

Gender-Inclusive Fashion Clothing for the LGBTQ+ Community: A Review

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Abstract— When it comes to expressing identity and confidence, fashion is crucial. Gender inclusive fashion for the LGBTQ+ population is the main topic of this review article. People with alternative gender identities, such as transgender and in binary people, are not included in traditional fashion which is mostly separated into male and female categories. Many people experience issues including poor fit, discomfort, and a lack of appropriate clothing options as a result.

This paper studies the history and growth of gender inclusive fashion, clothing needs of LGBTQ+ individuals, textile innovation, and issues related to sizing and fit. It also examines fashion industry issues, market trends, and branding. According to the review inclusive fashion is gradually expanding, but there are still a lot of issues, including scarcity, gender-based sizing systems, and a lack of awareness in fashion education.

Better representation of LGBTQ+ people in fashion, safe shopping environment, accessible garment designs, and inclusive size charts are some of the answers recommended by the study.

Overall, gender inclusive fashion is to just a trend but an important step towards equality, comfort, and self-expression for all people.

Index Terms— Gender inclusive fashion, LGBTQ+ community, clothing design, gender identity, inclusive apparel, sizing and fit, textile innovation, fashion equality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Fashion is a powerful medium of identity, communication and self-expression. Clothing reflects how individuals see themselves and how they wish to be seen by society. Fashion plays a major important role in LGBTQ+ community because it allows to their express gender identity, sexual orientation, and individuality in a world that often follows strict gender rules.

Traditionally fashion clothing is categorized into binary system, means understanding the gender, where clothing is divided into men and women's. This binary system excludes the LGBTQ+ community. Such as transgender, non-binary (Zixuan., & Zixuan, Wu 2024). Various studies show that this exclusion leads to emotional discomfort, lack of confidence, fear of discrimination and dissatisfaction with available clothing options (Melissa, Garcia M., et al 2026)

Gender inclusive fashion means clothes that are not made only for boys or only for girls. It is clothing designed for everyone. Instead of focusing on gender, it focuses on comfort, good fit, and personal style. The idea is that people should wear what makes them feel happy and confident, not what society says they must wear. This type of fashion is very important, especially for LGBTQ+ individuals, because it helps them express their true identity. When people wear clothes that match who they are, they feel more confident and accepted. Gender inclusive fashion also helps change old ideas about how men and women should dress, and it promotes equality and respect in society (Siddiqui., & Rane, N., 2024)

This review paper analyzes existing literature on gender inclusive fashion clothing for LGBTQ+ community. It focuses on the evolution of inclusive fashion, clothing needs, textile innovations, sizing and fit challenges, branding and market trends, existing challenges, and suggested solution based on reviews studies.

II. HISTORY OF LGBTQ+

From Convert identity to broad acceptance, LGBTQ+ fashion has changes. Strict gender standards restricted clothes to male and female categories in the past (before to the 1990s). LGBTQ+ people frequently

employed androgynous fashion as a convert means of expressing their identified (Price E., 2011). Pride movements and the media raise LGBTQ+ visibility in the 1990s and 2000s, making fashion a potent medium for expressing one's identity. Particularly for transgender people who struggle with fit and style, clothing has become crucial for expressing gender identity (Reilly. A, et al., 2017; Russell s.t., 2013). Fashion industry started emphasizing representation and diversity between 2010 and 2020. gender neutral apparel (Adomaitis A.D., 2024; Reynolds T.& McBee- Black K., 2023).

III. EVOLUTION OF GENDER -INCLUSIVE FASHION

In the past, Fashion has strongly strengthened gender differences. Men's clothing highlighted structure, strength, simplicity and while women's clothing dedicated on Softness, decoration and body shaping. This difference showed how society gave different power and roles to men and women and what it expected from them based on their gender (Song.J.,2023)

However, research shows that gender-less and gender-neutral fashion is slowly changing these strict rules, and people are moving away from fixed ideas about how men and women should dress. Lin and Wu explain that gender-less fashion emerged as designer began questioning why clothing must be tied to gender at all (Zixuan,L., & Zixuan, Wu 2024). Their research explains how women slowly started wearing clothes that were once considered men's clothes, and women's clothes. Because of this the clear difference between men's and women's fashion became less strict. It shows that as society changed and became more open; fashion also changed along with it.

The gender-less design literature emphasize that inclusive fashion focuses on the human body and not gender labels (Ramirez, R.m.2021). Androgynous and unisex clothing styles have become tools for challenging inequality and promoting freedom of expression (Baruah, S.,2022)

Research also emphasized regional differences. Western fashion frequently promotes gender neutrality and Eastern cultures blending with tradition and modern inclusive design approaches (Zixuan,L., & Zixuan,Wu 2024). Even though there are still differences, the global fashion industry is slowly

becoming more inclusive and accepting of all types of people and identities.

IV. CLOTHING NEEDS OF LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

LGBTQ+ community means it is a group of people. The group of people contains such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, non-binary and gender fluid individuals. So, each and every group has a unique clothing need, depends on their body type, identity, culture and emotional experience (Adomaitis, A.D., et al 2024)

"Dressing for Desire" this study explain that many LGBTQ+ people use clothing to show who they really are. Clothing helps them feel safe, confident and comfortable. It also shows that they sometimes use fashion to challenge society's rules about how people are supposed to dress (Garcia,Meraz,M., & Gonzalez Frago,M.c., 2026)

Research also showing that LGBTQ+ people facing the problems and additional challenges that due to body changes, lack of appropriate designs and dysphoria (Tulli-pow, S., etal 2020)

V. TEXTILE AND MATERIAL INNOVATIONS

Textiles are very important in making fashion inclusive. Studies show that fabric choice directly affects comfort, confidence and even mental well-being, especially for transgender and gender-diverse individuals (Singh, S., & Rane, N., 2024)

Research on inclusive clothing explain that soft, stretchable, breathable, and adaptive fabrics help adjust to different body shapes and reduce discomfort (Reynolds,T., & MC Bee-Black,k 2023). Fabric like knits, elastane blends, and natural breathable fibers are commonly preferred for inclusive designs.

Studies on adaptive clothing also show that features like modular construction, adjustable fastenings, and flexible seams help garments fit different body types and abilities (Singh, S., &Rane, N 2024). These designs allow clothes to adjust to the person, instead of forcing the person to fit into standard sizes.

VI. SIZING AND FIT CHALLENGES

Sizing and fit are some of the biggest problems faced by the LGBTQ+ community. Most size charts are created based on is gender male and female body types.

They do not consider body diversity or changes that happen during gender transition (Relly,A., et al 2019). Studies on transgender fashion show that poor fitting clothes can cause physical discomfort and emotional stress. Many individuals feel frustrated while shopping and may avoid shopping completely because they cannot find proper sizes (Tullio-pow, s., et al 2020). some people alter their clothes or wear fitting garments, which can reduce their confidence. Research on inclusive apparel suggests that size chart should be based on body measurements instead of gender categories. It also recommends adjustable and customization designs to fit different body types (Tullio-pow,s., et al 2020). without solving fit and sizing issues, gender inclusive fashion cannot be fully successful.

VII. BRANDING AND MARKET TRENDS

Recent market studies from 2023-2025 show that interest in gender-neutral and inclusive fashion is increasing, especially among young consumers (Runway Magazine editorial Team 2025).

Brands that promote inclusive through proper representation and ethical messages build stronger emotional connections with customers. Inclusive fashion shows and diverse runway presentations help increase visibility and empower marginalized communities (Elite associate 2024). However, some studies show that many brands use inclusive only as a marketing strategy without making real changes in their designs (sherwin, C., 2025).

True inclusive branding requires both proper representation and actual functional design improvements.

VIII. CHALLENGES FACING GENDER INCLUSIVE FASHION.

Even though progress is happening, many challenges still exist.

Retail stores still divide clothing into men's and women's section (song., 2023).

Many LGBTQ+ individuals fear discrimination while shopping (Dixit, Gop.,)

Inclusive clothing options are still limited. (Romans., & nedd Best, K.L 2026)

Fashion education often does not include inclusive design principles (Nilsen, S.m., 2021)

These challenges make it difficult for LGBTQ+ individuals to access inclusive fashion and continue the problem of exclusion.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

1.Inclusive Size Charts Develop size systems based on body diversity rather than gender.

2.Safe Retail Environments Remove gender-segregated sections to reduce fear and discomfort.

3.Customization and Adaptive Design Promote adjustable silhouettes and flexible textiles.

4.Education Reform Include gender-inclusive design principles in fashion curriculum.

5.Authentic Representation Feature LGBTQ+ models and designers in branding and runways.

X. CONCLUSION

Gender inclusive fashion is not just a new trend, but an important step toward equality and respect. This review shows that the traditional male and female fashion system does not include everyone, especially transgender, non-binary and gender diverse individuals. Because of this, many people face problems like poor fit, emotional discomfort, and fear while shopping. Although the fashion industry is slowly changing, many challenges still remain. Size charts are still gender based, inclusive clothing options are limited, and social stigma still exists in many places. Research suggests that inclusive size systems, adaptive designs, better textile choices, safe retail spaces and proper representation can help solve this problem. Fashion education should also include gender inclusive designs principles., fashion should focus on people and their comfort rather than gender labels. Clothing should help individuals express their true identity confidently. The future of fashion should be inclusive, respectful and designed for all bodies and identities.

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