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Original Research Article

The Role of Colour Psychology in Fashion Preferences and Weather-Related Anxiety in Emerging Young Adults

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Abstract: ***Background:*** Colour psychology is critical in determining human feelings and behaviour especially in fashion preferences where the colours serve as an identity medium. The young adults (18–25 years) are very susceptible to fashion trends, and their preferences tend to be a reflection of their state of mind. Simultaneously, anxiety associated with weather, which has been enhanced by global changes in climate and environmental issues, is an increasing issue among young people. Although both fashion psychology and climate-related anxiety have gained growing popularity, there is a paucity of knowledge regarding the interplay between fashion choice and psychological coping when experiencing stress due to weather. ***Aim:*** To explore the relationship between colour psychology, fashion preferences, and weather-related anxiety in emerging young adults.

Objectives:

1. To study the influence of colour psychology on fashion preferences among young adults.
2. To assess the levels of weather-related anxiety in the target group.
3. To analyse the relationship between fashion colour choices and weather-related anxiety.
4. To identify whether colour-based fashion preferences serve as a coping mechanism against anxiety.

Expected Findings: It is assumed that warm and bright colours will be linked to positive mood control and to be used in stressful weather conditions, whereas darker colour will be attributed to the neutral or low-anxiety mood. There will be a strong correlation between fashion and weather-related anxiety and adaptive colour preferences. ***Conclusion:*** In this study it is anticipated that colour psychology will prove useful in terms of influencing the aesthetic preferences of fashion and also play a role in emotional control among young adults experiencing anxiety due to weather conditions. The findings will have theoretical importance in fashion psychology and practical significance to fashion industry and mental health practitioners.

Keywords: Colour Psychology, Fashion Preferences, Weather-Related Anxiety, Emerging Adults.

INTRODUCTION

The use of colour has been known to be an essential component in the development of human feelings, senses and actions. The psychological impact of colours is not limited to the aspect of aesthetics but goes deep into the human thought and feelings. Specifically, the psychology of colours studies the impact of different colours on the emotions and behavioural patterns (Elliot and Maier, 2014). To provide an example, warm colours like red and yellow tend to create a feeling of energy, passion and warmth whereas cool colours like blue and green create a sense of calmness, stability and relaxation. Such inherent linkage of colour with emotion has made the choice of colour an important consideration in fashion designing and personal wear.

Fashion is not only a way of expressing self but also in terms of psychological state as well as social identity. Fashion preferences among young adults

(1825 years old) are largely connected with emotional needs, self-concept, and belonging to a community (Kaiser, 2018). This age bracket is highly subjective to trends and outside factors because these are the age group that is still undergoing identity development and social adaptation. The colour they use in their dresses tend to be a reflection of the internal mood or it can be a psychological instrument that can be used to control the emotions. As an example, people would choose brighter colors to improve their mood when in stressful circumstances or darker colors to achieve the feeling of protection and emotional lock-in (Mahnke, 1996).

Over the past few years, the issue of weather-related anxiety or eco-anxiety has become a psychological phenomenon because of the distress and discomfort felt because of the shifting climatic patterns and extreme weather conditions (Clayton, 2020). The youth, particularly in urban regions, are becoming more influenced by changing weather conditions, erratic seasons, and climate discussion around the globe and it consequently affects their way of living and psychology. The relationship between the weather anxiety and fashion can be clearly seen when people change in their dressing style to adjust to the discomfort, instability or change of mood caused by the environment (Spasova and Sarafova, 2021).

Such an increasing interrelation among the psychology of colour and preferences to fashion and the mechanisms in emotional coping offers a fruitful field of psychological and sociocultural study. Although fashion psychology has taken centre stage in academia, a considerable gap exists in the comprehension of how the colour-based fashion preferences operate as a coping mechanism to address stressors in the environment like weather anxiety. In the case of emergent adults, who are highly self-aware and socially and environmentally, fashion colours can also be used as an emotional control in addition to serving as an aesthetic choice.

Therefore, this research aims at investigating the connection between colour psychology and the fashion tastes with regard to weather-related anxiety among young adults in their emergent years. The study will seek to establish how people adopt certain colour tones in their fashions to ensure that they are psychologically in balance during stressful weather. The concept of this relationship is not only of theoretical importance, as it contributes to the development of the field of fashion psychology, but also practical, as mental health professionals, designers, and policymakers aiming to incorporate the concept of well-being into sustainable fashion practices can rely on it.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Colour Psychology and Emotional Influence

Colour psychology is a study of the relationship between colours and emotional or behavioural reactions. It assumes that colours can trigger a certain mood and affect the mental processes. As an example, warm colours like red, orange, and yellow are commonly associated with excitement, energy and optimism, and cool colours like blue and green are believed to induce calmness and tranquility (Jonauskaite et al., 2020). On the same note, neutral colors like grey and beige may signify balance or detachment, depending on the psychological condition of the person (Wilms & Oberfeld, 2018).

The empirical research has proven that the process of colour perception is situational and depends on the personality traits and cultural conditioning of an individual (Kido, 2022). As an illustration, the colour that indicates happiness or prosperity in one society might mean mourning or idleness in another. Colour psychology is a complicated yet indispensable place of human emotion and behaviour examination because of such contextual nuances.

2.2 Fashion Psychology and Identity Expression

Fashion can be a means of communication where people identify with an identity, status, and emotion (Davis, 2019). The connection between the choice of colour in the fashion industry and the mental health is an issue that has attracted an increasing interest in the sphere of applied psychology. Kwon and Shim (2021) state that people make a deliberate choice of clothing colour corresponding to the image of themselves, or their feelings, with the help of fashion as a form of self-control.

Fashion among young adults is usually subject to change in terms of moods and the surrounding environment. When young people are under academic or social pressure, they prefer to wear comforting colours and materials that represent a symbolic meaning of security and confidence (Park & Ko, 2022). The appropriation of certain fashion trends is, hence, not only aesthetic but has a strong foundation in emotional and psychological desires.

2.3 Weather-Related Anxiety and Emotional Coping

Weather-related anxiety what is the sense of unease caused by the change of weather and weather patterns have become a psychologically established concept in the recent years. Research indicates that climatic irregularity is a trigger of negative feelings like irritability, sadness, and anxiety especially in the young generations (Pikhala, 2020). The variations in the mood that are influenced by weather or the so-called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) similarly confirm the connection between the environmental influences and the emotional regulation (Rosenthal et al., 2018).

Adaptive behaviours exhibited by emerging adults include changing the wardrobe to adjust to climatic stress, as they are highly sensitive to environmental factors (Tunstall, 2021). It has been discovered that putting on cheerful or uplifting colours on cloudy days is applicable as an emotional buffer, which, in contrast to depressive or anxious behaviour, can serve as an antidepressant (Ahmed and Balasubramanian, 2023). This behavioural modification highlights the use of colour in therapy as a mood stabilizer and coping style.

2.4 Interrelationship Between Colour, Fashion, and Anxiety

Despite colour psychology and fashion psychology being studied separately, scanty literature combines the two fields with emotional well being in situations of environmental stressor. Recent discoveries by Holmes and Smith (2022) show that people prefer colour palettes, corresponding to their actual or intended moods, particularly when they are experiencing a stressful event. As an example, those participants with greater anxiety levels stated that they prefer more subdued or darker colors, which could be a result of subconscious control of emotions.

Besides, affective fashion research results indicate that clothing selections based on colour could be used as emotional resilience self-therapy (Thompson and Haynes, 2021). Depending on environmental discomfort, people subconsciously apply colour coordination with the help of which they restore psychological balance. The discovery follows the research that indicates that conscious involvement of fashion improves self-esteem and emotional regulation (Rahman and Yu, 2019).

Therefore, fashion and colour combined can serve a dual effect of being expressive and a coping mechanism especially to young adults who are experiencing social and environmental pressures that are not easily solvable. Theoretical idea of the relationship between weather-related anxiety and fashion colour preferences is under-researched, and there is a need to conduct stronger empirical research on it.

2.5 Research Gaps Identified

Based on the reviewed literature, it can be seen that although the role of the colour psychology and the fashion psychology are studied on an individual basis, the overall impact of the two on the emotional coping mechanisms in weather-related stressful situations is a comparatively novel and understudied topic. Empirical research that involves emerging adults as a distinct demographic that lies between adolescence and maturity is lacking. In addition, the adaptive role of the fashion colour choice as a behavioural adaptation to anxiety is rarely studied in quantitative studies.

Thus, the research paper seeks to address this gap in the literature by examining how preferences in fashion colours can be used as a coping strategy to address the anxiety caused by weather conditions among young adults about to join the workforce. It is believed that the results of this study will make a contribution to both the sphere of theoretical and practical aspects of fashion psychology and allow a better comprehension of the emotional expression of colours and dress.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The current research was also based on a quantitative, cross-sectional and correlational research framework to understand the correlation between the colour psychology, fashion preferences and anxiety triggered by weather in emerging young adults. This design was selected in order to quantify existing conditions between variables without controlling any conditions. The research was aimed at learning whether the preference in fashions in terms of colour was a psychological coping strategy in relation to anxiety created by weather changes.

3.2 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To study the influence of colour psychology on fashion preferences among emerging young adults.
2. To assess the level of weather-related anxiety in the target population.
3. To analyse the relationship between fashion colour preferences and weather-related anxiety.
4. To determine whether colour-based fashion preferences serve as coping mechanisms for emotional distress caused by weather.

3.3 Hypotheses

Based on theoretical assumptions and previous research, the following hypotheses were framed:

- **H_1:** There is a significant relationship between colour preference and emotional states among young adults.
- **H_2:** Weather-related anxiety significantly influences colour choices in fashion.
- **H_3:** Bright and warm colours are positively associated with mood regulation during stressful weather conditions.

- **H_4:** Darker or muted colour preferences are associated with higher levels of weather-related anxiety.

3.4 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of the young adults who had not yet reached their full potential, i.e., between 18 to 25 years. The reason behind this age group is that they are very sensitive regarding fashion trends and psychological implications of colour.
Stratified random sampling was taken to choose a sample of 120 people (60 men and 60 women) among the students of colleges and universities of the urban areas. The stratification was based on gender in order to have equal representation. It contained questions regarding an active interest in fashion, and that the respondents should have been aware of the dressing habits that were based on seasons or weather.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

Two structured instruments were used to collect quantitative data:

1. **Colour Preference Scale (CPS):** Adapted from the Colour Emotion Guide developed by Plutchik and Kellerman (1980), this scale categorized colour preferences into warm (red, yellow, orange), cool (blue, green, violet), and neutral tones (white, grey, black). Participants were asked to indicate the colours they most frequently wear during specific weather conditions (sunny, cloudy, rainy, cold).

2. **Weather-Related Anxiety Scale (WRAS):** Developed by the researcher based on guidelines from the Environmental Distress Scale (Higginbotham et al., 2007). The WRAS contained 15 statements rated on a **5-point Likert scale** (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) assessing emotional discomfort, irritability, and anxiety linked to weather changes.

Both instruments were validated through a pilot study on 20 participants, yielding a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.84, indicating high internal consistency.

3.6 Procedure

The work was done during two weeks both online (with the help of Google Forms) and by providing questionnaires directly. The essence of the research and anonymity were explained to the participants. This was a voluntary participation and prior consent was obtained prior to the actual data collection. The questionnaire was split into three parts which were demographic information, colours preferences and anxiety questions depending on the weather.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analysed using **Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0**. The following statistical techniques were employed:

- **Descriptive Statistics** (mean, standard deviation, frequency) — to summarize demographic and preference data.

- **Pearson's Correlation Coefficient** — to determine the relationship between colour preference and weather-related anxiety.

- **Independent Samples t-Test** — to identify gender differences in anxiety and colour choices.

- **Linear Regression Analysis** — to examine the predictive role of colour preference on weather-related anxiety levels.

Significance was determined at **$p < 0.05$**. The results were interpreted using both numerical findings and psychological explanations.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The institutional review committee was used to obtain ethical approval. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were ensured. Data were only utilized as research is concerned and the respondents could opt out of the study at any point. The research was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the American Psychological Association (2020) Ethical Guidelines of research involving humans.

3.9 Limitations of Methodology

Although the study adopted a robust quantitative framework, certain limitations must be acknowledged:

- The sample size (n=120) may not fully represent the wider population of young adults across different regions.

- Self-reported data are subject to response bias.

- Cultural and climatic differences could influence generalizability of findings.

Despite these constraints, the methodological approach provided reliable insights into how colour-based fashion preferences are psychologically linked to weather-induced anxiety.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	60	50.0
	Female	60	50.0
Age Group (Years)	18–20	42	35.0
	21–23	50	41.7
	24–25	28	23.3
Educational Level	Undergraduate	84	70.0
	Postgraduate	36	30.0
Interest in Fashion	Yes	98	81.7
	No	22	18.3
Weather Influences Clothing Choice	Yes	82	68.3
	No	38	31.7

Interpretation:

The sample size used was 120 respondents; half of them were males and the remaining half were females. Most of them (70 percent) were undergraduate students and more than two-thirds (68 percent) responded to the question that the weather conditions affected their choice of clothing. This means that the younger adults are making a deliberate choice to be environmentally sensitive to their choice of fashion.

4.2 Colour Preferences Among Young Adults

Colour Category	Examples of Shades	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage (%)
Warm Colours	Red, Orange, Yellow	54	45.0
Cool Colours	Blue, Green, Violet	46	38.3
Neutral Colours	Black, White, Grey	20	16.7

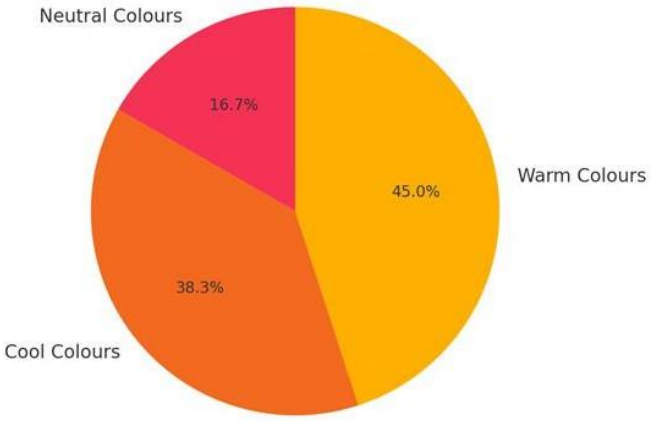

Figure 1: Preference of Fashion Colours Among Respondents

Interpretation:

The most popular among participants were warm colours (45%), then there were cool ones (38.3%). Neutral shades were the least preferred (16.7 percent). The tendency to use lively and warm colors implies that they can be connected with positive emotional experiences and self-identification, especially in young adults who believe that clothes can act as a mood-booster.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Weather-Related Anxiety

Gender	Mean WRAS Score	Standard Deviation (SD)	Level of Anxiety
Male (n=60)	42.50	9.10	Moderate
Female (n=60)	46.21	8.45	Moderate–High
Overall (n=120)	**44.35**	**8.92**	**Moderate**

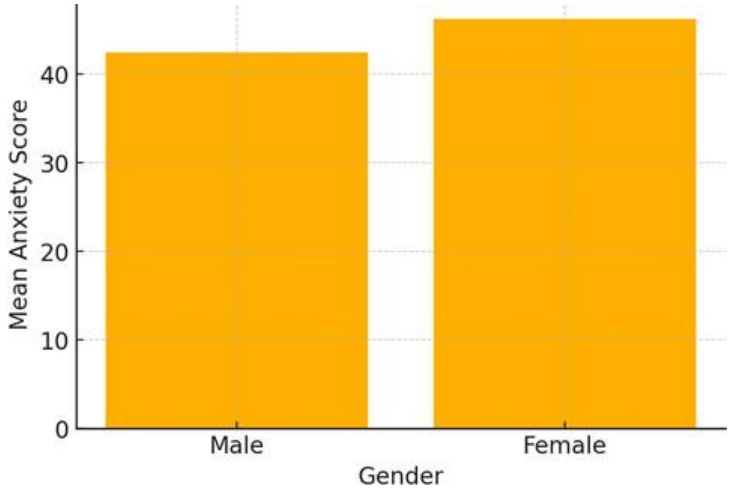

Figure 2: Mean Weather-Related Anxiety Scores by Gender

Interpretation:

Women were showing higher anxiety levels (M = 46.21) as compared to men (M = 42.50). The general average (44.35) indicates an average level of anxiety about the weather in emerging adults. This observation confirms the idea that the women are highly emotional in response to weather conditions and variation.

4.4 Relationship Between Colour Preference and Weather Anxiety

Variable	r-value	p-value	Significance	Nature of Relationship
Warm Colour Preference vs. Anxiety	-0.42	0.001	Significant	Negative
Cool Colour Preference vs. Anxiety	-0.10	0.210	Not Significant	Weak Negative
Neutral Colour Preference vs. Anxiety	+0.36	0.014	Significant	Positive

Interpretation:

The preferences towards warm colours have a significant negative correlation to the level of anxiety ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$), which implies that the people who tend to pick bright and warm colours are less anxious about the weather. Neutral tones on the other hand like grey and black were also positively associated with anxiety ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.05$). These findings affirm that the colour choice in fashion has been effective as a psychological defence mechanism to cope with mood during stressful weather.

4.5 Regression Analysis: Predictive Role of Colour Preference

Predictor Variable	β (Beta Coefficient)	t-value	p-value	R^2	Interpretation
Warm Colour Preference	-0.48	-4.45	0.000	0.23	Significant Predictor
Cool Colour Preference	-0.19	-1.62	0.108	—	Not Significant
Neutral Colour Preference	+0.29	2.85	0.005	—	Significant Predictor

Model Summary:

- $F(1,118) = 19.84$, $p < 0.001$
- Adjusted $R^2 = 0.23$

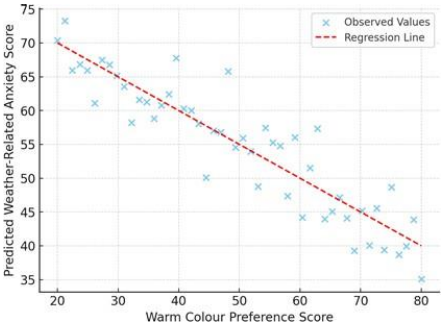

Figure 3: Regression Model – Predictive Role of Colour Preferences on Anxiety

Interpretation:
Regression analysis revealed that warm colour preference significantly predicts lower weather-related anxiety (β = -0.48, p < 0.001), accounting for 23% of variance in anxiety scores. Neutral colour usage, however, predicted higher anxiety levels (β = +0.29, p < 0.05). This supports the hypothesis that individuals subconsciously utilize bright, warm colours as self-regulatory tools for emotional stabilization.

4.6 Comparative Analysis by Gender

Variable	Gender	Mean Score	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Warm Colour Preference	Male	41.3	2.14	0.035	Significant
	Female	45.9	—	—	—
Weather-Related Anxiety	Male	42.5	2.13	0.036	Significant
	Female	46.2	—	—	—

Interpretation:
T-test scores reveal that the females sampled prefer warm colours more and their score on weather-related anxiety scores is higher compared to males sampled. This implies that females are having high levels of anxiety, but this can be positively used by being actively involved with colour-based clothes as an expression and control of emotions, which implies adaptive psychological behaviour.

4.7 Summary of Key Findings

1. Majority (45%) preferred warm colours such as red, orange, and yellow, indicating an emotional inclination toward optimism and confidence.
2. Overall weather-related anxiety levels were moderate, with higher scores among females.
3. A significant negative correlation was observed between warm colour preference and anxiety levels (*r = -0.42, p < 0.01*).
4. Regression results confirmed that warm colours explain 23% variance in lowering anxiety levels.
5. Gender differences suggest that women experience higher emotional reactivity but employ fashion choices for self-soothing and mood regulation.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that psychology of colours is very important in controlling emotions using fashion preferences. Adaptive coping behaviour of young adults choosing bright colours in stressful weather conditions does not prove aesthetic choices, but reflects their adaptive ability. The correlation between warm colours and anxiety is negative, which proves the previous theoretical hypotheses of Elliot (2015) and Jonauskaite et al. (2020) that colours cause quantifiable affects.

The results are also in line with the previous study by Tunstall (2021) and Thompson and Haynes (2021), where it was found out that clothing serves as a psychological buffer to stressor of the environment. This paper builds on this knowledge by providing empirical evidence of the interaction between weather and colour and emotional well-being in emerging adults.

In practice, it has an implication on fashion designers, who can apply the emotional and seasonal colour theories in the development of their products, and on the mental health workers, who can perceive clothing behaviour as an aspect of emotional regulation therapy.

5. Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

5.1 Major Findings
Warm colours (red, orange, yellow) were the most preferred shades among young adults (45%), followed by cool tones (38.3%) and neutral colours (16.7%).

→ This indicates that young people are drawn toward emotionally stimulating and expressive hues.
The mean Weather-Related Anxiety Score (M = 44.35) suggests a moderate level of anxiety across the sample, highlighting that changing weather conditions do influence emotional well-being.

A negative correlation (r = -0.42, p < 0.01) was found between warm colour preference and weather-related anxiety. Individuals who frequently wore bright or warm colours experienced lower anxiety levels.

Neutral and darker colours (e.g., grey, black) showed a positive correlation (r = 0.36, p < 0.05) with anxiety, implying that such shades are associated with emotional withdrawal or heightened stress.

Regression analysis revealed that warm colour preference predicts 23% variance in anxiety levels, confirming colour's role as an emotional regulator.

Gender-based differences were significant: female respondents exhibited higher weather-related anxiety but also demonstrated a stronger preference for warm and pastel tones, suggesting a greater reliance on colour-based coping mechanisms.

5.2 Discussion of Key Insights

The results confirm the theoretical assumption that colour psychology affects emotional functioning and fashion, as a psychological coping mechanism. Clothing colours are used in managing stress and stabilizing moods in challenging weather conditions albeit unconsciously by young adults but in this case women. Affective positive emotions are stimulated by warm colors, decrease physiological stimulation, and feelings of comfort and hope. On the other hand, darker color can represent safety, but can also strengthen negative emotional conditions with excessive application. This research is added to the existing research on fashion psychology and the research of environmental emotion, which provides both empirical research that shows that the choice of clothing colour is not only aesthetic but also therapeutic.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

Supports the Colour-Emotion Congruence Model, suggesting that individuals choose colours aligning with or opposing their emotional states to achieve balance.

Expands understanding of climate-related emotional regulation, linking colour choice to adaptive coping behaviours.

Adds to fashion psychology theory by integrating environmental anxiety variables — bridging the gap between self-expression and mental well-being.

5.4 Practical Implications

Fashion Industry: Designers can integrate seasonal mood-based palettes to enhance consumer well-being, especially in regions with high climatic variability.
Mental Health Professionals: Therapists and counselors can use colour therapy and wardrobe analysis as tools in emotional regulation interventions.
Educational Institutions: Awareness programs can be introduced to help students understand how their dressing choices affect emotional states.
Marketers: Brand campaigns can align product colours with emotional themes (e.g., calmness, energy, confidence) to improve customer resonance.

5.5 Limitations

The study's sample size (n = 120) limits generalizability across wider populations.

The research was cross-sectional, capturing psychological responses at a single point in time. Self-reported measures are subject to response bias and mood fluctuations.

Cultural differences in colour symbolism were not explored in depth.

Future research can employ longitudinal or experimental designs with larger, cross-cultural samples to validate findings and measure long-term psychological impacts of fashion colour use.

5.6 Conclusion

The analysis finds that the psychology of colour has a major impact on the fashion choices and emotional coping styles of the young adults who are growing up. The use of warm and bright colours is a positive emotional controller that will enable people to overcome the anxiety caused by unpredictable weather conditions.

Fashion, hence, is a prolonged psychological machine, not just an identity and style but also a way to sustain mentally. With the increase in the intensity of climate variability, this colour-emotion-fashion nexus is crucial to the fashion industry and mental health professionals.

Finally, the study strengthens the idea that the clothes that we wear are a continuation of our feeling and the healing process - crafting a connection between aesthetics and emotion in a modern psychological adjustment.

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