ABOUT FASHION TRENDS RESEARCHES: THEORETICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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Abstract: This article refers to a theoretical study about consumer and behavior trends researches, especially, ones focused on fashion. Are addressed important concepts and definitions, proposed by various authors, and thus constitutes a basis material for further deepening in theme. It was also made a brief chronological analysis, in order to know the origin of this research field, as well as companies that develop it, in Europe, in the United States and even in Brazil.
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Key words: Trends Researches. Fashion Trends. Consumption. Behavior.

1. Introduction

The hyperconsumption defined by the philosopher Lipovetsky (2007) is one of the most striking features of contemporary societies. The habit of acquiring goods overly and quickly is one of the pillars that supports the complex configuration of the behavior of individuals today. But this habit not only influences consumers, after all, consume is an action based on the exchange of goods, and how any change depends on both sides, in this case demand and supply. The hyperconsumption is one of those responsible for the development and maintenance of current models of production, supply and consumption of goods and services: very quickly offers very quickly consumed in large quantities and, as it could not be different, very quickly discards - already wishing what to be readily offered. And so it is the cycle where its speed very well shows the ephemerality, especially in the case of fashion products.

Avelar (2009) argues that globalization approached the companies with regard to both economic and cultural issues when quoting Castells (1999), which says that the exchanges take place much more quickly, because individuals are organized in a network. The popularization of the Internet, occurred in the early 1990s, made relative the notions of time and space, where everyone is allowed to be wherever they want, whenever they need. Thus, the internet spreads the fashion information, transforming local into global wishes. "Connected", consumers can watch in real time the fashion shows and releases, can see the photos in high definition at the very moment that the media make it available, exchange opinions on consumer experiences and so desire products that are developed and manufactured in different places, in what Avelar (2009, p. 80) calls "the internationalization of symbols given by consumption". The democratization of information provided by the Internet also allows companies and professionals to observe, identify and categorize markets through users/consumers, and so work using such data.

According to these informations, companies allied anthropology and ethnography, sociology, psychology and philosophy to its creative process, in order to analyze society and its consumption practices, after all, the starting point of any creative activity that aims the exchange of values in a capitalist environment is the consumer. The business activity is no more only the creation, production and supply of new products: came

to also be the development of markets and nonexistent before consumer needs, focused on complex social groups formed by individuals from multifaceted personalities, that relate to each other through "fluid ties" (Bauman, 2001).

Over time, much has been created and developed. It becomes increasingly difficult to generate new from non-existent yet, however effective the processing techniques of creative abilities are. Groups of students and professionals of Design, Marketing and Advertising started then to realize that "redesigning" the existing can be as innovative and bright as start from the beginning. And then, this "redesign" when associated with communication and manipulation of the individual's consumption needs can be synonymous of success. Success occurs because the professionals are aware that part of consumption choices made by people gives pulse and are motivated by massed influences, and quickly changed from the desire for novelty, since all the relationships involved are ephemeral. Soon are offered new products, soon are discarded and the search for the new restarts.

Therefore, the industry has been searching and thus trying to understand how the logic of change works, in this way is able to trace and follow a path as a guide, generating appeal and enchantment in products and services that are even subtly, according to malleability of the market.

2. What is trend

The term trend, in psychology, features something pointing one direction but unable to reach it. It is related to a possibility, something that has some uncertainty, but can also be used as "guidance" and "movement" associated with a group of people. Raymond (2010) explains that the term is old and originates in English or in German, meaning "to turn", "to rotate", "to spin". Caldas (2006, p. 23) presents the etymological meaning of the term as:

> "Derives from the Latin tendentia, present participle and noun plural name of the tendere verb, whose meaning is "tend to", "to lean" or "be attracted by". From the cradle, so the word comes loaded by the meaning of otherness - as it can only be due to an attraction of another object - movement (the slope of the image resulting from this attraction) and coverage (the verb to tend also means "extend" and "unfold" [...])".

Yet for Caldas (2006, p. 31), "often we call trend a random sequence of events, combining a correlation with the idea of chance, despising what really happens to the whole". Chance may be part of the concept of a trend, but this is not a rule. Creative individuals who combine their ideas to commercial interests at a given moment, and turn it into desire for a collective - which can be since an urban group, a community, even a society - can dispel trends in a strategic way.

The definition given by Gladwell (2009) is that trend - which may be an idea, a product, a message or behavior - is an epidemic and spreads like virus. The "contagion" is given by individuals that he puts as exceptional and have "contagious behavior", which eventually contaminate others by displaying their concept of fashion (here in comprehensive fashion sense: way or manner), in a particular context of place and time. "In other words, there are several ways to trigger an epidemic. Epidemics involve the action of people who transmit infectious agents, the infectious agent itself and the environment in which the agent acts" (Gladwell 2009, p. 24). Then understanding these elements within the fashion context, triggering a fashion trend depends on what is the trend itself, the individuals who appropriate it and the places they inhabit and frequent.

Raymond (2010) states that, within the context of consumption, a trend can be classified as a kind of "anomaly", something weird, contradictory or diverting standard, which becomes increasingly prominent after a period of time when more people, products and ideas become part of that change. Raymond explains that there are emotional character tendencies, intellectual and even spiritual. "Basically, a trend can be defined as the direction that something (and that something can be anything) tends to move and has a consequential impact on culture, society and business sector through which it moves" (Raymond

2010, p. 14). He adds that the words "style" or "movement" can sometimes be used to describe the changes, but style is a distinctive way, aesthetic, method or way to express something 'new' in design, fashion, architecture, etc. Therefore, a trend would be the direction in which the new moves, while style is in the sense of difference, when a trend is given on the difference and the direction and the way in which this difference runs.

Within marketing, Kotler & Keller (2006, p. 76) describe trend as a "direction or sequence of events with a certain force and a certain durability. More predictable and lasting, trends reveal how the future will be and offer many opportunities". In this context and more objectively, Rech & Campos (2016) state that the trend informations have contributed to help organize supply and demand. In short, companies who work supported on this informations can identify areas in market which they can act (opportunities) as well as dimensioning their products and services to meet or format itself the needs of consumers.

The term trend may still take pejorative connotation when used as an adjective, "biased", featuring lack of self-positioning (Caldas, 2006). Sorts the development of a trend as a way to impose the adoption of certain habits and behaviors, as well as the loss of personal identity and the massification of individual. For that matter, it is worth mentioning Avelar (2009), which places the importance of applying the glocalism - a dimension of global which comes under the own local identity features, and thus minimize the problems arising from diversification. "The glocalism is a movement that seeks not only the survival of capitalist industry, by the effective sale, but the hybridization of cultures in real time" (Avelar 2009, p. 92). The glocalism then appropriates the global information that is common but treats the cultural particularities of each place in a proper way in order to minimally maintain individual identity and self-positioning.

In other words, research trends is to understand the current context (identify and analyze its elements) and, from it, get "predict" its possible directions in the future. According to Rech & Campos (2009), "in this sense, trends act as a mirror of the future of contemporaneity. Mirror, in which emerging current signs of life models reflect projections pointed to a specific future", therefore, this information collected end up drawing more plausible futures. Trend researches are based both in behavior and in practice of consumption of individuals, because this is how it express the emerging values in social dynamics and hand the desires of contemporary consumers (Santos, 2013, p. 17).

From a marketing analysis, working with trends mean to increase the hit probability, with respect to the production and sale of consumer goods or services. According to Santos (2013, p. 17):

> "The need to acquire and retain new customers (whose wills are increasingly difficult to decipher), in a fierce global competition scenario, drives companies to invest in behavioral research practices to understand how people think, act and interact with products and brands".

Caldas (2006) explains that since the 1970s the way fashion works it is spread to all spheres of society and culture, and the desire for novelty has become the dominant paradigm in the post-industrial society. For him, "everything works as if capitalism had found in the "fashion way" which is earlier, your perfect formula: toggle of in and out in a cyclical system" (Caldas 2006, p. 44). This phenomenon causes the seasonal nature of fashion to be incorporated by other industrial areas, especially those that are linked in some way to design. Architecture and interior design, cosmetics and perfumes, beauty care, among others are already closely linked to fashion, but it has been noticed other segments, once distant, approaching and using languages that once belonged only to the "fashion universe". Two examples can be cited in this regard, the first (figure 1) is the case of smartwatch developed by Samsung, a company operating in the information technology segment. The Samsung Galaxy Gear Smartwatch was released in September 2013 and is a smart wristwatch, which has the same operating system for mobile phones from Samsung. This gadget is also an example of what is called wearable technology.

Figure 1: Samsung Galaxy Gear Smartwatch. (Photo: www.thegadgetflow.com)

The second example (figure 2) is given by Air France, which launched in 2014 an advertising campaign just like a fashion editorial. Destinations in which it operates were portrayed with elements of the cultural identity of each site, built by the models through a very elaborate styling.
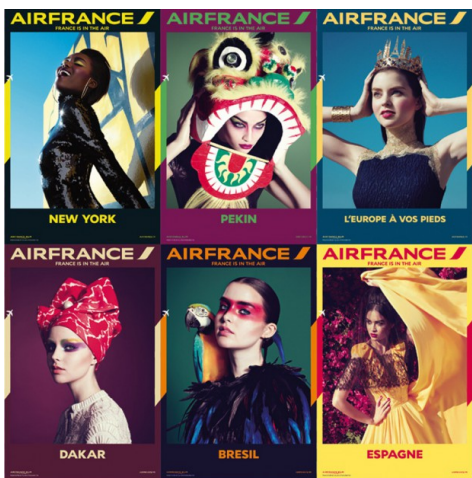

Figure 2: Air France 2014 advertising. (Photo: www.elle.fr)

Thus, all fields of endeavor who wish to combine their name to the idea of fashion - as well can have the benefits resulting from this - end up using research of fashion trends in the development of its products and services. The examples serve to illustrate the importance of this area for the most diverse industries and, although contemporaries, like many others, reflect the success of research practices that began some time ago.

It is important to note that sometimes, some trends only partially materialized, while others do not even come to fruition. But for the industry, work according to the predictions means increasing the possibility that a particular product or service offered will be well accepted in the market, thus minimizing losses. The marketing factor is what fosters the development and advancement of research trends, and thus is at stake economic value. However, as previously stated, the starting point of any commercial activity should be the consumer, so it is important to analyze the individuals in order to treat them as human beings and not merely as customers or numbers (Santos, 2013). When analyzing individuals from their social and cultural spheres, the industry can trace innovation guidelines to serve them.

2.1 How fashion trends researches arose

The interest in researching consumer trends started from analyzes and studies of marketing. According to Kotler & Keller (2006), is that "a new product or marketing program likely will be more successful if it is consistent with strong trends, not against them". The goal of marketing is to develop a strategic plan in order to deliver customer value, to measure and qualify the demand for any market or segment. The trend

information contribute to improve this delivery, to identify more precisely what is the demand and work to add value to the product or service.

Fashion design trends researches started up commercially in the 1960s, after World War II; however the trends research for colors were already taken since 1915 by The Color Association of The United States - CAUS. The industrial development of the United States (since the 1930s) has made ready-to-wear possible to be run, but the design of the pieces was always inspired by the Parisian *Haute Couture*. In this aspect it is important to emphasize that, for learning the techniques of making clothes and accessories, copying models is a factor of too much importance, because the methods are only learned after their repetition in exhaustion, and this is about to evaluate the already manufactured product, often to undo it in order to identify the smallest details of how to run it. Learning to manufacture on an industrial scale was only possible thanks to the understanding of technical manuals, and after that, had been managed to adapt to the production machines. In addition to speed, fashion's industrialization also brought, therefore, the standardization of products.

 The speed in which produces ready-to-wear checked quickly in the way of consuming fashion products, so the desires of consumers for novelty also had been accelerated. The success of American ready-to-wear spurred the emergence of French *prêt-à-porter* and it revealed the need to diversify, as the inspiration for both the American fashion as for the very French fashion departed from the same point, *Haute Couture*. Zanettini (2012) states that in World War II was still the seizure by Germany of some maisons, which resulted in the French fashion, a stagnation. The source of inspiration, then had to actually be renewed.

According to Sant'Anna & Barros (2011), the success of the American model of production and systematization of programmed obsolescence in releases by collections generated a scenario that made France realized the loss of sovereignty of the fashion market since the traditions of *Haute Couture* were faced with the industrial reality. Sant'Anna & Barros still place it was in the post-war scenario that was born youth as a consumer of fashion, through the generation called baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964). Young people did not want to look like their parents, so stard to change your clothes (customize) according to their own tastes. "This new fashion consumer - the young - is a voracious consumer, sought different things, innovative, cheerful, sexy, amazing, but also industrial, versatile and cheap" (Sant'Anna & Barros, 2011, p. 4). Such was the impact of young people in fashion that the industry needed to re-evaluate this scenario, and then he could serve them, after all it was a great market that could not be ignored.

In 1955 the French Claude Weill and Albert Lempereur created the Coordinating Committee of Industries of Fashion (CIM), after learning about the American industrial methods. The Committee developed information about fashion trends that were marketed in report format, and was funded by the French government in order to return to France the world reference position in fashion. This material was quite extensive and contained information from spinning to the direct sale to the final consumer as needed to cover all the creative-productive chain of fashion. Moreover, these were the same information that shaped consumer tastes, as the media also had access to reports (Sant'Anna & Barros, 2011).

In the 1970s then came the first private trend research agencies, called *Bureaux de Stylo*. Sant'Anna & Barros (2011) report that was through these bureaus, who did not have any link with the French government, which companies from other countries could have access to these reports. The Promostyl (figure 3) was the first to be established, followed by Pecler's Paris, Nelly Rodi, Carlin International, among others, and all exist until today. The materials developed by these agencies have brought from the outset, information as well as colors, textiles and materials, textures and silhouettes: also about economics, arts and emerging socio-cultural values.
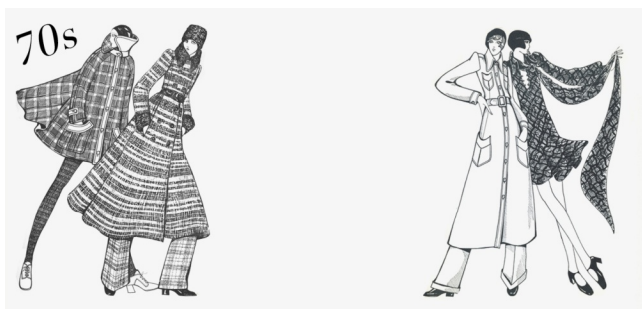
Figure 3: Example of Promostyl 1970s trend report. (Photo: www.promostyl.com)

In the late 1980s and early 1990s it came over a range of trend research agencies elsewhere in Europe and the United States, and not only aimed at the fashion information itself, but also on consumption trends in general and strategic design. As an example it have the Faith Popcorn's BrainReserve and Future Concept Lab. In 1998 was founded in London WGSN (Worth Global Style Net), currently the largest trend research agency in the world, a pioneer in the commercialization of information over the internet (called online reports, figure 4). The facility in which is possible to purchase the reports through the Internet, how quickly are updated and the possibility of access to the material remotely popularized this way to market trend research. The high demand for this search format generated a favorable scenario to the emergence of more online agencies in different parts of the globe and are presented to the market in the form of websites/portals. As an example may be mentioned Trendwatching, Trendstop, Stylus, L Report, K-Hole, among others. The absence of printing costs, material samples and sending to customers contributes to the cost of the signatures of these portals is increasingly accessible to a larger audience.

Figure 4: Example of a WGSN trend report. (Photo: www.wgsn.com)

The rise of emerging markets outside Europe-US axis has raised the need for more fashion information directed to particular realities. Brazil is an example of one of these countries, and has a number of agencies that develop research consumer trends, behavior and fashion. One can cite the Observatório de Sinais, Box 1824, UseFashion, Senai Mix Design, Futuro do Presente Lab. (research project developed in the Fashion Design course at UDESC - University of the State of Santa Catarina), Tendere, among others.

3. Final considerations

With trends research developed by these companies, a new light was created within the creative-production chain fashion: products are now created and manufactured from evidence that depart from the public for the industry. Production methods and processes are still delimiting parameters of creative activity, because without them the project can not get off the ground, but the resulting information from the public and the market became, likewise, the whole matter.

It is important to note that sometimes, some trends only partially materialized, while others do not even come to fruition. But for the industry, work according to the predictions means increasing the possibility that a particular product or service offered is well accepted in the market, thus minimizing losses. The marketing factor is what fosters the development and advancement of research trends, and thus is at stake economic value. Another facilitator of popularity of this research is the media, to promote the information offered by trend research agencies as essential items in any competitive business (Monçores & Mendonça, 2015).

However, as previously stated, the starting point of any commercial activity should be the consumer, so it is important that trends research agencies, regardless of where and how to conduct their research, analyze individuals so that treatment them as human beings and not merely as customers or numbers (Santos, 2013). When analyzing individuals from their social and cultural spheres it is that the industry can trace innovation guidelines to address them effectively.

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