



*Department of Economics and Finance*

*Bachelor Thesis in History of Economic Thoughts and Policy*

GEORGE SIMMEL'S CONTRIBUTION ON FASHION  
AND ECONOMICS:

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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The fashion field has achieved much attention from various scholars, sociologists, and management practitioners. The relationship between economics and fashion has in over the years remained a key focus for many researchers, who have tried to relate key industrial trends and changes in the economic status of countries over the years. Clemens (2000) highlights that among the popular studies concerning fashion, Veblen, Bourdieu, Blumer, and Simmel are among the scholars who have studied the subject with the objective of describing the contribution of fashion to other concepts such as economic and sociology. The scholars have expressed that fashion is related to change, and therefore, fashion act as an indicator of the economic growth, structure, and development. Here, the philosophers bring out the idea of social stratification and their impact on the economics changes (Clemens, 2000). In fact, according to Blumer, fashion is a concept that reflects the spirit of time, whereby when the time changes fashion changes making other components change as well (Clemens, 2000). Veblen, Bourdieu, Blumer, and Simmel present fashion as a self-reinforcing factor, which exist to reinforce the adaptation of several factors like economics transformation and grouping of the people in the community (Sassatelli, 2013). This clearly shows that fashion is an element that is viewed as an outcome of a process of common alternative factors, and it emerges as a key contributor to the economic development.

From Simmel's argument on the relations between fashion and economy, one can note that the philosopher had a realistic idea and supportive theories. In the argument, feverish change is the concept that the philosopher talks about and relates such change with the progress of fashion, which in turn influenced the economic transformation and progression (Sassatelli, 2013). In this paper, the focus is to discuss the economic development by employing contextual reading of George Simmel's idea and argument on fashion. In addition, the paper will try to sketch fashion as a social form that can help interpret the nature of economic growth and development. As the critical area of this thesis concerns fashion, before analyzing the idea of other scholars who have touched on the relations between economic and fashion, this document will first introduce George Simmel's key ideas on the economy of fashion. In the following sections, the

researcher will look at the contribution of fashion to the economic change, in which Simmel's ideas will be reviewed together with other scholars' views concerning the similar subject. The paper, thus, reviews literature from different scholars as the key methodology and identifies key issues that they have written about George Simmel's ideals on fashion and economics; ideals presented by other scholars on fashion and economics, while comparing them to Simmel's ideals; and other key issues that pertain to fashion and economics.

## **1.2 Georg Simmel's Key Ideas about Fashion**

A look at different texts like those written by Sassatelli (2013) and Clemens (2000) shows that fashion is a key area that forms the source of money is a synthetic factor in Simmel's argument. The sociologist tries to bring out the argument that money has an inner effect on the economy's transition, as it links the economic development with the fatality of the individuals through the society social activities (Hauge, 2007). On the other hand, as money from the social action such as fashion, Simmel notes that in the aspect of economic transition, materials are significant and functional factors that play a major role in the building and promoting the economy changes and development (Simmel, 1978). In this point, the philosopher argued that money is a form of material that has a meaning in the transition of the economy. Thus, money is the material that the development of economy requires in one way or the other, as Simmel places both money and economics in a cross section whereby fashion as a source of money develop money of the economy

In the modern world economic is a very complicated system, because most economists claim that to control the economy of a country it is something that is hard to carry out due to the competing hypothesis that is presence in an economic system (Marcuzzo, 2008). Historically, economics as a business concept has grown down on different paths. For this reason, the history of economics has received the needed attention, in particular by the scholars who see it as a significant influence on the global business performance. Research reveals that Adam Smith is the individual who created is the concept of economical with the inspiration of the French writers who had different perspective concerning the way economies work (Solow, 1985). However, as many see economics as a concept as the thing that is self-regulated system and one that is capable of repairing or reassembling itself, some sociologist such as George Simmel has a

played a major part toward its development. George Simmel introduced the social form of fashion to the world of business, which many scholars' reviews as something that can be used to interpret the beginning of the start of the feverish economy (Simmel, 1904). In fact, the fashion business brought about the development of an economic system, whereby the social and economic order introduced what is called productive capitalist economies.

Currently, most economists do not only see Simmel as the famous founding father of a number of sociology concepts but also as the individual who contributed an essential part in the history of economics thought and development (Faccarello and Kurz, 2016). In America, as scholars continue to look at the understanding of the different perspectives of economic thoughts, Simmel was compared with other scholars, but the scholars found that Simmel argument and discussion is something that economists can use to present a starting point for the analysis or discussion of the history of economics (Faccarello and Kurz, 2016). As one of the Simmel's sociology aesthetics, fashion or social forms that the people adopt in different ways is one of the originators of the economic thoughts and development. This means that Simmel views the aspect of design as the main player in the generation of economic thoughts, whereby the change in this social form does not only bring changes in the culture aspects but also in the concept of economic thoughts (Faccarello and Kurz, 2016). In other words, Simmel wanted to say that the economic thoughts or development is something that originates from several social forms that people are doing every day, and it became as a growing disciplinary, whereby it got detached to the ever increasing social circles such as fashion or any other trending activity.

Despite a balanced economy being the effective mode of the economic system, one can note that George Simmel's major ideas about the economy of fashion portray an economic system that forms an orthodox economic model. Research concerning fashion demonstrates that many scholars consider Simmel's work as an imperative component for the concept of economic generation and thought. In the context of the development and growth of the economic concept, Simmel started a project in relation to money that he branded as "The Philosophy of Money," (Dodd, 2015; Simmel, 1978). In this project, the sociologist argued that people should view fashion as something that is not different from the modern life, but as something, that is taking a more general social form. Similarly, just as it is the case of economic development where money is the

primary determinant of an economy, Simmel project, the “Philosophy of Money” through fashion is a continuously determinant of the expanding of the economy whereby people has the freedoms and social responsibilities (Simmel, 1978).

With Simmel talking of fashion as an economic phenomenon, this sociology concept contains important interest such as economic interest and takes a number of social expression. In the context of economic transition and fashion, Simmel argues that competition in fashion influences the evolution of economics (Simmel, 1978). Simmel argues that a number of actors in the social life exploit the economic evolution. This implies the economic sociology got off with great start in relation to sociology activities such as fashion. As fashion is the example of the concept that connects directly with the transition of economics, this social aspect determines the economy that is characterized with competition and other actors.

On the other hand, Simmel views fashion as a concept that developed the city, meaning that it is a fundamental component in the evolution of the economy (Aspers, 2006; Simmel, 1978). The reason on to why the sociologist relates fashion to the transition of the economy is that fashion intensifies a multiplicity of the relationship between the society and economic growth. Simmel states that fashion play an important part in the transition of the economy, as the social aspect increases the rate of social mobility that has an impact on the change and growth of the economy (Aspers, 2006). More so, Simmel’s argument implies that for decades, fashion has permitted individuals in the society in a way that brings effects on the economic transition. The sociologist claimed that the introduction of fashion contributed to economic transition as it made the economy move from a lower stratum to become a concept that is conscious in its own style. Since economics it is a traditional concept that started as a small circle, fashion had a meaning or was necessary to its transition and development (Aspers, 2006). This is to say that the transition of economics relied or depended on the modern individual and the growth of the modernity social concepts such as fashion. As such, Simmel’s argument can be interpreted by saying that fashion come out to be a major support of the economic development and gives the society an opportunity to express personal values that are significant to the transition of the economic concept.

According to Simmel, the economy of fashion has particular characteristics among them the unsettled effects that may include restlessness and unforeseen event level in the

social happenings (Simmel, 1978). This is to say that the sociologist shows fashion as the social aspect that may fluctuate or contradict the economic growth in which the fashion business makes every economic high point be accompanied by the short approach of the economic decline (Solow, 1985). For this reason, Simmel's work of fashion is at some instance an influence to economic development, because it may affect the economy in a way that it may become a fugitive movement to the people without the knowledge about its development. From this claim, one can see that despite the development of economy depending most on the social activities such as fashion, Simmel's argument brings out an even more close relationship between the operation of the economy and the socially productive activities such as fashion, which are viewed as the base for economic formation (Matheson, 2013). The connection is clearly portrayed by the way fashion transforms some of the economic elements such as demand and supply. Simmel reveals that in the economy product is first invented and then come into fashion, whereby the fashion product is made for a specific purpose of getting the attention from the buyers and the transaction activity influences the growth and development of the economy (Simmel, 1904).

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The literature about fashion by George Simmel has remained as one of the best area of study that many scholars have aimed to review with the objective of presenting how fashion affects other area of study such as economics and social science. However, as this thesis focuses on explaining the history of economics and the way it has been influenced by fashion, this section of this study concentrates on bringing a clear understanding of fashion and its contribution to economic development, in which fashion is reviewed as a social factor that has several changes relating to other fields. The history of economics, in particular about George Simmel is a subject that has attracted the interest of many scholars, as the concept of economics and fashion is a topic that is inspired by words such as evolution and progress. Therefore, in this section of this study, the focus is on presenting the literature concerning the contribution of fashion to economics and the way the two concept relates to each other. The main areas that this chapter touches on include George Simmel's arguments and the reasons that the sociologist highlights as the major social factors that makes economic become evolutionary concept and a concept that is progressive in nature. For adequate and relevant information, the thesis reviews journals, books, and articles that have touched on the topic of economic and fashion, especially arguments by George Simmel.

### **2.2 Veblen and Bourdieu Argument Concerning Fashion**

One of the greatest scholars in fashion and economics, Pierre Bourdieu, argued that "Fashion is the latest fashion, the latest difference. An emblem of class (in all senses) withers once it loses its distinctive power" (Bourdieu, 2013, p.135). Thus fashion, like economics, changes with time and the two can only be related by seeking to explain the underling concepts that define each. Most scholars claim that fashion and economics are two different concepts, but both have a close relationship, in which fashion has a direct impact to the development of economics. However, as the world is becoming more dynamic every day, Gartman (2002) argues that some of the sociology theories claim



that the social changes that are set to change the economics have several impacts on the economic changes. Looking at the Theory of Cultural Change, Pierre Bourdieu argues that most of the social changes that influence the economic development include taste and fashion (Gartman, 2002). In fact, the Theory of Cultural Change tries to note that fashion and tastes are external factors that directly affect the process of economic development in different ways. Pierre Bourdieu continues and points out that the idea of fashion is a model that brings out the motor of changing in style, which means that fashion concept has an autonomous history, and it connects with other concepts such as social and economic changes (Gartman 2002). According to Pierre Bourdieu the continuous change of fashion that is resulting from various factors such as, changing of styles has an impact on the field of production, which in turn influences the economic changes and transition (Bourdieu, 2013). The evolution of fashion makes economics to dominate other functions that may influence economic development negatively.

In a review by Schwartz (1990), concerning Bourdieu and Veblen's argument, whereby the philosophers analyze the Theory of the Leisure Class and its argument concerning consumption, the study brings out an understanding of the way consumption of fashion material can influence the change of other concepts among them economics. Moreover, concerning fashion and consumption, Bourdieu and Veblen say that when people buy the fashion materials, they aim at bringing about wealth in an already developed or developing economic (Trigg, 2001). When individuals buy fashion products, they spend money that is transferred to the economic development, thus, making the economy to be more robust and stable. Bourdieu and Veblen's Theory of the Leisure Class posits that consumption is an essential determinant of the consumers' behavior, and if people consume fashion materials in large numbers, this implies that the resources they put in the economy natures the economic development, as expenditure is one factor that influences the economic development and its changes (Trigg, 2001). In the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption, Bourdieu and Veblen opine that in the modern world people try to buy stylish products so that they can look different from other people (Trigg, 2001). Here, when one looks at this consumption behavior and its application in the fashion industry, the behavior is behind the economic boom, as people will spend adequately, which will later boost the economic development, thus making it stable and progressive at any time.

## **2.3 Fashion According to Simmel**

In the twentieth century, much has been said about fashion, but most of theories touch on the Simmel argument in relates to the way the philosopher views fashion and its contribution to other day-to-day concepts. According to Robinson (1961), fashion is a subtlest and one of the subtlest forms of luxury; and in some situations, fashion may be an aspect that is hard to see. For the economist, fashion is all to do with the expenditure and perception, with the two aspects being a key influence on the economic evaluation and development. In fact, economists believe that the economics changing in a similar manner to that which fashion takes, as luxury and design bring out a decorative purpose that in turn influences the shape of economics evaluation (Robinson, 1961). For instance, in the United States, fashion is viewed as the bright spot that is playing an important role in the formation of the creative economy of the American people (Joint Economic Committee: United States Congress, 2015). With many people in the American putting their life dependency on the fashion industry, the investment that is set within the fashion business has a vital influence on the American's economy, with the sector aiming at making the U.S economy one of the best worldwide. With this understanding, one can see that economic history has a relation to the fashion industry, which reflects the social happenings and the way they affect the economic evaluations of a country. Viner and Irwin (1991) assert that fashion defines the history of economics as an area that is quite an extent regarding economic thinking and ideas. With industrialization being among the factors that made up the history of economics, fashion industry comes out as a diverse industry that provides the economic development the right tools to embrace its evaluation (Joint Economic Committee: United States Congress, 2015). This is to say that fashion has a direct impact on the economic history, as the industry incorporates economic factors such as division of labor and expenditure and such factors are significant in the development and growth of the economic concept.

Simmel (1904) points out that fashion is a product that operates on numbers of different forms, as it is involved in revolving within one given circle and aim at emphasizing on the different form of social happenings. With this statement, Simmel tries to mean that fashion is a concept that seems to prove an exception. Therefore, as a concept that has many years tries to prove to be the exception in nature, the concept has a direct impact

on the development and evolution of economics (Simmel 1904). Fashion also has an essential element of change that tends to play a significant role in the growth and development of the economic concepts. With such key stands, Simmel (1904) highlights that fashion has the needed tendencies for the development of modern economics and the aim to influence the understanding of the economist people more about the evolution of the economic theory. In fact, the reason why Simmel suggests that fashion is a significant influence toward the development and growth of economics is that fashion has particular quality that makes the individuals within the society incorporate their personal lives with fashion. In addition, the fashion changes are another factor that makes the economic to change in one way or the other (Simmel 1904). The change here means the economic evolution and progression depends on the major fashion changes that are brought by fashion advancement (Simmel, 1904). With the understanding of Simmel argument taking the different perspective from several scholars, it is apparent that today, fashion is repeatedly making the economic history more clear, as it fits in the economic development circle.

From the discussion above, Simmels bring out a clear picture concerning sociology economics, as the man himself is a sociologist, his argument has a connection to the economics. With the Simmels argument about fashion bringing out the use of a phrase economic sociology by many scholars, this shows the contribution of fashion to the development of macroeconomics (Swedberg, n.d). As the fashion concept is an example of an economic sociology that deals with the economic phenomena, the concept traces the root of economic development, with the Simmel argument showing that economic sociology is relevant to the modern and future economics. Skoric, Kisjuhas, and Skoric, (n.d) identify that fashion, as studied in Simmel's text, has a uniqueness when it comes to the history of economics. In this case, the research demonstrates that any social factor has a unique impact on the economic evolution and its development.

According to Simmel (1904), fashion possesses a unique space within the economy, and therefore, it appears as a social factor that has a quantitative filling in the society that is part of the economic history. This means that fashion is relevant to the economic transition because of the different function it has on economies within the world. In a different study by Beckert (2007), the understanding of economic sociology as shown in the Simmel argument is vital to the economist because this will give economist an opportunity to understand that economic sociology is a contributing factor to the

evolution of economic change and development. In fact, in the history of economics has in various come across different problems, fashion as a sociology-economic factor makes the economic difficulties to be less (Simmel, 1978). This implies that the integration of fashion with economic development bring out a stable economic where there is a balance between economics and sociology.

For supportive information concerning Simmel's argument, Robinson (1961) points out that fashion behavior is a motivational to the underlying demand for luxuries and stylish products. In other words, the philosopher is brings out the idea of fashion as a concept that serves as a mean of demonstrating command over current means of productions, that will in turn shapes the economic concept in different ways. Robinson (1961) furthers his argument concerning fashion and economics and says that the aspect of changing the design of fashion is expensive, but it creates favorable demand and supply policies, which are economically unique. Fashion with all its characteristics is a readjustment factor that makes the economy to change from one level to another or rather makes the economy take on a progressive route, with the discipline bringing up new magnitude to the economic growth and its stability (Simmel, 1978).

## **2.4 Critical Observation about Fashion and Economics**

Clarke, Doel, nd Housiaux, (2003) note that within the modern understanding of the concept of fashion in relation to the Simmel's argument, it is observed that fashion and economics are key forms that people redistribute to their own advantage or to benefit the social standard of other people. Here, the philosophy intends to mean that fashion us a remarkably modern form that gives people a string sense of passing of other concepts such as economics. A different study by Lynch and Strauss (2007) implies that fashion is a form that has the potentiality of bringing about dramatic influence to the economic progression and setting up the human behavior that are in one way or the other essential when it comes to economic transitioning. From the trickle-across collective selection theory, fashion is viewed as an important social phenomenon that has direct impact on the people's behavior and transforming of the economic (Lynch & Strauss, 2007). With fashion coming up as an important social factor, it is evident that fashion is a concept that has role-playing impact on the economic and the people within a given region. According to the Simmel (1904) and the methodological perspective that the sociologist used to develop his argument concerning fashion, it is clearly observed that the

anthropology to economics in relations to fashion make up a characteristic of social theory that intends to describe the way fashion structure economics.

Additionally, a key observation made concerning Simmel's argument is the issue of theories of consumption. Ma, et al. (2012) argue that in the fashion industry, both top-down and bottom down penetration theory have been found consistent with the consumers' behavior when they are approaching the consumption fashion materials. Within this theory, fashion is viewed as a motivational factor that has the capability of influencing the customers' behavior (Ma, et al., 2012). When fashion is said to be a motivational and behavior mechanism factor, it implies that it can as well influence the development of the economic, in which the consumption that people are making will either take the economic up or down.

According to Simmel (1904) fashion is significant within the economic development as the economist uses it tactically to maximize their inner freedom and provide a sphere factor toward the development of economic in a fashionable manner. Clarke, Doel, an Housiaux (2003) further reveals that basing it on Simmel's argument about fashion and its historical advantages to various concepts, fashion is a democratic institution that people among them economist can elect to share the infinity that it has and use it to transform and develop economics. Moreover, philosophers indicate that fashion is something that is always moving forward with the objective of maintaining its proximity or congruence to other factors such as economics and social life of the people (Lynch & Strauss 2007). In this case, this means that fashion is the aspect that goes hand in hand with other modernity concepts and its role in their development relates to the Simmel argument about its historical evolution. With Simmel using the word fashion to describe and predict something that is moving forward and make people to be up to date (Lynch & Strauss 2007). In fact, Simmel says that fashionable goods directly relate to the development of economics, as the discipline makes up in the list of historical predecessors that shape the appearance of the present economic concepts.

## **2.5 Simmel's Theory and Simulation**

Simmel theory of fashion goes beyond the discussion about fashion, as the discussion invests in all form of social sciences, transmission, and changes that the concept of fashion bring to these concepts. According to Simmel (1904), fashion gives economist

an opportunity to find a similar phenomenon in the field of economic behavior. However, with the look of fashion and the way Simmel describes it, the sociologist goes ahead and say that the theory can make the economist find the tension of imitation and distinction in the economic field. Simmel (1904) describes that for the economist to find programs that stimulate the limitations that fashion cause to the economic may be difficult, despite the action making up a significant advance in the economic development and its relationship with the scope of fashion. Kaern, (1990) say that the theory of fashion as described by Simmel can be divided into two models. The reasons why the theory is explained as a model are as follow. According Kaern (1990), from Simmel's point of view, fashion as a theory plays an important form that is simplified interpreted and it affects both human behaviors and economic transitioning. In addition, Kaern, (1990) continues and says that fashion as a theory that scholars see as an influencing model play significant role in shaping of the society behavior when it comes to the way people views fashion and how fashion influences their consumption rate. Thus, here it is clear that the literature brings out the idea of fashion connecting different concept into one especially the society and economy.

## **2.6 Simmel Fashion and Philosophy of Money**

In the study about fashion, Simmel's work has also touched the relationship between money and fashion, in which the two components tend to influence economic development process. According to Simmel (1904), the money that is generated from the fashion consumption is symbols that have some impacts on both the people, society, and the process of economic development itself. In his text, Simmel, (1978) say that fashion has a direct connection with modernity and this case, the sociologist talks of modernity as a concept that is characterized with money. With Simmel's philosophy of fashion and money going against Benjamin's argument, Simmel (1978) points out that an overflow of money in an economic may affect the process of economic development in a negative and positive way.

Additionally, Simmel views the philosophy of money and its connection relationship with fashion as a theme, which economist need to use to manifest in the modernity, as it flourishes the development of other fields among them economic growth and transformational of people's social life (Simmel, Frisby, & Featherstone, 1997). In a deeper understanding of the philosophy of money and fashion, Simmel, Frisby, and

Featherstone (1997) continues and say that fashion reflects the philosophy of money, as the two elements associated to the modernity concepts. From this discussion and identification of the fact that both money and fashion are related, it is apparent that fashion has been a key influence on the tradition and modern economics. From the Simmel perspective, economics cannot progress without the presence of money that fashion generates and fashion industry cannot prosper without the money that people use to do the buying of the products. Simmel, Frisby, and Featherstone (1997) found out that in the process of using fashion and money at the same time, this may bring out a problematic situation in the development of other concepts that has a connection with fashion and money. From both fashion and money, there are positive and adverse consequences that may affect the development of the economy or social concepts (Simmel, 1978). Although from the Simmel argument, it is found that in a situation, whereby people are interacting with fashion industry there is freedom that in turn influences the people's contribution to the economic growth, money, and fashion can cause some problems if the distribution of both does not have the balancing that is needed within an economy.

## **2.7 Roles of Fashion to the Economics History**

From the review of the studies that relates to the Simmel argument concerning fashion and the way it relates to economic development, scholars say that Simmel analysis is capable of making notable and significant contribution to the economy and social life of different peoples. Simmel (1904) claims that fashion gives the economic history efficacy that is sometimes hard to find from other fields. In fact, from his analysis, it is evident for one to see that Simmel theory bridges the two sector that is, fashion and economic, with the collaboration of the two fields being an indication of the role that fashion play in the economic development and changes.

With the Simmel, findings showing that fashion has for a long time gained the importance in the development of economics, researchers has come up with crucial significant that fashion has in the process of economic development. In a study done by Kisfalud (2008), the author found out that fashion has become an essential element in the evolution and development of the present economic and social situations. With the study revealing that, the people's demand in the society keeps fashion alive; it is open that fashions make up in the historical root of economics. Skov and Melchior (2008)

opine that fashion is referred by many people as a hybrid subject, because it is a concept that has the different conceptual framework, among them being a fundamental concept in the evolution of the economics. With the issue attracting a lot of commentary from various scholars, this is an indication of the roles that fashion had on other disciplines particularly when it comes to their development. Kisfalud (2008) outlines that as an economic development factor, fashion senses the shifts that are taking place in the world and come up with the better responses that are needed in a sensitive and immediate manner. These changes have critical impacts on the economics and its development since they make the economic and social situations to bring out innovative ideas that have the positive contribution to the development and growth of the economics.

Skov and Melchior (2008) note that fashion has a history, and its history is directly connected with the aspect of economic changes. This implies that the concept of fashion is broader and narrower than many people would think. With fashion development being an opportunity for the economics of a country to gain capital, this implies that fashion has a significant role to the economic growth, as the capital, it brings in the economy is used to develop and changes the economic status (Skov & Melchior, 2008). When the customers purchase the fashion item, they contribute to the economic development through the money they pay for the fashion products. Shumpeter (1954) states that in the economic development money is like gold, with the scholar claiming that when money is plenty in the economy, this means that it will positively grow and develop. With customers buying clothing commodities, the money that they use aim at giving the economy a positive stand, as the money will support the economic development.

## **2.8 The study of Fashion by other Scholars**

In the present world, where the study of the neo-classic economics has taken place, many scholars claim that the relationship between economics and fashion is based on assumptions and other matters. In fact, research shows that the relationship between the two lies under normative theory, whereby researcher say that the progress of fashion does focus on explaining the actual economics and concentrates on describing the applications that are there in the history of economics (Lowenberg, 1990). With Simmel relating fashion and economics quoting that the two concept influence each other, from



the perspective of some scholars, one can note that other scholars has come up with the idea that aim at supporting Simmel ideas (Lowenberg, 1990). More scholars continue and say that the theory of fashion relates to the complexity of the fashion system and give evidence showing that fashion has a concrete effect on the development of the economics.

With many sociologists referring fashion as a social science subject, it is found out that the subject focus on the behavior of the individuals as the agent of economic development (Lowenberg, 1990). This implies that within text where Simmel relates fashion and economics, the philosopher identify that the behavior of the people and individuals are key contributors to the economic evolution. Simmel says that economics encompasses a progressive process; in the economic theories and this is used to support Simmel arguments that intend to present a regressive and refutable idea concerning how fashion and economics are connected (Lowenberg, 1990). Here, the researcher aims at bringing out the reason that makes the progressive history of economics and fashion be amended so that it become clear to scholars that economics follows a particular route toward its development and evolution. Lowenberg (1990) further entails that the political behavior is another issue that the economic Simmel tend to identify in the explanation of the economic history. In this context, the thinker says that fashion and economics stake into account, the individual political behaviors as it has intended impacts on the economic history.

According to Black, et al. (2014) Simmel explanation of fashion show adequate information or palpable that can make one say that fashion has impact on the economic development. In this case, Black, et al. (2014) posit that the argument and the supportive information that Simmel use concerning fashion shows the simplistic standard of the concept because fashion as a cycle necessary influences the development of economics as the scholar claims. Duduciuc (n.d.) further suggests that fashion is a sociological subject that can be distinguished in two orientations. As such, Duduciuc (n.d.) asserts that fashion is divided into two categories, which are social political and culture event categories. With the researcher grouping fashion in the two categories, it is obvious that the researcher intends to demonstrate that fashion is connected to economics just as Simmel tries to show in the theory of fashion. In this situation, whereby fashion is categorized, Duduciuc (n.d.) tries to support argue Simmel argument and the theory of fashion in order to demonstrate that Simmel's idea has

something to do with economics development and transformation. In the sense of Simmel and his argument, it is evident that fashion is a collective thematic factor that has a direct impact on the people's behavior and in some extent influences the political events (Duduciuc, n.d.).

A different argument by Black, et al. (2014) suggest that Simmel put the aspect of the society in his argument, as the theory of fashion presents a different perspective that may ignore implications of fashion to the society. The scholar notes that Simmel argument focuses on customer fashion and class fashion, with the two concept incorporating taste and concern of a particular social group. This diffusion makes fashion complex and associate with economic development as suggested by various scholars. Black, v (2014) point out that for economic to be at its level best, fashion should be a chain of activities, where it gives predictable roles to the economic transformation and changes. Black, et al. (2014) also argue that fashion is now a complex system that may have impact on the economic development. As such, for fashion to be at its best and provide positive results toward the development of other concepts, it should incorporate factors such as fabric and manufacturing, which to some extent may make it complex. Therefore, the scholar feels that with its complexity and its form, fashion is a complete factor that can make the economic become more progressive or get into a position where economist will be satisfied.

In a different documentation, Herbert (1969) argues that Simmel's discussion makes fashion be categorized in the context of realm, in which it is purely applied in areas such as painting, music, drama, and any other sector where the aspect of convincing people is highly needed. According to Simmel (1904), fashion serves the objective of identity within various concepts that are progressive. In this case, Herbert (1969) supports Simmel's argument by bringing out the idea of fashion as a factor that aims to attract people in different sectors rather than the economic concept. According to Duduciuc, (n.d.), fashion is a concept that is viewed as a complete uninformed system, as from Simmel perspective fashion move beyond the conditions of the economy and human life. Here, Simmel's argument can be seen as an idea that raises the question of how fashion is complete and its influence to the economic. In this context, the researcher sees fashion as an element that can influence economic development in the best way just as the way other factors such as investment and money can affect the economic development. Simmel argues that fashion concerns the mechanism of imitation that has

a phenomenon that applies phonetic changes and aims at influencing the behavior of the people within the society. Thus, Duduciuc, (n.d.) feels that the argument concerns economic changes and tend to influence the action of people, in particular, concerning the way fashion will make an individual look different from another person. Although fashion is a complex concept, it is a transforming factor, as it is presented as an element that determines the behavior of the people and the economics.

## **3.0 Discussion and Conclusion**

### **3.1 Summary of Findings**

In essence, from the discussion presented in this paper, it is evident that the idea of fashion in George Simmel's argument can be viewed as one of the early sociological accounts that explain the effective mode of production. In the text, the scholar argues that fashion as a key communal form represents a logical and positive impact on the economy. In other words, Simmel's argument brings out an approach that aims at combining the understanding of the relation between social and economic development. Additionally, Simmel presents fashion as a component that serves more than just a purpose of identifying the social group, but as a factor, that has a role in the development of economies. Contrarily, other studies on economics and fashion by philosophers such as Benjamin found out that fashion has a single purpose in nature, whereby the study by the theorist states that fashion focuses on serving a specific democratic social position (Simmel, 1978).

Additionally, from the discussion and the study findings, it is evident that economic history is a concept that is complex, and the development of economics is based on different factors. Fashion as a factor that has played various roles in the development of economics provides the economist with the sense of variety and flexibility, especially concerning the social arrangements. This implies that the understanding of studies focusing on fashion conducted by different scholars such as Simmel gives the economist a chance to understand better and more about the interaction of economic transformational and social activities such as the fashion.

The paper explores different characteristics that connect fashion and economics according to Simmel's argument concerning the same topic. Some of the issues that the study discusses include a key observation about Simmel's argument, philosophy of money, criticism discussion concerning Simmel's argument, and the role of fashion in the economic history. Despite broad discussion concerning fashion and the way it relates to economic development, it is patent in the argument by Simmel, the philosophy of money, is a significant characteristic of fashion that makes it in the list of the factors that concerns the exploitation of the economic transition. The interaction between money

and economics is a clear indication of Simmel work's that describes the economy of money whereby the philosopher believes that transition of the economy depends on the support of the money that come from the social activities that may include fashion (Simmel, 1978). Therefore, one can say that according to Simmel, money can lie on either side of the economy since it gives the precondition that makes the economy have a meaning and its practical position.

Simmel uses the philosophy of money to write about important components that connect fashion, economics, and this means that fashion in the modern days is a critical social factor, as the money that is gained from fashion doings support the development and transition of the economics (Simmel, 1978; Simmel, 1904). With fashion bringing money that is needed in an economy, today the economic history appears more clear and straightforward whereby the economics activities are done in the way that portrays the social practices. On the other hand, with the study observing several facts about fashion and its contribution to the economic history, what Simmel tried to mean when he talked about fashion as the theory that has roles within the economy is that fashion is the effect of dynamic play that will influence individuals' behavior and other concepts among them economics. Therefore, as a factor that motivates people to spend money and influence their behavior, fashion through the purchase, changes economics appearance, in which it makes economics to grow, transform, and become stable. This is to say that fashion is a major contributor to the economic growth and it aim at supporting the economic development and positioning the economics in a way that economist can say that the economy is balanced.

With fashion being connected to various characteristics that are important in different ways, Simmel demonstrates that fashion is a form of imitation that bring about relevant equalizations to the society and economics. At same time, with fashion having several roles to the history of economics, fashion increases changes in the economic that intend to differentiate the economic development and makes economic concept become a progressive concept. From the economics perspectives, Simmel present fashion as a concept that changes for no apparent reasons, yet it changes other concepts that it has a connection with the same way it changes the particular group of people. According to the theorist, fashion is a progressive element that makes economics move from a primitive status to a status that is better for economist or to a modernity standard. As such, the way Simmel view fashion and its role in the modern economic development

are essential for economist because the perspective brings out a comprised interaction between economics and fashion. In addition, Simmel's argument shows that economic development cannot depend on the wealth from the society, but it can rely on wealth that fashion distribute in any occasion where people and economics shares an interaction. Finally, with Simmel's argument showing that people use fashion to make themselves look different from one another, this is an indication of the fact that fashion makes the economics of some country change and looks different from the economies of the other countries. In fact, the philosopher quote and say that "fashion is a product of class distinction," (Simmel, 1957, p.542), which means that fashion has more than one functions that consist of revolving the life of people and separating the economics development of a country from the others.

### **3.2 Limitations and Recommendations**

While this thesis discusses key issues presented by George Simmel and other researchers on the latter's view on fashion and economics, as well as different views from other economists, this study does not give a critical comparison between Simmel's views and that presented by other scholars. Additionally, the depth of issues discussed in this paper does not lay a lot of emphasis on the future applicability of Simmel's models and ideas today. Thus, future research should focus on giving great details on the differences and similarities in what various scholars such as Bourdieu, Veblen, and Simmel presented as well as their applicability and how these issues can transform economics and fashion.

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