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Fashion brands strategies and contemporaneous consumer behavior on social media in Portugal

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Abstract. This study presents two main analysis focused on Portuguese fashion brands strategies and contemporaneous consumer behavior. The first analysis consisted on the case studied and observation of three Portuguese brands (Patrick de Pádua, Luís Carvalho and Nair Xavier) aiming to understand their behavior on social media. During 4 months, Facebook and Instagram were monitored aiming to understand the strategy of each brand and the consequent results. The second analysis was a online survey with 436 valid answers focused on the understanding of Portuguese fashion consumer behavior. The case studies analysis allowed to understand that to have more followers and thus produce more interactivity on a continuous basis with their public, the brands have to create contents consistent with their markets and publics, with the brand language and also with the brand image. The results obtained on the survey allow to conclude that the number participants that share opinions about fashion products and services are still limited. It was also possible to conclude that the majority of the survey participants know several Portuguese brands, but usually don't buy their products.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, people connect, interact and share experiences with other people and brands in just seconds. A vast number of recent tools allow people to interact in the online world without any influence of geographical and demographic boundaries [1]. These aspects trigger an exponential growing of social media users, reaching large numbers worldwide. According to Simon Kemp's study [2], between January 2017 and January 2018, worldwide internet users and active social networking users grew 7% and 13% respectively. In the 90's people started to become conscious about their acts of consumption, not only in terms of the exhaustion of natural resources by the over-high consumption, but also of the pollution that these acts and all their daily activity caused in the conservation of the nature, and consequently of those resources [3]. This concern began to reflect on people consumption habits and towards this new context Paiva and Proença [3] report that in the last decades, particularly from the beginning of the 21st century, a new consumer with a "greener" behavior has emerged. This new consumer is called "green consumer", "citizen consumer" or "conscious consumer".

Carvalho [4] reported that the factors previously used to define the target public, such as age, gender and social class no longer define the target public neither their behavior. The contemporaneous consumer has more information, access to this information, purchasing power and especially a high critical sense. The contemporaneous consumer does not admit any type of product and each brand needs to have one or more differentiating factors that stand out from the infinite existing options. These aspects lead to a process of personalization in which, an evolution occurs from a child's stage of identification to a state with a superior awareness and differentiation [4]. Accordingly, it is possible to observe this change through the growth of homonymous brands



of young designers with greater consciousness of their role in the world, which fit the contemporary consumer behavior by implementing their values on their brands and products. All of these aspects indicate that fast fashion networks and social media approaches have to reposition themselves in the market and work differently on product development lines. The current fast, degradable and unsustainable attitude no longer interest the general public as it was before.

This new attitude introduces a high level of complexity in terms of market segmentation which demands substantial changes on the analyzes of generations and the range age studied to make them able to analyze and to know better this new consumer and, consequently, to help the brands and companies to transmit with more relevance their contents [5]. In fact, this generation of new consumers is transversal to age, gender, nationality, religion and social condition and its distinctive feature is the ability to be informed and conscious about all the above-mentioned aspects and even other.

The outcome of these types of analysis request from companies a capability to adopt a research approach more focused on the human being. The contemporaneous, independently of the role (buyer or consumer) has inherent expectations that no longer agree with a passive consume. He is expecting pleasant experiences and assume a position in which the corporations are accountable for the impact of the products on his body, culture and environment. This revolution generates a wide-ranging transformation in the dynamics between sellers, service providers and customer [6].

This study aims to understand the abovementioned aspect in Portugal, i.e. understand the behaviour/attitude Portuguese brands on social media and also to understand if Portuguese consumer is aligned with the contemporaneous consumer.

2. Methodology Research

In this study two main analysis were performed. The first consisted in three case studies aiming to understand the behavior of three Portuguese brands on social media and its effects. The second analysis consisted on the understanding if the Portuguese participants behavior is aligned with the contemporaneous consumer.

2.1. Patrick de Pádua, Luís Carvalho and Nair Xavier brands: cases study

The first step of this study consisted in the brands selection. The ModaLisboa fashion show is one of the most important fashion events in Portugal and several new designers/brands have the opportunity every year to show their work. To select the brands to be investigated in this work, the brands had to have shown its collection on a recent catwalk ModaLisboa and have also the following requirements:

- . Portuguese origin;
- . Women's and/or men's wears;
- . Be present on social networks Facebook and Instagram;
- . Produce a minimum of two collections and a maximum of four collections per year;
- . No fast fashion neither slow fashion.

Based on the defined requirements the following three brands were selected: Patrick de Pádua, Luís Carvalho and Nair Xavier. The cases study were carried out with longitudinal analysis of their social networks Facebook and Instagram. This quantitative longitudinal analysis aims to analyse and understand each brand evolution/progress during a period of 4 months and also identify their behavior, patterns and changes.

2.2. Social media behavior, fashion consciousness and Portuguese fashion brands: online survey

The second step of this study aim to understand the social media, the fashion consciousness and the behavior of Portuguese residents about Portuguese fashion brands. The main objective was to understand if in Portugal the consumers attitude is aligned with the Carvalhal and other authors opinion about the contemporaneous consumer. For that purpose, an online survey was used to collect data about the following aspects:

- . Behavior of Portuguese consumers in social media;
- . Behavior of Portuguese consumers about fashion products;

- . Sensibility of Portuguese consumers regarding the issues associated to the fashion industry worldwide;
- . Knowledge and consume of Portuguese brands.

The online survey collected responses from 18th to 8th June 2018 on the Google Docs platform. This survey had 30 questions and the participants voluntarily answer to the survey with standardized questions [7]. The survey was sent by e-mail to professors of the University of Minho and shared in the social networks. The survey was available online for 21 days via a link on the Google Docs platform with 24-hour access.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Patrick de Pádua, Luís Carvalho and Nair Xavier brands: cases study

From January 14th to May 20th, 2018, was carried out a longitudinal analysis of Facebook and Instagram profile of Luis Carvalho, Nair Xavier and Patrick de Padua brads. Figure 1 shows the results obtained through the analysis of the profile of the brands with respect to Facebook. It was analyzed and collected data about the following points: number of followers, number of publications, reactions and likes of followers, number of shares, number of comments, number of replies of the brands in comments and number of brand reactions in comments.

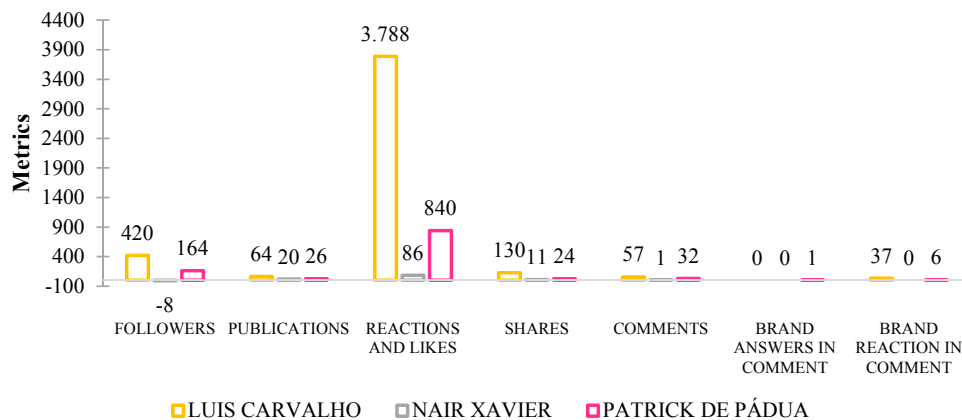


Figure 1. Facebook longitudinal analysis results (from 14th January to 20th May of 2018)

As can be seen in Figure 1, the brand that had the highest increase of the followers were Luis Carvalho, followed by Patrick de Padua. Nair Xavier brand lost a total of 8 followers during the analysis time. When analysing Figure 1, can be seen that the increase of followers is related to the number of contents and interactions of each brands. In fact, Luis Carvalho brand had more publications (64), more reactions and likes (3788), more shares (130), more comments (57), and more reaction in comments (37) when compared to the other brand’s metrics. In this sense, it can be comprehended that as high was the capability of the brand to chase the public and as more effective was the interaction to the followers and as high was the number of new followers

Additionally, a longitudinal analysis of the Instagram profile was also carried out. Figure 2 shows the obtained results in which the following metrics were collected: number of followers, number of publications, number of likes and number of comments.

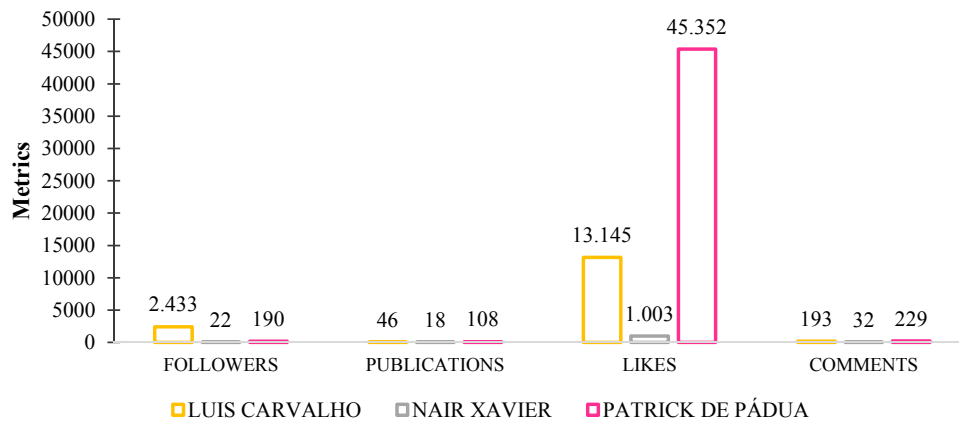


Figure 2. Instagram longitudinal analysis results (from 14th January to 20th May of 2018)

By analyzing Figure 2, some important aspects can be observed and discussed. Firstly, it can be seen that similarly to the tendency identified on Facebook analysis, Luis Carvalho was the brand with the highest increase of followers (2433) followed by Patrick Pádua (190) and, finally, Nair Xavier with 22 new followers. Secondly, it is also possible to perceive that the highest number of publications (108) and likes (45352) was obtained for Patrick Pádua brand. However, these results do not lead to a significant increase of the followers when compared to Luis Carvalho brand and actually, the new follower’s number was 190 when compared to 2433 obtained on Luis Carvalho brand.

3.2. Social media behavior, fashion consciousness and Portuguese fashion brands: online survey

The online survey on consumer behavior in Portugal regarding Social Media and conscious consumption collected a total of 436 valid answers. The majority of the answers were obtained from people with ages ranging from 19 to 29, in which 75% were female and 25% males.

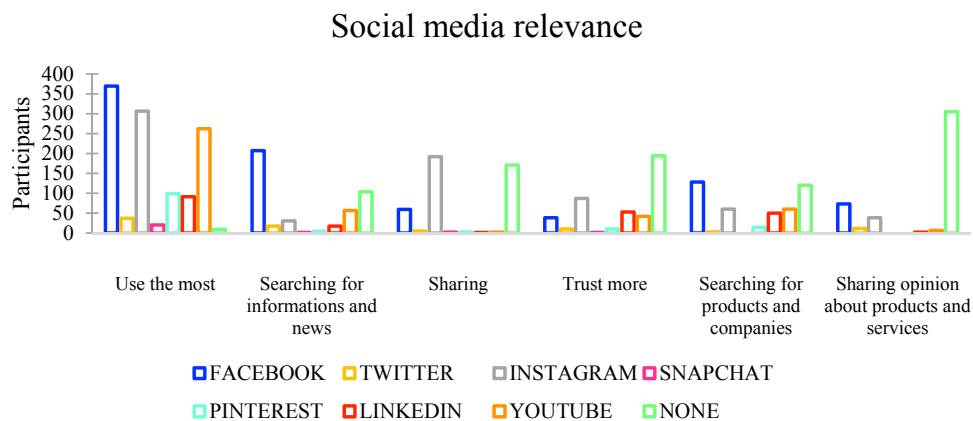


Figure 3. Survey participant’s answers regarding the differences on the social media relevance.

Figure 3 resumes the results obtained in regarding to the main aspects related to each social media. It can be observed that, in Portugal, Facebook is the most used social network (85%), indicating that Facebook has the higher time of utilization. Moreover, Facebook is the social media selected by the majority of the participants to find information and news. Regarding the sharing behavior it was observed that 44% of the participants share their daily life using Instagram, 39% of the participants don’t share their life on social media and 14% answered that

use Facebook for that purpose. Additionally, it was also observed that 45% of the participants do not trust in any social media here suggested.

When analysing the behavior of the participants regarding the searching for products and companies it can be observed that excluding Snapchat, all the social media are used for searching products and companies. Finally, the majority of the participants (70%) do not use the social media to share opinion about products and services. When asked about the origin of the brands, 239 participants confess to know only on certain occasions about the origin of the brands, they consume, 111 don't know about the origin, 86 affirm to know and 11 admit not knowing the origin of the brands.

Another question of the survey was about the consumption of Portuguese fashion brands. The obtained answers were the following: 220 of the participants claim to consume Portuguese brands, 152 declare that they do not know if they consumer or not because of the abovementioned aspect and 64 confess that they are not consumers of Portuguese fashion brands.

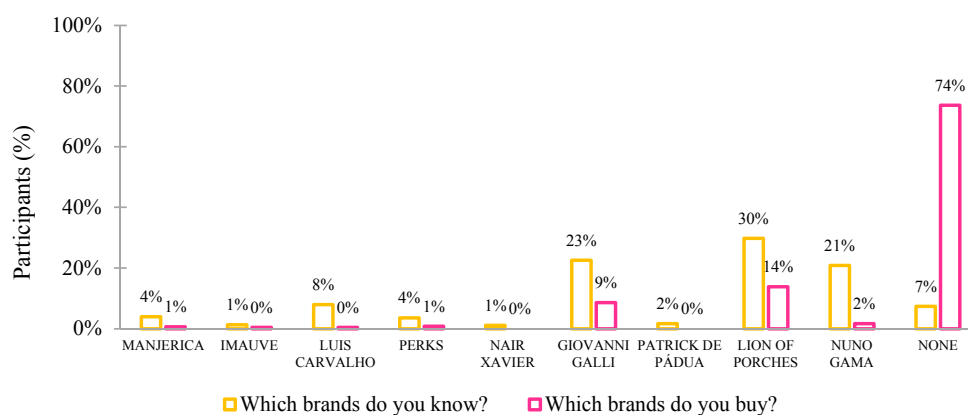


Figure 4. Survey results regarding the Portuguese brands.

Aiming to better understand if the participants know and consume Portuguese fashion brands, the following nine brands from Portugal were selected: Manjerica, Imauve, Perks, Nair Xavier, Giovanni Galli, Lion of Porshes, Nuno Gama and also Luis Carvalho, Nair Xavier e Patrick de Pádua. After considering these 9 brands, two questions were applied as can be seen in Figure 4. It can be understood that the four most well-known brands are Lion of Porches (30%), followed by Giovanni Galli (23%), Nuno Gama with 30% of participants and finally Luis Carvalho with 8%. Similarly, when asked about “Which brands do you buy?”, it is important to highlight that even knowing the majority of the nine brands selected, 74% of the participants don't assume that they don't buy these fashion brands products. Only 14% of the participants buy on Lion of Porches and 11% on Giovanni Galli.

4. Conclusions

Social networks users are increasing more and more users and this phenomenon indicates that the more a brand knows who its target audience is, the better it will be able to generate content and interact with its users. In Portugal, according to the analysis performed in this study, it can be concluded that the number of Facebook users is higher when compared to other social networks and also was comprehended that a significant number of people is using Instagram. Despite the higher use of Facebook when comparing to the other social media, it was verified that the level of user-brand interaction is higher on Instagram. The Nair Xavier analysis indicated that Instagram generate a higher interaction user-brand compared to Facebook even with a lower number of publications.

The fashion brands that want to connect directly with their consumers in order to generate value, recognition and interaction should have a higher assertiveness when investing their resources Facebook and Instragram social networks. It is important to emphasize that, as seen on the social media analysis for Luis Carvalho, Nair Xavier and Patrick de Pádua brands, it is

imperative for a brand to be not only concerned with the number of likes in its publications. To have more followers and thus generate more interactivity on a continuous basis, is necessary to create content that is consistent with the audience target, with the brand language and also with the brand image. When the communication is not planned and has not a well-defined targeted, it does not lead to an increase of followers even with high number of likes in several publications.

Sharing is one of the main trends of social network behavior worldwide. Through the analysis of the consumer behavior in Portugal it can be concluded that the users are increasing the share of their daily lives and their opinions about products and services on social networks. In contrast, it can be concluded that the number of participants that share opinions about products and services is still very limited due to the apprehension to trust in social networks. However, this apprehension is not visible when considering the sharing of users daily lives in social networks.

In addition, it was also possible to verify that the majority of the survey participant know several brands of Portuguese origin, but do not consume their products. In this regard, it is possible to conclude that in order to generate superior knowledge and relevance in the market, Portuguese brands must invest in social media campaigns aiming to get attention of the contemporary consumer through current and relevant contents.

This study allowed to understand the Portuguese brands and consumer's attitude in a global perspective considering several aspects related to the social media behaviors as well as contemporaneous attitude about fashion products and brands.

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