

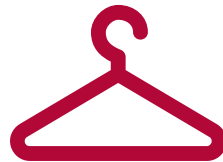
Understanding Professional Fashion Stylists' Outfit Recommendation Process

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Introduction



36% reduction in how often clothes are worn before disposal compared to 15 years ago.



Some identified causes

Not knowing how to wear what you have.
Ill fitting clothes due to wrong styling.
Complexity of decision-making process in choosing from multiple options in the wardrobe.



A possible solution: intelligent recommender systems

Essentially trying to play the role of a human stylist.
We need to understand what the stylist is doing now.

Research Objective

- To understand the factors that affect outfit choice from the perspective of professional stylists.
- Research questions:
 - RQ1 – What factors influence how professional stylists make decisions on outfit suitability and choice?
 - RQ2 – Do the outfit suitability and choice factors change if they are integrating the client's existing wardrobe?

Research Approach

Methodology: Phenomenology.

Method: Semi-structured interviews.

Analysis: Thematic analysis (inductive coding).

Sample

- 12 US-based participants.
- 30 mins to 1-hour interviews.
- Expertise – minimum of 3 years experience:
 - Wardrobe consultants
 - Image consultants
 - Personal stylists

Findings

- RQ1- What factors influence how experts make decisions on outfit suitability and choice?
 - Client considerations
 - Garment features
 - Stylist consultation process

Client Considerations

- Personal features
 - Body shape (Primary)
 - Coloring (Primary)
 - Age (Secondary)
 - Personal perceptions (Secondary)

Body shape:

“I don't like the ‘you're a pear, you're an apple’, I don't really like describing it that way. But it is true that you know, a person can be curvier on the bottom than on the top. And so things are going to fit that person differently than curvier on the top than on the bottom” – Wardrobe consultant, QRI9.

Client Considerations

- Lifestyle
 - Daily activities
 - Profession
 - Budget
 - Style preferences
 - Intended result
 - occasion
 - Personality

“I need to understand who they are and what they’re doing today and their life and where they want to go. When I know that, then I go in and assess their closet” – Image consultant, QRI5.

Garment Features

- Garment attributes
- Brands
- Fashion industry seasons/Trends
- Wardrobe basics
- Clothing versatility

Wardrobe basics/ versatility:

“Classics are going to be stuff that does not go out of style. Your pinstripe suit, your A-line dress, your black pumps, stuff that don't go out of style. Or you could take a pencil skirt and mix it with anything. Yeah. That's the stuff that you're going to spend the most money on.” – Image consultant, QRI8.

“So based on that and especially knowing that she’s a stay at home mom, the things I’m going to prioritize again are like her hourglass figure for things that are going to compliment that. Things that you know nip in at the waist a little bit and then also she’s staying home with her kids so comfort is probably really important to her, even if she is like going out, she probably wants something that could maybe also work for just staying home” – Personal shopper, QRI2.

Stylist Consultation Process

- Stylist specialization
- Mode of interaction (in-person or online)
- Client's objective
- Strategies and formula

Findings

- RQ2 - Do those factors change depending on if you are integrating the existing wardrobe or not?

Yes:

“And so I want to maximize their closet as much as possible. I'm not going to be like, hey, you need a black turtleneck when they already have one. It makes no sense.” – Wardrobe consultant, QRI3.

No:

“On paper, a lot of people would think it does look very different. But honestly, what we're doing, I think, is the exact same because if I'm just shopping with someone, I'm still teaching them the things that I would teach them in the closet.” – personal shopper/wardrobe consultant, QRI7.

Implication for apparel recommender systems

- Body type
- Color
- Lifestyle
- Garment representation – ontology and image representation.
- User requirements to garment features mapping.

User Objectives

Personal Shopper

- “So the first thing is to find out what their event is, or their need is that would be number one” – Personal Shopper, QRI1.
- purchase decisions vs. dressing decisions at home.
- building an outfit vs. finding an individual garment.

Wardrobe Consultant

- “It's working with them to help them find the clothing and the style that helps them to feel authentic. But also combining that with what suits them well in terms of fit and cuts and colors and combinations” – Wardrobe consultant, QRI9.

Strategies & Formulas

- “ **<wardrobe integration>** Then we'll go through creating new outfits from within their closet...that maybe they didn't know existed and then at the end,
- **<style tips>** I'll give them a personalized recap of what to focus on moving forward like colors, neck lines,
- **<wardrobe basics>** what to get that are great must haves, what they should focus on” - Wardrobe consultant, QRI3.

Contribution & Future work

- Identify which features are important to learn for good recommendations.
- Ideal methods to obtain user information such as body type, coloring, lifestyle correctly.
- Mapping user attributes to garment features that are ideal for them.

Conclusions

- Important factors for professional stylist fell into 3 main themes: Client consideration, garment features and the stylist consultation process.
- Wardrobe integration plays a huge role in determining the approach to recommendation.
- Client features and requirements determines which garments are recommended.

Limitations

- Not a truly representative sample.
- Mainly the participants opinions.
- Still a useful source of information in understanding design requirements.

Questions/Contact

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