



“HIGH FIVE TO COMFORT” – AN ECO-FRIENDLY CONVERTIBLE CASUALWEAR COLLECTION FOR UPPER-CLASS SINGLE WOMEN IN THE USA, INSPIRED BY PEARL OYSTERS

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This study presents the design and development of a convertible and comfortable casual wear collection tailored for upper-class single women aged 25–30 in the United States. Titled “*High Five to Comfort*”, the collection addresses the distinct lifestyle demands and psychological needs of this demographic, situated within the context of contemporary American society, which often reflects relatively conservative attitudes toward sexual openness. The target consumers face a range of social and personal challenges, including experiences related to single parenthood, unhealthy relationships, substance abuse, and mental health issues. Many of these challenges stem from the pressures of a fast-paced, career-driven lifestyle, compounded by societal undervaluation and limited emotional support. These women frequently prioritize professional success, often working extended hours with minimal time allocated for leisure or personal well-being. Given these circumstances, there is a clear demand for practical, versatile, and comfortable garments that can seamlessly transition between various social and professional settings. This collection is specifically designed to meet these requirements by integrating functional and convertible design elements that support dynamic lifestyles. The conceptual framework for this collection draws inspiration from the film *Miss Congeniality* (2000), whose protagonist, Gracie Hart, embodies qualities that resonate strongly with the target demographic—independence, resilience, and adaptability. The fashion collection draws design inspiration from the pearl oyster, which symbolizes transformation by turning a small particle of dust into a valuable pearl. This natural process symbolizes understated beauty and resilience, reflecting the often-overlooked value and strength of the women for whom this collection is designed. The collection is developed under the Tommy Hilfiger brand, known for its innovative design solutions and youthful, contemporary aesthetic. Fabrics such as lightweight linen have been selected to enhance comfort, breathability, and suitability for the spring and summer seasons. The designs emphasize not only comfort and versatility but also incorporate elegant details, including decorative embroidery, that align with the refined tastes and high purchasing power of the target consumers. The convertible features enable wearers to effortlessly adapt their outfits for varying occasions, offering both functionality and aesthetic appeal.

Keywords: fast faced, life choices, convertible, comfortable

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INTRODUCTION

This study presents the design and development of a convertible and comfortable casual wear collection specifically tailored for upper-class women aged 25 to 30 in the United States. Titled “*High Five to Comfort*”, the collection responds to the unique lifestyle demands and psychological needs of this demographic, situated within the framework of contemporary American society, which is often characterized by relatively conservative attitudes toward sexual openness.

The target consumers are well-educated women with stable, high-income careers who have consciously deprioritized traditional, committed relationships or marriage due to the demands of their fast-paced, career-oriented lifestyles. Over time, the pressure of managing both professional and personal responsibilities had led to a gradual decline in their attention to personal appearance and self-care. Many of these women report having limited time for rest or relaxation, with schedules that frequently extend into late hours (Furstenberg, 2017).

In addition to their professional commitments, these individuals often face a range of sociopsychological challenges, including the demands of single parenthood, experiences with unhealthy or toxic relationships, exposure to substance abuse, and struggles with mental health. These issues are frequently compounded by societal disregard or a lack of recognition, despite their significant contributions both professionally and personally.

A critical challenge faced by this demographic is the lack of appropriate clothing options that align with their need for both comfort and functionality. The majority of available casual wear is either purely comfortable but lacks aesthetic versatility, or stylish but restrictive and impractical for daily transitions between work, errands, and social activities. Furthermore, these consumers tend to adopt a highly practical approach to fashion consumption, often questioning the value of purchasing garments intended for limited-use occasions.

This gap in the market highlights an unmet demand for versatile, convertible clothing that provides both comfort and adaptability without compromising style. The “*High Five to Comfort*” collection seeks to address this gap by offering designs that seamlessly transition between various contexts, from professional settings to casual outings, while maintaining a focus on comfort, functionality, and aesthetic appeal tailored to the lifestyle needs of upper-class single-parent women in the United States.

METHODOLOGY

This research identifies and examines a high-profile customer group comprising



single, upper-class women in the United States aged 25 to 30. This demographic is characterized by sophisticated taste, strong purchasing power, and an appreciation for functional yet fashionable apparel. These women are highly educated, ambitious, and financially independent, with an average monthly income ranging between \$14,000 and \$18,000. Their lifestyles are fast-paced and career-focused, leaving them with limited free time, which is often divided between managing professional responsibilities and maintaining active social lives.

Being self-reliant and socially active, this customer group places a high value on apparel that seamlessly integrates comfort, versatility, and modern aesthetics. They prioritize garments that offer adaptability across various occasions, enabling transitions from professional environments to social settings without compromising style. Their wardrobe preferences reflect their commitment to personal autonomy, convenience, and a chic, contemporary appearance.

To address the needs of this customer segment, a comprehensive study was conducted on global fashion trends, styles, and emerging techniques in convertible and comfortable fashion design. This research guided the development of innovative concepts, design inspirations, and thematic directions.

The conceptual foundation of the collection is inspired by the Pearl Oyster (*Pinctada maxima*) (Figure 01(a)). In nature, pearls are formed as a defense mechanism when a foreign particle enters the oyster's shell. Over time, the mollusk encapsulates this irritant with layers of nacre, producing a smooth, elegant pearl. This process symbolizes transformation, resilience, and the creation of beauty from adversity. Much like the oyster, whose plain exterior conceals the precious pearl within, the target customer group often has its inner strength, intelligence, and resilience overlooked by society based solely on external perceptions.

Further conceptual influence is drawn from the film "Miss Congeniality" (2000), directed by Donald Petrie. The film's protagonist, Gracie Hart, is a highly capable FBI agent whose intelligence and competence are initially disregarded due to her unpolished appearance. Her transformation during the narrative parallels the experiences of the target customer—capable, intelligent women who are frequently underestimated. The story underscores the themes of self-acceptance, empowerment, and the realization that embracing one's identity and lifestyle is a source of strength. Based on these inspirations, the collection development process involves creating concept boards (Figure 1(b)), mood boards, trend boards, and color palettes aligned with current fashion trends and the symbolic themes of transformation and resilience. Initial design sketches incorporate convertible garment techniques and decorative

embroidery, reflecting the functional and aesthetic desires of the target market. Extensive fabric research was conducted to select materials that meet the customer's requirements for comfort, versatility, and durability. These materials were then used to develop embroidery samples and finalize the collection's garments, ensuring that both functionality and elegance are achieved in the final designs.



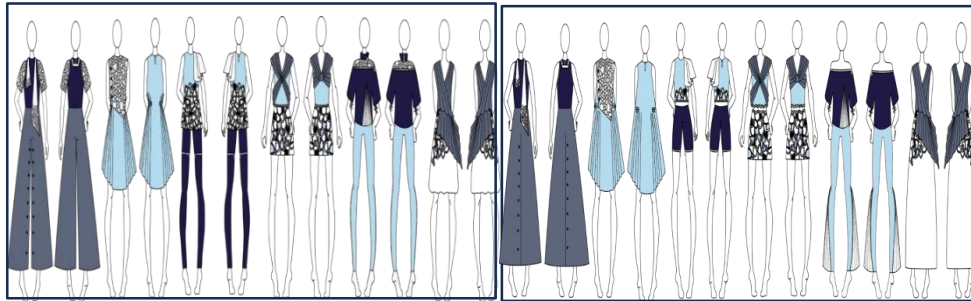
(a) Pearl oyster (*Pinctada maxima*) (b) Concepts & design developments
Figure 1: Inspiration for fashion collection (a) and concepts & design developments (b).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings from the customer survey, it was identified that the target consumers have a strong preference for comfortable, casual garments that can be worn across multiple occasions while aligning with current fashion trends in color and style. These garments must offer ease of wear, practicality, and functionality to accommodate the demands of their fast-paced, time-constrained lifestyles.

Fabrics that are breathable, lightweight, soft, and allow for ease of movement are particularly valued by this customer group. In response to these requirements, the collection was designed with convertible silhouettes, enabling garments to be adapted for various settings, from professional environments to casual gatherings. Additionally, the designs incorporate embroidery as a value-added surface embellishment, enhancing the aesthetic appeal while maintaining functionality. Also, the cropped tops were the top trend of the Spring and Summer (S/S) sessions. The development process also involved an in-depth study of the clients' body types and fabric measurements to ensure accurate fitness and comfort. Fabric selections were made with consideration for their suitability for the spring and summer seasons, prioritizing materials that offer both comfort and durability in warmer climates. According to preferences, Linen fabric was selected (Deihl, 2018). Based on these findings and creative approaches, the final fashion collection was

developed with six outfits, each featuring two convertible looks, resulting in a total



of twelve looks as illustrated in Figure 2.

(01) (02) (03) (04) (05) (06) (01) (02) (03) (04) (05) (06)

(a) Before silhouette conversion

(b) After silhouette conversion

Figure 2: Front and back fashion illustrations of six outfits before and after silhouette conversion



Figure 3: Live model photographs of the six final design outfits (a–f).

For each design, image No. 1 displays the original look before conversion, while image No. 2 shows the transformed appearance after conversion. Figure 3 illustrates the photographs of the six final designs developed for the convertible street casual



wear collection, specifically tailored to meet the needs of upper-class single women in the USA. This collection emphasizes versatility, comfort, and adaptability, allowing the wearer to seamlessly transition between different social, professional, and casual settings. Each design showcases unique silhouette transformations that provide multiple styling options within a single garment, contributing to both functional and sustainable fashion practices. These were embroidered, inspired by an oyster seashell, and the detailed descriptions of each look are provided as follows:

- Look (a): This features a pair of wide-leg trousers that can be effortlessly converted into a flowing maxi skirt, offering flexibility for both formal and relaxed settings. It is paired with a versatile T-shirt, which can be transformed into a sleeveless top by ditching the sleeves. A coordinating sash accessory adds an additional styling element, enhancing the outfit's overall aesthetic, while providing practicality.
- Look (b): A tent-shaped dress designed with ample volume for maximum comfort, which can be transformed into a more fitted silhouette through adjustable seams or hidden drawstrings. This allows the wearer to choose between a relaxed, free-flowing look or a more structured, body-contouring appearance depending on the occasion.
- Look (c): This design consists of a long-line tunic-style top that can be easily converted into a crop top by adjusting the hem using built-in fastenings or draw cords. It is paired with a set of straight-leg trousers, which can be converted into tailored shorts.
- Look (d): A loose-fit, non-body-con dress that transforms into a mini skirt and crop-top set, offering the wearer the ability to switch from a modest, relaxed look to a more youthful and playful style.
- Look (e): This piece is a maxi-length dress that can be converted into a short dress, providing styling adaptability based on the formality of the event or the comfort needs of the wearer. The simple transformation mechanism allows for quick changes.
- Look (f): A more tailored outfit featuring pencil-cut trousers, which can be expanded into bell-bottom trousers through the release of hidden pleats or side panels. This bottom is paired with a convertible blouse that can transition into an off-the-shoulder style, offering the option of a sophisticated, relaxed, feminine look on the wearer.

This collection highlights the potential of convertible fashion as a practical design solution, catering to modern consumers who prioritize functionality, comfort, and sustainable choices.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The objective of this project was to design a convertible casual wear collection for upper-class single women in the United States, aged 25–30, for the Spring/Summer season. The designs draw inspiration from current fashion trends, particularly crop-top styles, with a focus on garments that combine comfort, style, and versatility. Throughout the design process, it became evident that, despite the demands of modern life, maintaining physical appearance, health, and mental well-being is



essential. The collection offers easy modifications that transform garments from one silhouette to another — for example, frocks to skirt-and-blouse styles, trousers to skirts, short frocks to long frocks, and short pants to long pants. This project reflects the belief that inner peace and self-care are just as valuable as professional success. The knowledge and insights gained will significantly influence my future design practice. Furthermore, the concept has strong potential for practical application among working women worldwide. I recommend further research into this approach, as it presents considerable opportunities for innovation in fashion design. Also, to focus on creating convertible garments in the office wear section.

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