A Change Of A Dress For The Nation’s Young Women

Contributed by Mintel
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It has been an iconic clothing item for fashionable women throughout history, made or broken reputations on the red carpet and most recently been the focal point of an impending Royal marriage - but now it seems dresses are the clothing item of choice for young women.

Indeed, latest research from Mintel reveals dress purchasing has soared 20% over the last three years, with two thirds (66%) of women aged 16-24 buying dresses in 2010 - up from 46% in 2007.

Almost a third of young women admit that they buy items of clothing if they like them, even if they donâ€™t need them - and it seems the rise of the dress has been at the expense of other clothes items.

Indeed skirt buying, on the other hand, has fallen - dropping by 8% since 2007 to 53% of young women in 2010. Today, a quarter (25%) of young women are driven to buy new clothes as a result of new season fashion lines arriving in store.

Tamara Sender, Senior Fashion Analyst at Mintel, said:
â€œThis growth has been driven by a increasing fashion for dresses, with 2010 seeing a boom in styles such as maxi dresses, which this generation would not already own and therefore would need to add to their wardrobe. Skirt purchasing however has suffered as a result of this and also because of the trend towards wearing leggings more often, which can often be worn together with certain styles of dress, but less commonly used with skirts.â€•

The 16-24s clothing market has seen solid growth despite the recession and has grown 17% between 2005 and 2010 to stand at Â£10.1 billion, outperforming the overall clothing market, which has only increased by 9%.

Furthermore, Mintel forecasts this will rise 15% to Â£11.6 billion by 2015.
Indeed, clothes and shoes are ranked as the most important items of expenditure for young people aged under 18, with more than one in five of this age group ranking it as their first priority.

Just under half of young consumers (49%) shop for clothes every month with these consumers almost equally split between those that shop once a month and those who shop every few months.

And it seems Britainâ€™s youth are a nation of shopaholics, with four in ten 16-24s (39%) claiming to be weekly shoppers, one in ten going more than once a week or once a week and over a quarter going several times a month. They peak among females aged 16-18 (33%).

Older youths are the most likely to have cut back during the recession, with more than four in ten (44%) 20-24s spending less on clothes in 2009 than they usually would, compared to just over a third (34%) of 16-19s.

The year 2010 and the start of 2011 continues to be challenging for retailers, with a quarter of young people planning to spend less on clothing in this period. Thrifty spenders are most likely to be female, aged 20-24, and in work.

Nevertheless, the proportion of younger people planning to spend less is significantly lower than the third of all adults in the survey who planned to cut their clothing expenditure.

More than one in five (21%) young people spent more on clothes during the recession in 2009 than they usually would, peaking among younger women aged 16-19.

And it seems that while the older generation were tighthening their belts, the young were out spending - as this amounts to double the average of older people*. Indeed, more than four in ten (44%) young men and a similar proportion of 16-19 year olds did not change their shopping habits during the recession.

Over a third (34%) of young people said that they planned to spend more in 2010 and during the beginning of 2011, rising to four in ten (41%) 16-19 year olds.

Finally, Mintelâ€™s research also reveals that over a third (36%) of 20-24s are buying new clothes for a new job or job interview, highlighting the extra demand in the economic crisis.

As a result it seems young men are buying more ties, with a 4% increase in the numbers of 16-24 year old men purchasing these between 2007 and 2010.

Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

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