

An Investigation of Online Consumers' Choices of Textiles and Clothing Color and Design

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Abstract: *This study investigated online consumers' purchase behaviour towards the colour and design of textile clothing. Bestseller products on Amazon's e-shop were collected for four categories in women's clothing: Coats, jackets, vests, skirts, dresses and tops, tees, and blouses. The best-seller products ranked from the highest to the least at identified retrieval time were analysed for each category. The analysis was based on mixed methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse collected data relevant to colour and pattern design and the frequencies of choosing them. It was found that black was the most desired colour by online shoppers, followed by White. Therefore, black and white shades -not considered colours - are the most purchased online. This result would be due to these shades' independence from visual display qualities. This finding would interpret the challenge of marketing clothing and textile products through e-stores. Multi-colour designed textiles occupied the second position in textile design and colour. These results mean that online consumers preferred black and white shades and a designed clothing textile. Therefore, textile print design products could be more prominent in online markets than plain products of various brightness and saturation levels. These research findings support textile print designers in considering the specifications of online products in terms of design attributes, listing, and competitive advantage.*

Keywords: Colour, Consumer, Attitude, Behaviour, e-commerce, Online shopping, Textiles

1. Introduction

Textiles and clothing companies have increasingly used e-commerce to market their products. Consequently, traditional marketing tools have evolved, enabling companies to efficiently reach their goals and meet their customers' needs and demands. This mix's main axes are product, price, place, and promotion (BJELOBRK, 2022; CIMteam, 2023). In the design products context, designers would contribute to a marketing strategy development indirectly by considering selling points, price or promotion or directly in creating a design product to be sold by a company. It is worth noting that a successful marketing starting point considers the product, including its intrinsic specifications, features, characteristics, and extrinsic features, including the environment in which it is being sold, purchased, viewed or displayed.

Textiles and clothing products have been sold for decades via traditional physical stores. Consumers used to visit brick-and-mortar stores to view, sense, or try the products to recognise a product's specifications, features and characteristics relevant to its physical, functional and aesthetic aspects. Textile Print Designers are used to understand consumer attitudes and

behaviour towards textile clothing products available in traditional shops. However, online shops have been increasingly employed by various textile companies selling a range of textiles, clothing, and fashion products. Marketing these products in online shops is entirely different because consumers cannot interact with the products like in physical shops. Therefore, this is still challenging for sellers and buyers.

Moreover, online consumer attitudes and behaviour could be more explicit regarding design specifications. However, online stores are a promising avenue for marketing many products, including textiles and clothing items. This perspective indicated the importance of studying online textile consumer behaviour to identify the challenges facing manufacturers and purchasers and consequently consider and tackle them by marketers and designers.

2. Literature Review

Several research studies investigated e-commerce focusing on textile products to maximise the benefits and advantages of this purchase channel, namely ease of use and low management cost.

2.1 Consumers' Attitude to e-Commerce

Aichner & Coletti, 2013 investigated the mass customisation preferences of online shoppers of various product categories. They highlighted the significance of black cars being remarkably sold in mass. Through their survey, respondents expressed their need for personalisation and inclination to online shopping due to the demand for product unavailability (Aichner & Coletti, 2013). Mazurova 2017 highlighted the intercorrelation impact of the brand, colour and product position on a webpage. Product colour was the second most influential factor in online consumer behaviour. The preferred colours were Blue, Brown and Yellow; on the other hand, Green, Purple, and Red were the least preferred (Mazurova, 2017). Broeder and Scherp 2018 studied online consumers' attitudes towards online products based on their background colour (Yellow, Red and blue) about cultural differences. Purchase intention was investigated, focusing on its reasons, including emotions and trust. The yellow colour affected consumers' purchase intention, emotion, and trust in Eastern and Western cultural Fields (Broeder & Scherp, 2018). Broeder & Wildeman 2020 found that the red colour affects consumer attitudes toward online hotel booking stores as various red colours were compared. Consequently, light red was the most indirect and effective on consumers' intention to make a transaction because of the evoked pleasurable emotions (Broeder & Wildeman, 2020).

2.2 Consumer Response to Textile and Clothing Products

Colour is one of the most critical factors affecting online consumers (Mazurova, 2017). Therefore, designers and researchers have considered consumer attitudes towards the colour of textile products. Durrani & Niinimäki, in 2021, investigated colour preference in clothing consumption. They based consumers' preferences on several axes representing reasons for preferring clothing colours. Preferences are classified according to internal/personal, structural, colour attributes and social reasons. However, the most critical internal forces (identity, mood, body image, and self-esteem) were the internal forces (Durrani & Niinimäki, 2021). Mo et al. (2021) studied online consumers' visual attention and found that clothing products have significant display features and that consumers are attracted to unfamiliar clothing patterns. From Clothing product features, the most significant factors attracting consumers are shape followed by colour (Mo et al., 2021).

Research studies have been conducted investigating colour in the electronic environment. Nitse et al. 2004 explored fashion products' colour impact on e-commerce. They found that colour the non-realistic products' colours are one of the significant negative impacts on both sides, sellers and buyers, which could lead to customer dissatisfaction and loss (Nitse et al., 2004).

2.3 Purpose of research

Previous research studies showed the importance of colour in marketing textile products. Therefore, this study aims to explore consumers' attitudes and purchase behaviours towards textile product colours, focusing on online shops. The current investigation seeks to discover the range of textile colours online consumers prefer and purchase, besides the textile print design, patterns and motifs they prefer. Furthermore, it aims to identify challenges faced by designers and purchasers of textile print design in terms of design and colouration considerations and then develop suggestions to tackle them. This research question is: What are online consumers' preferred ranges of colours and types of prints, patterns and motifs? The significance of this research lies in providing textile designers, manufacturers and researchers with insights regarding textile design products' e-commerce. These results allow them to create a broader range of products and develop efficient virtual environments, web pages, and display options.

2.4 Methods and Materials

2.4.1 Data Collection Method

Usually, consumers' attitudes, including preferences, are gathered via primary data collection techniques such as surveys or focus groups through which participants answer a group of questions. Then, these answers are collected and analysed to identify their inclinations and behaviour patterns. However, it is believed that consumers' purchase behaviour could be identified and investigated through a realistic and credible approach, such as using online shop data. Through e-stores, a range of data could be discovered describing presented items considering featured, high price, low price, average customer review or best seller items. These data would be regarded as reliable sources reflecting consumer attitudes and behaviour towards the purchased products.

Amazon's online shop has been considered in several research studies as a source of data collection on consumers' attitudes or behaviour (Candi et al., 2017). Moreover, it is a widespread e-store that has been used by customers all over the globe, having a wide range of products, including printed and coloured textiles. Therefore, it is selected as a versatile, reliable source for the data analysed in this study. Amazon's online shop ranks the best-selling products of each category sold on its e-shop, making a list of one hundred best-sellers. A negative relation exists between products ranked as a "Bestseller" and their sales volume. These best-sellers are updated regularly and hourly based on recent transaction trends and can be reached through the e-store "<https://www.amazon.com/Best-Sellers/zgbs>". Therefore, this list is an appropriate indicator of a category's product status of selling but should be signified by the date of retrieval. It could help marketers enhance their product listings' searchability by enhancing keywords or product presentations, including images and videos and identifying competitive advantages. Best seller data could be employed to estimate product sales (Connolly, 2023).

2.4.2 Product Category Selection

A wide range of fashion, clothing, and textile products are available on Amazon's e-shop, offering textile and clothing products for various categories, i.e. women, men, and children, for varied purposes, usages, and occasions. Although this study addresses the colour and print

textile design, it is decided to study textiles used in garment making to infer realistic designs used in the market. This study is limited to analysing consumers of Women's clothing products with a focus on textile print and colour design. Four subcategories were identified for the analysis: coats, jackets and vests, dresses, skirts and tops, and tees and blouses.

2.4.3 Content Analysis Method

This research collects online customer behaviour from an online shop using the web analytics method. One advantage of web analytics is avoiding biased answers to questionnaires, focus groups or interview questions. Therefore, this study is driven by mixed methodology; the qualitative approach is represented in identifying the colours and motifs used in the textile design, and the quantitative approach is employed to conduct the e-shop content analysis, finding out the frequency of those colours and pattern design used. The researcher searched Amazon e-shop for Amazon Best Sellers of Women's Clothing, Shoes and Jewellery category and then analysed the four sub-departments identified in section 4.2. By accessing the best seller products of each category, one hundred products are ranked from the first to the hundredth. Then, each product is accessed to analyse the textile colour and print design specifications using text data or analysing presented images.

2.5 Analysis and Discussion

In this research, consumers' choices of colour and print of fabrics used in garments ranked as the "Best-seller" items of four women's clothing subcategories, namely: Coats, Jackets and vests, Dresses, Skirts and then Tops, Tees and blouses were analysed. The Amazon e-shop order ranks one hundred best-seller items in each category from the first to the hundredth. The current research referred to Amazon to search for the best-selling items in each category. Therefore, four hundred products were analysed for their colours or prints.

Figure 1 shows consumers' colour and printed textile selection frequency. The colours found involved in the best-seller items are as follows (ordered from the highest best-seller to the least):

Black>Design>White>Red>Pink>Blue>Beige>Apricot>Green>Gold>Clear>Mauve>Burgundy>Olive>Brown>Silver. The most frequently chosen colour is black, with 59% of the four hundred items investigated. Black is followed by print fabrics, with 12% of the studied best-seller items in the identified categories. White colour was involved in the best seller items' colour with 10% of selections. Notably, each of the other colours involved in the best seller colours ranges from a low percentage of 0.000025% to 4%. These findings means that black, print, and white are the most chosen colours by consumers in the period in which best-seller items were retrieved from Amazon, i.e., 7 February 2024.

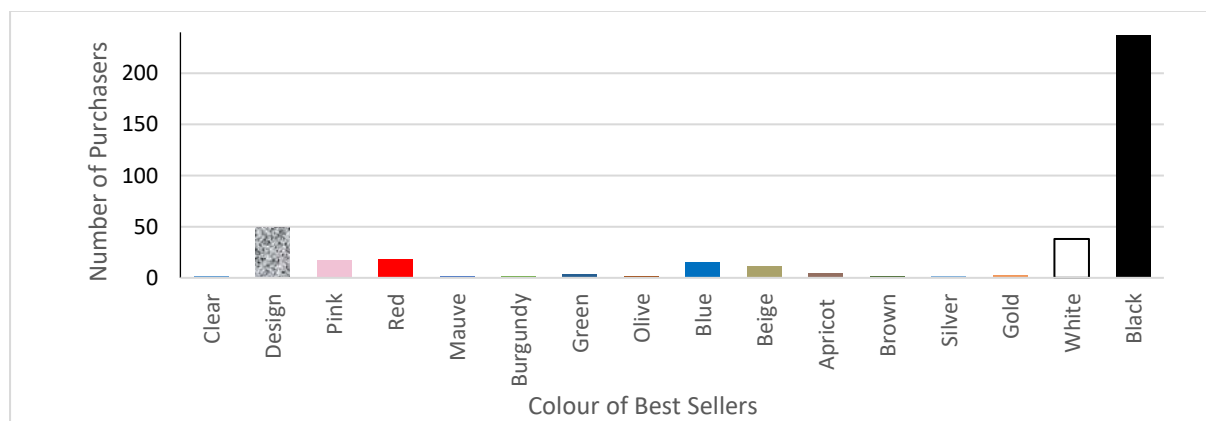


Figure 1: Frequency of Colour and prints used in textile design for all categories

Figure 2 shows the colours and designs frequently selected in making textiles of each clothing category studied. Black was primarily used in the Coats, Jackets, and vests category, followed by Skirts, Dresses, Tops, and blouses. However, White was significantly used in the Tops, Tees, and blouses compared to the other three categories. The print textile design was used mainly in making Dress fabrics; lower frequency was found for designed fabrics in skirts and Tops. Although the Coats, Jackets, & Vests category was the least used designed fabrics.

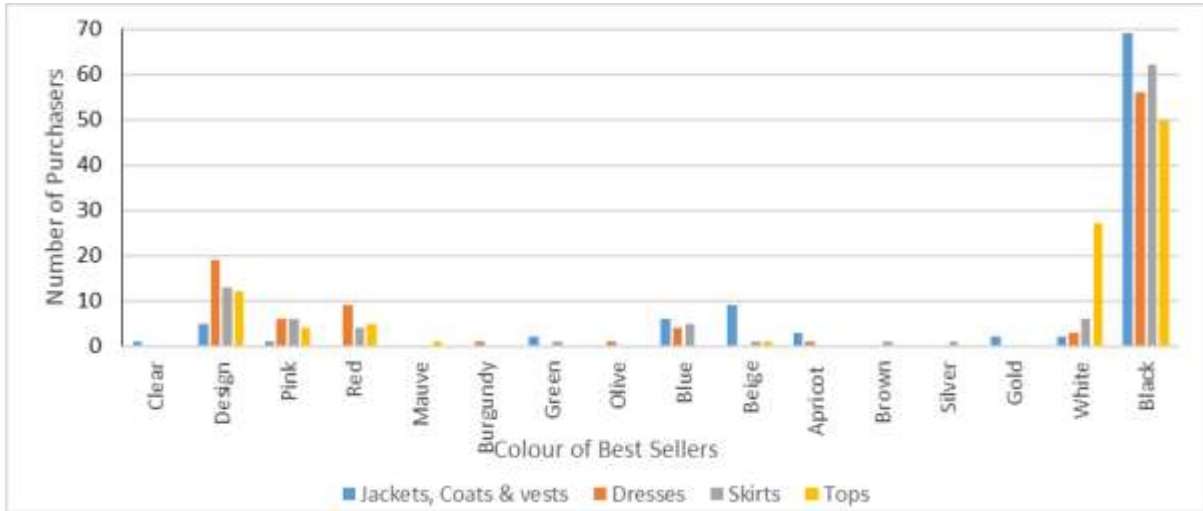


Figure 2: Frequency of Colour and prints used in textile design for all subcategories

Women's clothing included Various shades of colours, frequently chosen as best sellers (See Figure 3) Pink variants included Hot Pink, Fluopink, Pale-Rose, Rose, Light Pink, Tulle Pink, and Bright Pink. Red shades' names are Red, Wine red, Rose red, Mauve, and Burgundy. The greens selected involved Fluorescent Green, selected various Greens, Army Green and Olive. However, A wide range of blue items were found in best-seller clothing products: Thousand Oceans Blue, Royal Blue, Sky Blue, Weathered - Medium Blue, Denim Blue, Dusty Blue, Navy Blue, Haze Blue, and Dark Blue. Notably, the Blues range is the widest among all the shades. Regarding the Beige, there have been various shades employed, i.e. Beige, Khaki, Dark Camel, and Cream. A variant shade of each of Brown, i.e. Apricot and white, i.e., off-white, are involved in the best-seller women's fabric colours.

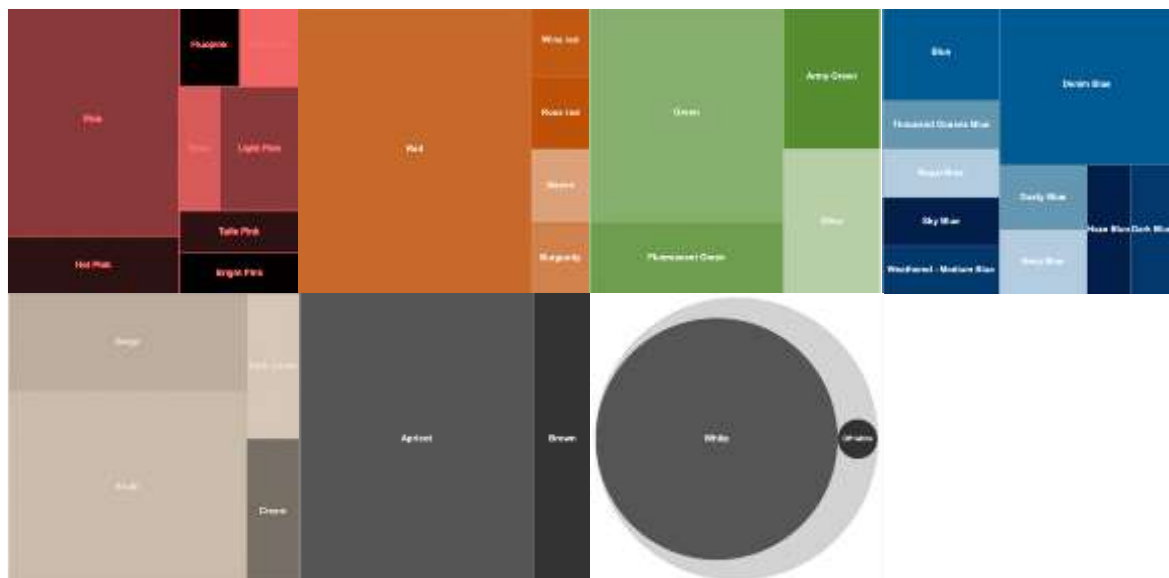


Figure 3: Colours' Shades in best-seller items

The designed print fabric, i.e. multi-colour textiles, was found to be the second most chosen category. Investigating the type of designs used in making these fabrics was interesting. The analysis of multi-colour designs concluded that the patterns used were inspired by several traditional sources of textile design (see Figure 4). The most used motifs are floral patterns (47%), followed by geometrical designs (27%); animal patterns are adopted with 6% of the designs, textured patterns existed (4%), then 2% for each of ethnic and nature pattern design.

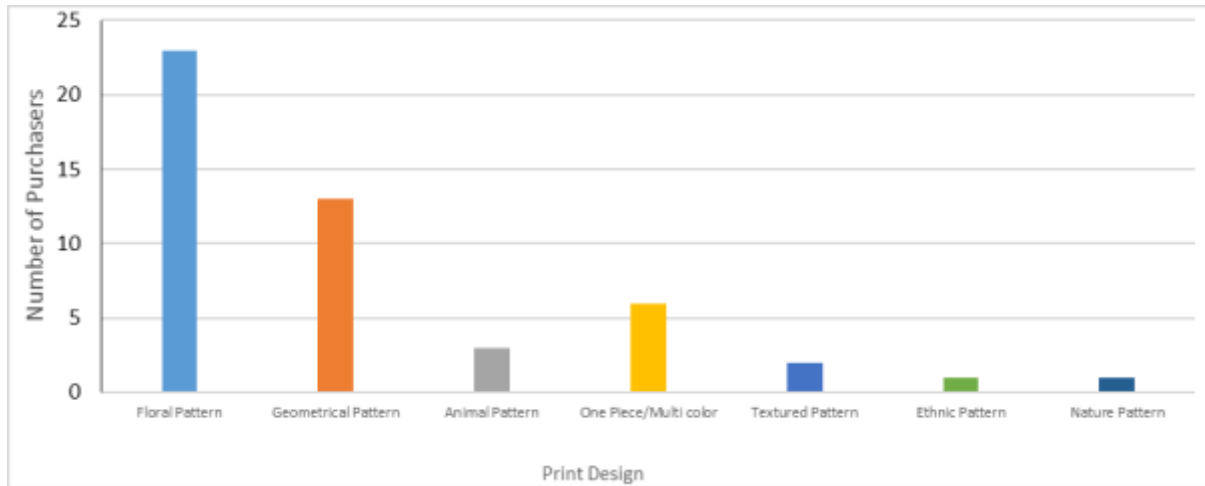


Figure 4: Types of inspiration sources of multi-colour textile print design

Variant motifs were used in creating the found patterns and were analysed to identify the motifs used in the design-making process of each design type (see Figure 5). The geometrical pattern was based on variable shapes, i.e. stripes, polka dots, heart shapes, Checks (Tratan, flannel or Plaid), and paisley design. However, floral patterns were inspired by abstract, boho floral and African style motifs. Animal patterns and prints were sourced from animal skins such as tiger and leopard. Furthermore, textured patterns are a type of pattern made by texturing simple geometrical shapes or by imitating pencil drawing texture.

Regarding ethnic design, the African motifs and colours were the most significantly used in this context. Besides that, camouflage prints were used to make several women’s clothing textiles. Moreover, colour design of organic usage of colours was found to be used in creating women’s clothing textile design.

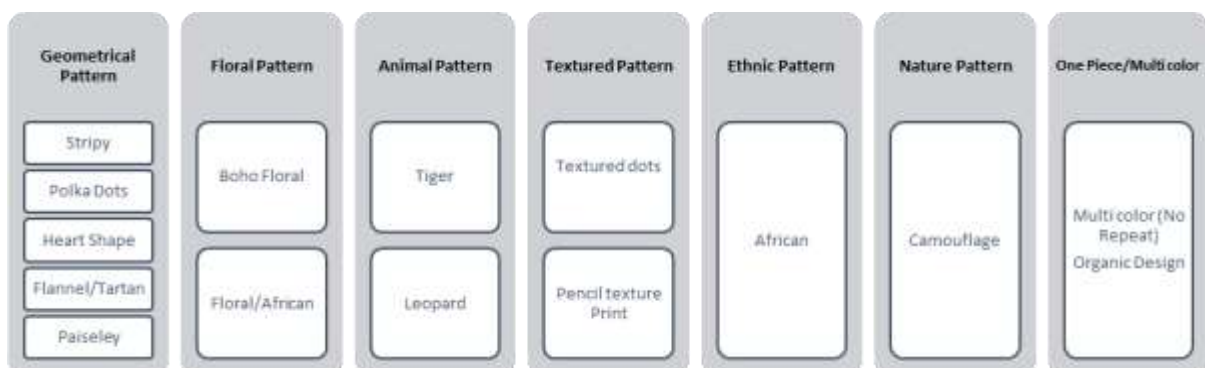


Figure 5: Variations of motifs used in Multi colour textile design

3. Conclusions

This study analysed online consumers' choices of textile colour and design. Significant results were concluded to support clothing textile designers, providing them with colours frequently chosen. It was found that the highest colour online shoppers selected is black, with more than half of the best sellers. In terms of plain colours, White followed black and was ranked the second-most selected colour among the clothing textiles' colours, with around a tenth of the chosen by customers through e-commerce. Notably, black and white are not colours but shades generated by light's complete absence or existence, respectively. The reason for finding these shades (Black and white) as the most purchased ones in online shops could be that these shades are trustworthy in terms of visual specifications. In other words, these would not be misvisualised when a customer purchases an online item, especially textile clothing. This finding would interpret the challenge of weak marketing of coloured clothing and textile products through e-stores. Therefore, visualising coloured clothing and textile products should be reconsidered to widen the range of marketable products, enhancing the selling of these products via e-commerce. Various pinks, reds, blues, greens and beiges were found among customers' choices of women's clothing textiles.

Regarding Multi-colour Designed clothing textiles, they occupied the second position in textile design and colour. Accordingly, it is concluded that online consumers' main options were to select black and white shades or designed clothing textiles. Therefore, marketing-designed textiles were a better case than the range of colours found involved in online textile products. Thus, these products still have a greater chance in marketing than plain products of various brightness and saturation levels. Almost all textile designs were inspired by conventional sources, including animals, floral and geometrical references. These results could be significantly considered in developing the women's clothing textiles' marketing strategy for e-commerce.

Further research is recommended to investigate other aspects that could affect challenges facing consumers and marketers, then follow this process of identifying and tackling these challenges. For clothing textile design, more understanding is required to have a clear image regarding these designs' specifications.

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