

## **THE ROLE OF CLOTHING IN SHAPING WOMEN'S POWER AND CONFIDENCE IN UZBEK SOCIETY**

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**Abstract.** This article explores the role of clothing as a cultural, social, and psychological phenomenon that influences the formation of women's power and confidence in Uzbek society. It analyzes how the choice and interpretation of clothing reflect social norms, gender expectations, and women's personal identity. Special attention is paid to both traditional and contemporary clothing, their relationship with cultural self-perception, and the impact of globalization and fashion trends on the perception of femininity and social roles. The study is based on an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating sociological research, cultural analysis, and interviews with women from different generations.

**Keywords:** clothing, women's power, confidence, Uzbek society, gender identity, culture and fashion

**Introduction.** Clothing is not merely a utilitarian object; it is a powerful symbolic resource that shapes perceptions of oneself and others. In Uzbek society, where historical, religious, and cultural traditions are deeply rooted, the role of clothing in women's lives assumes particular significance. This study aims to examine how clothing affects women's self-esteem, social status, and sense of confidence.

Clothing reflects the cultural values of society and serves as a means of communication. Psychosocial theories assert that appearance influences an individual's self-perception and how others perceive them. Gender theory considers clothing as a tool for expressing identity. Women are often subject to specific stylistic expectations that affect their sense of confidence. Numerous scholars and designers have studied this topic (see references [1–10]).

Historical Context: Traditional Clothing of Uzbek Women.



Symbolism and Meanings. Traditional clothing included the caftan, parcha, Khan atlas, and Suzani embroidery—each element carried its own symbolic meaning and reflected family status, age, and social position.

The Image of Women in Traditional Culture. In traditional culture, clothing often emphasized modesty, respect for social norms, and family values. However, it also embodied power—providing protection, beauty, and cultural identity. Contemporary women actively integrate elements of traditional clothing into their personal style, which helps them maintain a connection with their roots and express individuality.

Interviews with women from younger and middle generations indicated that clothing influences their perception of themselves as confident individuals capable of achieving their goals.



**Contemporary Fashion and Women's Confidence.** Contemporary fashion plays a significant role in shaping women's confidence in Uzbek society. Modern clothing allows women to experiment with styles, colors, and silhouettes, enabling them to express individuality while simultaneously engaging with cultural heritage. The integration of traditional motifs, such as Khan atlas patterns or Suzani embroidery, into contemporary designs helps women maintain a connection with their roots while presenting themselves as empowered, stylish, and confident in professional and social contexts.

Psychological studies suggest that clothing not only affects self-perception but also influences how others perceive an individual's authority and competence. Women who incorporate both traditional and modern elements into their wardrobe often report heightened self-assurance, a stronger sense of personal identity, and greater comfort in leadership roles.

**The Influence of Global Fashion Trends.** Global fashion offers a wide range of styles, expanding opportunities for self-expression among Uzbek women and contributing to the development of confidence.

**Fashion Business and Women's Leadership.** Successful designers and fashion entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan demonstrate how clothing and fashion can serve as tools of women's leadership.

Sociopsychological studies indicate that clothing affects self-perception, enhancing confidence during public speaking, interpersonal interactions, and self-evaluation.





**The Role of Clothing in the Professional Environment.** For women in professional settings, clothing choices are often associated with a sense of professional competence and social significance. Social norms sometimes impose specific expectations regarding women's appearance, which can limit their freedom of self-expression. As society develops, these norms gradually shift, expanding opportunities for self-expression through clothing.

**Case Studies of Women and Clothing Transformation.** Specific examples of women demonstrate how changes in clothing can help build confidence and alter social perception. The discussion addresses how external changes are reflected in women's social activity, participation in public life, and self-esteem.

**Discussion.** The research results highlight the complex interrelationship between clothing, cultural norms, and women's personal confidence. Clothing functions not only as an external attribute but also as a tool for cultivating inner strength.

**Women Entrepreneurs and Fashion.** Contemporary Uzbek women engaged in entrepreneurial activities use clothing as a tool for building a personal brand.

**Example 1:** The founder of a fashion brand incorporates elements of Khan atlas into business suits. This combination of traditional patterns and modern silhouettes emphasizes her national identity and professionalism.

**Example 2:** A female lecturer at international conferences prefers bright accents in her attire (scarves, accessories with traditional patterns). This approach helps her feel confident, stand out in the audience, and create a memorable visual image.



**Youth Trends.** The younger generation actively integrates traditional motifs into everyday wardrobes: dresses and skirts with Khan atlas elements, modern jackets with embroidery, and traditional patterns on accessories. The use of the national color palette in office or casual styles is also popular. These trends not only promote cultural heritage but also foster a sense of inner strength among women, allowing them to express individuality within social norms.

**Influence of Media and Social Networks.** Modern media and social networks reinforce the perception of clothing as a tool of empowerment: on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, women showcase their style, creating visual images of confidence and leadership.

**Influence of Bloggers.** Uzbek fashion bloggers actively demonstrate how combining traditional fabrics with modern cuts creates aesthetically appealing and confident looks.

**Impact on Self-Perception.** Visual feedback and positive comments stimulate feelings of empowerment and self-esteem in women.

**Psychological and Social Significance.**

**Self-esteem:** Properly chosen clothing allows a woman to feel more competent and confident.

Social adaptation: Clothing facilitates integration into various social and professional environments, reducing barriers and enhancing authority.

Cultural identity: Combining traditional patterns with modern designs fosters a sense of belonging to national culture while remaining open to global trends.

Final Analysis. In contemporary Uzbek society, clothing has become a tool for self-expression, confidence, and leadership. Traditional elements and modern fashion create a synthesis of culture and personal power, allowing women to feel both inner and outer harmony. Integrating clothing into social and professional strategies contributes to the formation of a stable female identity, where aesthetics, culture, and empowerment are inseparably linked.

**Conclusion.** Clothing plays a significant role in the lives of women in Uzbek society. It shapes not only external appearance but also influences the inner sense of strength and confidence. In the contemporary context, where traditions merge with global influences, clothing has become a key tool for self-expression, social adaptation, and personal growth.

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