

Artificial or Real Fur? An Empirical Study on Fur Consumer Behaviour in Germany

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Abstract: In recent years, an increasing number of consumers are choosing to wear fur clothes, made from artificial or real fur. This has resulted in an increase in the global consumption of real fur and growth in the number of fur farms. In addition, because of non-species-appropriate livestock farming, the reputation of fur farms is increasingly attracting public criticism and the resulting fur scandals are reported at regular intervals in the media. The research objective of the present empirical study was therefore to investigate the consumer behaviour of fur buyers in the German market. The aim was to identify the most relevant factors resulting in a purchase decision of a specific fur type of either artificial or real fur. For this purpose, four research questions were derived.

Consequently, over 2,018 interviews in different German regions were conducted. The analysis of the survey results has revealed some interesting differences and similarities regarding the purchase behaviour of artificial and real fur clothes buyers. Furthermore, this study could identify a need for future research within this subject area.

Keywords: fur consumer behaviour, purchase decision factors, empirical research

JEL Classification codes: M31, D12

INTRODUCTION

Fur as a garment has always been part of human history. The reasons for wearing fur clothing have changed over the centuries from a protective function to a symbol of luxury (cf. Loschek 2011: 397). In the winter months in particular, fur is an indispensable garment on the streets. Whether used in a winter jacket, as a bobble on a cap, fur gloves or as a complete fur coat, many passers-by on the street wear fur.

Fur is processed and worn in textile products in two different ways, first as real fur and second as artificial fur, also known as woven fur. Real fur is the material obtained from the densely haired fur of a furry animal (cf. Eberle et al. 2013: 141-149). Synthetic fur on the other hand, is produced synthetically (cf. Meyer zur Capellen 2015: 420f).

Over the centuries, the consumption of real fur has increased steadily until the 1980s, when demand - and image - collapsed. The main reasons for this collapse were controversial practices in the keeping and killing of fur animals, the resulting actions of the animal rights activists against wearing real fur and negative media reporting (cf. Loschek 2011: 401).

For some years a partially strong trend towards the increasing consumption of real fur has been emerging again. Both the production figures and the sales figures have experienced extreme increases in some cases. The increase in turnover from 2002 to 2012 was 44% (cf. Copenhagen Fur 2013). In the years 2011 to 2014 there was even an increase of 59%. In the financial year 2013 to 2014, sales of US\$ 38.5 billion and US\$ 87.2 million in animal hides were achieved (cf. Copenhagen Fur 2016).

In an apparent contrast to these figures are the results of surveys dealing with consumer opinion on the production and wearing of real fur. The majority of German consumers have a negative attitude towards wearing real fur clothing (82%) (see Ipsos 2016). In addition, critical reporting in social and traditional media concerning the retention of fur animals and fur farms has obviously increased in recent years.

At present, there is a lack of studies investigating the reasons for consumers' choices of real or fake fur when buying fur clothing. Similarly, there is a lack of evidence to explain why consumers buy real fur garments despite their awareness of critical media coverage concerning the production of genuine fur.

The aim of this study was to analyse fur buying behaviour in Germany and to identify which factors have an influence on the type of fur worn, whether real or artificial fur. In addition, this study also investigated the reasons for consumers' conscious purchase of real fur garments despite knowledge of critical reporting regarding the production of real fur.

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The very simplified S-O-R model is based on the idea that a stimulus triggers processes in the human organism that then manifest themselves in a reaction (Kotler et al. 2011: 298; Bröring/Griese 2011: 69). S-O-R means stimulus, organism and response. In economics, this reaction usually refers to the purchase decision. Accordingly, the S-O-R model can be used to explain purchasing behaviour or customer behaviour. Like many model representations, the S-O-R model is greatly simplified.

Transferred to buyer behaviour this means that the "potential buyers are offered a product whose appearance, price, advertising, etc. (=stimulus) cause them to buy it at a certain time, in a certain quantity and in a certain store (=response)" (Gelbrich/Wünschmann/Müller 2008: 34). 'Stimulus' refers to the stimuli acting on humans and 'response' refers to the reaction to the stimuli. The transition of these two areas which comprise the decision-making process contains the considerations, moods and feelings and is called the black box (=organism). In this context, the black box describes the complex 'invisible' phenomena that are inaccessible to research. In order to understand what a person thinks and feels, research into buying behaviour takes place in the black box.

Cultural, social, psychological and personal factors are among those which influence consumer behaviour or the process in the black box. Personal factors include socio-demographic data such as age and stage of life, occupation or economic circumstances. Psychological factors are motivation, perception, views and attitudes. The social environment is shaped by reference groups, family, role and status. Culture, subculture and social class are cultural factors.

The question of the motive or the reason for the purchase of a fur garment is an essential part of the explanation of fur buying behaviour. On the one hand, it is a fashion product in which

purchasing motives such as appearance, quality and price/performance ratio (cf. Fuchslochner/Hochheimer 2001: 32ff) are in the foreground. On the other hand, the status of a real fur garment as a purchase motif automatically comes into focus (cf. Kolaschnik 2012: 183ff). In addition, fur garments are mainly worn during the cold season. As a result, the functionality and comfort of the garment are of particular importance.

One reason that the purchase decision is usually not made by the wearer of the garment is the possibility that it is a gift. In order to ensure that the decision to purchase one of the two types of fur was not made accidentally or unconsciously, it is necessary to ask whether the choice of one of the two types of fur is a conscious purchase decision. Conscious in this context means that there is an intention behind the purchase decision.

In order to consider the ethical aspect, it was necessary to question the influence of the critical media reporting of animal husbandry on the fur buying behaviour. Real fur wearers were therefore asked whether they are aware of one of the fur scandals from the media. If they said yes, the respondent was then asked to give a reason explaining why they wear real fur despite their knowledge. Synthetic fur wearers were asked to provide information about their purchase, including why they made a conscious decision to wear artificial fur and whether animal protection or the knowledge of the fur scandals from the media played a role.

The socio-demographic factors associated with the fur wearer also represent an important component. These include age, gender and location. The spending power associated with the location of the fur wearer can also be used as an indicator of economic strength. Spending power refers to the disposable income of a population of a region, which is net income excluding taxes and social security contributions, including the transfer of payments received.

In this study, a standardized spending power index was used, which was determined for each city or county (see MB Research 2016). The national average spending power index per inhabitant is $D = 100$. The highest spending power in Germany is found in the Hochtaunuskreis district with a value of 144.2, while the lowest spending power is in the Görlitz district with 80.

Finally, the type of fur garment was clarified, with options provided for fur jackets, fur trim in fabric jackets, caps, bags, accessories, shoes and gloves.

Tab.1 shows the factors which explain the purchasing behaviour of real and artificial fur garments.

Tab. 1 Factors explaining the purchasing behaviour of real and artificial fur garments

Main purchase reason	Type of purchase decision	Ethical aspect	Socio-demographic factors	Fur clothing
Look Quality Price/performance ratio Status Functionality/ wearing comfort Gift	Consciously/ intentionally Unconsciously/ unintentionally	Knowledge of critical media reporting about fur farming / fur scandals	Age Gender Spending power/ Domicile	Fur jacket Fur trimming in fabric jacket Fur cap Fur bag Fur accessory Fur shoes Fur gloves

2 METHODOLOGY

Research questions and corresponding hypotheses

Based on the objective of the study to analyse fur buying behaviour in Germany the following four research questions with the corresponding hypotheses were formulated:

1. Is there a connection between the reason for purchase or gender and the purchase of one of the fur types?

Hypothesis 1.1: The fur type has no significant influence on the reason for purchase.

Hypothesis 1.2: The buyer's gender has no significant influence on the purchase decision regarding the fur type.

2. What influence does age or spending power have on the acquisition of one of the fur types?

Hypothesis 2.1: The buyer's age has a decisive influence on the type of fur acquired.

Hypothesis 2.2: Spending power (budget) has a decisive influence on the acquired fur type.

3. Is there a connection between gender and the purchasing reason 'animal welfare/knowledge of critical media reporting' in the conscious acquisition of artificial fur clothing?

Hypothesis 3: Female wearers of artificial fur state 'animal welfare/knowledge of fur scandals' more frequently as a reason to buy artificial fur than male artificial fur wearers.

4. What are the reasons for buying real fur clothing despite knowledge of critical reporting for the production of real fur?

Hypothesis 4: If the buyer is aware of the fur scandals in the production of real fur the look of the garment is the most common reason for the conscious decision to purchase real fur garments.

The variable definition (code plan) can be viewed in Tab. 2.

Tab. 2 Definition of variables (code plan)

Variable name	Hypothesis	Variable type	Variable values	Measurement level
Main reason for purchase/acquisition the fur garment	1.1	Dependent	Look Quality Price/performance ratio Status Functionality/ wearing comfort Gift	Nominal
Fur type	1.1 1.2; 2.1; 2.2	Independent Dependent	Unknown Artificial fur Real fur	Nominal
	4	Dependent	Look	Nominal

Conscious purchase decision for real fur despite knowledge of the fur scandals from the media			Wear comfort/ functionality Sustainable production No interest in scandals Status Quality Other reasons	
Knowledge of fur the fur scandals	4	Independent	Yes	Nominal
	3	Dependent	No	
Age	2.1	Independent	Numerical	Metrical
Gender	3	Dependent	Male	Nominal
			Female	
Postcode (spending power)	2.1	Independent	Numerical	Metrical

Research Methodology

A face-to-face survey based on a standardized questionnaire was conducted to collect data (cf. Bortz/Döring, 2006: 191ff; cf. Möhring/Schlütz 2010: 67ff). If the hypotheses, concepts, variables and indicators are now defined at the level of the context of justification in the research process, the question of operationalization at the lowest level - that of the measurability of the target - must be clarified. The fact that the investigation was conducted through the instrument of questioning means that a questionnaire was developed.

The interview questions were designed in three parts with an introduction, a main part and conclusion. Only the main part of the survey is based on a standardized questionnaire, ensuring that an open and harmless conversation between the interviewer and the fur wearer can be guaranteed. In order to prevent a high involvement of the participants and answer tendencies influenced by social desirability, the interviewers wore garments with real fur components (jacket with fur collar, fur cap, etc.).

The aim of the introductory question was to arouse the interest of fur wearers and motivate them to participate. The interviewer addressed fur wearers with positive emotions about their fur garments. These statements were adapted to each target group (age, gender, appearance) and were not given to the interviewers, allowing them to vary from "A very nice fur coat you are wearing" to "Cool fur jacket". These introductory statements were formulated in question form and also served as icebreaker questions, as they introduced the interviewee to the interview situation and could be answered quickly by participants with little cognitive effort (cf. Möhring/Schlütz 2010: 67ff).

After this introduction to the interview, the actual part of the survey began, which was divided into six questions on fur buying behaviour and surveyed in a standardized manner. The survey was completed by providing socio-demographic data and the postcode to determine purchasing power. In order to avoid answer tendencies based on social desirability as has been postulated (Schumann 2006: 57ff), the anonymity of the answers was guaranteed.

Execution of the survey

Between 10th and 12th January 2017 a pre-test with 40 individuals was conducted. The aim of the pre-test was to assess the duration and comprehensibility of the question items.

The actual data collection took place between 17th and 31st January 2017 in 37 German city centres. In order to reflect the influence of the survey location on purchasing behaviour, this study distinguished not only between the geographical and economic situation (high-income and low-income regions), but also between rural and urban areas. The aim was to create a comprehensive sample with as representative a selection of areas as possible.

In addition to a representative selection of locations, the participants were approached completely randomly. The only selection criterion was the wearing of a garment with a visible fur component. A distinction was made between seven different pieces of fur clothing: (1) fur jacket, (2) fur trim fabric jacket, (3) fur cap, (4) fur bag, (5) fur accessory, (6) fur shoes and (7) fur gloves.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Descriptive data analysis

A total of 2,018 fur wearers were successfully interviewed.

1. Gender-specific distribution

A total of 1,514 participants were female (75.02%) and 504 were male (24.98%). The gender-specific comparison of the fur type shows that the percentage of artificial fur garments among the female volunteers (59.58%) was higher than among the male volunteers (47.22%). In contrast, the share of male participants was higher for real fur garments (31.15% male, 28.60% female) and for garments without knowledge of the fur type (21.63% male, 11.82% female).

2. Knowledge-specific distribution

When asked about the type of fur, 56.49% of interviewees (1,140 participants) said they wear artificial fur. A further 29.24% (590 participants) said that they wear real fur. A total of 85.73% (1,730 participants) knew which type of fur they were wearing. Nearly one in seven of the participants (14.27%, 228 participants) did not know what type of fur comprised the worn fur garment.

3. Age-specific distribution

The average age was 35.29 years. The age span ranged from 15 to 92 years. A total of 22.15% of the participants (447 participants) were 20 years old or younger, 44.86% (885 participants) were 21 to 40 years old, 22.84% (461 participants) were 41 to 60 years old and 11.15% (225 participants) were 61 years old or older. The 21 to 40-year-old age group thus accounts for the majority of participants.

The age-specific comparison of the two fur types shows that the wearing of artificial fur garments decreases with increasing age, whereas the wearing of real fur garments increases.

In the 20 years old or younger age category, the percentage of artificial fur wearers is highest at 68.23%, while the lowest percentage is found in the 61 years old or older age group at 39.11%. The highest percentage of real fur clothing wearers (48.00%) is in the 61 years old or older age group, while only 18.34% of the 20 years old or younger age category wore real fur clothing.

4. Spending-power-specific distribution

As far as the distribution of spending power among the participants is concerned, 25.82% (521 participants) came from places with a relatively low purchasing power of up to 95. A total of 25.97% (524 participants) had a purchasing power range greater than 95 and extending up

to and including 103. A total of 16.85% (340 participants) were within a purchasing power range greater than 103 and up to 111. The largest share of 31.37% (633 participants) of participants came from a place with a relatively high purchasing power above 111.

The distribution of the fur type in relation to spending power shows that clothing with artificial fur is most in demand (65.45%) in areas with low purchasing power (purchasing power less than 95). As spending power increases, the share decreases (55.53%, 48.82%) until it rises again (54.03%) in areas with the highest purchasing power (purchasing power greater than or equal to 111). The opposite is true for real fur garments: the lowest share (21.69%) is in areas with the lowest spending power. With increasing spending power, the proportion of real fur increases (25.00%, 37.94%) until it finally decreases again (34.28%).

5. Distribution of piece of fur clothing

The most frequently worn fur clothing was fur trim fabric jackets at 78.54 % (1,585 participants). The second most common fur garment was fur jackets at only 10.11% (204 participants), closely followed by fur caps at 7.43% (150 participants). Only a small proportion of participants wore fur accessories (2.53%, 51 participants). Bags, shoes and gloves were worn at a negligible frequency.

With regard to the distribution of worn pieces of fur clothing per type of fur (artificial or real fur), it is noticeable that the greatest absolute differences exist between the fur jacket, fur trim fabric jacket and fur cap.

The fur jacket was worn by 18.29% of real fur wearers (107 participants) and only 7.95% of artificial fur wearers (91 participants). A similar ratio can be found with regard to the fur hat, which was worn by 10.26% of real fur wearers (60 participants) and 5.15% of artificial fur wearers (59 participants).

The opposite is true for the fur trimming in fabric jacket. This garment was worn by 84.10% of the artificial fur wearers (963 participants) and 65.98% of the real fur wearers (386 participants).

6. Distribution of the main reason for the acquisition or purchase of the fur garment

The questionnaire allows for status, look, functionality/wearing comfort, quality, price/performance ratio and gifting as possible answers for the main reason for acquisition or purchase.

Status was the main reason for 106 participants (5.25%) to buy fur. A total of 815 of all consumers (40.39%) bought the fur garment because of how it looks. Functionality and wearing comfort were decisive for 685 participants (33.94%). Quality played a decisive role in the purchase 81 times (4.01%). The price/performance ratio of the fur-trimmed garment convinced 156 participants (7.73%). For 175 participants (8.67%) the garment was a gift.

The comparison of the main reason for the acquisition or purchase per each type of fur shows that look, price/performance ratio and gift are more frequently given as the reason by artificial fur wearers than by real fur wearers. Status, functionality/wear comfort and quality were more frequently mentioned by real fur wearers.

The biggest difference in favouring artificial fur was seen was associated with how the garment looks (artificial fur at 42.80% with 648 participants in comparison to real fur at 37.29% with 220 participants).

With regard to status as a reason the largest proportion was in favour of real fur clothing, with 7.66% (44 participants) wearing real fur for this reason in contrast to 4.29% (65 participants) who wore artificial fur. Quality was also preferred by the real fur wearers with 5.25% (31 participants) of these participants citing quality as a reason for their choice in contrast to 3.5% (53 participants) who wore artificial fur.

7. Conscious buying decision for a certain type of fur

Of the 1,730 participants who knew their fur type, 67.05% (1,160 participants) intentionally (consciously) chose one of the two fur types. A total of 32.95% (570 participants) stated that they unintentionally (not consciously) chose one of the two fur types.

For artificial fur, the percentage of conscious buyers was 69.47% (792 participants) and for real fur 62.37% (368 participants). For those who made their decision unconsciously 30.53% (348 participants) chose the artificial fur garment and 37.63% (222 participants) chose the real fur garment.

8. Gender-specific distribution of the reason for a conscious purchase decision for artificial fur

The fourth question of the questionnaire explicitly asked the reason for the conscious decision to purchase the artificial fur garment.

A total of 792 participants identified as conscious buyers of artificial fur formed the basis for this evaluation. The answer options provided were functionality/wear comfort, fur scandals in the media/animal welfare, price/performance ratio, appearance and status. Multiple responses were permitted.

A total of 920 answers were given as a reason for the conscious decision to buy artificial fur clothing. Functionality/wearing comfort was given as a reason by 34 participants (4.29%). Fur scandals from the media/animal welfare were cited 648 times (81.82%). For 152 participants (19.19%), the price/performance ratio is a reason for gainful employment. Appearance was led by 83 participants (10.48%). Status was mentioned only six times (0.38%).

When looking at the gender-specific distribution, it can be seen that the female participants relatively frequently stated fur scandals from the media/animal protection as the reason for the conscious purchase decision for artificial fur garments, with 83.91% of the female and 70.87% of the male artificial fur wearers. The price/performance ratio is exactly the opposite, with 28.35% of the male and only 17.44% of the female artificial fur wearers citing this reason.

9. Knowledge of the fur scandals in the media among those who consciously bought real fur

In the sixth question of the questionnaire, all participants who had consciously chosen to purchase a real fur garment were asked whether they were aware of at least one recent fur scandal in the media.

A total of 280 of the 368 conscious real fur wearers (76.09%) answered this question in the affirmative and 88 real fur wearers (23.91%) answered this question in the negative.

In terms of gender, it can be seen that the female participants among the conscious real fur wearers were informed about the fur scandals from the media to a higher percentage (77.74%) than the male participants (71.84%).

10. Reasons for the conscious decision to purchase real fur clothing despite knowledge of the fur scandals from the media

Of the 280 participants who opted for a real fur garment despite knowledge of the fur scandals in the media, a total of 179 evaluable reasons were given in response to the question "Why did you nevertheless buy real fur?" As this was an open question, multiple answers were possible.

Answers were sorted according to the number of mentions in decreasing order, resulting in the following distribution:

- Look; mentioned in 87 responses (48.60%)

- Functionality/Wearing comfort; in 21 responses (11.73%)
- Sustainable production, poaching; in 15 responses (8.38%)
- Indifference, no interest in scandals; in 14 responses (7.82%)
- Privilege, status, brand; included in 11 responses (6.15%)
- Other reasons such as quality, gift, etc.; in 23 responses (12.85%)

3.2 Validation of the hypotheses

Hypothesis 1.1: The fur type has no significant influence on the purchase reason.

The relation of the variables 'type of fur' and 'purchase reason' is illustrated in a cross table. The number of mentions and their percentage share within the respective fur type group are shown in Tab. 3.

Tab. 3 Cross table (reason for purchase and fur type)

	Artificial fur		Real fur		Unknown		Total	
Status	40	3.51%	44	7.46%	22	7.64%	106	5.25%
Look	487	42.72%	220	37.29%	108	37.50%	815	40.39%
Functionality	395	34.65%	199	33.73%	91	31.60%	685	33.94%
Quality	35	3.07%	31	5.25%	15	5.21%	81	4.01%
Price/Performance	96	8.42%	46	7.80%	14	4.86%	156	7.73%
Gift	87	7.63%	50	8.47%	38	13.19%	175	8.67%
Total	1140	100%	590	100%	288	100%	2018	100%

It can be shown that there is basically no decisive difference between the reasons for purchase associated with the acquisition of a certain type of fur with regard to the respective percentage weighting.

The only difference is that the real fur buyers attached much more importance to status (7.46%) than the artificial fur buyers (3.51%). The total number of participants is $n = 2,018$.

A Chi-square test was used to check the significance of the results. Cramer-V was used to measure the strength of the correlation (see Bortz/Lienert/Böhnke 2008: 295ff). The corresponding results can be viewed in tab. 4.

Tab. 4 Results of the Chi-square test and Cramer-V (purchasing reason and fur type)

Chi-Square Test	Value	df	Asymptotic significance
Chi-square after Pearson	174.900	10	.000
Number of valid cases	2018		
<i>0 cells (0.0%) have an expected frequency of less than 5. The minimum expected frequency is 11.52.</i>			
Symmetrical Dimension	Value	Approximate Significance	
Nominal- in terms of nominal dimension Cramer-V	.294	.000	
Number of valid cases	2018		

The execution of the Chi-square test results in an 'asymptotic significance' of 0.000 and in addition, the correlation is weak (Cramer V = 0.294). Hypothesis 1.1 can be confirmed.

Hypothesis 1.2: The buyer's gender has no significant influence on the purchase decision regarding the fur type.

The relation of the variables 'buyer's gender' and 'fur type' is illustrated in a cross table. The number of mentions and their percentage share within the respective fur type group are shown in table 5.

Tab. 5 Cross table (Gender and Fur type)

		Artificial fur		Real fur		Unknown		Total	
Gender	female	902	59.58%	434	28.67%	178	11.76%	1514	100%
	male	238	47.22%	157	31.15%	109	21.63%	504	100%
Total		1140	56.49%	591	29.29%	287	14.22%	2018	100%

It shows that female fur wearers clearly preferred artificial fur (59.58%) to real fur (28.67%). This difference is less pronounced in male fur wearers.

As a result, there is a clear difference in gender in terms of the preference to purchase a particular type of fur.

The total number of participants is n = 2,018.

The significance of the results from the cross table was again checked with the help of a Chi-square test. The corresponding results can be found in tab. 6.

Tab. 6 Results of the Chi-square test and Cramer-V (gender and fur type)

Chi-Square Test	Value	df	Asymptotic significance
Chi-square after Pearson	36.916	2	.000
Number of valid cases	2018		
<i>0 cells (0.0%) have an expected frequency of less than 5. The minimum expected frequency is 11.52.</i>			
Symmetrical Dimension	Value	Approximate Significance	
Nominal- in terms of nominal dimension Cramer-V	.135	.000	
Number of valid cases	2018		

The use of the Chi-square test has resulted in an 'asymptotic significance' of 0.000, which suggests the significance of the hypothesis. The correlation is again weak (Cramer V = 0.135).

Hypothesis 1.2 can be confirmed.

In summary, Research Question 1 shows that there is a connection between the acquisition of one of the fur types and the reason for the purchase or the gender. However, this connection is extremely weak.

Research Question 2 examines the influence of spending power and age on the fur type worn. Two simple covariance analyses were used to analyse the predictor (fur type) under the control of the covariates (gender) with regard to the spending power factor and the age factor. The control variable 'gender' was included as covariate. The fur type was classified as real fur, artificial fur or unknown and was used as a predictor in the model.

The prerequisites for carrying out a covariance analysis were largely fulfilled. There is no variance homogeneity, since the level test is significant for all covariance analyses. However, this is not necessarily required for large samples. The single-sample covariance analyses were performed because of their robustness as an analysis procedure and because of the sample size despite a slight violation of the normal distribution of the criterion variables, variance homogeneity and same group sizes, since on the one hand they are capable of extracting effects from control variables and on the other hand pair comparisons can be easily calculated. Independence and linearity between the covariates and the dependent variable are also provided.

Hypothesis 2.1: The buyer's age has a decisive influence on the type of fur acquired.

The analysis shows that real fur wearers were on average considerably older ($M_{\text{real fur}} = 40.1$, $SD_{\text{real fur}} = 18.7$) than known non-fur wearers ($M_{\text{Unknown}} = 35.1$, $SD_{\text{Unknown}} = 16.9$) and artificial fur wearers ($M_{\text{Artificial fur}} = 32.8$, $SD_{\text{Artificial fur}} = 16.2$).

This mean value difference is significant as shown in tab. 7.

Tab. 7 Results of one-factor covariance analysis (fur type and age)

Age				
Predictor	Df	MS	F	η^2
Gender (Covariate)	1, 2018	6.807	0.02*	.003
Fur type	2, 2018	15590.1	35.982***	.034

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Under control of the covariate (gender) a significant influence of the predictor fur type ($F [2, 2018] = 35.982$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .034$) on the variable 'age' was observed.

The fur type could explain 3.4% of the variance. According to (Cohen 1988) this is a small effect. According to the Bonferroni post hoc test, real fur wearers were on average significantly older (40 years) than known non-fur wearers (35 years) and artificial fur wearers (33 years).

This test is preferred to the Scheffe post hoc test and the Tukey post hoc test because only a few groups are compared with each other and there are small differences in the individual case numbers of the groups (see Field 2009). Hypothesis 2.1 can be confirmed.

Hypothesis 2.2: Spending power (budget) has a decisive influence on the acquired fur type.

Descriptively it can be shown that real fur wearers on average have a higher spending power ($M_{\text{real fur}} = 104.6$, $SD_{\text{real fur}} = 11.7$) than artificial fur wearers ($M_{\text{artificial fur}} = 101.2$, $SD_{\text{artificial fur}} = 12.2$) and unknown fur wearers ($M_{\text{unknown}} = 101.2$, $SD_{\text{unknown}} = 12.2$). This mean difference is significant as shown in tab. 8.

Tab. 8 Results of one-factor covariance analysis (fur type and spending power)

Spending power				
Predictor	Df	MS	F	η^2
Gender (Covariate)	1, 2018	3.1	0.02*	.000
Fur type	2, 2018	2390.1	16.774***	.016

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Under control of the covariate (gender) a significant influence of the predictor fur type ($F [2, 2018] = 16.774$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .016$) on the available spending power was found. The fur type could explain 1.6% of the variance. According to (Cohen 1988) this is a small effect.

According to the Bonferroni post hoc test, real fur wearers had on average a significantly higher spending power ($M_{\text{real fur}} = 104.6$) than artificial fur wearers ($M_{\text{artificial fur}} = 101.2$) and known non-fur wearers ($M_{\text{unknown}} = 101.2$). Hypothesis 2.2 can be confirmed.

Hypothesis 3: The female wearers of artificial fur state 'animal welfare/knowledge of fur scandals' more frequently as a reason to buy artificial fur than the male artificial fur wearers.

The conscious artificial fur wearers were the reference value for this hypothesis.

Of the 2,018 participants surveyed in total, 792 were conscious artificial fur wearers, including 665 female and 127 male participants. The relationship between the variables 'gender' and purchasing reason 'animal welfare/knowledge of fur scandals' is illustrated in a cross table. The number of mentions and their percentage weighting within the respective fur type group are shown in tab. 9.

Tab. 9 Cross table (Conscious artificial fur wearers - gender and reason for purchase 'Animal welfare/ knowledge of fur scandals')

		Purchasing reason 'animal welfare/ knowledge of fur scandals'				Total	
		Yes		No			
Gender	female	558	83.91%	107	16.09%	665	100%
	male	90	70.87%	37	29.13%	127	100%
total		648	81.82%	144	18.18%	792	100%

It can be seen that the percentage of female artificial fur consumers who cite animal welfare or the knowledge of fur scandals as a reason to buy is 83.91%, 13.04% higher than the male percentage (70.87%).

A percentage of 81.82% was obtained across the genders. Hypothesis 3 can be assumed with the help of the cross table. Hypothesis 3 can be confirmed.

Hypothesis 4: If the buyer is aware of the fur scandals in the production of real fur the look is the most common reason for the conscious decision to purchase real fur garments.

The significance of the results from the cross table was again checked with the help of a Chi-square test. The results can be found in tab. 10.

Tab. 10 Results of the Chi-square test and Phi (Conscious artificial fur wearers - gender and reason for purchase 'animal protection/knowledge of fur scandals')

Chi-Square Test	Value	df	Asymptotic significance
Chi-square after Pearson	313.770a	1	.000
Number of valid cases	792		
<i>0 cells (0.0%) have an expected frequency of less than 5. The minimum expected frequency is 11.52.</i>			
Symmetrical Dimension	Value	Approximate Significance	
Nominal- in terms of nominal dimension Cramer-V	-.128	.000	
Number of valid cases	792		

The Phi value of -0.128 regarding Hypothesis 4 is only slightly meaningful and shows only a small association between the two variables.

An evaluation of the responses from buyers who have knowledge of the reporting of fur scandals has shown that the appearance of the garment is the most frequently cited reason with 48.60%. A total of nine further reasons follow at a considerable distance. Hypothesis 4 can be confirmed.

3.3 Discussion of the Results

This study provides an in-depth insight into the consumer behaviour of the German fur market. The insights gained are most relevant for textile retailers, as they can form an important basis for selling fur garments.

In addition, at a time when topics such as sustainability or ecological responsibility are the focus of public attention, this study also makes a contribution to the impact of social values on consumer purchasing behaviour (Felser 2015, pp 161ff). This applies in particular to real fur products, the manufacture and wearing of which are regularly the subject of ethically controversial public debate.

A look at the sample population (2,018 participants) reveals that 14.27% (288 participants) of those wearing fur garments did not know which type of fur they wore. The fur type does not seem to have any relevance for this group of buyers, which is why it can be assumed that they did not actively deal with the subject of fur.

Nearly two thirds of the participants who knew the fur type wore an artificial fur garment (1,140 participants, 65.90%). Only approximately one third of the participants (590 participants, 34.10%) wore real fur clothing. This means that clothing made of artificial fur is sold and worn much more frequently than clothing made of real fur. This finding has a direct influence on the assortment policy of textile clothing retailers, who predominantly encounter a demand for artificial fur.

However, the importance of real fur garments for textile retailers must not be underestimated, as consumer acceptance is still an important factor. In order to better assess the consumption of real fur garments, the purchasing reasons given in the survey may be helpful. According to the results of the study, appearance and functionality are the most frequently cited main reasons for buying real fur garments. For example, the aesthetics factor in visual merchandising can be increasingly used to promote the sale of real fur. These results are in line with the literature, which cites hedonism and utility orientation as relevant purchasing

reasons (Kuß/Kleinaltenkamp 2009: 239ff). Appearance falls under the category of hedonistic reasons and is the most frequently cited reason in the survey at 40.39%. Functionality as a benefit follows as the second most frequent reason, which is mentioned in 33.94% of all cases.

Research Question 1 asks whether there is a connection between the reason for buying or the gender of the purchaser and the purchase of one of the two types of fur.

It is conspicuous that status was chosen as the reason for purchase much more frequently for real fur wearers compared to artificial fur wearers, but with a share of 7.46% it was relatively rarely mentioned in relation to all real fur wearers. The expectation that status plays a decisive role in buying real fur is therefore not fulfilled.

Furthermore, it could be shown that there is only a small significant correlation between the personal determinant gender and the decision to purchase real or artificial fur. Men (31.15%) wore a real fur garment comparatively more frequently than women (28.60%), whereas female fur wearers (59.58%) were more likely to wear a synthetic fur garment than male (47.22%). It is also striking in this context that the proportion of those who did not know the fur type was considerably higher among the male participants (21.63%) than among the female participants (11.82%).

With regard to Research Question 2, which asks about the influence of age and purchasing power on the acquisition of one of the two fur types, it can be stated that age and purchasing power have a decisive influence on the choice of fur type. The older the wearer, the less likely they are to wear artificial fur clothes and more often real fur clothes will be worn. The following applies to the purchasing power available: the more purchasing power the wearer has at his disposal, the higher the proportion of real fur and the lower the proportion of artificial fur.

Furthermore, it can be stated that the wearers of real fur garments (\bar{x} 40.1 years) are on average older than those who wear artificial fur garments (\bar{x} 32.8 years). With regard to average purchasing power, there was a slight difference between real fur wearers (\bar{x} 104.6) and artificial fur wearers (\bar{x} 101.2).

Research Question 3 deals with the connection between gender and the purchasing reason 'animal protection/knowledge of critical media reporting' when purchasing artificial fur clothing. The results demonstrate that the female participants cited this reason more frequently than the male participants (female 83.91%, male 70.87%).

Research Question 4 examines the reasons real fur garments were acquired despite knowledge of critical reporting concerning the production of real fur. It should be noted that Hypothesis 4 did not involve any significance tests, which limits its validity.

In this context, it can be seen that the majority of participants who consciously chose real fur (76.09%, 280 of 368 conscious wearers of real fur) seem to be unimpressed by the fur scandals. They made the purchase despite this knowledge.

Most often appearance was mentioned as the reason real fur garments were purchased despite knowledge of the fur scandals (48.60%). It is noticeable that 11.73% of those who had consciously chosen to buy real fur garments mentioned functionality as a reason for purchase despite knowledge of the fur scandals. It would be interesting to carry out further analyses of the type of fur garment in this respect. For example, the use of fur in jackets usually does not contribute to warming the wearer of the jacket. The functionality argument must therefore be questioned.

It also seems paradoxical that 8.38% of all real fur wearers who had consciously decided to buy despite being aware of the fur scandals stated sustainability as the reason for buying. This gives rise to the idea that despite knowledge of critical media coverage, real fur wearers are not aware of the conditions under which real fur garments are frequently produced.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that this study is a snapshot of the consumer behaviour of fur wearers rather than a study lasting years or even decades. However, the results of the survey provide deeper insights into fur buying behaviour.

The basic population of the study refers to all wearers of real fur and artificial fur clothing in Germany. According to Bahrenberg, a sample should not consist of a number of participants that is less than 30. With increasing sample size, however, the characteristics of the sample approach those of the population, which is why samples should be as large as possible. The fur study shows a satisfactory sample size with an n of 2,018. In order to guarantee the representativeness of a sample, it must have been formed at random (cf. Bahrenberg et al. 2010: 20ff). This was not the case in this study. On the one hand, the surveys were largely conducted during weekdays, so that many employees with traditional working hours had a lower chance of participating. In addition, it should be mentioned that the survey was always conducted in shopping streets and not all groups of people who wear fur are likely to be found there.

The choice of survey type has advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the face-to-face survey could increase the success rate in terms of the number of participants who are addressed and ultimately participate. Personal contact may make it more difficult to refuse to participate in the survey than is the case, for example, with an online survey. This type of survey also ensures that the interviewee understands the content of the question correctly, as help can be given if there are any ambiguities. On the other hand, it is more likely that some participants will not answer a critical question concerning subjects such as fur or animal welfare honestly for reasons of social ostracism. This inhibition threshold would not have occurred in an anonymous survey. For this reason, the result that only 6.15% cited status as the reason for purchase despite knowledge of relevant scandals should be interpreted with caution. It is possible that the participants were not honest when answering the question.

In addition, there are other influencing factors that were not collected by this study. These include for example the significance of status for the respective individual or their preferred lifestyle. In order to get to the bottom of the question about the influence of status in more detail, it would also be necessary to include additional questions that are an indicator of status orientation. This would avoid the problem of not obtaining an honest answer to critical questions. Cultural origin also affects the purchasing behaviour of fur in general. This was also not considered in this study.

After fashion designers rediscovered the theme of fur, it has once again come to play a special role in fashion. Although the wearing of fur coats is not particularly widespread, the wearing of fur trim on jackets and other garments is popular. This often leads to animal welfare falling by the wayside in order to meet the demands of the market. The desirability of the product is also reflected in the fact that, according to the International Fur Federation, worldwide sales have risen by 70% in the last decade and a continuing expansion of worldwide fur farming can be observed (see Deutsches Pelzinstitut e.V. 2015).

In Germany on the other hand, the majority of participants are in favour of animal welfare and against the unworthy keeping of fur animals. This is accompanied by an increase in the desire for artificial fur. This development can be explained, among other things, by the increasing importance of sustainability and the increasing ecological awareness in society (cf. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2012).

The question of buying real fur leads to a strong polarization in society as a whole. Through the multimedia networking of the world, further information about the unworthy keeping of fur animals in captivity regularly reaches the public. This increasingly leads to education and a change of consciousness in the population. Possible effects can also be observed in the

textile industry. This industry is increasingly responding to consumer expectations of greater commitment to animal welfare. For example, several companies have already voluntarily committed themselves to forgo real fur. These companies include internationally active companies such as Hugo Boss, H&M and Zara (cf. Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V. 2015).

An interesting way of meeting the demand for real fur garments without producing genuine fur using controversial farming methods is the 'Fellwechsel' initiative of the German Hunting Association (see Fellwechsel 2017). Approximately 500,000 red foxes are annually hunted in Germany in accordance with legal requirements and predominantly disposed of as waste. The aim of this initiative is to pass on the skins produced from the fulfilment of the shooting quotas to the regionally active furriers. The natural fur from sustainable domestic hunting can then be transformed into high-quality goods (see Weprefur 2017).

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