31). Funnel approach was followed by directing the questions from general to specific (Grover & Vriens, 2006, p. 91).

Because of the special situation we have been experiencing, majority of the interviews were held online while some of them carried out face to face with respondents who agreed. Online video conference application “Zoom” used as the communication tool. On average, each interview lasted between 1 to 3 hours. Based on the respondent’s consent, meetings were recorded as only audio or video and audio together while all other ethical necessities were met attentively. Thanks to recordings, it was possible for the researcher to listen interpretively and actively follow the flow and participate properly without the concern of taking notes at the same time. Fully transcribed pages of the conversations numbered approximately 137 pages in total. In order to add another dimension to the research, respondents were asked to bring 3 photos which showcase their styles for different occasions which could be listed as chic, serious and casual.

In order not to leap any details while the memories are fresh, primary analysis is carried out almost immediately. All other off the record observations, conversations and feelings are noted by the researcher in order to support the interview data (Patton, 1980). By doing this, a better understanding of the respondents’ world and perspective from a variety of dimensions is aimed since multiple and variety of sources ‘adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to the inquiry’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 8).

Lastly, in order to understand my sample in depth, I have also benefited from secondary sources, which illustrates the context, such as data from Turkish Statistical Institute as well as academic studies. Through the employment of these sources, I have aimed to describe the context more clearly and in detail.

## 4.2. Research Sample

Since the sample should act as a mirror of research's purpose and the audience in question, defining the aimed sample frame becomes a rather sophisticated process (Keegan, 2009, p. 34). Based on this information, sample of the study consisted of 15 women who are well educated professionals aged between 25 to 55 and live mostly in Ankara. Three of these attendants have recently moved to İstanbul, Antalya and Amsterdam. The other main concern while choosing the respondents was if they are interested in the subject of the research itself. Thus, they are chosen among women who are especially into sartorial practices, fashion, beauty and trends. The reason for that was to provide more accurate, rich and quality data from individuals who are conscious and informed about the phenomenon on both personal and theoretical dimensions (Kuusik, 2017).

All participants are women whose ages range between 25 to 55 and they all grew up in cities in middle class families. They all had a proper education ranging from college to Master's Degree and work in reputable companies as professionals currently. Five of them are married. At the table 1 below, participants' age, education, occupation and background information are depicted. At the beginning, convenience sampling was used in order to select first respondents since it is easy to contact them and they may be able to lead the path of where the study follows. First, 5 attendants were chosen with this method and then, snowball method used in order to provide diversity and inclusiveness.

Few preliminary interviews conducted in advance with the aim of testing and refining the questions besides as well as the method. General flow of the process also reviewed and necessary modifications are made in order to increase the effectiveness and the quality of information that will be acquired. In reliance upon the resilient nature of qualitative approaches, researcher had the opportunity to explore and rake up the notions which are sculptured in participant's mind (Keegan, 2009, p. 38).

Once the research has begun, a repetitive and continuous approach was followed in order to revise, modify and redirect the processes according to every bit of newly emerged data. Thus, process was very liquid in a way supporting the natural path where the research is headed. Interviews were continued until the data reach its saturation point and the answers repeat themselves.

**Table 1.** Informant Profile

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
Gül	53	University	Foreign Relations Specialist, German Interpreter
Nihal	55	University	Beauty Specialist Trainer
Ada	25	University	Computer Engineer
Zeynep	27	University	Materials Engineer
Işıl	26	Master's Degree	Auditor in a private bank
Aslı	25	Master's Degree	Junior Sales Manager in a private company
Bade	26	Master's Degree	Data analyst in a private company
Selin	49	University	Administrative Affairs Manager
Ece	38	University	Brand Representative
Derin	28	University	Brand Manager
Beril	26	Master's Degree	Mechanical Engineer
Sanem	26	Master's Degree	Junior Auditor
Yasemin	32	Conservatory	Music Teacher
Leyla	38	Master's Degree	Foreign Trades Specialist
Sıla	26	University	Mathematician

### **4.3. Data Analysis**

In this part of the chapter, the detailed road map will be offered concerning how the analysis of data carried out in a systematic way. Firstly, based on the nature of the specific research question which leads the study, I preferred not to use any

pre-defined theories to guide me through my research. Instead, as using an inductive approach, I aimed to understand the phenomena deeply and build a new theory around the subject in question. Right after the earliest bit of data acquired, the process of data analysis has started. As the research continues, certain relationships, perspectives and then finally theories became visible. While I was conducting my research, I analyzed the data simultaneously and let it direct and define my next step (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 488).

Rightfully so, because of the nature of in-depth interviews, data acquired was detailed and vast, making it harder to analyze easily and quickly (Patton, 1980). In addition to the raw interview data, my neat transcription methods and visual sources provided support for my understanding and gave me insight.

Based on Grounded Theory of Glaser and Straus (1967), in order to reveal the knowledge which is intrinsically hidden in the rough data, I used an inductive approach which requires data collection first and building a theory based on collected data afterwards. Crucial point of following an inductive path is making sense of the meaningless chunks of data. Relationship between people with their surroundings and the meanings emerging from this dual continuous communication is the focal point of this approach. Context is very important in order to gain a better and deeper understanding while the more flexible nature gives some room for changes and improvements through the research process. There is less concern with the generalization and more emphasis on gaining insights (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 127). Considering all, it was the best approach to adopt for my research. Followed by the fundamental inductive approach, deductive analysis will also be used as a supportive tool in order to further our understanding while matching emerging patterns and themes with the pieces meaningful and related from literature (Patton, 1980, p. 80).

After transcribing each interview data, I carefully and analytically read the texts with the aim of defining the antecedents which give signals about the concepts

concealed. Personally, writing down the interview notes enabled me to recognize possible key points beforehand. A summary of each meeting with every respondent was prepared in order to reveal focus points and leading clues about the big picture. By doing this, big and meaningless data was distilled into an expressive extract. My detailed and structured transcriptions have been pretty useful here while interpreting the implicit phenomena (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 489).

In the second step, since I already got familiar with the data, I have started to categorize the chunks of data in two levels: first, the categories which are going to be useful road signs were defined then the complex data pieces are assigned to them resolvingly. With the research question on mind, I defined the categories based on data which is comprised of respondents' answers and assigned them certain codes. Considering Dey's (1993) suggestion of the idea that "categories must have two aspects, an internal aspect – they must be meaningful in relation to the data – and an external aspect – they must be meaningful in relation to the other categories" (p. 7), I was careful to capture the essence of real nature and relationships between concepts, meaning their expressive essence (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 493).

Finally, in the last step, I started to match the data with the corresponding code and creating a unified narrative in the background. I used a variety of research aids through the process which help me clear my vision. Matrices and note cards have been very helpful in terms of uniting the related dots and common points by simplifying the concepts into an essence. This last phase gave me a lot of insights (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 493).

It has not been a direct process but rather sophisticated and iterative. As the meanings disentangled, new codes emerged and added while some others lose ground. Networks and patterns became visible which allow further interpretations which in the end help me build a new theory. An exhaustive



process of reading and re-reading data supported by a detailed scan of the literature, patterns and certain categories built (Belk, 2017, p. 32). Certain conversational pieces from interviews which highlight and exemplify the concepts were added in order to provide a deeper understanding of the hidden meanings.

I have tried to keep my objectivity and been wary of possible subjective treatments while both collecting and analyzing data. Patterns emerged through my analysis by coding, matching, comparing and contrasting are presented as an example in the Appendix for a better understanding of the analysis part. Data processed will be initially presented in a structured way in the following “Findings” chapter with the categories attached then these categorical data will be deciphered in the “Discussion” chapter.

#### **4.4. Trustworthiness and Ethics**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness is about the researcher being able to convince both the audience and the self with the provided. They offer certain criteria which could be listed as internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. There are also certain techniques offered in order to check if all the criteria given is ensured.

Based on their work, I have evaluated my research by testing suitable technics on it. Starting with the prolonged engagement with stands for the relationship between researcher and the culture studied, I was lucky that I was conducting my research in the cultural setting which I grew into however I have been careful since this could be disadvantage at the same time because of the fact that one might lose the hints given because of the already familiarization with the subject. Through the study I have been mindful about it and arranged the processes accordingly.

I used persistent observation method which is helpful in determining important aspects of the data and focus on them for checking irregular aspects in the future research. I have carried out my research until I get same results constantly thus my data is reached its saturation. Data triangulation method is used through supporting in depth interviews with photo elicitation method by the employment of some visuals, in order to better understand respondent's preferences so that it added to the trustworthiness of the study. Peer de-briefing method with the help of a peer commenting on certain aspects of the research is also used in order to gain a deeper insight while preventing any biases and overlooked details. Integrity of the research is ensured by providing a full privacy for the respondents and through the attitude adopted during the interviews by reframing, probing and narratives.

In order to eliminate the privacy concerns, pseudonyms were preferred to replace actual participant names by informing the respondents in advance. Consent of each participant in the written form was taken after a short information session about the study and its aim. In order for study to be valid from the ethical dimension, it is controlled and approved by the METU's Ethics Committee. Throughout the meetings, respondent's consent was prioritized as they were asked if it is possible to record the meetings as only audio or video and audio together while all other ethical necessities were met attentively.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FINDINGS**

Throughout this study, I aim to explain how style is defined and practiced as a process by participants who are professional women in the age between 25-55 and living in metropolitan areas. While participants are talking about style, there are some motivations which direct them to stylistic practices, featured especially. These motivations could be listed as need of authenticity, fulfilling desires, reflecting identity and managing the first impression then finally being happy and feeling good.

Then they define style in their own ways and words as a beautiful appearance, a part of lifestyle, a state of standing out through creative combinations, a communication tool for emotions, harmony, an experience, a mirror for identity, adoption of style codes and finally a totalistic concept.

With these definitions in mind, they create their style using certain components and practices. They first collect material and non-material components by shopping and gathering information and inspiration. Secondly, by benefiting from these collected components, they engage in certain creation practices such as making combinations, aestheticizing, harmonizing, creativity, and strategizing. Finally, through those practices, they achieve certain outcomes such as reflecting their personality and soul, practicing authenticity and reflecting their taste. There are also other outside factors which affect these stylistic processes. Age and culture are two important factors which play a huge role in the process.

## **5.1. Place of Dressing Up in Our Lives**

Parallel to Cordwell et al. (1979) the place of dress in the participants lives demonstrate that clothing is not only consumed for its functional aspect of covering and protecting the body but for more sophisticated motivations such as authenticity, fulfilling desires, reflecting identity and experiencing happiness. In the following part, I am going to list these motivations in detail.

### **5.1.1. Reflecting Identity, Managing First Impression and Need for Authenticity**

Considering the place of dressing up in our lives, one of the most common motivations emerged was the fact that clothes actually help a lot with our first impressions since they are one of the first things which gives access for evaluation at first sight. Appearance (Armstrong et al., 2018) and clothes (McNeill, 2018, p. 86) are essential in the identity building process. Through a piece of clothing, one can reflect the values created his/her identity (Bye & McKinney, 2007). “There is a saying around here. People are welcomed with their outlook and are seen off with their wisdom.” States Nihal by highlighting the importance of appearance for her with this little phrase.

According to Thompson and Haytko (1997), people tend to care about others’ appearances thus clothing has a distinctive power which could put one on the spotlight. How one is dressed up has the ability to affect the surrounding people’s behaviors and determine the one’s place in society. Likewise, Ada admits that when she meets a person for the first time, the first thing she does is observing his/her clothes as she unconsciously tries to get a glimpse of character and values through clothing pieces and adjust her attitude accordingly. The appearance is the one and only way of forming a perception about a person and in a way, it is a tool to reflect your inner self without talking at all thus that’s why it holds a great deal of importance.

As for authenticity, it is one of the driving aspirations which encourages the act of consumption (Rafferty, 2011). For some women, primary motivation in sartorial practices is being different with their choices and creating an authentic identity (Arnould & Price, 2000). Although the level of difference ranges, they want to be separated and simply stood out with the simple touches reflecting their true selves. For example, one of the respondents Gül (53), emphasizes her wish to be different from everybody with these words: “Growing up, I would not like to wear what everybody wears. If a hundred people have chosen one thing to wear, I would prefer the different one, the one that nobody has chosen.”

She talks about how her mom, a good seamstress, cutting and assembling her favorite pieces together and recalls the moments which they have chosen models they like from magazines for her mom to sew for her (Parsons, 2002). She adds that she also does not like to borrow clothes or lend hers at all. She does not like to be ordinary. Actually here, she subtly indicates her need for reflecting her identity by being distinct from the crowd through her sartorial choices.

### **5.1.2. Fulfilling Desires**

Desire as a recurrent manifestation of passion, has two dimensions which are delightful and uncomfortable. In the roots of desire, lay beneath the individual allurements, cravings, lust for desire and also, anxiety for losing desire, hope and dilemma of allurements and morality (Belk, Ger, & Askegaard, 2003). Some women display special interests, namely a form of passion in their sartorial practices. There is actually a desire which needs fulfillment and feelings of satisfaction or discomfort follows this desire according to the degree it is fulfilled (Belk et al., 2003). Some respondents speak about their love for shoes and bags with an overwhelming enthusiasm while another mentions how she never leaves the house without having make-up.

For instance, high heels are one of the most significant objects of desire for Ece. She does not even know how many pieces she owns. She sometimes buys two or three if she likes something with the fear of not being able to find the exact one again.

Shoes are what I love most. I love love love them! I have a passion for shoes, I guess. I am one of those who do not even know how many pairs she owns. Once, I loved a pair of high heels extremely and I bought three of them with the fear of not being able to find them again! (Ece, 38)

### **5.1.3. Being Happy and Feeling Good**

Another emphasized aspect surrounding the idea of clothing throughout the study was its relation with our emotions. According to consumer research, emotions are a quite important part of consumption practice however this claim has transformed into a concept only in a few studies (Rafferty, 2011). Emergent pattern here was how clothing was directly wired with mood thus, women dress up for being happy, feeling good and better about themselves while it is also reflected on their clothes if they feel bad (Richards, 2018). Sartorial practices here actually turn into a tool which is beneficial for reflecting and adjusting the emotional state (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2006, p. 209). Zeynep (27) emphasizes the feelings she experiences concerning the place of dressing up in her life with following words: “When I dress up, it is important for me to feel good in it. A person should wear things which make him/her comfortable and happy. I would not wear anything that I do not feel good inside.”

Likewise, Işıl clarifies her background motivation as seeing herself beautiful and happy by increasing her mood. Derin admits that she dresses poorly if she does not feel good and sometimes just putting a lipstick is enough to raise her spirits (Willis, Jones, Canaan, & Hurd, 1990, p. 89).

## 5.2. What is Style?

This section demonstrates how the participants (young professional women living in Ankara) interpret the meaning of style in their fashion consumption practices. The data reveals that style as a category constituted by the combination of multiple dimensions such as: a beautiful appearance, part of a lifestyle, standing out through creative combinations, a totalistic concept, a communication tool for emotions, harmony, experience, mirror for identity, and practicing style codes. I am going to explain them in detail and give examples from my sample in the following part.



**Figure 3.** Dimensions which form the definition of style in detail.

### 5.2.1. Style as a Beautiful Appearance

Through my analysis, I see that a beautiful appearance is a highly sought dimension by the respondents in terms of giving a solid definition for what style is. According to Tatarkiewicz (2006), as human, we tend to drawn to beauty and

beautiful objects. According to the participants, this beautiful appearance is expressed through both internal beauty and external beauty. Displayed through style, aforementioned external beauty is actually perceived as the reflection of inner beauty by most of the participants.

What they mean as the inner beauty is notions such as naturalness, energy, shine, elegance and personality as a whole while especially emphasizing the indispensable subjective characteristic of beauty further by recognizing the existence of their self-perceptions as mindful as possible. This subjectivity about beauty differs for participants. Some of them claim that beauty is a whole idea with one's character indicating that rudeness is never beautiful while others give more emphasis on the idea of natural beauty. For instance, Gül conveys the crucial importance of natural when it comes to beauty for her by indicating that she does not like artificiality in anything and never considered plastic surgery since she believes she is more beautiful with her wrinkles.

“Beauty is something which comes from inside and what we do outside is actually sculpting it” says Derin. Beauty reflected outside, on the other hand, is a notion which is realized through harmony (Lehene, 2020), self-care, gestures and attitudes. Outcome in the end is also mentioned as being chic. Self-care is provided through being groomed and well maintained which detailed as smelling beautiful, having healthy hair, simple make-up and clean clothes. Aslı suggests that natural beauty and self-care are complementary to each other. She believes self-care completes the natural beauty and without the proper essential care, the most beautiful face would not mean anything.

Harmony as a source of beauty is explained through concepts such as clean lines, balanced proportions, coherence and especially in a way which does not hurt one's eyes (Lehene, 2020). For instance, Zeynep defines her beauty standards as a part of her style definition as “It should not hurt my eyes, you know? They



should be harmonious with each other. It should look clean and neat and definitely should not irritate my eyes.”

### **5.2.2. Style as a Part of Lifestyle**

Respondents defined style as a holistic concept which is observed in many aspects of life. According to this, style is actually about the taste regimes which at the end form a total lifestyle concept. Taste regime is an erratic concept which enables aesthetics as visible practices and integrate these practices into art of consumption (Arsel & Bean, 2013). These formed taste regimes enable to dissociate individuals through complex and refined details observed in their collective consumption habits which is namely called, lifestyle (Holt, 1997). Clothing style is actually not limited with clothing but a part of their exhaustive taste notion. Gül introduces her idea of holism with these words:

Actually, style is not just about the way we dress ourselves. It is also about how we decorate our homes, maybe cafes and restaurants we prefer to go. One could prefer to stay in a luxurious hotel while the other opts for a camping trip, you know. Should I call it lifestyle maybe? But all is like a whole. It is a line which you draw and follow. (Gül, 53)

Based on Geertz (1968), Holt (1997) also suggests that people cannot simply exist without their past social experiences thus their taste is shaped by former experiences and beliefs presented by the relative settings. Bade narrates how her upbringing formed her current taste perception with relate to her style with these worlds (Bourdieu, 1984):

Where you grew up, who your parents are, the way you live really affect your stylistic choices, I believe. If I have not engaged with sports at all, maybe I would not prefer shorts and blouses which I find comfortable. Since I have been born in Ankara, interested in sports and raised as a person who does not like to stand out; I choose my clothes accordingly. (Bade, 26)

### 5.2.3. Style as Standing Out with Creative Combinations

Another defining attribute emerged through the analysis has been the notion of creativity. Creativity represents finding one's style through mix and matching (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). It is defined through adjectives such as harmonious, different, attention grabbing and it is expected to create awareness through inspiration. Defined in the borders of creativity concept, style is perceived as authentic and unique while adding value and encouraging for the undone. For instance, Aslı defines style with the ability to build combinations which are memorable and striking:

For me style is standing out through combining right pieces, colors and suitable pieces. I mean when someone says 'what Ayşe wore today' and we could remember and say 'yeah, she wore this and that'; either it is so good that sticks in our mind or it is so bad that sticks to our mind. (Aslı, 25).

She also emphasizes that variety of pieces combined and the existence of fashion-conscious items in the mix, depicts the high presence of a high stylistic perceptions since combining those items is an arduous task.

Certain people have the ability of throwing pieces together in a way which is very different, the way never rendered before thus automatically, it grabs the attention. In essence, everybody more or less buys the same things but combine it with different items such as one prefers heels while other prefers sneakers and creativity occurs here, which is interesting (Tokatli, 2008). Zeynep, for instance, is very inspired by the way blogger Leonie Hanne combines irrelevant pieces and turn them into visually attractive blends:

She is very stylish; I really like her physique and whatever she wears suits perfectly to her. Interestingly, she mixes together the most irrelevant and sometimes even ugly pieces and the result is always very chic, stylish and good-looking combines. Whatever I say this does not go with this, she makes it so. (Zeynep, 27)

Aslı again attracts the attention to the encouraging and exemplary dimension through an example of the style of her beloved blogger Rachel Araz:

I really like Rachel Araz's style. She is a blogger and has a unique style. Everybody expected her to wear something pink or blue as usual for her baby shower but she wore a bright green dress instead. Everybody was sharing it on Instagram. She even started a trend which is called #itmakesense and shares and uses interesting things with this hashtag. For me being stylish is transferring ideas, feelings and impressions to other people, inspiring them and showing new ways. (Aslı, 25)

#### **5.2.4. Style as a Totalistic Concept**

In general, respondents defined style as a totalistic concept. This totalistic dimension means style should be considered as an all-inclusive notion enclosing not only clothes but also every detail reflected outside such as cut of hair, behavior, perspective, self-care and attitude (Kapstein, 2006, p. 117). Conformity and common language is sought in the total outlook. It is provided by making right choices and combinations which I will talk about in the practical aspect of the study.

Selin talks about how each of the simple sartorialist practices coming together and creating a totalistic style perception and even how one of them being out of order might affect the whole look.

When you first met a person, you look at them and search for conformity in order to make meaningful interpretations. Hair for instance, is the most remarkable feature of a person and it completes the total look thus it should be considered in the borders of style. Make-up also in the same manner, not everybody has to put on make-up but if do, should do it in a way to create completeness between the overall look. (Selin, 49)

Nihal (55) in the same way draws the attention towards the subtle details “Hair, clothing, make-up... All should be considered as a whole in fact. Everything should be in harmony and complement each other. Even the cut of your hair could reflect your style.”

### **5.2.5. Style as a Tool for Expressing Emotions**

Through the survey, style has also associated with internal sophisticated factors such as emotions, feelings, moods and expression of these in the form of preferences, attitude, gestures and mimics. Style facilitates the realization of inner negotiations on the outside in a refined and simple manner. It is an effort to communicate the sensual world (Schembri, Merrilees, & Kristiansen, 2010).

For instance, Ece (38) gives an example of how her inner beliefs, motives and relative moods were became visible on her sartorial choices stating that “I used to wear black a lot when I was a teenager. I use black a lot when I gain weight, maybe with the sadness it brings. Then in my 20s, I ditched out the black entirely and opted for more color.” She says, sharing the inclinations towards different styles in her various periods of life. She also shares her favorite clothing piece which is a blue coat with me. She talks about how her inner motive to get herself together and prioritize herself after a year of her pregnancy directed her to buy the most attractive color in the store which is the aforementioned blue coat.

Supporting Ece’s expression of feelings, Gül says there is nothing you can do if a 20 years old feeling like 40 and dress that way. In the same manner a fifty years old woman could feel like 20 and dress up as it is. She gives herself as an example by saying that she feels younger than she already is and she could easily pull off 25 years old’s look. Selin similarly suggests that a woman would not prefer fancy or colorful things and be well groomed as always if she is feeling down or vice versa. Feelings definitely reflects on one’s look she says.

### **5.2.6. Style as Harmony**

Throughout the study, one of the things which most of the respondents agreed to be present in the definition of style has been harmony. Harmony actually stands for the consistency along time and the accordance between pieces combined and

also with the body. These three notions combining into one as harmony; actually, has formed the pillars for the style definition's main block. Harmony in time requires a steady image realized by the agency of following a steady philosophy in sartorial practices (Armstrong et al., 2018, p. 555). For instance, Bade explains the consistency in time as follows:

Style for me is uniformity or how could I say... steadiness, I guess. Fashion changes unceasingly, a color which is so fashionable this year probably not so the following year. But being not carried away with it and finding your colors and patterns means that you have a style! (Bade, 26)

As the other dimension of harmony, accordance also emerges as the communication between sartorial pieces in order for style being exist. Although not related occupationally, some pieces complement each other better symbolically (Solomon & Assael, 1987). McCracken's (1990) concept of "Diderot unity" is also supports this perspective. Gül perfectly explains the need for connection between the stories told by every piece:

As a definition, style is a lot of elements coming together in harmonious way. It means they should be in line with each other and complement each other to say the least. Colors, forms, fabrics... Even your fabrics should complement and be in harmony with each other. (Gül, 53)

She suggests that a person with a sense of style should be able to create variable matches in her wardrobe easily which requires a common essential features and language spoken by each piece. She emphasizes that pure uniformity of artifacts is not the aim here but giving the same message in total through overlapping pieces is the key.

Finally, style is also knowing one's body properly and manage sartorial choices in harmony with it (Hidayati et al., 2018). Knowing your body includes many aspects such as acknowledging your physical characteristics, recognizing your body's needs, knowing what flatters your body and what not. Satisfaction of these requirements provides a base for a solid style.

Considering the qualities my body has and taking action with those in mind, rather than wearing what is popular and trendy right now, is the basic rule for having a powerful style. Style is choosing what speaks to you out of many crowded messages. (Bade, 26)

### **5.2.7. Style as a Mirror for Identity**

Derin (28) states that “First a woman should get to know herself. She could like a lot of things but style is actually the ability to understand what fits to her idea of self and choosing accordingly. Style is reflecting our best selves.” Another common pattern which has emerged from respondents’ answers was the role identity concept played in terms of defining style (Isla, 2013, p. 226). Style has been defined as a mirror to true self and identity which separates one individual from another like a signature. As a sophisticated expression of one’s nature, it is kneaded with one’s character and personality. Style acts like a little window which gives a glimpse of these traits (Saucier, 2011).

“If one’s soul is classic and you dress her sporty, she would not feel comfortable since there is no reflection of her at all.” Says Gül. When I ask to her about her personal style, she defines it through her desired identity and her characteristics:

I do not care what people say much. I would wear ripped jeans now if I want to. I have a free spirit and it reflects to my sartorial choices. I wish to look fit and energetic in my clothes. I am a powerful woman who stands up on her feet and I wish to reflect this also through my look (Gül, 53)

Considering clothing is an imperative component of their identity building practice (McNeill, 2018), respondents indicate that identity has a definitive effect on women’s sartorial choices. They should recognize their identity which is formed by their tastes, idea of self, character and dress accordingly in order to be considered as having a style. Thus, style in fact is a guidance which gives an opportunity to explore one’s characteristic features without getting in touch at all (Solomon & Schopler, 1982).

“Somebody whose personality is more serious or somebody who likes to strike the attention may wear totally different things or on the contrary; if she is an artistic person, she could prefer very much different styles.” Suggests Bade (26) while Sanem (26) automatically thinks that a person who wears simple and black or white clothes all the time is probably someone who is not very open to new ideas or a person who wears colorful things mostly could have a very happy and cheerful character.

### **5.2.8. Style as an Experience**

Most of the respondents say feeling good inside of your clothes is essential for complete style. They associated this feeling with the notion of comfort. Feeling of comfort as the perception of a delightful and desired experience was naturally very personal and represented the satisfaction which arouses from the fit between expectation and offerings provided by the sartorial practices in the mediation of taste, personality and preferences. This feeling of satisfaction based on symbolic meaning and physical experience is also introduced by Adam and Galinsky (2012), as the “enclothed cognition”. For instance, Beril suggests that feeling good inside what we wear provides us the delight as referred as comfort:

If a woman is feeling good in an outfit, it means that she put her style out there. By wearing her favorite colors, patterns and fabrics; adding her favorite accessory, she reflects herself. If something is not reflecting me or my style, I do not find it comfortable. I would feel restless in it since I think they do not look good on me. (Beril, 26)

Işıl and Zeynep agrees with this idea and asserts that one should simply wear pieces which she feels comfortable and happy inside without thinking much about outside expectations, rules and interpretations, instead of wearing uncomfortable or fashionable things to satisfy cultural and social expectations. Nihal also advocates that “If one does not feel good inside her clothes, she becomes restless and reflects it. That is not actually a very good look. It is about carrying the look actually.”

### **5.2.9. Style as Compliance with Style Codes**

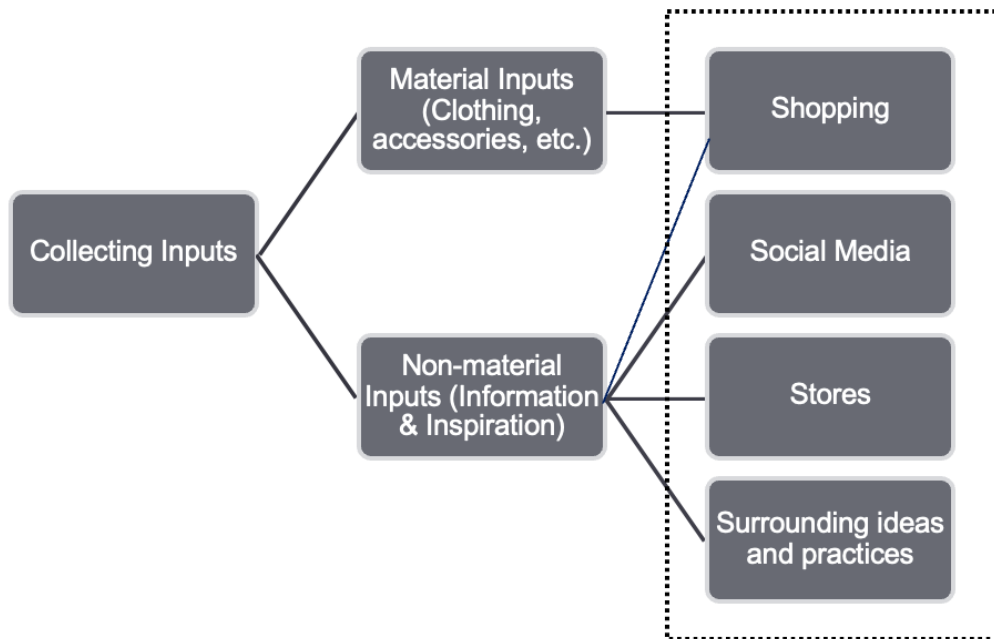
Respondents also defined style through style codes such as sporty, casual, chic and combinations of them. These codes are generally accepted categories which includes the combination of certain sartorial pieces. There is an established silhouette which comes to mind when referred to them. Women use these codes in order to define their style in a perceptible way (Entwistle, 2000). Their adopted style code could change according to their taste, preferences and the social requirements.

For instance, Sanem defines her daily style through the code sporty chic. She likes to wear things which are categorized as chic in general by the society with adding a little bit of casual touches. Nihal also categorizes her love for shalwar and embellished handmade scarfs through ethnic and bohemian style codes. Aslı adopts casual style code in order to illustrate her daily sartorial preferences but switches into business casual at work and chic for an event.

### **5.3. Creation of Style**

This section demonstrates the practices which participants (young professional women) engage in the process of creation of the style. The data reveals that participants first gather the tools which are information, inspiration and materials in order to use in the process. Then immediately, the creation of the style process begins (Tokatli, 2008). They make combinations, aestheticize, harmonize, engage in creativity, strategize and as outcomes they reflect personality and soul, practice authenticity and reflect their taste. There are also other outside factors which affect these stylistic processes. Age and culture are two important factors which play a huge role in the course.





**Figure 4.** Creation of style. Related steps and phases in the collection of inputs.

### **5.3.1. Collecting the Material Components – Shopping**

Participants collect material components required in the style creation process by shopping. Variety of decisions with different characteristics play role in the consumption rituals. In the shopping process, there are many factors and patterns emerged such as preferred channel, value proposition, shopping motivations and purchasing styles, shopping frequency and duration, budgeting and product selection criteria (Bye & McKinney, 2007). I am going to explain them in detail and give further examples from the data.

#### **5.3.1.1. Channel**

Through my analysis of participants' channel preferences, although online channels' popularity has been rising recently (Cho, Kang, & Cheon, 2006), physical stores are still first and mostly only choice for participant's sartorial

shopping ritual. While almost all of the respondents preferred physical stores, only few of them have said that they also use online. Thus, I prefer to group them as the ones who shop from physical store and the ones who prefer physical stores and online.

#### **5.3.1.1.1. Shopping from Traditional Brick and Mortar**

The source of consumption habits we observe today is the department stores which introduce people with modern consumption way (Merlo & Belfanti, 2019, p. 18). The majority of participants preferred shopping directly from the stores for a few reasons. Most frequent of them was the ability to try the piece and see how it suits before the purchase made and decide accordingly. Second one was the wish to touch and feel the fabric which sartorial piece made of. Few participants said that shopping directly from the store is a fun leisure time activity. Lastly it was seen as a more reliable channel in case of facing a problem, since there is a direct human contact. For instance, Zeynep highlights why trying ahead is so important for her as follows:

I should see how a piece looks on me. Details are important for me. I have a bigger cleavage actually and the forms and sizes changes from model to sometimes even brand. I wear small in x brand but maybe forms and models are larger in brand y. So, I find it easier to just try it on... (Zeynep, 27)

Likewise, Ece explains her need to feel the fabric as follows:

I like to shop from the physical stores. I would like to touch and feel its material, what it is made of. I do buy other things online but I do not think I could buy clothing or shoes; I have never done that. If I do not have time, I prefer to go when I have time. (Ece, 38)

#### **5.3.1.1.2. Shopping Online as an Option**

Shopping online in terms of setting and practice is much more different than traditional store experience (Liu, He, Gao, & Xie, 2008). Only few of the

respondents indicate that, most of the times they prefer to shop online to store because of its certain advantages, although they continue to visit stores from time to time. Participants qualify online shopping as easy, timesaving, practical, comfortable as well as risky. Positive aspects could be listed as saving a lot of time and energy, chance to compare in terms of both product and price, access to products anytime and anywhere and knowing what to expect through reviewing comments. Risk on the other hand is not getting what you want in terms of quality, color, size, etc.

Sıla says that she uses online channels as much as she visits stores because it is just simply there offering a lot of time and energy saved:

I do go to the store but I prefer online shopping most of the time. Because it is easier you know... I have the chance to check what other people who bought it before said, I can compare products and prices among different brands and I am in the comfort of my home doing all that. (Sıla, 26)

She adds that online provides her all the tools which she might need in the process.

My last shopping was online. I bought a pair of boots, a tweed jacket with a matching skirt and a laced satin top. They have been waiting in my cart for a long time. I read the comments in order to see if the product has the same quality as in the picture and thinking in my head how I could wear them. (Sıla, 26)

Ada on the other hand, says that it is all about what she is going to buy. She prefers to buy certain pieces, which she wants to try first, from physical stores while buying others online because it is practical.

Customer's experience is a highly influential factor on the online shopping practice (Pappas, Pateli, Giannakos, & Chrissikopoulos, 2014). Conversely, Zeynep who is pretty risk averse, selective and detail-oriented, finds online shopping very risky considering her prior experiences:

Although it is practical for many people, it is not for me sadly. I did not have any good experience. Whenever I shop online, it has been a disappointment for me. Products never came as they have looked in the picture, and they did not look good on me either. It is hard to find your exact size. It is exhausting and takes a lot of effort. (Zeynep, 27)

### **5.3.1.2. Choosing Materials According to the Value Proposition**

Through my research, I have seen that value proposed is a variable which women consider while shopping. Being proportionately abiding, there may be certain forces which bear one or more shopping style elements, affecting shoppers' decision making. This decision-making style represents a sophisticated perspective in terms of purchasing and consuming practices. (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Almost all of the respondents said that they prefer fast fashion and mainstream brands while a few of them following a different path.

#### **5.3.1.2.1. Fast Fashion**

After industrialization and globalization, fashion evolved into a bigger and faster industry with increased actors, a more fractured market structure, and products which do not allow settling and forming of classes through their ever-increased pace of moves in and out from the market (Rocamora, 2002). Defined by Simmel (1903) fashion is actually a never-ending pursuit of novelty (Jayne & Ferencuhova, 2015). Majority of the participants indicated that they prefer to shop from fast fashion brands. They are known and preferred by a lot of people because they are accessible, reliable, fashionable and offers a variety of choices at affordable prices. Brands like Zara, Mango and H&M are the most preferred ones (Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang, & Chan, 2012).

There are a lot choices fast fashion offers you know... It is easy, there is a brand but prices are reasonable, price range is not much high. When you like a model, you could find the similar ones in different brands. You could find assistance when you face a problem, you could easily return it. Through labels you could find the information about material which the product made of or where it is produced. says Zeynep (27).

Also shopping from these brands Bade, finds it easy. She says that really good models, patterns and fashionable items are available and achievable in these stores and there are a variety of models to choose from and combine with each other. Ada also prefers mainstream brands and she very much likes Zara since it makes fashionable and affordable pieces (Joy et al., 2012).

#### **5.3.1.2.2. Deciding According to the Expectations**

Few respondents decide what to buy by evaluating their expectations from the product. These expectations are listed as life-span, purpose, quality, importance, brand image and such... Each product is classified using these variables then the structured platform which offers the most satisfactory composition is preferred (Birtwsitle, 1998; Frank & Enkawa, 2009). For instance, expectations from a sock and a coat differ notably thus the most satisfactory value proposition is preferred. For instance, Zeynep says:

What I am buying is important. I would buy socks and t-shirts from a flea market but I would not buy shoes or cosmetic products from such place. I prefer to buy things from its main store. For instance, if I buy a leather jacket, I would go to Derimod. It is about expected quality and life span. (Zeynep, 27)

#### **5.3.1.2.3. Ethically Supported Products**

One of the respondents Derin prefers ethically supported products. By ethically supported, she means sustainably and locally produced premium pieces or already used second hand and vintage pieces. Sustainable fashion means, to slow down, producing with the concern of better value and quality while supporting local production, expansion of products' life span and causing no harm to people or environment in the progress. Thus, overall aiming for the better consumption habits (Gurova & Morozova, 2018). In terms of sustainability, she has emphasized values such as lowering carbon print and protecting natural

resources. Another concern she has raised was supporting Turkish brands by buying from local producers (Holt, 2002).

Lately, I have been shopping from local stores especially because local products are more sustainable and produced in more ethical conditions such as low carbon foot print. And I also believe that Turkish designers are very good and must be supported. It is a value which must be seen and I really love and appreciate what these brands do. (Derin, 28)

She also suggests a brand called Lokal Hareket which supports locally and sustainably made products while indicating that buying this kind of products is more satisfactory than buying countless mass-produced items. Likewise, Nihal also appreciates the effort and elaboration given to local, hand-made authentic pieces she discovers during her local trips.

As a consequence of her more sustainable style concerns, Derin also says she lately inclined towards vintage and second-hand products. Second hand clothing, which blends identity building method with environmental concerns such as recycling and controlling waste, allow fashion to exist in a sustainable way (Isla, 2013, p. 226). She wears her grandmother's coat and shops from second hand stores consciously:

Lately, I have discovered Dolap. There are really good pieces if you shop in a conscious manner. The advantage here is buying something not newly produced in the end. There is a name in foreign countries about this which I adore: pre-loved. I think it is very sweet and sincere. It means it is loved by someone else before you and it is actually your turn to love it. (Derin, 28)

#### **5.3.1.2.4. Premium and Luxury Brands**

Luxury shoppers are also a part of the mass market and currently through different label layers, luxury brands penetrate mass market, too (Rocamora, 2002). Through the research both positive and negative perspectives are attributed to premium and luxury brands. Positive aspects suggested that products have quality, they offer an attractive experience towards atmosphere,

decoration and hospitality and it is a representation of value given to self. Conversely, negative interpretations indicated that offered quality and values do not justify the price asked. Environment, upbringing and life philosophy also was seen as the influential factors here (Bourdieu, 1984). For instance, Ece (38) associates premium brands with valuing self and having a good experience by stating that “Buying a premium brand or a quality piece actually shows the value one gives to herself. I am going to carry it around on me all day. Of course, it should be valuable. Sadly, there are too many people who does not prioritize this.”

Gül (53) explained why she does not favor premium brands as following:

High class brands' clothes are not much different in terms of quality. They only sell their names. It does not seem reasonable to me to pay 1000 liras to 10 liras worth piece. Well, it may attract a person with its ambiance, decoration and hospitality but they all actually selling tactics. In the end what you buy is just a t-shirt. Let's say the price is 50 liras and not 20 considering the high-quality material and labor. But 5.000 liras? It does not make sense to me.” she adds emphasizing she does not find price policy rational.

“I have never shopped from high-end brands and did not really wish to. Giving tons of money for a dress is just does not make sense to me in a world where still people die from hunger. It is about the philosophy of my life I believe.” acknowledges Bade (26) emphasizing her upbringing in a middle-class family which does not show this kind of habit (Ramya & Ali, 2016).

#### **5.3.1.2.5. Made to Measure and Small Boutiques**

“Custom dressmaking can exist only by putting out a product superior to the ready-made wear.” (Allinson, 1916). Today, fashion is more than ever accessible and affordable with far too much options to choose from thus it is easy for a typical consumer to shop for every kind of item such as both expensive and cheap together with the stimulation which comes from actors of the industry (Tokatli, 2008). For majority of the participants there are also options such as

made to measure and small boutiques. They associated made to measure pieces with special occasions since it aims for perfect and unique which require time and effort thus expensive. There is also a risk emerging from situations such as time restrictions and not always getting the results you expect. Considering all, ready to wear alternatives are perceived more attractive since they are available, offer plenty of options and affordable.

“Even on special occasions I would second guess it because it is too risky you know... You do not know if the seamstress understood what is in your head, and if did understand she still may not be able to sew it. Let’s say the dress is perfect, what if it would not look good on you?” argues Zeynep (27) while Ece (38) says she has tried it a few times but it ended up as a disappointment thus she no more prefers made to measure pieces. Especially when there are too many brands which their size fits perfectly to her.

Yasemin on the other hand prefers to sew her clothes herself or shops from little boutiques since she cannot find a fit between her taste and ready to wear pieces. Being different and her authentic self is very important for her.

I have started to sew my clothes because I have realized that I cannot find what I am looking for most of the time. Skirt lengths for example, they were either too short or too long for me or I was not able to find the specific models I have been searching. So, I have learnt to do it myself. (Yasemin, 32)

### **5.3.1.3. Shopping Motivations and Purchasing Styles**

Based on Campbell’s (1987) ideas, Zalewska (2017) indicates that needs and desires are the two decisive factors in the consumption process. While needs are the essential stimulants for consumption in lower classes with little to no economic power, they are replaced by desire in the higher society. Participants go shopping with few motivations. They could be listed as realizing and



satisfying a sartorial need, just to feel happy and enjoy leisure time (Buttle, 1992), and finally to see what is new out there (Dholakia, 1999).

During shopping, five forms of purchasing habits are observed. First of them is buying one necessary thing pre-determined earlier. Second is buying needs collectively at once. Third is seeing and buying detached from need. Fourth one is collecting most preferred pieces or styles non-routine beforehand. Finally, the last one is buying at the beginning or end of the season. Need is the weakest motivation since very few respondents indicated it as a priority. With her sustainability concerns, Derin (28) says she first considers her needs before going to shopping (Bye & McKinney, 2007) by stating “For the last year, I have been shopping only towards my needs. I look at my wardrobe and buy whatever is missing, instead of going to shopping casually and buy whatever I like.”

On the contrary, since shopping is a source of self-care and happiness for Ece, she continues to do shopping regardless of need. “I am totally in the mood of like it-buy it. I guess I am an unconscious consumer. I have a lot of clothes which could meet my needs for a long time but it is not an obstacle for me to add some more.” Ece (38) says. Moreover, Ada finds going shopping and walking around stores as a kind of a pleasant and fun leisure time activity and even though she does not go to the store every time; she searches online to see what’s new and maybe add one of them to her wardrobe. Bade (26) sees shopping as a self-care activity and enjoys her time to feel better spiritually (Bloch, Ridgway, & Dawson, 1994; Prus & Dawson, 1991; Stobart, 1998). She states that “I go shopping when I want to do something for myself. It is like a little treat... I enjoy my time even if I come back home empty handed. It almost never happens by the way (laughing).”

Aslı (25) on the other hand says that she has no observable fixed or periodical habit of going shopping:

I usually browse online sites and collect good pieces which I like, even though I don't need them for the season. Because when I need something, I probably may not be able to find that thing right in that certain moment. For example, there are times such as I buy a bikini in winter.

Likewise, confesses that she collects white shirts wherever she goes since she finds them very basic and practical in her combinations. Lastly, Sanem (26) goes shopping at the end of the season in order to catch the year-end sales (Entwistle, 2000) indicating that her latest shopping was from Trendyol's Black Friday sales:

I would never go shopping at the beginning of the season since it is the most expensive time of the year. For instance, I would never prefer September or October in order to buy a cozy sweater. I wait and buy at the end of November or December. Same thing is valid for the summer pieces. (Sanem, 26)

#### **5.3.1.4. Frequency and Duration**

Throughout the study, certain patterns in terms of frequency and the duration of shopping have been observed. In terms of frequency, two types of shopping styles emerged. These are classified as routine and non-routine shopping behaviors. Routine shopping behavior means shopping regularly in certain time intervals such as once a week, once a month, every season beginning or ending. Non-routine behavior means there are no fixed time intervals and participant shops whenever she feels the urge to.

For instance, Nihal goes to shopping when she realizes a need or looks around the stores when she meets with her friends occasionally. However, Leyla for instance goes to shopping at the beginning of every season in order to complete her wardrobe for the coming season.

In terms of time allocated to shopping, two types of habits have emerged. One type of habit shows that few participants could allocate three hours or more, even a day to shopping while the other type allocates less than 3 hours and cannot tolerate more. I see that the ones who allocate more time actually sees shopping

more than it is, an enjoyable leisure time activity, a tool for building identity and self-care time while others see it as it is, acting more decisive and emphasizing the value of their time (Cowart & Goldsmith, 2007). For instance, Ada (25) sees going shopping as kind of a prize for her hard work at job or daily life. She indicates “I like my time spent shopping. It is a pleasing activity for me. I could easily spend 4-5 hours at the mall and look online daily even if I do not buy anything. I see this time as a prize actually for my hard work.”

On the other hand, Aslı is quick and has certain places in mind thus she prefers to spend her leisure time sitting and having a coffee instead:

I could spend about 2 hours maximum wandering around stores and not much than that. I have certain places for certain products so I do not look around much. I buy pants from Zara as said for instance. Why would I be tired looking all the stores for just a jean? I rather sit on a coffee shop and have a conversation with a friend you know. (Aslı, 25)

Differently, Derin spends a lot of time and effort because it is actually very hard to find what she wants with the sustainable options being so limited:

Sadly, I spend a lot of time thinking about buying from the right and wishing to buy the best. I have looked for a trench coat for a whole month. I search a lot and evaluate my options. Quitting fast fashion is giving me hard time because my options are really limited and finding all the locals and searching for the best is really time-consuming. But it is worth it. (Derin, 28)

### **5.3.1.5. Budgeting**

“I do like shopping. I could buy the whole store if you let me; I feel that potential in me. But I stop myself.” Gül (53) says laughing. Budget has long been an issue in sartorial practices (Parsons, 2002). Although my sample is determined as upper middle class professional women who have their own budgets, these budgets also have certain limits. Considering this, individuals try to get the most benefit out of their limited budget (Parsons, 2002). It is not always lowest price but sometimes would be the highest pleasure and happiness.

Considering their budget allocation choices, there are two types of habits emerged. The ones who spent less than 10% of their budget and the ones who spend more than 10% of their budget to sartorial pieces. The ones who spend less than %10, indicate that clothing is not a priority in their life or there is a psychological limit holding back. The ones who spare more than 10% of their budget are generally the ones who also enjoy shopping as an activity. The ones who spend more than 20% shows signs of passion and collective shopping. For instance, Aslı spends only 8% of her budget on sartorial items and says that she feels bad if she spends more than 250 liras or buys too much at once.

I do not spend much... 8% maybe? I have an odd thing, though. I try not to exceed the limit of 250 or 300 liras. Because whenever I do, I feel guilty as if I have spent too much. It is not a problem if I spend 100 liras 4 times but spending all at once makes me feel guilty, interestingly. (Aslı, 25)

As in the case of shopping and sartorial practices becoming a passion, Ada says she could spend up to 30% of her budget maybe more sometimes. Besides, Gül cannot give a percentage since it is really volatile.

### **5.3.1.6. Product Selection Criteria**

While collecting materials for the sartorial processes, participants benefit from certain criteria (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). These could be listed as quality, combinability, what is the material the piece made of, price, fit between their taste and design, piece being up-to-date and finally functionality versus aesthetics. I am going to explain them in detail in the following phase.

#### **5.3.1.6.1. Quality**

Quality is an important characteristic for the purchase decision of a style-oriented person (Armstrong et al., 2018). While adding a sartorial piece to their style, majority of the respondents indicated that quality is important. Quality is

expressed through attributes such as long lasting, healthy, useful and comfortable. With quality, a good experience and a beautiful appearance (Merlo & Belfanti, 2019, p. 3) dimensions of style are aimed. Buying from certain brands as well seen as a guaranteed quality. However, for some, it was sought only in certain products. This product is a bag for one for its durability and a sock for one for the health-related concerns. Besides, respondents indicated that quality is sensed with a touch or look and elevates the whole look. Lastly, it was seen as independent from high-prices. For instance, Aslı tries to eliminate her quality concerns and maintain a standard by shopping from certain stores of her choice. “If I am paying for something, it is important for me to be able to use it for a long time and in order to keep this quality standards, I shop from certain brands and do not look for difference.” Aslı (25) indicates.

Beril relates quality with the life span of the product and emphasizes its importance for her in a clear manner:

For me quality means long life span and durability. I should be able to use for a long time if I am buying something. Let’s say I am going to buy a jean for example. I should be able to wear it for years without it being worn out quickly. Also considering my comfort and health, I especially prefer quality shoes. (Beril, 26)

Compared to all, Işıl says quality does not have much definitive effect in her purchasing decisions, even though it is important. As her reasoning, her fashion-focused perspective comes forward while she explains how she does not expect a piece to be durable since fashion changes really quickly.

#### **5.3.1.6.2. Combinability**

Fashion coordination means coupling and blending a variety of sartorial items like a top and a skirt as one with the aim of building a coherent look (Wong, Zeng, Au, Mok, & Leung, 2009). Style is a notion which is closely related with the concept of combination namely mix and match (Cillo & Verona, 2008).

According to the sample, combinability of a piece has emerged as another important concern of participants while making a sartorial decision. In order to provide harmony dimension of style, a consistency and communication between pieces is aimed. Limited options caused by satisfactory but limited budget of the sample also facilitates the search for harmony and combinability. The act of visualizing the wardrobe for possible matches before the purchase has also observed here.

Based on Simmel's thoughts Kuusik (2017), suggests that through combination of pieces appropriately, individual style is given meaning. From this perspective, style emerges as original by the way combination made. Bade emphasizes the importance of combinability and indicate that she realizes the same line, attitude and spirit in every piece she buys:

When I have the intention of purchasing a sartorial item, I also evaluate it in terms of its overall fit to my wardrobe, what I could combine it with. Maybe that is why I buy classical, simple and minimal items and main colors, in general. I stand still in the same circle for them to conform to each other. (Bade, 26)

She adds that she tries to prefer easy to combine and basic ones for expensive and main pieces such as coats and boots since she owns just a few of them.

#### **5.3.1.6.3. Material**

Style is blending the shape, structure, material and distinctive details which exist in the same level (Welters & Lillethun, 2007). In this context, style embodies much more than a notion or an adorning way and it turns into a facilitating and guiding source which reflects meaning hidden in the sophisticated form of fabric (Chan, 2020). According to Zanette and Brito (2019), fashion as a mindset, consists of know-how and related materials which complete each other in order to provide a sense of identity, comfort and belonging.

While adding a piece to their style, participants especially check what the product is made of. They want ingredients to be healthy, comfortable, durable and chic. This perception changes from product to product for most of them. Products closer to skin such as underwear and bra are expected to have healthier and more comfortable ingredients such as cotton while products which does not have direct contact to skin such as outerwear, bag and shoes are expected to be made of longer lasting materials. For instance, Nihal introduces her health concerns as number one priority:

Fabric is critically important for me. I would never wear synthetic or such. Because it is unhealthy since they contain a lot of additives therefore, I do not want such products to touch my skin. Besides, I do not think they are comfortable anyways. I prefer cotton or similar fabrics. (Nihal, 55)

Talking about sustainability, Derin makes clear that she prioritizes it thus she also looks for fabrics which are durable, consciously and ethically produced and healthy. “Fabric is very important for me. For instance, a jean’s fabric should be denim and not some other stretchy poor fabric. I prefer authentic denim.” Derin (28) states. More than the feeling of the fabric, Ece adds that she hates linen and does not own even one thing made of it because she finds it becoming wrinkled so quickly irritating and not chic at all. She loves chiffon and has a lot of chiffon pieces in her wardrobe.

#### **5.3.1.6.4. Price**

“I am not rich enough to buy cheap products” says Selin, introducing a famous local saying. Majority of the respondents prioritized price in the process however price has actually been seen as a part of and evaluated according to the value offered by the market. This value includes the benefit, life span, quality and other attributes the product presents and it is evaluated within the budget and taste limits of the potential buyer who is willing to pay extra for the desired value offer (Kapstein, 2006; Ding, Ross, & Rao, 2010). Especially quality has

been decisive in the evaluation of price points (Ramya & Ali, 2016, p. 78). Low prices are associated with low quality (Ding et al., 2010) while very high prices seen as the function of brand value, not quality.

According to this, participants exhibit 4 purchasing behaviors considering their budgets, values offered and tastes. First is, participant likes the item but does not buy it since she does not see a fit between the value product offers and the price asked. Secondly, participant buys the item even if it exceeds her limits since she likes it so much. Third is participant waits for the sale. Fourth, participant looks for similar items for a better price. For instance, Yasemin says that price was an important factor for her latest purchase and followed the product's price for over a year:

Lately, I bought a coat which is very plain and similar to my old one. I have been searching for a while and then when I finally found one, I have seen that it was pretty expensive. I did not want to give that much and followed its price for a while. I really liked the coat by the way, it was exactly what I was imagined. Finally, after a year, its price went down and I bought it. (Yasemin, 32)

Ada says the first thing she considers while giving the purchase decision is price. Unless it is something she falls in love with, she tries not to exceed her limits and try to stay within budget as much as possible. That is why when she looks for something or sees something which she likes, she says she always looks for if other stores have the similar for a better price. Aslı on the other hand also considers price very important and a very decisive in her purchasing act. She easily says that if it is beyond her price limits and expensive in her perception, she would never buy it, even though she liked it very much.

#### **5.3.1.6.5. Up-to-date Pieces**

Turkey is one of the countries which adopt the consumption method as an indicator of modernity (Üstüner & Holt, 2009). While adding a piece to their style, participants also consider the piece being up-to-date (Parsons, 2002). In



order to provide this, they try to prefer fashionable, timeless and iconic pieces which are not irrelevant, outdated and disconnected from today. Extreme edges such as excessively fashion conscious and marginal products or very old vintage pieces which exceeds limits of being timeless and iconic have been avoided by all participants.

Zeynep says she tries to buy timeless and long-lasting things but at the same time, she does not want those pieces to be totally irrelevant from today's fashion. Sila, Aslı and Ada also expresses the same concerns of being disconnected from today's trends and tastes causing them to look like outdated.

"I find pieces which are timeless and fashionable at the same time such as cowboy boots and leather jackets. These kinds of pieces actually come to my mind when we talk about fashion. I also prefer such pieces." says Beril (26) by adding that she is very much affected from the 90s fashion while indicating her love for the period's iconic pieces such as mom jeans, military boots, and leather jackets. She adds that she will continue to wear those pieces because they are iconic pieces even though not trendy.

Sila says she follows fashion and definitely affected by the trends but picks out the pieces which are wearable, not the ones which are too marginal and edgy such as ripped jeans and weird knitted Zara sweaters which has only sleeves. Aslı also says she would not wear crazy outfits, so creates herself a balance.

#### **5.3.1.6.6. Design and Taste**

Design of the product is one of the major decisive dimensions while adding a piece to style. Looking from the materialistic perspective, taste as represented by desires, is embodied in assets (McCracken, 1990). Belk et al. (2003) acknowledges that taste being essential in initiating desire for consumer. According to my sample, design includes the concepts such as model, cut, color

and pattern. These concepts are evaluated collectively within the taste limits and expectations of the purchasers and decided accordingly. An innovative model, a different color, favorite color or pattern are few of the things searched in products.

Actually, it is all about the design for me. If there is a different piece which I like and in line with my taste, I just try it on. If it fits and looks like what I have imagined in my mind, I simply buy it. Actually, my criterion is all about difference and the piece speaking to my taste. (Işıl, 26)

A model speaking to her taste is important for Ada as she always looks for new and different models. She especially likes dresses which are narrow towards the waist and blouses which have a bow on the neck. Selin likes classy pieces, especially leopard print. Aslı (25) says her personal taste is the second most important thing and even though a piece is very popular and fashionable, she would not wear it if it does not appeal to her taste. “For example, biker tights are really fashionable right now. I really do not like them at all. It would be very constrained for me to wear them.”

#### **5.3.1.6.7. Functionality versus Aesthetics**

There are two dimensions to a product. One is its aesthetic aspect and the other is its functional aspect. Dressing choices we made indicates much about the social and personal aspects of ourselves (Saucier, 2011). While fulfilling functional needs and building an image, women also fulfill their emotional and aesthetic needs (Bye & McKinney, 2007). Barthes (1983) suggest that, functionality alone cannot be the sole reason of fashion consumption since fashionable pieces contain much more messages about the brand and social world rising above its functional value.

Through the research, majority of the respondents have prioritized functional benefits to the design itself. They buy sartorial pieces with the expectation of a

functional benefit first while aesthetic and visual pleasures are secondary. These functional benefits are subjective and changes from one to another according to the level of expectations. They range from comfort, practicality and protection. For Bade, comfort is very important, especially her shoes must be comfortable at all cost:

My shoes have to be comfortable, no matter what. I remember I have tried countless shoes in order to find the perfect shoes for my graduation ball. I wanted them to be chic of course but would not care if they were not actually because I was going to be on my feet all night long, comfort was priority. (Bade, 26)

Gül adds that she liked a winter dress which has a thick and wooly fabric very much but it did not have sleeves thus she did not buy it even though she loved it, since was not a useful piece. Aslı in the same manner says that she loves small bags but find them unpractical since none of her stuff fits into them.

### **5.3.2. Collecting Non-Material Components – Information and Inspiration**

Although well dressing has been seen as a natural quality of standard women, most of them actually have to learn how to dress properly and beautifully (Delhaye, 2006). Participants collect informative components such as inspiration and techniques required in the style creation process through few sources. In this process, they benefit from stores, surrounding people's ideas and practices and finally social media. I am going to explain them in detail and give further examples from the data.

#### **5.3.2.1. Stores**

For participants, one of the major inspiration sources is stores. The first department store was opened in Paris in 19<sup>th</sup> century then spread to Europe and America. This affected the way people dress and their style (Merlo & Belfanti, 2019). "The department stores were the paradise of any devoted follower of

fashion” (Merlo & Belfanti, 2019, p. 7). Decorated windows every season and regularly renewed merchandise give ideas to consumers about what is new this season and what goes with what. Setting of the store, collections, visuals and combined looks on the mannequins are the specific inspiration points in stores.

For instance, Ada (25) finds regular trips to certain stores very inspiring since these brands renew their collections weekly or bi-weekly (Tokatli, 2008) thus she stays up to date about what’s new while following certain trends and fashions on the market. “I enjoy wandering around the shops. It is kind of a fun leisure time activity for me and I get to see what is new out there since brands such as Zara and Bershka bring new merchandise regularly like weekly or once in every two weeks.” She says. Gül (53) also gets new ideas generally from her time-to-time trips to shops and shares that “I do not have a specific medium which I follow. I usually visit stores to see what’s new and look at the windows then purchase the things which I like, find comfortable and looks nice to me.”

### **5.3.2.2. Surrounding People’s Ideas and Examples**

Some of the respondents get ideas and inspiration from family members, friends and sometimes even strangers (Willis et al., 1990, p. 85). They might ask about subjects such as what to wear where, what to match with what, whether to buy a piece or not, to get approval for their combination or whether a piece suits them or not to their close circle (Ramya & Ali, 2016). Or else, they could simply get inspiration from an already put together look. Two patterns emerge here: seeking approval or courage and finding new ways. For instance, Ada asks for opinions of her sister and friends especially about how and where to wear certain things:

I actually do not ask opinions whether something fits to me or not because I know what suits me and what not. But in the case of matching things and whether a piece suitable for certain occasions. I ask my sister and friends about those in general in order to get an idea. (Ada, 25)

Aslı says the ideas of certain people around her such as her aunt, siblings and friends are really important and has an impact in her decisions. She also shares me the story of how she met a friend recently and found her outfit very inspiring:

The other day, I have met with a friend. She wore a dark green leather pleated skirt and matched it with a simple white t-shirt and a knitted sweater. She had a matching beige bag and white sneakers on. I really liked her outfit and it gave me ideas about how to combine things in my own closet. (Aslı, 25)

Sıla similarly says that a stranger casually walking in the street could inspire her and even sometimes when she likes a certain piece worn by a random woman she wonders where she bought that piece. On the other hand, Gül remembers she used to get ideas from her husband sometimes in past but she does not really prefer now since she is a very decisive person who knows her priorities and body very well, as she aged.

I used to ask my husband what he thinks and took the ones which I liked. I actually do not like asking for ideas to someone. I should be in a really difficult situation but have never been since I am a very decisive person. If I have gone shopping with a friend, I ask her idea actually not to get her idea but to be nice and kind actually. I decide already when I try it on. If I liked and felt comfortable in it, it is done for me. (Gül, 53)

### **5.3.2.3. Social Media**

Social media is one of the most frequently used sources of inspiration by younger participants. They prefer social media in order to stay updated about latest trends and get inspiration about subjects such as how to combine a piece or what to wear where (Tse & Tsang, 2018). The most preferred platforms are Instagram and Pinterest. Instagram enables cultural, aesthetic and digital conversations through various mutual effects, mediation and interpretation among different actors such as brands and end users (Schöps et al., 2019) while Strugatz (2013) indicates that people pin more than 2 million fashion-related “pins” each day on Pinterest. In these online channels, participants follow

celebrity styles (Rafferty, 2011), latest street style, latest trends, bloggers and the posts of their favorite brands. Printed magazines were no longer in use.

Aslı for instance, prefers both Instagram and Pinterest. She especially follows bloggers in order to get ideas how to mix and match certain things and her favorite brands to benefit from their regular posts and live stories.

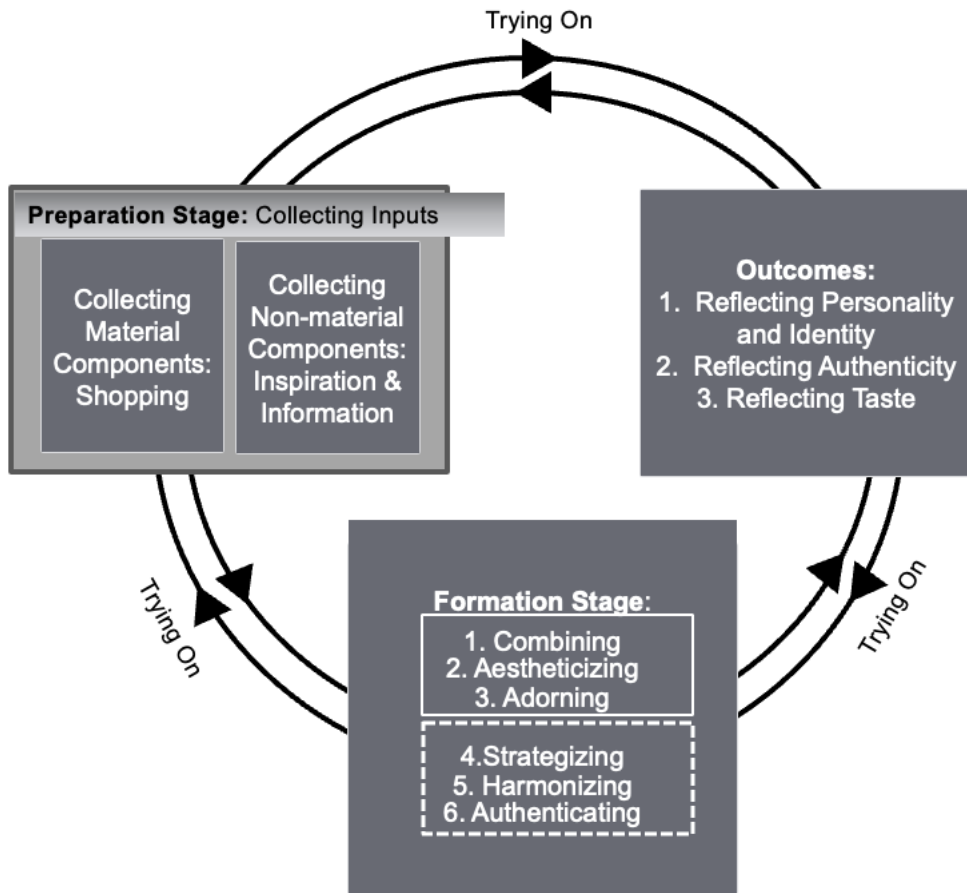
I use Pinterest a lot in order to get ideas about how to combine almost everything. I bought fishnet stockings once and did not have any ideas about how I was going to wear it. Then I have searched it on Pinterest and had many ideas such as... People have combined it with mini jean skirts and wore it with Superstars. Suddenly I had the entire look come together in my mind. (Aslı, 25)

Considering her passion for a more sustainable style, Derin actually follows and adopts the Scandinavian style which is mostly founded on the pillars of minimalism and sustainability. She follows Scandinavian bloggers on Instagram and says that they inspired her a lot in the discovery of her sustainability conscious side.

Do you know Jenny Mustard? She shares really inspiring things considering sartorial practices and sustainable ways of dressing up. And there is also an account called 'shotfromthestreet'. She also wears minimal things and showed me how one could look stylish wearing the same things. I love these blogs and they inspire me a lot. (Derin, 28)

Bade says she uses social media, especially Instagram in order to get inspiration and stay updated about the latest trends but she does not find blogs or bloggers inspirational actually since they do not seem sincere or realistic. Zeynep in the same manner agrees with this idea. Latest popularity of Instagram and rise of blogging (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2012) as a popular occupation resulted in more advertisements and collaborations and maybe this could be the reasoning behind the decreased credit given to them.

## 5.4. Formation of Style



**Figure 5.** Formation process of style as a dynamic and flowing map.

As a sophisticated engagement, practice of style is built on three main stages. In the first stage, material and non-material sources are collected. In the second stage, style is formed by using these resources with the mediation of certain methods and practices. As a consequence, certain outcomes are achieved. As shown in Figure 1, individuals may move between these stages in order to revise, adjust and recollect. From the preparation stage to outcomes, Figure 1 illustrates the practice of style in the cultural context which Turkish women who aged between 25-55 belongs to, meaning that all these processes are affected by age and culture factors.

Tokatli (2008), argues that in essence, everybody more or less buys the same things but combine it with different items such as heels, boots or sneakers and creativity occurs here, which is interesting. After the required components are collected, participants engage in certain practices using the collected parts, in order to create their style. These practices could be listed as making combinations, aestheticizing, harmonizing, creativity and strategizing.

#### **5.4.1. Strategizing**

Since the dressing rituals covers a big part of our lives, dressing up cannot be seen as a simple unifying act. It is a rather sophisticated process than just being part of a fashion show which complies with the generally accepted norms of the society (Volonte, 2019). In the uniformly ordered world of meanings, one may directly think fashion as equivalent to dressing however we may be able to see its sophisticated touches in the ways where individuals, act, live and think (Rafferty, 2011).

##### **5.4.1.1. Preparation**

Based on Foucault (1979) and Reckwitz (2002, p. 249), practice regarding materiality is defined as a recurrent attitude which includes several interdependent factors while materials and their utilization are essential components (Klepp & Bjerck, 2014). Rituals, symbols and perspectives, which are the composing elements of culture, act as “a tool kit” which a person can choose and use whenever it is needed (Parmentier & Fischer, 2011). Process of preparation is one of the processes participants engage and changes according to situationality. On an ordinary day, some participants prepare beforehand and allocate more time for the process. They may either pick out the pieces a day before or wake up approximately 1 hour earlier to get ready. Others get ready in a short time; they decide and wear in the morning quickly in 15 minutes. “In college, my friends have always been saying that I look very chic. Because if the



class is early, I would have really put some effort even though it was an early hour.” Sanem (26) says.

On special days, process of preparation takes more time and effort for participants. According to the importance of the situation, preparations may begin even months before. Preparation time and effort increases as the importance of the situation does. Some participants try the outfit before in order to see the whole combination. For instance, "Even though I put together the whole look in my head, I sure also try it on because I need to see it if it is like how, I have imagined it." Says Gül.

Besides, all respondents keep certain pieces ready for certain occasions such as simple black tights and White t-shirt for ordinary days and classic black pants with a chic blouse. For instance, Ece loves stilettos and adds that she has never owned flamboyant shoes except the gold and silver ones which she bought for extreme situations. Additionally, Gül keeps special pieces for every occasion: “I have my black pants, chic blouses and shirts ready for special events such as engagement party of a friend’s child. A jacket or a shirt is a must for a meeting at work.”

As jean, a white or black simple t-shirt is also considered a functional piece since it goes with almost every outfit. Gül says she buys whenever she sees a white t-shirt she likes. “I cannot help myself. Wherever I go, I collect basic white t-shirts. I could wear it with anything. I love a basic white t-shirt. Jeans, black pants and shirts are as well functional pieces for me.” She says.

## **5.4.1.2. Using Situationality**

### **5.4.1.2.1. Ordinary Circumstances**

People behave in a certain way in order to adapt to the surrounding circumstances (McNeill, 2018). In ordinary days which includes activities which are repetitive and a part of our daily lives, participants prioritize comfort. In these days, there are no strict dress codes, tastes are expressed freely and less time and effort spent for dressing up. Participants prefer more casual, sporty, comfortable and cozy pieces. Based on McKinsey and Company (2016), the development pace of the industry in growing countries is 3% while it is anticipated to reach to 5 percent by 2025. Additionally, casual clothing market in growing nations represents 37% of total today, which is relied upon to ascend to more than 50% in 2025 (Chowdhury & Akter, 2018). Through these casual pieces, functionality gets ahead of aesthetics. There are levels to this ordinary day practices according to the type of the situation which one prepares to engage to. These situations could be a Sunday running, a family outing, coffee date with friends and a casual work day. They may prefer a tight and a sweatshirt for Sunday sport and a Jean and a nice sweater for a coffee date while opting for comfortable black trousers on a workday. Degree of comfort decreases as the casualty decreases. For example, Aslı says she wears casual and chick jeans and blouses for a union with friends in the evening but she has a whole Sunday morning outfit in her mind which is very sportive:

For me tights and sweatshirts together are just perfect Sunday morning outfits. On Sundays, sweatshirt is a must. I would never wear a jean or an uncomfortable shoe. You are going to wear your most comfortable clothes, and going to read your book with a coffee on the side. That is what a Sunday is. (Aslı, 25)

Selin also prefer sporty looks such as jeans for a casual day although she likes glam things very much. She sometimes pairs a jean pants with a jean shirt. Adds a puffy vest sometimes. She shows me a few pictures where she went to a coffee

date with her family wearing a jean combination. Likewise, Bade always prefer jeans as her favorite piece and never wear sweatpants or trousers even on workdays.

#### **5.4.1.2.2. Special Circumstances**

In special days, participants go out of ordinary and prefers the pieces and combinations which they do not in their daily lives. These types of clothes called ceremonial or occasional wear which are worn on events such as wedding, award ceremony or prom (Tijana, Tomaž, & Čuden, 2014). Participants here, again prioritize their comfort while try to choose suitable pieces for the occasion. There may be flamboyant gowns, showy fabrics and embellishments, polished make-up and hairstyles and shiny jewelries. They also prefer vivid and strong colors, especially red and black. Characteristic of the situation one will engage is again very important. The look preferred may vary according to the type of the situation and the status or role one bears. For instance, “I would like to look different and more elaborate on special occasions. I never want to look ‘alaturka’. Not much but I would like to outshine a little, since I put so much effort for that look.” Bade (26) indicates.

More serious attires are preferred while more glam and elegant looks chosen for parties. One may prefer different looks going to a rock concert and a classical music concert. Gül for instance indicates that a chic jacket and an elegant white shirt are indispensable and perfect combination for an important meeting. On the other hand, Zeynep for instance wore a dress which is vivid red and satin for her cousin’s wedding and combine it with ostentatious jewelry. More pretentious, attentive and theatrical combinations are adopted if one has the role of being host or close to the host while other guests may opt for simpler and safer choices. Aslı classifies her combinations according to where she is going or what kind of an event she is going to attend:

If I am going to close friend's wedding, I would really go out of my limits. I would consider every detail to the tip of my nail. I would wear a full make up and put on a showy jewelry. For example, I do not wear skirts much in my daily life. If I am wearing skirts, it means that where I go is important (Aslı, 25)

Nihal in the same way justifies Aslı's idea by saying that she definitely considers the place she goes and chooses an outfit accordingly in terms of importance, situation and the ambiance:

If it is a wedding or an engagement party of a close friend, I would wear more glamorous and fancier outfits. But if it is, let's say, the engagement party of the neighbor's son, I would go with a simpler option since it would not have a high importance for me. (Nihal, 55)

#### **5.4.1.2.3. Seasonality and Weather**

What is significant, and continue to be so in each social mental discourse of sartorial practices, is that; to the extent that its motivation is concerned, all dress seems, by all accounts, to be roused essentially by the surrounding circumstances. Subsequently, we need to accept the external circumstances as our beginning stage in any investigation of the inspiration of its motivation (Harms, 1938). Participants consider season and daily weather conditions while making their combinations (Kwon, 1988). They pick pieces according to the necessities of the season. Color, material and functional attributes of the item here are very important. They prefer darker colors and more sheltered materials which keeps warm and dry in winter while light colors and light, breathable, airy fabrics are used in summer.

For instance, Beril prefers neutral and cold tones such as grey and black in winter and white and ecru in summer; while Bade adjusts the color of her jeans from lighter to darker in seasonal transitions. Daily weather is also affecting the combination process of participants. "I had a friend date. Considering the weather, I wore my beige knitted sweater with stripes on it. I wore my green

raincoat with hood on it since it was a bit cold outside.” Says Gül. She also uses her layering technique in order to handle with the changing weather situations:

I actually love cold weathers since I love layering pieces and I cannot find the opportunity to do that in summer. I find layering very useful besides being chic. I could take my sweater off if I feel too hot and spend the day with my t-shirt and if it gets hotter, I could take off my shirt too. It is practical for me. (Gül, 53)

#### **5.4.1.2.4. Characteristics of the Situation: Time, Length and Transportation**

There are different intrinsic and extrinsic factors which influence apparel choices. Every one of these variables are essentially multi-dimensional and interrelated, yet each has its sole significance and duty. One factor may be being liable with another factor further influences those choices. These elements are additionally named as endogenous and exogenous variables (Arora & Aggarwal, 2018). Considered by participants, these variables could be listed as characteristics of the place, time of the day, length of the activity and transportation means used if there is. Participants prefer to be chicer and more polished in the evenings according to the type of activity they engage while preferring more casual looks in the daytime. For instance, Ada (25) makes her mind according to where and how she goes: “If I am using public transportation, I would prefer sneakers and more comfortable clothes but if I am going with my own car, I may prefer dress and high heels or flat shoes.” Likewise, Yasemin says where she goes and when she goes affects her combination very much:

If I meet with my friends in a regular cafe in the afternoon, I prefer more casual pieces such as jeans and a checkered shirt. However, if we meet in a stylish cafe, I may combine a skirt with a nice blouse and match them with flats. If we have a dinner in an elegant restaurant, I may prefer a red lipstick and a black dress. (Yasemin, 32)

Gül (53) looks at it as dressing up according to people’s levels of perception:

I don’t generally shop from luxury brands because I do not live a life like that. I do buy the quality one yes but I do not give money for the brand itself only. For

example, if you go to Demetevler wearing a Louis Vuitton bag, people probably would not recognize it, they could even consider it fake since they do not know real measures. There is no need to give all that money. If you are living in a high society, do whatever you want then. I mean, medium is important... What you wear makes sense in a relevant environment.

#### **5.4.1.3. Using Fashion as a Supportive Tool**

“Fashion is something which feeds style but should not be nothing more” says Derin. Fashion reminds participants clothes, constant circle of change, fashion shows and glamorous world, a bureaucratic system and high prices. In the uniformly ordered world of meanings, one may directly think fashion as equivalent to dressing however we may be able to see its sophisticated touches in the ways where individuals, act, live and think (Rafferty, 2011). McNeill opposes the idea of fashion affecting every woman in the same manner even in the face of collective efforts of media and environmental norms (McNeill, 2018). According to participants, stylish women should have style filter and they use trendy pieces by passing them through this filter. They are expected to use classic and timeless items and if they want, fashionable pieces by adapting them to their style. They follow fashion in order to get an idea about latest trends and be up-to-date while integrating these pieces to their combinations in certain measures. Fashionable pieces are seen hard to combine and expensive.

Gül says fashion affects her attitude and behavior in terms of sartorial practices (Rueling, 2000). She says in certain times, some colors become more appealing for her and then others or her perception is shaped that way. Nihal (55) gives an example of a color which she has been seen involuntarily and strikes her attention: “Lately, I have been seeing lilac color a lot from sweatpants to bags and even phone cases. It is a very fashionable color, I guess. I could not resist to buy something in that color actually and bought a pair of sweatpants!”

“A stylish person does not accept every trendy piece and she has her own style filter actually. She prefers classic pieces or adapts those trends or fashionable

pieces according to her style by passing them through her filter.” Says Derin (28). For instance, lately knitted two-pieces are very fashionable thus Bade benefits from this trend by choosing the one which has a thin fabric and neutral colors. Enclosed by others, Simmel along with Veblen, were the leaders who discover fashion’s these functions of connecting in the meantime separating (Rueling, 2000). Zeynep (27) also advocates that one should take whatever suits to her and nothing more from fashion. She suggests that one should evaluate it in her own terms with the following example: “There is a tie dye fashion right now for example but I do not think it would sit well with me, you know? I mean, I am not against fashion, it is a trend and most of the people accept it and wear it but it is not for me.”

#### **5.4.1.4. Choosing Between Comfort and Functionality versus Aesthetics**

Functional interpretation of clothing embraces the utility dimension while aesthetic interpretation includes appraisal of beauty or appearance (Hopfer & Istook, 2016). Participants highly value their comfort regardless of the situations. They look for comfort, practicality and functionality in pieces they have chosen or in their combinations. Material, size, model and brands are important issues they look for here. Customers compromise one component against the rest and base their decision making on ascribes offering high utility to themselves (Birtwistle, Clarke, & Freathy, 1998). Representatively, they prefer bags such as backpacks, belt bags or shopper bags and opt for sneakers flats and really comfortable heels. They also want to feel comfortable in their clothes and expect the pieces to not tight, uncomfortable or oppressive. For instance, Gül prefers chic mini evening bags with a shoulder strap instead of hand clutches since she does not find practical to carry the bag on her hand all night. Ada prefers shopper bags since she likes to carry all of her items such as charger, perfume, make-up tools, tissues with her all day. Sıla (26) in the same manner tries to use functional items in her combinations. “Functionality means practicality, ease and versatility for me. For instance, I prefer backpacks in my daily life since they are very

comfortable and you can fit so many stuffs into it. In this way, I can use both of my hands when I go shopping!" She says.

If Gül is going to wear high heels, she prefers short, square and thick heels or wedges instead of very high and thin ones. Otherwise, she picks chic flats. "If I wore a simple dress, I prefer flats under but if I wore a fancy one, I go with the heels since a dress like that requires one. But I try to find the one which does not hurt my feet and turn that evening into a nightmare." says Nihal. Comfort and simplicity are desired notions in functionalist belief however postmodernist approach indicates that even basic needs change between cultures (Isla, 2013). Ece, believes one must simply find the right pieces:

High heels are not necessarily uncomfortable shoes. You should buy it from right places. If one wears x brands' carelessly put together shoe with no attention paid to foot anatomy, of course it would be uncomfortable. I wear all day long my 11 cm orthopedic high heels which I have bought from a very quality store and I do not feel uncomfortable at all. (Ece, 38)

Bade considers the aspect of being usable for many occasions and introduces jeans a functional piece which she could use in many different combinations. Growing up in a middle-class family, she has the habit of having only a few coats and such items thus it is very important for her to be able to use them in different combinations:

The word functional is directly reminds me jeans actually. They look sportive when combined with a casual simple t-shirt but they would look chic combined with a black top and stilettos. I wear jeans going out with friends at night and also going to work. They are the perfect example for me. (Bade, 26)

The famous Little Black Dress (Edelman, 1998), says Ada when I ask her about the functionality.

A piece which makes you feel good, meet your expectations wear anyway you want. It is Little Black Dress for me. It has its own ongoing fame for years and people would wear it to a wedding and a funeral. I could wear it with stilettos for an event and with sneakers to a chic coffee date with friends. (Ada, 25)



On the other hand, Lascity (2018) suggests that, consumption could also be made with aesthetic concerns. Style focused people pay attention to aesthetics since human mind is essentially inspired by beauty (Armstrong et al., 2018). Consequently, some participants prioritize aesthetics over comfort:

Look is always more important for me, If I look good in something and find it chic, I would wear it no matter what.” Says Selin while Ada suggests “Comfort is something which I could easily give up. The one and only thing which I look for comfort would be shoes but even for shoes; if they are beautiful, I would wear them regardless their level of comfort.

Aslı who does not wear high heels in her daily life because of comfort issues, opts for high heels for special occasions, by trying to find the most comfortable one she can since the importance given to special events in her family is too much.

#### **5.4.1.5. Benefiting from Colors, Patterns and Models**

Based on Hetherington’s (1998) suggestion, it is argued that individuals have freedom of combining different signs in order to create a meaning which they wish to transmit to other side and this process mediates relationship between identity building and symbolic consumption (Murray, 2002). Participants also benefit from the power of colors and patterns and models in their styling process. They may use these variables in order to give a message, reflect their personality, taste and preferences, aestheticizing their body, and providing harmony. For instance, Aslı says that black and red are strong and chic colors for her and they are very suitable for special situations and late-night occasions:

Red for me is a color which makes you look chic, lively and sexy They are spectacular, elaborate, and attractive colors. For special events which require you to be chic elegant and stylish, these are the perfect colors. If you wear these colors, you look attractive, pretentious and chic. (Aslı, 25).

In order to reflect the aimed images in the society, women take advantage of the expanded meaning of clothing and this also demonstrates power of clothing in embodying the self-notion (McNeill, 2018). To express her personality and tastes, Gül benefits from colors. She has an active life and a very energetic person. That is why she prefers vibrant and main colors in her life. She never uses pink as it seems so girly for her. She also does not like ambiguity and always wants clarity thus main colors speak to her taste more. Selin in the same manner use red and leopard pattern frequently in order to reflect her feminine and confident personality.

Adopting simplicity, classics and elegance as much as possible, Beril says she prefers neutral and cold tones such as grey and black in winter and white and ecru in summer in order to be in harmony with her environment and seasons. In order to provide harmony Ada says that she preferred a pastel and frilly dress for her sisters' country wedding however she would prefer a long gown like dark colored dress if it was in a hotel.

#### **5.4.2. Combination**

Belk (1988) argues that as opposed to a solitary item or brand addressing the entirety of one's self-idea, just a total outfit of utilization articles might have the option to address the assorted and possibly mixed-up parts of the absolute self.

##### **5.4.2.1. They Mix and Match Clothes**

Clothes are a part of daily routine practices (Gronow & Warde, 2001). Participants build different combinations by mix and matching pieces in order to create a personal style. There are different patterns observed in the process. After choosing the pieces, they couple those pieces and aestheticize them using accessories, hair styling and make-up while aiming for harmony. During this

process, they benefit from their taste, creativity and fashion. Finally, the whole process is constructed through situationality.

Style is created with efforts of creative minds who look from an artistic window while playing with clothes (Armstrong et al., 2018). Combination of pieces is the main step for participants in order to create a style. They first look at the combinability of pieces and what goes with what. Then they match the pieces together using their knowledge. They enrich their combinations and add variety benefiting from colors, materials, patterns and cuts. Sanem for instance wears skirts sometimes in order to create different combinations likewise Ece prefers dresses frequently. She also buys many colors of what she likes in order to use something which is suitable to her taste in different ways:

If I find something which I like very much, I buy different colors of it. I have this certain obsession. A knitted sweater for example... If it is comfortable, if I liked its form and the way it looked on me, I buy it in every color. Especially black and white. (Ece, 38)

Gül indicates the relationship between combination and style as follows:

It is collecting things together. These maybe colors, clothing pieces... If you, do it right, it would look delightful and if you do it wrong it would look really bad. If you have a style, you would match beautifully and if you don't, what you get would be a mess. It is pretty relative I guess. (Gül, 53)

#### **5.4.2.2. They Use Bags to Complete Their Combinations**

It is suggested that tailoring, caring and refining the clothes are the keys for a solid style (Freer, 2015). In order for a refined look the wardrobe, acts as an inventory which keeps images and meanings thus an individual could choose corresponding communication tool from that certain composition (Bye & McKinney, 2007). A bag is one of the main components of a combination and completes the look. It is used both for practical and aesthetic concerns. Harmony with the whole expression is aimed while choosing a bag. Through their bag

choices, participants reflect their taste and authenticity while the form of the bag changes according to situation. For ordinary days, practicality and comfort are prioritized while aesthetics and glamour emphasized on special days.

For instance, on ordinary circumstances, Ada always prefers shopper bags since she likes to carry all her items such as makeup, charger, power bank with her in case she might need it. She generally prefers colors such as black and nude in order to create a harmony with her look easily. Backpacks and belt bags are also very much preferred because they are practical and comfortable. On special occasions, participants prefer smaller bags such as mini evening bags, envelope bags and clutches, preferably the ones which are chicer and more flamboyant. Gül prefers chic mini evening bags for important events. She prefers them to have shoulder strap for the ease-of-use while being plain and simple, in a way to reflect her taste.

#### **5.4.2.3. They Use Shoes to Complete Their Combinations**

According to Zanette and Brito (2019), fashion as a mindset, consists of know-how and related materials which complete each other in order to provide a sense of identity, comfort and belonging. “Objects in our possession literally can extend self, as when a tool or weapon allows us to do things of which we would otherwise be incapable” (Belk 1988, p. 145). Just like bags, shoes are also one of the main components of a combination and completes the look. Both aesthetical and functional concerns are observable here while harmony with the whole look is aimed while choosing the shoes. Through their choice of shoes, participants reflect their taste and authenticity while the form of the shoe again, changes according to situation. For ordinary days, functionality and comfort are prioritized while aesthetics and glamour added to the list on special days.

On ordinary days, participants prefer comfortable shoes such as sneakers, simple flats, low ankle boots and sandals. From time to time, they prefer heels unless

they are too uncomfortable. Bade says she prefers her most comfortable sneakers which she likes to use frequently. Aslı and Nihal also cannot forego sneakers in their daily combinations; Nihal especially likes low top casual boots.

For special occasions, participants again prioritize comfort but as aesthetic concerns emerge, comfort may lose ground. They prefer more aesthetic, flamboyant and elegant shoes such as stilettos, high heels and chic flats. For instance, Ada generally prefers stilettos which she finds chic, elegant and suitable for every occasion. She shows me the plain nude stilettos which she has preferred for her sister's wedding. Aslı, who does not wear high heels in her daily life because of comfort issues, opts for high heels for special occasions.

### **5.4.3. Aesthetization**

Although well dressing has been seen as a natural quality of standard women, most of them actually had to learn how to dress properly and beautifully (Delhaye, 2006). The dressed body communicates our personal and social identities (Saucier, 2011). In order to reflect the aimed images in the society, women take advantage of the expanded meaning of clothing and this also demonstrates power of clothing in embodying the self-notion (McNeill, 2018).

#### **5.4.3.1. Aesthetization Using Aesthetical Measures**

Dress reform movement established on the basis of putting forward the wearer's natural self and beauty. Instead of being lost behind the dress' dominant being, individual must have been emphasized (Delhaye, 2006). However, natural is suggested to be not enough and body needs certain possession in order to excel. When people finally start to seize the real connotation behind the concept of improving self, they also try different possibilities in order to discover their potential (Zanette & Brito, 2019).

In order to create a solid style, participants benefit from aesthetic senses and perceptions. Knowing their body and dressing up accordingly, they manipulate their look in a way that suits their aesthetical perceptions. A woman can emphasize or hide her certain bodily features by using certain sartorial methods. Colors, models, cuts, patterns and textures are some of the tools benefited in the process. Choosing clothes according to their body features, accessorizing, self-care, putting on make-up and styling their hair are few methods of aestheticize. Colors and fabrics for instance are primary tools in the process.

Ada prefers dark colors, especially black since they make her body looks thinner and never wears fluffy or plush fabrics because she believes they make her look thicker. Bade does not prefer earthy tones such as nude or camel since she thinks those tones do not look good on her skin tone, even though she finds it chic when sees it on other people. Models and cuts are also important. Sila (26) picks out the miniskirts because she considers herself short compared to others and believes miniskirts make her look taller: “My legs are not too long and ankle boots are making them look shorter that is why it is really hard for me to find ideal boots. Since I am not a very tall person, I prefer miniskirts ideal because longer ones cut my height actually.” Işıl also shares her desperate wish to wear a romper but admits that never had the courage to do it because of her height.

#### **5.4.4. Adorning**

Clothing can be characterized as a feature of the comprehensive design of individual look which incorporates hairstyle, adornments, covers, improvements and mutilations. The various pieces of the design are intentionally manipulated to declare and separate contrasts (Kuper, 1973, p. 348). "To adorn" signifies to make something appealing, particularly one's self. Adorning is consequently a progressive aesthetic encounter which may be rightfully placed in the circle of enthusiastic experience (Harms, 1938).

#### **5.4.4.1. Adorning by Styling Hair**

Specifically, only few researches have referred to the duty of daily appearance practices like hair-style or dress in women's silhouette (Tiggemann & Lacey, 2009). Hair is an inherent piece of the construction of appearance (Kuper, 1973, p. 352). Participants style their hair in a way to complete their look. Hair is seen as a beautifying tool. They prefer different styles considering the harmony with overall look and comfort issues while they may use certain accessories such as headbands, scarfs and hair pins. As in other processes, the way they style their hair changes according to the situation. For ordinary circumstances, they style their hair themselves with less effort and may leave natural. For special events and situations, they may get help from a professional and put extra effort. They may prefer a chic up-do, waves or a braid. In both circumstances, natural, effortless and not exaggerated looks preferred. The grooming, trimming and styling of hair is a significant social practice and emblematic exercise for every young individual. Hair has long been a mean for serious articulations about self and society in which emblematic implications are devoted (Willis et al., 1990).

For instance, Nihal's hair is very short and she says she use it like this all the time so no effort needed. Ada has a naturally straight hair and she likes to accessorize her hair with headbands and scarfs from time to time. According to the occasion, Gül either does her hair herself or has it done on hairdresser but she says she always prefers the same updo with a chic and elegant hair pin. Leaving her hair natural every day, Bade says she definitely does something special with her hair like an elegant braid or natural looking waves but she also prioritizes natural look.

#### **5.4.4.2. Adorning by Putting on Make-up**

Armstrong et al. (2018), suggests that beauty, regardless it is seen in the figure or meaning drive human beings. Make-up as another tool for the beautifying

process, applied in a way to reflect taste and authenticity. Participants want make-up to be in harmony with their whole look. As in other processes, their make-up applying processes changes according to the situation. For ordinary circumstances, they apply their makeup themselves with less effort and may go natural. For special events, they may get help from a professional and put extra effort.

For instance, on ordinary days Işıl likes to use dark and colorful eye shadows even in the day time. She applies full make-up wherever she goes and not afraid to use bold colors such as red and purple in both her eyes and lips; she even uses black lipstick. Considering her daily preferences being also chic and easily adaptable from day to night, Ece says that she would only add a bit more make up in order not to look so pale.

For special events, Zeynep says even though it is an important occasion and she has makeup done by professionals, she expects it to look natural all the time and not too synthetic. Bade sees make up as an essential element for special occasions and emphasizing the importance of natural look again, does a total makeup using all elements from foundation to highlighter and blush.

#### **5.4.4.3. Adorning through Accessories**

Dressing demeanor is an attitude in relation to the means one dresses, where, dress in question is a collection of adjustments and/or supplements to the body. It includes a lengthy account of attainable continuous adjustments of the body such as styled hair, shaded skin, earrings, along with evenly lengthy agenda of apparel, jewelry and accessories (Arora & Aggarwal, 2018). Participants use accessories as complementary tools in order to enrich, embellish and personalize their combinations. These accessories may be jewelry, hats, scarfs and even hair clips. Through their choices of accessory, they reflect their taste and authenticity. Situationality again affects the process here. While they stick to their tastes and



authentic features, they may go out of ordinary and opt for more flamboyant, theatrical and conspicuous pieces on special occasions as opposed to their ordinary preferences which are simpler, smaller and less showy. Harmony with the overall look is aimed while choosing the piece.

For instance, Derin says she really like accessories a lot especially good designer ones. Since she always prefers minimal outfits, she likes to stir up her look with putting on a few minimal rings. She also prefers gold pleated ones since they are more durable and not so expensive. She reflects her taste by especially choosing more minimal and gold pleated models. “I like to wear different and colorful hats and beanies.” Says Sanem as an effort to put her authenticity front.

For special affairs Bade prefers big and glamorous eardrops which it is not possible to see on her in normal circumstances. She says she goes out of ordinary in the case of accessorizing for special days. Ada in the same way prefers clear diamonds for an important day such as her wedding and colored diamonds or diamond like pieces are also very much preferable for important occasions.

#### **5.4.5. Harmonization**

Through this method, participants aim to provide harmony between their personal style and life style in order to live an easier and more balanced lifestyle. In order give a clear message and offer a beautiful look they also provide harmony between pieces combined and preferred looks through time. Last but not least harmony between personal style and personality is aimed.

##### **5.4.5.1. They Adjust and Adapt According to Lifestyle**

Based on Adamson (1980), Murray (2002) suggests that, it is easier to adapt to imposed rules rather than showing refusal with a mindful effort. While creating their style, participants adjust and adapt their styles according to the certain

factors in their lives. These factors could be listed as their environment, their working conditions, their habits and preferences. They want to accommodate to external conditions in order to feel comfortable, harmonious and not discordant. For instance, they adapt to their working conditions by creating a style which meets the needs of their jobs and also theirs. Zeynep talks about how her work routine is affecting her sartorial preferences:

I work in an industrial place where production is made. So, my clothes could get dirty any time. I have to move comfortably around. And on top of all, I work from 8 am to 6 pm for 6 days of the week. Thus, I wear simple and comfortable things most of the time. (Zeynep, 27)

Bade in the same way says that she has been working from home lately and bought new pieces which are both chic and comfy in order to adapt to these new circumstances. Moreover, they also try to be in harmony with their lifestyle. Gül says she recently moved to the countryside and realized that she should adapt her style to her environment. She even indicates that she does not wear black which is one of her favorite colors no more since she has a pure white Chinchilla cat.

I recently moved to my other summer house which is on the countryside, like a bit outside of the city. Here is like a village and very different from the city. I feel different because of my clothes and feel like people are staring at me. I would like to fit where I live but it could take some time, I guess. (Gül, 53)

#### **5.4.5.2. They Provide Harmony Between Pieces**

Participants indicate that a look is whole and there must be harmony between each and every detail (Harms, 1938, p. 248). Harmony is aimed between pieces combined, hair, make-up, accessories and other sartorial practices. This coherence is provided by mixing and matching materials, colors, textures, patterns and other tools. For instance, Zeynep tries to achieve harmony through matching colors, fabrics and patterns:

Fabrics should complement each other for sure. For example, velvet and satin does not go together but a leather jacket and a jean could be perfect. I don't

think two crowded patterns would go well with each other. One patterned piece would look better when it combined with a simple piece. Colors are also should be well matching. I would not be comfortable if I wear a yellow shirt and red pants. (Zeynep, 27)

She also remembers how her hair and makeup which she did not like changed her feelings towards her overall look as follows: “I really liked my gown which is a red satin flowy maxi dress but the hair and makeup applied to me had nothing to do with what I have asked for so it really made me feel bad about my overall look that night.”

#### **5.4.5.3. They Provide Harmony with Personality, Emotions and Philosophy**

Participants reflect their mood, emotions and life philosophy to their style. They aim to harmonize their look with their personality and character (Marshal, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgan, & Touchie-Sepcht, 2000). Their look and choices also affect their mood. They prefer pieces which make them comfortable, feel good and happy or if they feel down, they try to raise their spirits by benefiting from sartorial choices (Arora & Aggarwal, 2018).

When I wake up, I open the wardrobe and ask myself ‘which one today?’ It is weird for a lot of people but it sets the mood for the whole day I believe. I wear according to how I wish to feel all day. If I want an amazing day, I should look awesome as well. Says Ece (38)

Derin adds that she puts on a red lipstick, put on some rings or style her hair differently in order to feel better. On the other hand, Sanem says that she tends to wear darker colors or more simple and comfortable pieces in the days she feels dispirited. Ece (38) supports her by saying “If a woman wore a chic dress and high heels that day, she definitely must be feeling very good. Otherwise, is not possible. If she is wearing sneakers, it means stay away from me. Because it is for me.”

#### **5.4.5.4. They Provide Harmony Through Time**

In order to talk about the presence of a style, one must be consistent with her combinations, message given and pieces chosen, through time and different occasions indicate participants. Persistence achieved through one's discovery of clothes which are best for her body type is the pillar of style together with timelessness and individuality, rather than following and practicing frequently changed latest looks. The ideal aimed identity is must be being a woman who is aware of the special qualities of her body and dress accordingly; not someone who unconsciously follow fashion or who does not care at all because clothes chosen according to one's style benefits one more than other trendy ones (Mikkonen et al., 2014). For instance, Bade says she prefers classic pieces and neutral colors, similar silhouettes and same materials for a long time.

Whenever I go shopping, my hand goes to thin knitted fabrics and jeans. I never wear trousers or sweatpants. I prefer a black Jean instead. I never wear nude or earthy tones or colorful and patterned pieces. I guess I have a line which I follow constantly and this means style. (Bade, 26)

Ada in the same manner prefers pastels, soft colors, nudes and sometimes lively and vivid. She embraces elegant and polished silhouettes. She says she never wears ripped jeans, never put on purple lipstick or wear checkered lumberjack shirts. She says she opts for palazzo pants, chic blouses and pearls as far as she remembers.

#### **5.4.6. Authenticating Through Creativity or Following the Classic:**

Creativity represents finding one's style through mix and matching. For people who appreciate creativity, aesthetics has been a pursuit commonly. Creativity epitomizes discovery of personal style over the practice of mix and matching (Armstrong et al., 2018). Participants benefit from creativity in the styling process. Creativity means unexpected things, irrelevant pieces coming together,

seeing what others cannot see and doing the undone for them. They use creativity in 2 ways: They either combine pieces in a creative way or they prefer creative pieces. While combining, they use methods such as layering and using pieces with a purpose other than its original one. While choosing pieces, they prefer different, innovative and unexpected cuts, models and colors. Gül (53) for instance prefers layering items and using them in unexpected ways:

I do like to wear things by layering them. I wear a t-shirt inside, put a shirt over and maybe throw a sweater on it. I do not like to wear one piece; I like to look crowded. The shirt showing inside the blouse or leaving its collars open... I really like these little touches. I mean, everybody wears a jean and a shirt but put them together with a twist.

Işıl (26) looks for innovative pieces and adds her creative touches subsequently:

While I am purchasing a product, I try to find the different one compared to what others wear or what I already have in my closet. Since we shop from mainstream brands such as Zara and Mango, I try to find the most distinctive pieces and add something from me while combining them.

Some respondents on the other hand do not engage with creative means thus prefer classic and simple pieces and combinations. “Creativity for me is a different cut in a clothing piece or matching very different things which never come to mind and irrelevant together. I have already never been creative my whole life. It has always been classics for me.” Says Bade (26). Zeynep agrees to Bade’s creativity definition saying that she wonders who in the world thought about a dress in the form of shirt or a shirt with one sleeve. While emphasizing her amazement, she adds that her style is actually same with every 9 person who walks on the street out of ten.

## **5.5. Outcomes of the Process**

After participants collect the required inputs which are both material and non-material, then they create their style by using these inputs and engaging in

certain practices. As a consequence of these preparation and formation stages, they achieve certain outcomes. According to the variabilities which they have chosen to engage in their preparation and formation stages, these outcomes vary. These consequences could be listed as reflecting personality, reflecting their authenticity and reflecting their taste.

### **5.5.1. Reflecting Identity and Personality**

Participants indicate that style is personal and women should wear what suits to their character, freely, without rules. Through their combinations and pieces chosen in the process, attendants act in a way reflecting their personality and values (Schembri et al., 2010). When they try to express their personal traits and values such as being energetic, sporty, masculine, young and conscious, they prefer combinations which carry the reflections and meanings of these traits just as wearing ripped jeans, preferring sustainable products, combining vibrant colors. For instance, as an advocate for sustainable fashion, Derin shares with me an old photo which she does not like her combination wearing all trendy and colorful pieces: a jean, a yellow fashion conscious (Nam et al., 2007) blouse, and a blue headband. This style is pretty different from her current look which is formed by neutral colors and plain silhouettes formed by sustainably produced products.

I used to see fashion as something fun and enjoyable but looking deeper, now I see an industry which is not so innocent and actually it has certain aspects which harm the world, nature and our perceptions. That is why, I prefer sustainable products now she shares. (Derin, 28)

As an illustration, Gül is a very energetic person and she is young spirited. She tells me that she could wear what a 25 years old wear without any doubts at all. She wears ripped jeans, sneakers and vibrant colors in order to reflect her young spirit. Bade in the same manner, tries to reflect her sporty and dynamic personality even in situations which require more serious attires. She does not

give any compromises concerning her personality. She tells me about the time she looked for a simple yet elegant evening gown which reflects her sporty and classic personality for her college graduation ball: “I wanted it to look not so gown gown, you know. Chic and suitable for an evening but still comfortable and me. Those kinds of dresses are like make you look like you are 35 when you are actually 18 so, I never want that.” Looking at the picture of her dress, I see that she wore a very simple, flowing emerald green dress which has strings on its back giving the dress a younger and casual look. There was no embroidery, glitters, flakes or patterns on the dress.

### **5.5.2. Reflecting Authenticity**

In the period of dress reform movement, amongst many significant ideas one was the possibility that an individual may be able his/her authentic self. Dress reform movement established on the basis of putting forward the wearer’s natural self and beauty. Instead of being lost behind the dress’ dominant being, individual must have been emphasized (Delhay, 2006). Some participants aim to reflect their authentic identity through their style thus choose pieces accordingly in the preparation process. Authenticity here means being different, unique and distinctive while going against the rules and realizing true self. They use their taste, creativity and distinctive characteristics in the formation process. Attendants advocate that, women should be authoritative, selective and loyal to inner self while filtering external voices in their sartorial practices.

Staying away from popular culture and mainstream practices while finding your own voice... I find it cheap when people wear the exact same things which they see on a model or a window. One could make a cheap item very quality by adding things from herself. I add a scarf to my old jeans sometimes or I may add some details to my heels which makes them more stylish. indicates Gül (53).

Ece (38) supports her idea by indicating that women should be free and more courageous and playful in their choices:

There is no right or wrong to making combinations. Who says pink and red or black and navy cannot be combined? Every person has their own standards and there cannot be universal rules in a situation like this. I have friends who buy the whole outfit on the model since they are too afraid to make their own combinations. Where is style or authenticity in this?"

Selin shows me a picture from a wedding wearing a vivid emerald colored romper with a few frills on it. She says that she likes to prefer pretentious and different pieces and adds that nobody else wore a romper that night. Additionally, she likes to wear all white in winter on the contrary of common belief and indicates that she bought a pair of white boots for winter lately. Lastly, Işıl reflects her original self in her choices frequently:

Even though it is not on the edges or crazy, I define my style as different. I do not wear what everybody wears most of the time and I like creating little nuances through my makeup or accessories. Sometimes my friends find my choices very offbeat but then they say 'I would not buy it if I have seen in the store but it looks so good on you'. They even define my style as 'Işıl Style'. (Işıl, 26)

Looking together at her choice of dress for the graduation ball, it is possible to see her love of dark colors and different spirit. She wears a black tulle dress embroidered with a few red big flowers and inside she wears a simple black crop and a miniskirt. She also never leaves the house without makeup and likes to use dark and colorful eye shadows even in the day time. She is not afraid to use bold colors such as red and purple in both her eyes and lips; she even uses black lipstick.

### **5.5.3. Reflecting Taste**

Established upon personal connection to the object in question while learnt and instructed; taste is proceeded as a shared and arranged activity within the procedure. Detailing and cultivating procedures within a culture includes taste-making, which is based on 'reasonable information' and the ceaseless arrangement of aesthetic classifications. Taste is a feeling of what is aesthetically



fitting inside a local area of professionals—an inclination for 'the manner in which we figure things collectively' (Gherardi, 2009). Participants reflect their taste through their style by engaging in different practices in the formation process. This notion of taste is visible in their pieces chosen, their combinations, and even make-up and accessories. Taste actually emerges as the combination of preferences and it is the message and reflection of self and personality on the outside. Participants use colors, patterns, models, materials and aesthetical measures as intermediaries while expressing their tastes.

For instance, Bade (26) wants the components of her style to be a reflection of her taste and personality. She states that “I’ve searched for two years, I have maybe checked thirty or forty stores and spent two winters without boots just because I could not find the one. It should reflect me. When it does not, I do not feel comfortable nor stylish.” Likewise, Selin says she likes jean on jean, all white looks, leopard pattern and puffy vests thus she frequently uses these in her combinations. Nihal finds satin pants both chic and comfy thus prefers them in her daily life while choosing bohemian and natural touches on her accessories. Gül likes oversized pieces but never wear sweatpants outside since it does not look aesthetically pleasing for her, although she is very fond of her comfort. Accessories also reflect participants’ taste. Zeynep does not like pieces such as hat and scarfs while Ada loves adding colorful scarfs and stylish hats to her combinations.

They also use colors, patterns and materials in order to express their taste. Ada for example, loves pastels, nude colors and soft fluffy fabrics thus try to use them as much as possible while styling her looks. Likewise, Işıl loves purple, dark colors and tulle fabrics which are the details visible on her ball dress. Nihal uses silver necklaces and bracelets however Ada prefers pearls and diamond like cut colorful jewelries.

## **5.6. Outside Factors Affecting Style**

There are also certain outside factors affecting both the way style is defined and practiced. These are namely age and culture.

### **5.6.1. Age**

Age is one of the most highlighted aspects in terms of changing and re-sculpturing one's style. It leads to an evolution in style through changes occurred in one's taste, financial situation, social class, education, etc. (Ramya & Ali, 2016). Gül (53) talks about the change she experienced through age over the years as follows:

Maybe, I think in time, my judgment and priorities have changed as I grow older. I used to dress up for people to like my style but now comfort is more important for me. Lately, I have been wearing more different things compared to what I liked before. Perhaps my style is evolving. I like wider, looser, and not figure-hugging clothes.

Sıla also supports Gül's idea by indicating that over the years how much her approach to sartorial practices and choices she makes has changed.

Age is actually a very influential base factor in defining one's style. Over the years, too many things change around us, so do we. Our life philosophy and experiences direct us to look at things a bit more different than before. I used to think that people who dressed up like hippies were very stylish in high school. Shabby silhouettes and sloppiness would fascinate me. Now I think the opposite. Stylish person must be up-to-date and attentive. (Sıla, 26)

### **5.6.2. Culture**

Considering variables such as age, gender, education, class, profession and religious demeanor; norms and traditions of a culture deeply affects an individual's stylistic choices (Tse & Tsang, 2018). The way they see things in their family life growing up, the climate of the region they live, local societal

customs and habits plus the effect of different cultures as a consequence of living in a global era, they all have certain responses in the sartorial world. Based on Bourdieu, Üstüner & Holt (2009) indicates that tastes and practices are adapted inadvertently through numerous repetitive encounters, for the most part in childhood. Family and core environment growing up have a great impact on participants' sartorial choices of today.

Sıla (26) reflects traces of the culture she has seen in her family by sharing her memories. "My mom always wears V-neck blouses. That is why, I cannot wear anything which covers my neck. Also, she is a very well-groomed woman all the time. I have always seen her in fancy outfits. She is kind of my role model." Moreover, Bade says her environment change from high school to college has brought also a little change in her style.

At the beginning of college, I was shopping a lot. There has been a change in my style and I bought more dresses and high heels, at that period. But then graduating, I have never worn them. I did not feel comfortable in them. I would like actually like them if I have seen them on someone else. (Bade, 26)

After family, societies and their unspoken rules and expectations affect women's stylistic choices. Fear of judgement brings the need to fit in. For instance, Aslı indicates that her style is shaped according to the society she lives in because she does not want to look weird and judged by wearing different things compared to others. Zeynep (27) looks at her style under the light of societal norms and analyzes her sartorial choices: "Actually, I live the way society does because my soul is kneaded with the same things, growing up. I'm not practicing differently either; but in my mind, I am way ahead believing that a woman should wear whatever she likes." Gül shares her recent personal experience concerning this dilemma:

We recently moved to our summer house which is on the countryside. This place is a bit like village. I feel different and feel like people are staring at me because of my clothes. A lot of people come here in order to shop for organic

foods and you could easily tell who local people are and who the outsiders are. I would like to fit where I live but it could take some time, I guess. (Gül, 53)

Other than societal norms and expectations, the geography which they live in also affects participants sartorial choices. Bade suggests that the climate which one grows up is pretty effective. Living in a climate which includes all four seasons actually provide us with the ability to add variability in our sartorial choices. However, she says that she maybe would have a different style if she lived in a place where the weather is always cloudy or lived in a country which is always sunny and hot (Siple, 1945).

Mixing regional customs with global structures, style blends contrasting cultural ingredients to create a unique identification (Murray, 2002). Since we live in a fast and global world, other cultures are actually pretty visible and sometimes affect women's sartorial choices. Brands which preferred by most of the respondents such as Zara and Mango are designed in Europe. Luxury brands such as Chanel and Gucci are ruling the fashion world and inspiring the latest trends. Although Turkish women think they are not affected from other cultures, they do in an indirect way (Kapstein, 2006).

Aslı says she does not care about what French woman wear while Canan says that she is only inspired by Turkish culture's different dimensions such as women in Aegean Region and East Region wearing shalwar. However, they both shop from Zara and Mango frequently. Zeynep on the other hand accepts that foreign cultures have serious impact on us in the age of information and everything is really achievable. "For instance, Berta comes to mind when you think about bridal gown. It is a really popular brand in the world and inevitably you are inspired. I could look for a Berta style gown when I am going to get married." Says Zeynep (27). Ada in the same manner says that Ugg boots are really popular in our country as well as in the whole world and she likes to wear them as well.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1. Discussion**

The main objective of this research is to define what personal sartorial style is and explain in detail how professional women who aged between 25-55 create their style in an emic level. My attitude in this study has been to determine what personal sartorial style means by giving a solid definition while analyzing the methods and strategies for creating a style by utilizing the aesthetic, material, economic and symbolic dimensions of clothing. Moreover, I have observed the variety of meanings and place clothing holds in women's life while external factors also affecting their perception and practices. Thus, through repetitive analysis and interpretations, I was able to illustrate a holistic personal style creation as a dynamic and flowing process.

My foundations are based on understanding from multi perspectives the sophisticated meanings and associations adopted by professional women while resolving the layers of patterns of how they benefit from those meanings and associations concerning their preferences, habits and practices in the creation process. My study consists of five intertwined dimensions which investigates the meaning of style, creation of style, formation process, outcomes and outside factors affecting style respectively.

##### **6.1.1. Definition of Style**

As for meaning of style, first, the research results demonstrate that dressing has a much more sophisticated standing in women's life such as fulfilling desires,

reflecting identity along with authenticity and experiencing happiness rather than simple motives, as parallel to Cordwell et al. (1979). McNeill (2018) also suggests that, clothing is an imperative component of identity building practice however, her study focuses on fashion consumption and its relative reflections on the identity building practices in the social context. In contrast, this thesis suggests that women engage in sartorial practices in order to simply express themselves in every way such as mood and values, not just identity. Besides, Rafferty (2011) also studies emotions focusing on them as a significantly important component in the practice of consumption. However, her study analyzes emotions in the context of consumption and social classes while literature also in general focuses on variety of emotions such as anxieties, fear, desires and passion. On the contrary my findings suggest that sartorial practices are actually a motivation and a tool for well-being.

Until now, no study has been conducted in an emic level in Turkey, based on style and its definition while internationally, only Kjeldgaard (2009) examines the concept of style in an emic level. Other than his study, there are no studies carried out which aims to define style in an emic level. In addition, there are many general and theoretical definitions for style in the literature. With this study, I build on these theoretical definitions by adding the emic definition of how professional women aged between 25-55 understand and define style. Based on these motivations, my findings reveal that style as a definition includes 8 dimensions. These could be listed as a beautiful appearance, being a part of the lifestyle, a totalistic concept, harmony, standing out through creative and authenticating acts, tool for communicating emotions and identity, an experience and finally, compliance with the generic style codes.

Looking at the general literature, since style has been not studied in an emic level and studies are focused on the collective style notion; style has been seen as an equivalent and alike of fashion. Thus, there are studies which use concepts of style and fashion interchangeably (e.g., Welters & Lillethun, 2007). In some

studies, style has been seen as a notion which could be changed and replaced expeditiously (Volonte, 2019; Mikkonen et al., 2014) and a democratizing tool since it is studied from a collective perspective however, in this study because it is studied in the emic level and reduced to individual, we find that in fact style is a continuous and balanced concept which requires consistency and has a long lifecycle (Welters & Lillethun, 2007) since it is personal and regarding with characteristic features.

Through the medium of style, women effortlessly give hints about inner conflicts and mirror a sophisticated statement of identity. In line with this aspect, Kjeldgaard (2009) defines style as a tool which unravels personality based on consumer culture theories which define consumption with postmodern philosophy. However, his study indicates style and identity together as fragmented, fluid and communicated through signs; on the contrary of this study which is more in line with Armstrong et al.'s (2018) findings which expresses style as permanent, balanced and long lasting.

Secondly, findings of this study reveal that style is a part of the total lifestyle thus it is actually a signal of one's generic taste preferences. Kjeldgaard (2009) agrees that style is an extended concept in many aspects of life however his study does not recognize style as a notion which is the representation of one's competencies, reflection of how one lives, and a statement of social standing. This brings me to the totalistic dimension of style which demands an integrity and completeness of the total attitude of an individual both visually and behaviorally. Findings suggests that all the components in the sartorial practice including the attitude and mimics of a person all merge as a part of her style, again in an emic and individual level. In literature, Hebdige (1979), also describes style as a collective concept which is formed through the mutual coalesce of individual proceedings and values however collectivity and values here actually sourced from the subcultures. Moreover, respondents define style as an experience which stands for feeling good and comfortable inside what one

wears by eliminating forced practices out of the rationale. Although its main argument is the expression of identity, Sobh et al.'s (2014) study on dressing habits of Qatari and Emirati women perfectly exemplifies the finding that styling is being an experience for women. Hebdige's (2007) study in the same manner focuses on the message given through the combination however misses out on the idea that structured combination which reflects tastes and preferences is also creates an experience for the wearer.

Lastly, compliance with the generic style codes has been recognized as fundamental since the research results demonstrate a tendency to define personal style through style codes. However, style codes here are benefited only as a tool to define style. Style here is something unique and built through collective practices of individuals in a way to reflect identity. Conversely, Murray's (2002) study suggest that people perceive style as something they exhaust. Meaning that, style does not signify much alone but the association with style defines identity thus style as a medium, adopts an integrative role as in one's relation with style as part of his/her personality (Kjelgaard, 2009).

### **6.1.2. Creation of Style**

As for the second part of my analysis, results exhibit that, participants (young professional women), first collect the necessary input which are classified as material and non-material before the formation stage initiates. Material inputs represent physical items gathered through shopping such as clothing and accessories while non-material inputs represent information and inspirations sources such as social media.

As noted in the findings section, participants reveal certain patterns while shopping. Traditional way of shopping directly from the store still the most preferred way of shopping. Further, value proposed is an important factor in the basis of shopping. Majority of the respondents prefer shopping from mainstream



fast fashion brands such as Zara, Mango and H&M while sustainable products, premium brands, small boutiques and made to measure pieces are also preferred value propositions but relatively on a small scale compared to fast fashion. In order to extend the study of Isla (2013), I would like to note that these middle-class women do not prefer to shop second hand and vintage. Here, brands which carry signs and symbols, are tools to reflect values and selfhood as well (Lascity, 2018). However, on the contrary of what literature suggests, although signs and symbols are (Parmentier & Fischer, 2011; Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Mikkonen et al., 2014), brands are not very active and decisive factors in the styling process of these middle-class professional women. Besides, as a strategy, some women choose where to shop according to their dynamic expectations changing from product to product. Moreover, there are also certain shopping motivations, purchasing styles, differing frequency and variable allocated time for shopping are observed. Expectedly, budget is also one of the concerns in the collecting process since the sample represents middle class. Precisely, the ones who allot higher than 20% of their budget, exhibit signs of passion or collective shopping. Passion here could be associated with fashion's appeal which requires considering the social aspects of emotions (Rafferty, 2011).

Lastly, one of the most essential rituals concerning sartorial practices is the process of product selection. In this process, women consider certain measures. These could be listed as quality, material, combinability of the product, price, fit between design of the product and consumer's taste and preferences, and finally the functional aspects of the product.

This thesis suggests that women consider and integrates quality in their sartorial practices according to their expectations from the sartorial piece. This finding extends the literature which claims, that consumers' decisions are affected in differing ways by the variety of quality dimensions through different contexts (Spencer & Crosby, 1997). Quality is measured subjectively by consumers who may hold some aspects higher than others (Hanf & Wersebe, 1994). Moreover,

this finding also in contrast with Brata, Husani and Ali 's (2017) suggestion which claims higher the quality, higher the purchase intention in the sartorial practices context. Along with other criteria, price dimension considered critical as well however price has presumed to be a function of the value offered. This value is appraised conforming to benefit, life span, quality and other attributes offered while these measured within the budget and taste limits of the buyer. On the contrary of literature (Hanf & Wersebe, 1994), findings claim that women do not associate high prices with higher quality although low prices are directly associated with low quality.

Compared to all these findings, there are certain studies carried out concerning style focused consumption in the literature. For instance, Cho et al. (2015) analyzes style consumption in the context of sustainability and investigates the motives and results of this kind of engagement by also considering gender differences. Similarly, Gupta, Gwozdz and Gentry (2019) also aims to identify the role of style in the sustainable consumption by including the fashion orientation to the study and contrast them. In a different context, Rahman, Fung, Chen, Chang & Gao (2018), examines the preference and decision patterns of consumers, both men and women, in Asia through a survey based on shopping channels, product appraisal measures and fashion knowledge sources. Although all these studies give clues regarding the style-oriented consumption preferences in different contexts, none of them intend to discover the criteria and considerations behind the product selection process of style-oriented women, in depth. In addition, Thompson and Haytko (1997) also analyzes the consumption habits of young college students however their study aims to understand fashion discourses and their relative place in the process.

Chowdhury and Akter (2018), analyzes the material gathering part of the sartorial practices from the perspective of young Bangladeshi individuals by interrogating the attributes searched utmost in the purchasing process of fashionable items. Considering both male and female counterparts, results reveal

that they both prioritize a good design and sales with nuances in their choices. Texture, comfort and durability stands out for women while men prefer harmony and functionality. However, style only emphasized here as an attribute of the product and a function of the design rather than being integrated as a comprehensive phenomenon. In the same manner, Birtwistle et al. (1998) examines men's sartorial purchasing habits based on quality, price, selection and staff in the framework of store's offerings while quality is emerging as the essential consideration.

Other category of inputs is represented by non-materials, namely information and inspiration. In order to be capable in the formation stage, participants collect these inputs frequently from stores, social media and benefit from ideas, experiences and examples presented by surrounding people. Instagram and Pinterest are the most popular ones in this context. Not surprisingly, social media is mainly preferred by young participants while middle aged women prefer stores overall. This thesis finds that, valid for every age, women may collect information or inspiration through their friends, family members or even strangers in the forms of approval, courage and new means. This result again likely to be related to the informative capacity of style (Barthes, 1957; Hebdige, 1979).

### **6.1.3. Formation of Style**

Style creation is an exhaustive process. This process consists of three fundamental parts. First of them is the process where the sources are collected. Second is the process where style is formed through these sources by using a variety of methods and practices. Finally, the last part represents the outcomes of the style formed. As shown in Figure 1, there are two-way arrows which represent the repetitive and retroactive nature of the passages between phases. In the formation stage, individuals may go back to preparation stage in order to add, revise and adjust their sources, then again engage in with certain practices in the

formation stage in order to achieve to desired outcomes. After the desired processes engaged in the formation stage, women may also would like to test if they achieved to their desired outcomes by trying beforehand. Here, two-sided arrow again represents the retroactive transition which enables adjustments by going back to the previous phase in order to achieve to the desired outcomes. Beginning with the preparation stage and ending with desired outcomes, Figure 1 summarizes the creation process of style in detail in the cultural context which Turkish women who aged between 25-55 belongs to. Thus, this figure is mediated and affected by outside factors which are respectively age and culture. I am going to explain them in detail in the following pages.

In the third part of my analysis, after collecting the necessary inputs, participants form their style by engaging with certain practices. At this point, I prefer to categorize them as base practices including combining, aestheticizing, adorning and complementary practices including strategizing, harmonizing and authenticating. According to the evaluated data, formation stage starts with combining collected pieces. Participants mix and match clothes and add preferred bags and shoes in order to complete the combination. Secondly, they may engage in the practice of aesthetization based on aesthetical measures. Then, adorning practice may occur in the forms of styling hair, putting on make-up and adding accessories. Meanwhile, other three complementary ones which are namely strategizing, harmonizing and authenticating are employed as mediating the process. To clarify, while combining, aestheticizing and adorning; participants may benefit from factors such as situationality, fashion (strategizing), creativity, following classics (authenticating), coherence and consistency (harmonizing) and inspiration with information (non-material factors) collected in advance. Practice of strategizing which is one of the mediator practices includes preparation period, situationality which covers cases namely ordinary and special circumstances, seasonality and weather and finally factors such as time period and time length of the situation with means of transportation while defining the action of participants accordingly. Making a

decision between functionality and comfort versus aesthetics is another practice of strategization. Last but not least, as a part of the strategization, fashion as well as colors, patterns and models are benefited as supportive instruments in the formation process.

In the literature, Murray (2002), focuses on the symbolic aspect of fashion and style practicing by introducing the notions ‘sign domination’ and ‘sign experimentation’ based on hypothetical and known fundamental positions with industrialist structure in mind. Although he worked on middle class professionals, his study does not cover the practice of style but rather focuses on understanding the fashion discourses. Likewise, Kjeldgaard (2009) offered the concepts “style switching” and “style code reflexivity” respectively by replacing industrialist factors with social norms. Through Kjeldgaard’s (2009) study, symbolic aspect of postmodern consumption is challenged since he suggests that although styles are freer and more disconnected from traditional forms, they still keep their connection. However, concerning the practice of style, there are no study conducted which analyzes the way style is practiced in detail. Our thesis offers an exhaustive process map which includes the collection of both material and non-material components and how they react with each other by the mediation of a variety of methods benefited in the process just to achieve desired sartorial outcomes.

Furthermore, from practical perspective Mikkonen et al. (2014) also suggests a philosophy called ‘Wardrobe Self Help’ which supports individual sartorial practices, emphasizing one’s own exceptional attributes, and listening to inner suggestions. Through this philosophy, being free from the industrial impositions and embracing authenticity is also emphasized. However, their study is conducted in the context of fashion as well. My other emphasis here is that these women follow fashion with the aim of being up to date however act conservative while accepting it. Here fashion acts as a supportive tool or intermediary as also labeled by Zanette and Brito (2019). While Bly et al. (2015) refers fashion as

the contrast of style, this outcome is contrary to that of Murray (2002) and Brickell (2002), since here fashion is defined as the reference point or equivalent while mixing apparel with adornments. Besides, contrary to Murray's (2002) suggestion of fashion's equalizing power, findings imply that fashionable products are associated with high prices thus equalizing aspect is pretty context specific.

Harmonization as one of the complementary practices, also mediates the other base practices. It is observed that there are four dimensions to harmonization namely, harmony with lifestyle, harmony between pieces, harmony through time and finally harmony with personality, emotions and philosophy. Further research reveals that women use authenticating practices by means of engaging in creative acts or following the classics. By building on Kaiser (1977), Thompson and Haytko's (1997) proposes that style is built with efforts of creative minds who look from an artistic window while playing with clothes. However, some participants prefer not to engage with creativity by employing more classic and simple inputs and methods. These results are likely to be related with context since it is a strong determinant in the ultimate self-perception of an individual. Namely, a woman with a solid self-perception and strong presence in her social environment, then her choice of clothing and style has the possibility of being "riskier" compared to others (McNeill, 2018). Thus, in a different context, choices of these women could differ.

#### **6.1.4. Outcomes and Outside Factors Affecting Style**

As a result of my framework based on collecting inputs, then formation of style by employing these inputs together with certain practices, women acquire particular outcomes. As they may vary according to the practices engaged and inputs chosen in the upper stages, they could be classified as reflecting personality, authenticity and taste. While many studies interrogate the fashion's place in the identity formation process of women in a collective manner

(Delhaye, 2006), this study expands the style's critical role in terms of building an identity through a creation process.

Lastly, analysis exhibits that age and culture are the essential influential factors in both definition and practice of the style. As one ages, certain changes occur in taste, way of living, environment, level of education status and financial state. Hence, these re-sculpt the philosophy of defining and practicing style. On the other hand, the outcome of this study is contrary to that of Kjeldgaard and Askegaard (2006) since although style evolves through time, there has been no disassociation or apathy observed with aging. Likewise, culture also has a significant influence over both definition and practice.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

“Fashion, style, la mode”. These are the introduction words of the book “*The Fashion Reader*” written by Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun (2007) as if they represent the exact same idea. Over the years, style in relation to notions such as fashion, consumption and identity is defined and analyzed in various contexts (Kjeldgaard, 2009). Although style is investigated in many studies, these studies did not differentiate it and solely defined style in the sartorial concept while explaining its philosophy and process of practice in detail. Until today, limited number of studies conducted concerning actual meaning and practical aspect of style through the consumer's perspective (Kjeldgaard, 2009). As personal awareness increases and fashion becomes a common and global sense, value of style heightened as a significant tool to be separated from the crowd. This study fills the gap in the literature by providing a solid definition for the notion of style which has been studied as a “subtitle” until now (Kjeldgaard, 2009) while also illustrating a detailed process map concerning how a woman builds her sartorial style. By all means, this thesis defines style as a collective, experiential and beauty-oriented practice which is a part of a lifestyle and aims for harmony, mirroring identity, expressing emotions and standing out while it is expressed

through style codes. Further, women create their style by composing material and non-material inputs through the mediation of practices namely combining, aestheticizing, adorning, authenticating, harmonizing and strategizing. As a result, identity, taste and authenticity communicated through final look. Age and culture are the external factors affecting the process. These findings have important implications for better understanding and execution of style as a concept for both individuals and market.

From managerial perspective, this study recommends that sophisticated motivations of dressing should be considered and prioritized while both designing and marketing the products for a better fit between offerings and needs of both parties. Considering the given definition, personal style should be re-evaluated in an exhaustive manner with all dimensions in order to understand the consumer and her expectations better. While creating seasonal collections and merchandise, all dimensions of style could be integrated in order to offer an experience. Besides, while collecting the material inputs, consumers shop through online platforms and stores. However online platforms should be enhanced in a way to eliminate concerns of consumers while enhancing the overall experience of both online and physical stores. Moreover, benefiting from the results which indicates shopping motivations, styles, frequency and duration of consumers could be analyzed in order to offer a custom experience (in terms of time and selection of goods offered) for every consumer individually. Further analysis reveals that considering the product selection criteria of purchasers, labels could be enriched providing a better information such as material and ethics) while means of combining and styling a piece including recommendations for aesthetization and adorning could be offered through visuals. Besides non-material inputs could be readily integrated and offered to customer together with material items such as offering tips and tricks, making recommendations and supplying inspiration sources. As a crucial source of inspiration, social media could be utilized in a more active and efficient way. Finally, based on age and culture; tastes, preferences and evolution of these



factors should be calculated as well as effects of globalization on the market offerings.

Overall, based on the evaluated data this thesis defines style as a collective, experiential and beauty-oriented practice which is a part of a lifestyle and aims for harmony, mirroring identity, expressing emotions and standing out while it is expressed through style codes. Further, women create their style by composing material and non-material inputs through the mediation of practices namely combining, aestheticizing, adorning, authenticating, harmonizing and strategizing. As a result, identity, taste and authenticity communicated through final look. Age and culture are the external factors affecting the process.

### **6.3. Limitations & Future Research**

While conducting this research, considering the characteristics of my sample which consist of professional women, reaching out to them and setting interviews within their busy schedule and limited timeframe has been quite difficult. Acknowledging the intrinsically limited structure of a master's thesis, this study reflects the realities of the middle class. For future research, this study could be repeated with people from different social classes and age groups. Such, when one could repeat this study with a higher class which prefers luxurious consumption, it is possible to better grasp how luxurious and designer brands are used as a source in the sartorial processes. Moreover, this research could be conducted in the context of second-hand consumption in order to understand how an authentic practice like this is practiced and perceived by women in their sartorial practices. Additionally, the research may be conducted comparatively between different age groups or social classes, in the future.

Although sartorialist practices have always been associated with women more, today men also are important focal points in terms of stylistic representations. Men were excluded from the study due to the concerns of simplicity and

women's rather sophisticated interest in fashion compared to them and this kind of interest could be explored only through a special tool (Karademir-Hazır, 2014). In future, men could be included in the research or a study which focuses only men's stylistic preference patterns could be conducted.

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## APPENDICES

### A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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02 KASIM 2020

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

**Sayın Emingül KARABABA**

***Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Münevver ALPASLAN'ın "Giyim tüketiminde stil kavramının anlamı, stili oluşturma stratejileri ve etkileyen faktörler" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 310-ODTU-2020 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.***

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Prof.Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY  
İAEK Başkanı

## B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Açılış Sorusu

1. Biraz kendinizden bahsedebilir misiniz? Yaşınız? Eğitim durumunuz? Nerede çalışıyorsunuz? Nasıl bir aileden geliyorsunuz? Anne ve Babanın eğitim durumu & mesleği. İlgi alanlarınız/hobileriniz neler?

### A. Stil Nedir?

2. Giyim kuşamın hayatınızda nasıl bir yeri var?

3. Stil sahibi birini nasıl tanımlarsınız? Örnek.

- Sizce stil kişinin kendisini/kimliğini yansıtır mı? Örnek

4. Kendi stilinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?

- Çevrenizdekiler sizin stilinizi nasıl tanımlar? (Şık, zarif gibi kavramları açtır.)

renk çeşit

5. Stil sözcüğü sizin için ne ifade ediyor?

### Projektif:

Size vereceğim kelime ile ilgili, hiç düşünmeden aklınıza gelen üç kelimeyi söyleyiniz:

Moda, Şıklık, Stil, Tarz, Güzellik, Kombin (Biraz açabilir misiniz?)

6. Kendinize has/eşsiz bir stiliniz mi var yoksa bir grup veya akımdan etkileniyor musunuz?

- Herkesten farklı zevk ve tercihleriniz var mıdır?

- Bir başkasıyla benzer ürünleri giymek sizi rahatsız eder mi?

7. Fonksiyonellik ve rahatlık kavramları stil anlamında sizin için ne ifade ediyor?

Yansımaları neler?

8. Estetik kavramı stil anlamında sizin için ne ifade ediyor? Yansımaları neler?

## **B. Stilin Yaratımı**

### **Alışveriş:**

9. Hangi kanallardan genelde alışveriş yaparsınız ve ne tür ürünler tercih edersiniz? (AVM, Online, Butikler, Semt Pazarları, Vintage, DIY, Yurtdışı, ... & Fast fashion, Premium markalar, El yapımı/Özel dikim ürünler, Orijinal parçalar, ...)

10. Ne sıklıkta ve hangi dönemlerde giyim kuşam alışverişi yaparsınız?

- Alışverişe ne kadar zaman harcarsınız?

- Fiyata ne ölçüde dikkat edersiniz?

-Aylık bütçenizin yüzde kaçını giyim tüketimine ayırırsınız?

11. En son yaptığımız giyim alışverişini biraz anlatır mısınız?

### **Ürün seçimi:**

12. Bir ürünü stilinize eklerken karar verme sürecinden bahsedebilir misiniz?

Kriterler nelerdir?

-Materyal, renk, model, doku, kesim, dikiş, menşei, ...

- Stilinizde daha çok tercih ettiğiniz bir renk paleti veya özel modeller var mı?.

13. Kalite kavramı stil anlamında sizin için ne ifade ediyor? Yansımaları neler?

14. Yaratıcılık kavramı stil anlamında sizin için ne ifade ediyor? Yansımaları

neler?

## **C. Stilin Oluşum Süreci:**

Stilinizi nasıl oluşturduğunuz konusunda biraz bilgi almak istiyorum.

15. Sıradan bir günde, stilinizi nasıl oluşturursunuz? / Özel bir günde stilinizi nasıl oluşturursunuz?



- Aksesuar kullanır mısınız?

- Makyaj yapar mısınız?

- Saçınızı yapar mısınız?

- Stilinizi oluşturmak ne kadar zaman alır?

16. Sizce bir bireyin stilini oluşturmasının en temel kuralları/olmazsa olmazları nelerdir?

17. Stilinizin vazgeçilmez 3 parçası nelerdir?

- Hayatınızın sonuna kadar tek bir ürün giymeniz gerekse neyi tercih ederdingiz?  
(Elbise, sneaker etc.)

18. Stilinizi oluştururken vücut orantınız/beden ölçünüz kararınızı nasıl etkiliyor?

19. Stilinizi oluştururken ne gibi kaynaklardan / ne ölçüde yararlanırsınız?

- Sosyal medya, bloglar, dergiler, aile ve arkadaş fikirleri

20. Stilinizi oluştururken, yaşadığınız çevreden, yetiştiğiniz kültürden ve farklı kültürlerden etkilenir misiniz?

21. Fotoğraflar üzerinden soru:

- Bu fotoğraftaki tarz hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

- Beğendiğiniz ve beğenmediğiniz yönleri nelerdir?

- Bu şekilde giyinen tanıdıklarınız var mı?

- Nasıl birisi bu şekilde giyinir?

- Siz bu tarzı tercih eder misiniz?

22. Aşağıdaki stilleri yansıtan birer fotoğrafı benimle paylaşır mısınız?

A. Şık bir ortam,

B. İş Stili

C. Günlük stil

D. Stilini hiç beğenmediği 1'er fotoğraf.

## C. ANALYSIS SAMPLES

### Sample 1. What is style?

İsim	Yaş	Medeni Durum & Meslek	Öğrenim Durumu	Baba Öğrenim Durumu & Meslek	İş Alanları	Kişisel Özellikler	Kendi Stili	Rahat pjk-Gül Rahat Klasik Spor Şade - Bade Spor sade günlük - Ash	Feminin Dikkat çekici farklı - Ada Spor pjk otantik bohem - Nihal Farklı pjk öznel ijl tarzı- ijl Rahat günlük oradan - Zeynep
Gül	53 Evli	Üniversite, Özel Sektör, Terziman	Öğretmen Okulu, Kamu, Öğretmen		Resim yapmak, yürümek, gezip yeni yerler görmek, bir kedi var, karant ve planlı,	Rahat ve pjk, ekonomik, bol, geniş, hatları belli olmayan, spor pjk, üstü üste giyinmek, kombin yapmak, kalabalık görünmek, modern/kesik harman, zıtlıklan uyumu, kılışını yansıtan, kendine has, minimal(i),	Rahat, klasik seyler, vücut yapısı, 4 yil önceki kıyafetini giyebiliyorum, basit, kombin, spor/kesik, ajır dar seyler(i), ayakkabı rahatısa edeceğ seyler(i), sade renkler, öne çıkımayan göze batmayan kıyafetler, desenli/seyler(i), bir arada farklı renkleri(i), en fazla 3 farklı renk, kendine has, yaratıcı (i),	KOMBİNLİ Kombin yapmam, kalabalık görünmek, üst üste giyinmek - Gül kolay kombinlenebilir parçalar - Aslı Zeynep	KİŞİLİK Eğilim, kendine has - Gül kendine has, yaratıcı(i) - Bade kendine has, matiz(i) - Aslı koyu renkler siyah - Ada sade renkler - Aslı
Bade	26 Bekar	Master, Özel Sektör, Marketing Analist	Üniversite, Kamu Emeklis, İktisat Mühür		Spor yapmamak, Voleybol, Pilates, Düzenli koçu ve yürüyüş, Film izlemek, Müzik dinlemek, yemek yemek	Rahat, klasik seyler, vücut yapısı, 4 yil önceki kıyafetini giyebiliyorum, basit, kombin, spor/kesik, ajır dar seyler(i), ayakkabı rahatısa edeceğ seyler(i), sade renkler, öne çıkımayan göze batmayan kıyafetler, desenli/seyler(i), bir arada farklı renkleri(i), en fazla 3 farklı renk, kendine has, yaratıcı (i),	ŞİMLİK Gül-Gül pjk - Nihal pjk, öznel ijl Feminin, dikkat çekici, gese-Ada	UYUM modern eski harman, zıtlıklan uyumu - Gül 4 yil önceki ijmimde giyebiliyorum - Bade	KİŞİLİK klasik minimal basit with a sophistication, öne çıkımayan göze batmayan kıyafetler, desenli seyler (i) - Bade düz parçalar, sade - Aslı Sade üniformalar modeller - Nihal Vücut yapısı - Bade
Ada	25 Bekar	Master, Özel Sektör, Satış	Üniversite, Özel Sektör		Meditasyon, yürüyüş, kitaplar, yemek okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, alışveriş yapmak, kitap okumak, öğrenmek, gezmek, spor yapmamak, Müzik dinlemek, yeni yerler keşfetmek	Meditasyon, yürüyüş, kitaplar, yemek okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, alışveriş yapmak, kitap okumak, öğrenmek, gezmek, spor yapmamak, Müzik dinlemek, yeni yerler keşfetmek		Yaşam tarzı-Nihal Yaşam tarzı-Zeynep	ÖZEL, bohem - Nihal
Ada	25 Bekar	Üniversite, Özel Sektör, Bilg. Müh.	Üniversite, Kamu, İktisat Mühür		Meditasyon, yürüyüş, kitaplar, yemek okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, alışveriş yapmak, kitap okumak, öğrenmek, gezmek, spor yapmamak, Müzik dinlemek, yeni yerler keşfetmek	Meditasyon, yürüyüş, kitaplar, yemek okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, alışveriş yapmak, kitap okumak, öğrenmek, gezmek, spor yapmamak, Müzik dinlemek, yeni yerler keşfetmek			
Nihal	55 Bekar	Üniversite, Özel Sektör, Güzellik Uzmanı	Üniversite, Kamu, İktisat Mühür		Meditasyon, yürüyüş, kitaplar, yemek okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, alışveriş yapmak, kitap okumak, öğrenmek, gezmek, spor yapmamak, Müzik dinlemek, yeni yerler keşfetmek	Meditasyon, yürüyüş, kitaplar, yemek okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, alışveriş yapmak, kitap okumak, öğrenmek, gezmek, spor yapmamak, Müzik dinlemek, yeni yerler keşfetmek			
İşıl	26 Bekar	Master, Özel Sektör, Mülteci İnci	Üniversite, Devlet Bankası emeklis		Meditasyon, yürüyüş, kitaplar, yemek okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, alışveriş yapmak, kitap okumak, öğrenmek, gezmek, spor yapmamak, Müzik dinlemek, yeni yerler keşfetmek	Meditasyon, yürüyüş, kitaplar, yemek okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, alışveriş yapmak, kitap okumak, öğrenmek, gezmek, spor yapmamak, Müzik dinlemek, yeni yerler keşfetmek			

### Sample 2. Formation of Style – Shopping: Channels

İsim	Kanallar	1. O arada kumaşına dokunmam azim. Onun için mesela ben internetten alışveriş hiç yapmadım yapamam diye düşünüyorum. Dokunmam lazım, en azından üzerine tutarım denememe değer mi değmez mi görmek için. Renği şekli bana uyuyor mu bakarm. Olmuyorsa denemem bile. Tığört vb bol seyler bazen denemeden almım.	2. Geceken diyelim vıcıkta bir şey görümdü. Aja bu ijmim deneyim derim, müsaitim.	3. Daha bol, daha geniş, rahat, hatlarını belli etmeyecek seyler seviyorum. Bunlar nerede varsa oraya gidiyorum. Mesela gödp de Adil ijl' tan pantolon almam ben. Oturuyor üzerine. Kot alıcakam önceden Mavi' ye giderim ama artık gömiyorum, çünkü kottan lastikli, grip denemiyorum bile. Vakit kaybı. Beğendiğim kot nerede var ise oraya gidiyorum. Değer gün mesele sadece Zara' ya girdim. Başka mağazaya girmediim.	4. Ben mesela bu ara tesettür mağazalarından alışveriş yapmayı çok seviyorum. Hepsi de ijl ama. Bazı mağazalar acayip güzel seyler üretiyor. İntta da da takip ediyorum. Çok pjk geniş bol farkli kesimler... Bu insanları bir yerlerini götmeden de güzel ve kaliteli olabilirler bir kane benca. İla vücudunu sorgulama da güzel olabilir. Hem rahatsız, hem kimseyle götünü tırmalamıyorum, hem de pjk görünüyorum... Tesettürü insanlar da pjk alabiliyor. Kapalı deyinse ruhsuz bir kıyafet geliyor insanın akına de ijl mi... Parfüz ve eşya pektinde. Ama eğermanlar var, yırtık pantolonlar var, ijl görünüyor ijl dantel koymuş, uzun bir sweat ama ijmim...	5. Fikrile mağazaların terç ederim kesinlikle. Hiçbir ürünü denemeden, üzerinde görmeden almam, çantayı ayakkabıyı bile. Bu yüzden covid dönemi çok da sıkıntı yaşadım. Elimden gese bikini almadan önce bile denemek isterim. Dolayısıyla online' dan çok alışveriş yapıyorum.	6. Mağaza, Deneme olanağı, Online(i), Kulanmadım, artık daha sık kulanıyorum, çabuk sikiyorum.	7. Mağaza, Online(i), denemek, üzerinde görmek, yakıması, vücudta uyguluğu	8. Mağaza, Online(i), denemek, üzerinde görmek, yakıması, vücudta uyguluğu	9. Mağaza, Online(i), denemek, üzerinde görmek, yakıması, vücudta uyguluğu
Gül	Mağaza, online (i), belirli mağazalar, vitrinlere bakmam, tesettür mağazaları, dokunmak, denemek, Severim, mağaza gemesi severim, biriyi gezmeyi severim, kararlıyım(i), aradığımda bulmam.					Mağaza	Dokunmak, denemek, üzerinde görmek.			
Bade	Mağaza, Deneme olanağı, Online(i), Kulanmadım, artık daha sık kulanıyorum, çabuk sikiyorum.					Mağaza	Denemek, üzerinde görmek.			
Ada	Online (kolay, yorumları okuma şans, hizi, karşılaştırma olanağı, çabuk sikiyorum) Hemen alamam, yorumları okumam, ijmim					Mağaza, Online	Denemek, üzerinde görmek, yorumları okumam.			
Ada	Ürüne göre de ijl yiyor, mağaza, online,					Mağaza, online, ürüne göre	Parçaya göre			
Nihal	Mağaza, Online(i), görenek almak, dokunmak, sorun yapmamak, kanal atığı, kolaylık,					Mağaza	Görmek, dokunmak, kolaylık, sorun halinde muhattap bulmak			
İşıl	AVM, Mağaza, Online(i), denemek, üzerinde görmek, yakıması, vücudta uyguluğu					Mağaza	Denemek, üzerinde görmek			
Zeynep	bedenim bulma zorluğu, ijl ijl ijl için pratik olsa da benim için pratik de ijl, mutsuz deneyimler, deneme imkanı yok					Mağaza	Denemek, üzerinde görmek			

### Sample 3. Formation of Style – Product Choice

İsim	Med enli İsim	Öğrenim Alanı & Meslek	İş Alanları	Kişisel Özellikler	Kriterler	Renk & Model Tercihleri	Kalıte	Yaratıcılık	Rahatlık	Fonksiyonel	Estetik		
<b>Gül</b>	53	Evl	Öğrenci Univerte Kamu Özel Sektör Tercihen	Rasim yapmak için İzmirde, arazi yeni yerler görmek, "yayınlar" Nöbetçi, Filan, Düzeni kaçı ve yürüyüş, film çizim, Müzik	Annenin dilige İğne bir kedi var, kararı ve düzeni Kedi var, Yür düzeni yapıldı, sağlık ve çizim önemi, konuşuk bir kişiliği olduğu söyler	Kalıte, pahalı (x), ne te geydikim? İzmirde, başka medeniyet(x), kumaş, görmüşü, dokumalym, yayam tarzı, büyün ruku, yare	Ara renkler (örneğin yeşil, sarı, siyah, beyaz, puft(x)), kahve tonları (şayka renklerle kombinlendiğinde), haki, hardal, beyaz eşya kahve(x), desenli renkler (x), canlı ve net renkler, lacivert, mor, ila, pembe(x), desenli renk tercihi,	Ayaklı(x)&çanta, kumaşın kalitesi, tok kumaş, nylon(x), jers(x), pamuklu (x)ör, çizgiyince düzlenmeyi (x) rahat, sağlıklı, sık, pamuklu sporlar, kalem gibi, dokumunca hoş gelen, marka (x) pahalı(x), dilim,	Soyun, kullanımı, alışın olmak, vaktim, gençlem,	Rahat, hatları belli olmayan, bol kesimler ayaklarını mutlu olsun rahatlık olmak, yay ile gelen rahatlık iştigi, rahat hareket edilebilirlik, çok önemli	Önemli, Gardrop içinde Çarçafına, kolye(x), İnan, siyah pantolon, siyah görmüş, beyaz tişört, meda, büyün ruku büyün ruku büyün ruku	Göz yormayan, gözü rahatsız etmeyen, kombin, taşıyabilirlik, siyah ruku büyün ruku büyün ruku	
<b>Bate</b>	26	Bekar	Master Marketing Analyst	Açık havada meditasyon, sürüşüyle ilgili yemek yapmak	Yürümüş, kombinlenmiş, ayakkabı, fırta, kumaş, pamuklu, rahatlık	Sade renkler, monokromatik renkleri(x), siyah, toprak tonları (x), ana renkler ( mav, yeşil, kırmızı), ince tırba çiziler	çok ucuz(x), basit(x), yüksek fiyat(x), sağlıklı, kalite, kıyafet.	Farklı tasarımlar, farklı payları kombinlenmek,	Rahatlık çok önemli, ayakkabıları mutlu olsun rahat olmak, ayırıcıdır payları(x),	Rahatlık önemli, eskiden önemli idi, şimdi rahatlık görmüş, Üzerine yapışkan döğru kombin	Üçünemesi rahat etmemiş, önemli, İnan, sade renkler	Güzel, gözü rahatsız etmeyen, uyumlu	
<b>Ah</b>	25	Bekar	Master Özel Sektör, Özel Sektör, Sektör	Öğrenim Univerte, Kamu Özel Sektör, Sektör	Okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, dişleri yapmak kitap okumak	Hüsk karar verem görmüşü evim	Büyük, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Soft tonlar, renk parçalar, beyaz, kırmızı, koyu kombinlenmiş renkler, kumaş (x)(Saba), yık, güzellik, görmüşü, önemli	Önemli, uzun yıllar kullanabilirlik, standart, marka	Yaratıcı(x)im, çabası ve özün, farklı parçalar, dağılı kombin	Rahatlık önemli, eskiden önemli idi, şimdi rahatlık görmüş, Üzerine yapışkan döğru kombin	Üçünemesi rahat etmemiş, önemli, İnan, sade renkler	Güzel, gözü rahatsız etmeyen, uyumlu
<b>Ata</b>	25	Bekar	Univerte, Özel Sektör, Bilgi Müh., Müd.	Okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, spor yapmak, emirlerim Güzelik	Hüsk karar verem görmüşü evim	Farklı, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Farklı, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Farklı, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Önemli, uzun yıllar kullanabilirlik, standart, marka	Yaratıcı(x)im, çabası ve özün, farklı parçalar, dağılı kombin	Rahatlık önemli, eskiden önemli idi, şimdi rahatlık görmüş, Üzerine yapışkan döğru kombin	Üçünemesi rahat etmemiş, önemli, İnan, sade renkler	Güzel, gözü rahatsız etmeyen, uyumlu
<b>İhsan</b>	55	Bekar	Univerte, Özel Sektör, Devlet	Okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, spor yapmak, emirlerim Güzelik	Hüsk karar verem görmüşü evim	Farklı, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Farklı, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Farklı, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Önemli, uzun yıllar kullanabilirlik, standart, marka	Yaratıcı(x)im, çabası ve özün, farklı parçalar, dağılı kombin	Rahatlık önemli, eskiden önemli idi, şimdi rahatlık görmüş, Üzerine yapışkan döğru kombin	Üçünemesi rahat etmemiş, önemli, İnan, sade renkler	Güzel, gözü rahatsız etmeyen, uyumlu
			Master, Özel Sektör, Devlet	Okumak, öğrenmek, yemek yapmak, spor yapmak, emirlerim Güzelik	Hüsk karar verem görmüşü evim	Farklı, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Farklı, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Farklı, zaf gösterip göstermemesi, siyah ile göstermek, gövdenin faktör, siyah önemli, muafif anama, materyal (dağım, x, giyim & pamuklu, da giyim & çok konese dağılı)	Önemli, uzun yıllar kullanabilirlik, standart, marka	Yaratıcı(x)im, çabası ve özün, farklı parçalar, dağılı kombin	Rahatlık önemli, eskiden önemli idi, şimdi rahatlık görmüş, Üzerine yapışkan döğru kombin	Üçünemesi rahat etmemiş, önemli, İnan, sade renkler	Güzel, gözü rahatsız etmeyen, uyumlu
<b>Stilin Yaratımı - Ürün Seçimi</b>						<b>Kriterler</b>	<b>Renk Model Tercihleri</b>	<b>Kalıte</b>	<b>Rahatlık</b>	<b>Fonksiyonel</b>	<b>Estetik</b>		

## D. SAMPLES FROM PHOTO ELICITATION SESSION

*Sample 1. Casual*



*Sample 2. Business*



*Sample 3. Vintage*



*Sample 4. Fashionable*



*Sample 5. Chic*





## E. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Bu çalıřma, temel olarak, giyim kuřam stiline kavram olarak ne olduđunu ve bu stiline çeřitli faktörlerden yararlanılarak nasıl yaratıldıđını anlamayı amaçlar. Çalıřma, birbirine bađlı ve geçiren 6 bölümden oluşur. ‘Giriř’ bölümü, bu çalıřmanın neden gerekli olduđu hakkında ipuçları verirken, aynı zamanda neden önemli bir çalıřma olduđunu gösterir. Bir sonraki bölümde konuyla alakalı literatür taramasına yer verilirken, ardından gelen bağlam bölümünde söz konusu kavramı etkileyen ve çevreleyen durum ve şartlardan kısaca bahsedilir. Metodoloji bölümünde, çalıřmaya rehberlik etmiş teknik ve yöntemlerin yanı sıra, hedef grup ile ilgili de demografik bilgiye yer verilir. Bulgular bölümünde, çalıřma sonucunda elde edilen veriler sistematik bir şekilde paylaşıldıktan sonra; bu bilgiler literatür ile karşılaştırılarak çalıřmanın katkısı ortaya koyulur.

### 1. Çalıřmanın Gerekliliđi ve Önemi

Saucier'in (2011) belirttiđi gibi, beden bir sosyal tuvaldir ve çeřitli giyim kuřam unsurlarıyla süslenir. Günümüzde insanlar sadece ilkel kaygılarla deđil, aynı zamanda daha sofistike motivasyonlarla (Arora & Aggarwal) giyinmektedir. Bu motivasyonlar, kiřinin dıř görünümünü oluřturma řeklini büyük ölçüde etkiler. Burada stil kavramı ön plana çıkar. ‘‘Stil’’ kelimesi bugüne dek çeřitli bağlamlarda kullanılmış ve tanımlanmıştır (Inkpin, 2018), ancak giyim kuřam bağlamında net ve açık bir şekilde tanımlanmamıştır.

Literatürde stil yaratımı ve uygulamaları çođunlukla kimlik kavramı üzerinden incelenmiştir. Çođu zaman bu uygulamalar sadece bir giyinme eylemine indirgenmiştir. Görünüm, kostüm, moda ve süslenme gibi kavramlar, giyim kuřam uygulamalarının bir parçası ve stiline eş deđeri olarak anılırken, stil kelimesi tek başına bir kavram olarak bu çerçevede eksiktir. Ayrıca, birkaç çalıřmada stil, moda veya trendlerin eşdeđeri olarak kullanılmış ve bu

kavramların aralarında net bir ayırım yapılmadan birbirlerinin yerine kullanılmıştır (örn., Takagi et al. 2017; Allinson, 1916; Parsons, 2002; Willis, Jones, Canaan & Hurd, 1990). Aynı şekilde Allinson' da (1916), genellikle moda için kullanılan "stilin demokratikleştirilmesi" ifadesini kullanarak, stil ile modayı eş değer olarak yorumlar. Stil burada, kolektif bir eylem olan ve topluluk tarafından benimsemeyi gerektiren moda benzer, metalaştırılmış bir kavramdır.

Türkiye açısından bakıldığında, stil üzerinde çalışılması ve aydınlatılması gereken önemli bir konudur. Karademir-Hazır (2017) ve Üstüner ve Holt'un (2010) araştırmalarından yola çıkarak, stilin Türkiye bağlamında önemi rahatlıkla anlaşılabilir. Gelişmekte olan toplumlarda, Batı toplumlarının uygulamalarını ve modernliğini örnek alan bir orta sınıf ortaya çıkmaktadır. Gelişmekte olan bir ülke olan Türkiye' de de aynı desen gözlemlenir. Bu nedenle, modern ve küresel olmanın yanı sıra Batılıların alışkanlıklarını uygulamak da özellikle orta sınıf profesyonel Türk kadınları için önemlidir. Bahsi geçen profesyonel kadınlar, aynı zamanda bu değerleri ve yaşam tarzını ifade etme arzusuna sahiptirler ve bunun için stilden yararlanarak kişisel bir tarz yaratırlar. Hepsi bir arada düşünüldüğünde, stilin bu kadınların hayatlarındaki yeri göz önünde bulundurularak, onların bakış açısını ve yöntemlerini daha detaylı ve kapsamlı bir şekilde anlamak önemlidir.

Yanı sıra hem Türkiye hem de genel literatür bağlamında, stilin tanımını ve profesyonel orta sınıf kadınlar tarafından emik düzeyde nasıl uygulandığını inceleyen Kjeldgaard (2009) dışında herhangi bir çalışma olmadığı görülmektedir. Kjeldgaard (2009), alt kültürler çerçevesinde, Danimarka gençliği bağlamında stil ve nasıl yaratıldığı üzerine çalışırken aynı zamanda stilin emik yorumuyla ilgili literatürdeki boşluğu vurgulamaktadır. Son olarak, stil ile ilgili birçok makro teori olmasına rağmen; tek başına bir uygulama olarak incelenmemiştir. Dolayısıyla, bu araştırma ile 25-55 yaş arası, modern ve Batı

standartlarını rehber edinmiş, orta sınıf, profesyonel kadınların stil kavramını emik düzeyde nasıl tanımladığı ve uyguladığının anlaşılması hedeflenmektedir.

## **2. Literatür Taraması**

Literatüre bakıldığında, stilin modern ve bilinen tanımı 20. yüzyılın ikinci yarısına kadar gitse de aslında son zamanlara kadar stil bir alt başlık olarak incelenmiştir (Kjeldgaard, 2009).

Stil için literatürde birçok tanım vardır. En geniş anlamıyla, Maffesoli (1996) stili basitçe “yöntemler” olarak tanımlar. Daha spesifik olarak, Hebdige (1979) stili, insanlar tarafından bir mesaj vermek amacıyla oluşturulan, kasıtlı bir iletişim aracı olarak tanımlar. Burada stil, duyguları ve kimliği aktarmak için bir araç olarak görülmüştür (Rafferty, 2011; Murray, 2002). Ardından, Kjeldgaard (2009) stili temel olarak, seçilmiş parçaların harmanlanması olarak tanımlar. Kjeldgaard’ ın (2009) çalışması, tüketim kültürünün post modern perspektifini temel alır ve parçalılık, akışkanlık ve işaretler dünyası olmak üzere üç temel boyut içerir. Benzer şekilde Murray’ de (2002) stil tanımını eşleştirmeye dayandırır; ancak bu tanım kolektif ve ticari bir bakış açısı içerir.

Yine Kjeldgaard (2009), stili, tüketim kültürü teorileri süzgecinden geçirerek, kişiliği ve varoluşu daha iyi anlamak için bir araç olarak tanımlar. Bu çalışma, bireyselliğe odaklanarak tarzın, çevreye uyum sağlamanın bir yolu olduğu fikrine karşı çıkmaktadır. Ayrıca Murray (2002), stili, insanların belirli yetersizliklerini gizlemelerine yardımcı olan bir araç olarak tanımlamaktadır. Murray (2002), stilin çelişkili öznel kavramlar, ayırım ve karakter yönetimi süreçleri gibi içsel ve zıtlıklar barındıran konuların çatıştığı bir arena olduğunu iddia ederek farklı bir bakış açısı sunar. Aynı şekilde Hebdige (1979) stili, karşıt tanımların büyük bir güçle birleştiği alan olarak tanımlamaktadır.

Son olarak, Armstrong vd., (2018) stili, stilin hızla deęiřebilen bir kavram olduęunu iddia eden dięer alıřmalara kıyasla kalıcı, dengeli ve uzun süreli kavramları ile tanımlar (örn., Volonte, 2019; Mikkonen, Vicdan & Markkula, 2014). Tarzın bireysel boyutunun dıřında kolektif bir boyutu da vardır. Blumer (1969), belirli tarzların zamanla topluma yayılabileceęini ve kolektif ruh hallerini temsil edebileceęini öne sürer. Bunun en güzel örneęi sokak stili kavramıdır (Woodward, 2009).

Literatürde, stilin dięer kavramlarla iliřkisi de oka incelenir. Zamanla stil, tanımını birok alana genişletmiřtir; moda ise bunların en bařta gelenlerinden biridir (Kjeldgaard, 2009). Kimlik, stil uygulamalarıyla ilgili olarak literatürde en ok arařtırılan konulardan biri iken; Armstrong vd., (2018), stili ön planda tutan bireyler için estetięin bir odak noktası olduęunu öne sürmektedir.

Stilin yaratılma biimlerine bakıldıęında, yine literatürde farklı yaklařımlar bulunmaktadır. Bazı alıřmalar kombinasyon ve yaratıcılık kavramlarını vurgularken, dięerleri kimlik, toplum ve endüstri atıřmalarına odaklanmaktadır. Murray (2002), “anlam kodları” kavramını ortaya koyarak stil oluřturmak için kiřinin uygun anlamları seebileceęini söyler.

Ayrıca, Kjeldgaard (2009), halk teorisine dayalı olarak, kiřisel stilin iletiřiminde, kimlik, özgürlük ve sosyal hayat olmak üzere üç güçlü ayaęı olduęunu öne sürmektedir. Bu alıřma, tüketicilerin farklı stiller arasında geiř yaparken, hareket ettikleri yelpazeye sadık kaldıklarını ve bu hareketin kendileri için düşündükleri özgürlükle sınırlı olduęunu savunmaktadır. Bu iddiaya göre bireyler, sosyal hayatın sınırlayıcı bir faktör olduęunun ok iyi farkındadırlar. Son olarak, Kjeldgaard' a (2009) göre, stil tüketimine iliřkin iki belirgin kalıp ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bunlar, Murray'in (2002) 'iřaret baskınlıęı' ve 'iřaret deneyimlemesi' kavramlarına benzer şekilde "stil deęiřtirme" ve "stil kodu yansıması" olarak adlandırılır. Farklı olarak, Kjeldgaard' ın (2009) alıřmasında,

işaret baskınlığının temelini oluşturan kapitalist kurallardan ziyade sosyal normlar stil kodlarında rol oynamaktadır.

### **3. Araştırmanın Bağlamı**

Bu çalışmanın bağlamını, stil deneyimlerine dahil olan Türk kadınları ile onların fırsatları ve çevresi oluşturmaktadır. Türkiye, modern Batı bakış açısı ve klasik Türk geleneklerinin bileşimi ile, eşine az rastlanır bir yapı sunmaktadır. Modernleşme ve Batılılaşma kavramları genel olarak bağlama hâkim olmakla birlikte; küreselleşme, farklı ekonomik görüşler ve dini faktörler, kırdan kente gerçekleşen göç de bağlamı oldukça etkilemektedir. Kentleşmeyle birlikte, kadınlar için daha iyi ve yüksek eğitimin yanı sıra mesleki fırsatların da önü açılmıştır (Abadan-Unat, 1978). Bu gelişmeler ve moda sektöründeki gelişmelerle gelen yeni pek çok seçenek sayesinde, kadınların çok fazla özgürlüğe ve birçok fırsata sahip olmaları nedeniyle, her zamankinden daha özgün ve zevkli olmaları beklenmektedir (Delhaye, 2006).

### **4. Araştırmanın Metodolojisi**

Metodoloji bölümünde, araştırmanın tamamına rehberlik eden yaklaşım ve yöntemler ayrıntılı olarak tanımlanmış ve açıklanmıştır. Araştırmanın örneklemini, yaşları 25-55 arasında değişen ve çoğunlukla Ankara'da yaşayan, iyi eğitilmiş, orta sınıf profesyoneller olan 15 kadın oluşturmaktadır. Başlangıçta, ilk katılımcıları belirlemek amacıyla “kolayda örnekleme” yöntemi tercih edilmiş, daha sonraki katılımcıları belirleme aşamasında, çeşitlilik ve kapsayıcılık sağlamak amacıyla “kartopu yöntemi” kullanılmıştır. Konunun özünü kavramak amacıyla, araştırmada nitel bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir (Langley, 1999). Zengin ve kaliteli verilere ulaşmak adına, derinlemesine görüşme yöntemi, temel araştırma aracı olarak tercih edilmiştir (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

Araştırmaya yön veren araştırma sorusunun doğası gereği, araştırma boyunca rehberlik etmesi için, önceden tanımlanmış herhangi bir teori veya teoriler temel alınmamıştır. Bunun yerine tümevarım yöntemi ve yorumlayıcı yaklaşımlar kullanılarak fenomenin derinlemesine anlaşılması amaçlanmıştır (Saunders ve diğerleri, 2009). Kavramların daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlamak için “fotoğraf paylaşım yöntemi” de kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılara farklı stil kodlarını temsil eden çeşitli fotoğraflar sunulmuş ve stil olarak kendisine daha yakın hissettiğini seçmesi beklenmiştir. Ayrıca, katılımcıların kişisel tarzlarını daha iyi kavrayabilmek amacıyla, farklı ortam ve stil kodlarını içeren kombinlerinin bir örneğinin paylaşılması istenmiş ve bunların üzerinden katılımcı ile sohbet edilmiştir (Patton, 1980).

## **5. Çalışmanın Bulguları**

Derinlemesine gerçekleştirilen mülakatlar sonrası gerçekleştirilen kapsamlı bir analiz sürecinden sonra çalışmanın ulaştığı veriler bu bölümde kategorilere ayrılarak ele alınmıştır. Cordwell ve ark. (1979) tarafından yapılan çalışmaya paralel olarak giyim; özgünlük, kimlik ve ilk izlenimi yönetmenin yanı sıra arzuları yerine getirmek ve iyi hissetmek gibi motivasyonlarla da tüketilmektedir. Giyim kuşama yüklenmiş anlam ve bu durumdan doğan önemli beklentiler

Stil kavramının ne olduğu ve nasıl yaratıldığı konusunun önemini vurgular niteliktedir. Bu çalışmanın verilerine göre, stil çoklu boyutların bir araya gelmesiyle oluşmaktadır. Bu boyutlar birlikte, bireysel stil tanımını oluşturur. Buna göre stil, yaşam tarzının bir parçası olan ve stil kodlarıyla ifade edilirken uyumu, kimliği yansıtmayı, duyguları ifade etmeyi ve öne çıkmayı amaçlayan kolektif, deneysel ve güzellik odaklı bir uygulamadır.

Veriler, yaratım sürecinde, katılımcıların öncelikle materyal ve materyal olmayan girdileri topladıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Materyal girdiler, alışveriş

yoluyla toplanan fiziksel öğeleri temsil ederken, materyal olmayan girdiler, çeşitli kaynaklardan toplanan bilgi ve ilhamı temsil etmektedir. Alışveriş yaparken, katılımcılar belirli kalıplar ortaya koyarlar. Bulgulara göre, doğrudan fiziksel mağazadan alışveriş yapmak hala en çok tercih edilen yöntem olmakla birlikte katılımcıların çoğunluğu Zara ve Mango gibi bilinen hızlı moda markalarını tercih etmektedir. Premium markalar alışveriş sürecinde seçenekler arasında olsa da lüks markalar bir seçenek olarak görülmemekte ve özel dikim ürünler genellikle çok özel günlerde tercih edilmektedir.

Alışveriş sıklığı açısından bakıldığında, katılımcıların bir kısmı haftada bir gib rutin bir alışveriş yaklaşımını tercih ederken; diğer katılımcılar bir rutin benimsemeyerek istek veya ihtiyaç duyduklarında alışverişe giderler. Alışverişe ayrılan süre açısından sınır, üç saattir. Bulgulara göre, alışveriş yaparken üç saatten fazla vakit geçirenler, alışverişini keyifli bir boş zaman aktivitesi olarak algılamakta, diğerleri katılımcılar 3 saatten fazla vakit ayıramayacaklarını belirtirler. Süreç içerisinde ayrıca, kişisel stili oluştururken ayrılan bütçe de detaylı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Bütçe dağılımına bakıldığında, bütçesinin %10'undan daha azını kişisel stilleri için harcayanlar, giyim için kendileri için bir öncelik olmadığını, %10'dan fazla harcayanlar ise alışverişini keyifli bir aktivite olarak gördüklerini vurgularlar. Giyim kuşam alışverişine ayrılan %20'den fazla bütçe ise alışverişin bir tutku olmasına veya tüketicinin toplu alışveriş yaptığına işaret eder.

Katılımcılar materyal girdileri toplarken belirli kriterlerden yararlanırlar. Bunlar kalite, kombinlenebilirlik, parçanın hangi maddeden yapıldığı, fiyat, bireysel zevklerin ve ürün tasarımının arasındaki uyum, parçanın güncel olması ve son olarak işlevselliğe ve estetik olarak sıralanabilir. İlham ve bilgi ile ifade edilen materyal olmayan girdilere gelindiğinde, bu girdilerin mağazalar, çevredeki insanların fikir ve uygulamaları ve son olarak sosyal medya aracılığıyla toplandığı görülebilir. Bu konuda en çok tercih edilen sosyal medya uygulamaları ise Instagram ve Pinterest olmuştur.

Çalışma, aynı zamanda, stilin yaratım sürecini ve şeklini özetleyen, yol haritası niteliğinde detaylı bir tablo da sunmaktadır. Bu tabloya göre süreç, üç temel bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde kaynaklar toplanır. İkinci bölümde ise bu kaynaklardan ve belirli uygulamalardan yararlanılarak stil oluşturulmuştur. Son olarak, çıktılar bölümü, oluşturulan stilin sonuçlarını temsil eder. Aşamalar arasındaki geçişler tekrarlayıcı ve geriye dönüşü mümkün kılan bir yapıya sahiptir. Böylelikle, bireylerin istenen sonuçlara ulaşılana kadar ekleme, gözden geçirme ve ayarlama yapmalarına izin verir.

Girdilerin toplanmasından sonra, tüketiciler bu girdilerden yararlanarak belirli yöntem ve uygulamalar kullanırlar. Bunları temel ve tamamlayıcı uygulamalar olarak sınıflandırılır. Temel uygulamalar kombin yapma, estetize etme, süsleme gibi uygulamaları içerirken; tamamlayıcı uygulamalar strateji oluşturma, uyumlaştırma ve kimliği ortaya koyma uygulamalarını içerir. Tamamlayıcı olanlar temel uygulamaları desteklerken, tüm süreç yaş ve kültür faktörleri tarafından etkilenir ve düzenlenir. Kombinasyon oluşturmak, burada ana adımdır. Katılımcılar kıyafetleri eşleştirir ve ardından kombini tamamlamak amacıyla ayakkabı ve çanta eklerler. Estetize etme yöntemi ile birlikte, vücuda uygun giyinme gibi estetik düzenlemeler de sürece dahil edilir. Daha sonra bir diğer temel yöntem olarak, saç şekillendirme, makyaj yapma ve aksesuar ekleme ile yapılan süsleme uygulamaları gelir.

Tamamlayıcı uygulamalardan biri olan strateji oluşturma farklı koşullara göre farklı adımlar gerektiren uygulamalarda benimsenen yaklaşımı tanımlar. Bir kombini tümüyle oluşturmak için yapılan hazırlık, durumsallık, işlevsellik ve estetik kavramlarının sürece dahil edilmesinin yanında, moda, renkler, desenler ve modelleri de doğru bir şekilde kullanmayı içerir. Durumsallık ise değişen koşulları ve bunlar karşısındaki tutumu kapsar. Yine tamamlayıcı metotlardan biri olan uyum sağlama ise, bireysel stil ile yaşam tarzı arasında bir dengenin yanı sıra parçalar arasında da ortak bir dil olmasını hedefler. Bireysel stil ile kişilik arasındaki uyum ve zaman içinde bireysel stilde gösterilen tutarlılık da



diğer önemli noktalarıdır. Son olarak, kadınlar kendi bireysel kimliklerinin yanı sıra otantik ve farklı yönlerini de yansıtmak ve vurgulamak isterler. Bunu yaparken, katılımcılar yaratıcılık veya klasikleri benimseme yollarından faydalanabilirler. Sonuç olarak, bireyler belirli çıktılar elde ederler. Bu çıktılar, hazırlık ve oluşum aşamalarında tercih edilen yöntemlere ve toplanan girdilere göre değişmektedir. Stil yaratım süreci sonlandığında kadınlar kendi kişiliklerini, özgün yanlarını ve kişisel zevklerini yansıtabilirler.

## **6. Araştırma Sonucu**

Literatürde, McNeill (2018), giyim kuşamın kimlik oluşturmak için bir zorunluluk olduğunu öne sürer. Bununla birlikte, çalışması moda tüketimine ve bunun sosyal bağlamda kimlik inşasına yansımalarına odaklanmaktadır. Buna karşılık, bu tez, kadınların kendilerini sadece kimlik değil, ruh hali ve kişisel değerleri de dahil olmak üzere her şekilde ifade etmek için kişisel bir stil oluşturduklarını savunmaktadır. Kjeldgaard (2009) dışında, stili kavramsal olarak ne olduğu ve nasıl uygulandığına dair, emik düzeyde herhangi bir çalışma şimdiye dek yapılmamıştır. Bu nedenle literatürde stilin genel ve teorik birçok tanımı bulunmaktadır. Bu teorik tanımların üzerinde inşa edilerek, bu çalışma ile 25-55 yaş arası profesyonel kadınların, stili nasıl anladığına dair emik bir tanımın literatüre kazandırılması hedeflenmiştir.

Pek çok çalışmada, emik düzeyde incelenmediğinden ve kolektif boyuta odaklanıldığından; stil, modanın bir eşdeğeri olarak görülmüştür. Bazı araştırmalar stil ve moda kavramlarını birbirinin yerine kullanır (örn., Welters & Lillethun, 2007) ve stili, hızla değişebilen bir kavram olarak tanımlar (Volonte, 2019; Mikkonen ve diğerleri, 2014). Ancak bu çalışmada, emik düzeyde çalışıldığı ve bireye indirgendiği için, aslında stilin süreklilik gerektiren, tutarlılık gerektiren ve uzun bir yaşam döngüsüne sahip olan sürekli ve bireysel bir kavram olduğu vurgulanmaktadır (Welters ve Lillethun, 2007). Aynı şekilde Murray' nin (2002) çalışması da insanların stili bir tüketim maddesi olarak

algıladıklarını ileri sürmektedir. Yani stil tek başına geçerli bir anlam ifade etmez ve stil ile kurulan ilişki, bireysel kimliği tanımlar. Böylece stil, bir araç olarak bütünleştirici bir rol üstlenir. Fakat bu çalışma, tam tersine, stilin benzersizliği ve bireyselliği yansıtacak şekilde bireylerin çeşitli uygulamalarının birleşimi yoluyla inşa edilmiş bir kavram olduğunu savunur.

Literatürde, Hebdige (1979) de stili, bireysel yöntemlerin ve değerlerin birleşmesiyle oluşan kolektif bir kavram olarak tanımlar. Ancak burada yer alan kolektivite kavramı ve değerler aslında alt kültürlerden tedarik edilmiştir. Ayrıca, katılımcılar stili, endüstri ve toplum tarafından dayatılan uygulamaları hiçe sayarak, kişinin giydiği şeyin içinde kendini iyi ve rahat hissetmesi anlamına gelen bir deneyim olarak tanımlamaktadır. Temel argümanı kimliğin ifadesi olmasına rağmen, Sobh ve ark. (2014), tarafından Katar ve BAE kadınlarının giyinme alışkanlıkları üzerine yapılan çalışma, stilin kadınlar için bir deneyim olduğu iddiasının mükemmel bir örneğidir. Hebdige'nin (2007) çalışması da aynı şekilde kombin yoluyla verilen mesajı odaklanmakta, ancak zevk ve tercihleri yansıtmak amacıyla oluşturulmuş kombinin, aynı zamanda kullanıcı için de bir deneyim yarattığı fikrini gözden kaçırmaktadır. Bireysel stil, dışarıya verilen mesajın yanında, aslında kişinin kendisine de verdiği değerli bir mesajdır.

Stilin oluşturulması süreçlerine bakıldığında, girdileri toplarken karşımıza çıkan en önemli kavramlardan biri kalitedir. Bu çalışma, kadınların kaliteyi stillerine ekleyecekleri ilgili materyal girdiden beklentilerine göre değerlendirdiğini öne sürmektedir. Bu bulgu, tüketicilerin kararlarının, farklı bağlamlardaki kalite boyutlarının çeşitliliğinden farklı şekillerde etkilendiğini iddia eden literatürü genişletmektedir (Spencer ve Crosby, 1997). Ayrıca bu bulgu, Brata ve diğerlerinin (2017) giyim kuşam tüketimi bağlamında kalite ne kadar yüksekse satın alma niyetinin de o kadar yüksek olduğu iddiasının aksini savunur. Alışveriş sürecinde etkili olan diğer etmenlerden fiyat da kritik bir karar değişkeni olarak kabul edilir, ancak fiyat katılımcılar tarafından sadece sunulan

değerin bir fonksiyonu olarak algılanmaktadır. Hanf ve Wersebe'nin (1994) aksine bu çalışma, her ne kadar düşük fiyatlar, doğrudan düşük kalite ile ilişkilendirilse de kadınların yüksek fiyatları daha yüksek kalite ile ilişkilendirmediğini iddia etmektedir.

Literatürde stil odaklı tüketim ile ilgili yapılmış bazı çalışmalar bulunmaktadır. Örneğin, Cho ve ark. (2015), stil tüketimini sürdürülebilirlik bağlamında analiz eder ve bu tür bir katılımın güdülerini ve sonuçlarını cinsiyet farklılıklarını dikkate alarak araştırır. Benzer şekilde, Gupta ve ark. (2019), moda yönelimini de çalışmaya dahil ederek stilin sürdürülebilir tüketimdeki rolünü belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Farklı bir bağlamda, Rahman ve ark. (2018), alışveriş kanallarına, ürün değerlendirme ölçütlerine ve moda bilgi kaynaklarına dayalı bir anket aracılığıyla Asyalı kadın ve erkeklerin karar modellerini incelemektedir. Ayrıca Thompson ve Haytko (1997) genç üniversite öğrencilerinin tüketim alışkanlıklarını da analiz etmektedir ancak bu çalışma, moda söylemlerini ve süreçteki göreceli yerini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Chowdhury ve Akter (2018), stil yaratım süreçlerinin girdi toplama bölümünü genç Bangladeşli bireylerin bakış açısıyla analiz eder. Ancak stil burada kapsamlı bir olgu olarak kavramsallaşmaktan ziyade, yalnızca ürünün bir özelliği ve tasarımın bir işlevi olarak vurgulanmıştır. Tüm bu çalışmalar farklı bağlamlarda stil odaklı tüketim tercihlerine dair ipuçları verse de hiçbiri stil odaklı kadınların ürün seçim sürecinin ardındaki kriterleri ve değerlendirmeleri derinlemesine keşfetmeyi amaçlamamıştır. Bu çalışma, literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurarak, orta sınıf, profesyonel, 25-55 yaş arası Türk kadınlarının stil odaklı tüketimdeki hangi kriterleri ön planda tuttuğu hakkında bilgi verir.

Katılımcılar, gerekli girdileri topladıktan sonra belirli uygulamaları benimseyerek ve kullanarak kişisel stillerini oluştururlar. Literatürde Murray (2002), 'işaret egemenliği' ve 'işaret deneyi' kavramlarını tanıtarak moda ve giyim kavramlarının sembolik yönüne odaklanmaktadır. Orta sınıf profesyoneller üzerinde çalışmış olmasına rağmen, Murray (2002) tarafından

yürütülen çalışma, stil pratiğini kapsamamakta, daha çok moda söylemlerini anlamaya odaklanmaktadır. Aynı şekilde Kjeldgaard (2009), Murray' in çalışmasındaki endüstriyel faktörleri sosyal normlarla değiştirerek sırasıyla “stil değiştirme” ve “stil kodu refleksivitesi” kavramlarını sunmaktadır. Ancak, stilin yaratılma şeklini ayrıntılı olarak analiz eden emik düzeyde bir çalışma yapılmamıştır. Bu çalışma hem materyal hem de materyal olmayan bileşenlerin bir araya gelerek, çeşitli yöntemler aracılığıyla birbirleriyle nasıl tepki verdiklerini içeren kapsamlı bir süreç haritası sunar.

Diğer bir önemli nokta, modanın Zanette & Brito (2019) tarafından da etiketlendiği şekliyle, destekleyici bir araç veya aracı olarak hareket etmesidir. Ayrıca Murray' in (2002) modanın eşitleyici gücü önerisinin aksine bulgular, moda için uygun nitelikteki ürünlerin yüksek fiyatlar ile ilişkili olduğunu ve modanın kendisinin belirli bir bilgi gerektirdiğini, dolayısıyla eşitleme yönünün oldukça bağlama özgü olduğunu ima etmektedir. Thompson ve Haytko (1997), Kaiser'i (1977) temel alarak, stilin, giysileri bir araya getirirken sanatsal bir pencereden bakan, yaratıcı zihinlerin çabalarıyla inşa edildiğini öne sürer. Ancak bazı katılımcılar daha klasik ve basit giydiler ve yöntemler kullanarak, yaratıcılığı sürece dahil etmemeyi tercih etmektedirler. Bireyin nihai benlik algısında güçlü bir belirleyici olması sebebiyle, bu sonuçların bağlam ile ilişkili olması muhtemeldir. Yani benlik algısı sağlam ve sosyal çevresinde güçlü bir varlığı olan bir kadın, giyiminde ve stilini oluşturan seçimlerinde, diğerlerine göre daha “riskli” davranma olasılığına sahiptir (McNeill, 2018). Bu nedenle, farklı bir bağlamda, çalışmaya konu kadınların tercihleri farklı olabilir. Son olarak bu çalışmada yapılan analizler, üslubun hem tanımında hem de uygulamasında yaş ve kültürün etkili temel faktörler olduğunu göstermektedir. Öte yandan, bu çalışmanın sonucu Kjeldgaard ve Askegaard'ın (2006) sonuçlarıyla çelişmektedir, çünkü stil zamanla değişse de yaşlanma ile birlikte stil kavramından uzaklaşma gözlemlenmemiştir.

Sonuç olarak, stil, yıllar içinde çeşitli bağlamlarda tanımlanıp analiz edilse de diğer kavramlardan ayrıştırılmamıştır. Kişisel farkındalık arttıkça ve moda ortak ve küresel bir algı haline geldikçe, stilin değeri bireyi kalabalıktan sıyıran önemli bir araç olarak yükselmiştir. Bu çalışma, şimdiye kadar bir “alt başlık” olarak incelenen stil kavramına sağlam bir tanım getirerek (Kjeldgaard, 2009) literatürdeki boşluğu doldururken, aynı zamanda bir kadının bireysel stilini nasıl oluşturduğuna dair ayrıntılı bir süreç haritası sunar. Bu tez, stili; bir yaşam tarzının parçası olan ve stil kodlarıyla ifade edilirken uyumu, kimliği yansıtmayı, duyguları ifade etmeyi ve öne çıkmayı amaçlayan kolektif, deneyimsel ve güzellik odaklı bir uygulama olarak tanımlamaktadır. Ayrıca, kadınlar, birleştirme, estetize etme, süsleme, otantik benliği yansıtma, uyumu sağlama ve strateji oluşturma gibi pratikler aracılığıyla materyal ve materyal olmayan girdileri bir araya getirerek kendi tarzlarını yaratırlar. Sonuç olarak kişiler bireysel kimlik, zevk ve özgünlüklerini yansıtma imkânı bulurlar. Yaş ve kültür süreci etkileyen dış faktörlerdir.

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