

Craftsmanship and tradition tailoring in contemporary fashion

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Abstract

Purpose

The growing worry with the fact that tradition tailoring may be disappearing was the motivation to research the evolution of menswear, since it developed side by side with both craftsmanship and industrial tailoring through times to our days. This investigation pretend value the craftsmanship and contribute for his permanency and growing in the market, also aims to explore, question and analyse the differences between craftsmanship and industrial tailoring.

Design/Methodology/Approach

The objectives of this work were at first understand the menswear journey, and how this evolution is reflected in men's clothing nowadays; detect and analyse the differences between craftsmanship tailoring and industrial tailoring; delimit stages of building a blazer and see if there is space in the market for craftsmanship and industrial tailoring.

It was made a field, bibliographic and exploratory research. In the first part occurred a bibliographic research and information based on secondary data on the craftsmanship and industrial tailoring. At this stage where analysed the evolution of menswear, craftsmanship tailoring, industrial tailoring and the study of construction of a blazer. In the second part of this research work using a qualitative methodology was held a case study of a tailor and a garment company of high quality and luxury of suits.

Findings

In order to achieve the case study, involving a tailor and an industrial company, was chosen to use the questionnaire technique and interview to tailor Paulo J. G. Batista and Twintex company in person. Some of the questions inculcated to tailor not appear the company's questionnaire, because they didn't fit in the context of a garments confection. It can be concluding that there is a market for both of these clothing options, each with their own specific characteristics, allowing them to coexist without harming each other. It is remarkable that the public of this market is considered a luxury, which is not accessible to a large number of people, but only to a niche market.

Originality/Value

This paper is based on the dissertation "Tailoring in Contemporary: Handmade Tailoring and Industrial Tailoring a study case" designed by Benilde Reis, under the guidance of Profª Dra Madalena Pereira; this was presented and defended in November of 2013.

Keywords

Craftsmanship tailoring, industrial tailoring, tradition, menswear, luxury

Article Classification

Research paper

Introduction

Initially, clothing was mostly a way to cover the human body. Although it began as a practical solution to a set of physical and symbolical needs, it rapidly became clear to some that it was possible to profit from that simultaneously individual and collective necessity, making that work for others, so that they wouldn't need to do it themselves.

When these people started charging for those goods and services, tailors were born. "The knowledge and the art of tailoring, cutting and sewing the fabric – the two basic features when building a clothing pattern – developed gradually over Europe between the 12th and the 14th Centuries." (BOYER, 1996)

This research aims to explore, question and analyse the differences between craftsmanship tailoring and industrial tailoring. The growing worry with the fact that craftsmanship tailoring may be disappearing was the motivation to research the evolution of menswear, since it developed side by side with both craftsmanship and industrial tailoring through times and to our days.

The tailor differentiates itself from the mass production, thereby constituting a character that establishes communication with the public and meets their needs, both functional and aesthetic, expressing values, status and personality through clothing. Because of the growing concern of craftsmanship tailoring could be endangered, this was a motivation for this study. Posteriorly incorporating industrial tailoring, the ready-to-wear is a direct rival to the traditional tailoring.

The objectives of this work were at first understand the menswear journey, and how this evolution is reflected in men's clothing nowadays; detect and analyse the differences between craftsmanship tailoring and industrial tailoring; delimit stages of building a blazer and see if there is space in the market for traditional tailoring and industrial tailoring.

A brief history of menswear evolution

Initially the man had needed to cover and protect his body. It was something that started as a practical necessity, and it becomes today, one of the largest economic industries.

Laver (1996), affirms that the men were unable to compete with women in fashion arena in the late XVIII century, until the naming "Peacock Revolution" in 1960. However, before the 60's, the men expressed the sartorial style, not only through the use of a well cut suit, but also to dress in way that was leading edge, daring, innovative and men were doing so much better than women.

The evolution of menswear goes back to our ancestors, starting with the ancient civilizations, following towards to the Middle Age, through the 20's until the present. According to Kohler (2001), the ancient civilizations were as the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans among others. The

Middle Age come with the fall of the Roman Empire and extends until the appearance of the Renaissance movement, during this time we see the formation of the Byzantine Empire, by the initial XIX century there were several changes in menswear. In the early XVII century France acquires a strong influence on fashion by other countries in Europe, in the XIX century was marked by expansion of the industrial revolution that begun in the previous century. With the revolution, disappeared the differences between classes consequently men began to give greater importance to the comfort of clothing that they used.

The XX century was marked by major developments, events and achievements. Blackman (2009) mentions that men are also largely responsible for introducing ways in cultural, in the way of wear and garments that are used by a minority, and who oppose or reject some of the social norms and in tailoring used in a dominant culture. This author refers that men's fashion and style, until recently, were often considered secondary for women. Men's fashion of the XX century has been described and also considered monotonous compared to the most obvious glamour in women's fashion.

Craftsmanship and Tradition Tailoring

The knowledge and the art of tailoring, the act of cutting and sewing fabric, developed slowly and gradually in Europe between the XII and XIV centuries. According to Boyer (1996), to the Renaissance, the fabric had been the trait that distinguished the clothing, and who wore was largely responsible for the design and shapes and in most cases, the production of their own clothes. Master tailors become responsible for meeting the clothing needs of society and tailoring become a highly specialized, complex and jealously guarded art.

Tailor remains a profession that resists. With the evolution, development and industrial upgrading of the textile and clothing production, there are still people who prefer the hands of a tailor for making his cloths. Elegance, style and tradition are the results of years of artisan work and combined with his personality and action. This type of artisan work of tailor for exclusive clothing begins with the choice of fabric. Through tailor it was possible to develop a new form of aesthetics in the clothing, to mimic the human body and while the improvement.

Reis (2013) refers, according to the project of IPAM Lab, "Tailoring: a lifestyle? Experiences and service in Portuguese tailors", framed in the scientific area of "Luxury Marketing", is from the countryside to the city, willingly or under compulsion left early as a child at play and entered the world of tailoring to learn. A long route was followed to become masters. Many even went on several tailors to can learn more and climb the ranks in tailoring (Figure 1.). This is the career path common to the tailors who fall in the age group above 50 years.

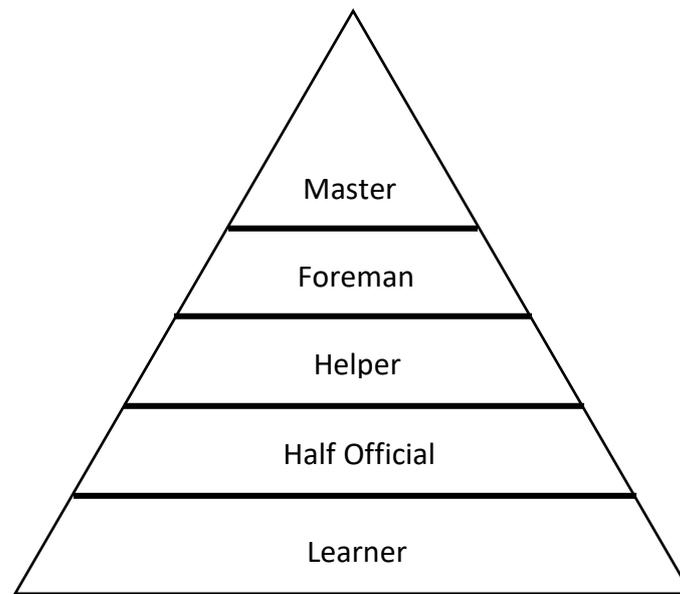


Figure 1. – Hierarchy in tailoring.

Font: Information from “Anuário dos Alfaiates 2013”, my own construction 25/09/2013.

Jones (2005), refers that the tailoring techniques include sewing which are an extension of this, whether the level of male or female clothing. It is a method to combine and shape to create the desired tissues in the body, a combination of techniques placing the fillers, stitching and ironing. The wool fabric responds very well to tailoring techniques because of the flexibility inherent to such materials, but the tailoring is not restricted to wool suits, tailors use a variety of fabrics that can be worked. The tailor work is usually seen in men’s suits, women’s and coats. A blazer can have forty to fifty pieces and then put together in order to be complete.

Tailor Paulo Batista

During this research, there was the opportunity to go to the Tailors Meeting in Aveiro. This was the launch of “Directory of Tailors 2013” we had the chance to meet some of the Portuguese tailors and which met the tailor Paulo Batista.

Paulo Batista is tailor in his studio “A-do-Alfaiate” in Lisbon (Figure 2.), and exerts the tailor profession since 2002. Having no family background in tailoring was a company where he worked that invited him to make a tailor course that he accepted. Consequently, it went to Spain, later finishing the course in Portugal in Maguidal Academy. In the early years in the tailoring profession he worked for others and later opens your own business and studio in A-da-Beja, these days in centre of Lisbon.

Currently the number of customers has increased, in the opinion of Paulo, begins to be a new demand for this art by younger audience of around one age group between 25 and 30 years old. (REIS, 2013)



Figure 2. – The tailor Paulo Batista working in his atelier.

Font: A-do-Alfaiate, 18/09/2013.

Industrial Tailoring

The tailoring profession has evolved, but also the methods that are used in this profession. There are a number of different business models that has progressed in the transformation of raw materials, evolving therefore the equipment used in industry. The location of the business and work organization were instrumental in the evolution of the industry to this day.

In accordance with Baldini (2006), in the late sixties of the XX century there was a democratic revolution of fashion called ready-to-wear. In 1957, in Paris, held the first hall of the female ready-to-wear, years later would materialize the male. From this time, most of the clothes began to be manufactured in series and were inexpensive.

Is with the massification of ready-to-wear that came the diversity of sizes and standard sizes were established, sometimes translated into numbers, although often the sizes are available in letters, the most common being: S; M; L and XL, making these sizes with the most predictable measures that most often repeated themselves.

Among several records that were analysed, the development of artisanal and industrial tailoring is also notable in Portugal. The appearance of the first companies to manufacture had no great

reflexes as produced is a very poor quality clothing with mediocre fabrics. The sewing machines have slowly entered the tailor shops, in a very controlled way, thus continuing the tradition be manual labour. Later, in the context of various events, the industry has developed in the ready-to-wear, thus improving their quality. Of course in the context, the clothing made to measure loses dimension and becomes restricted more selected customers, requiring a new tailor – client relationship.

Both industries, craftsmanship and industrial tailoring, use the pattern-making. According to Stefania Rosa in 2008, the pattern-making is a technique responsible for the construction of garments, through a reading and interpretation of particular sketch. This procedure the translation of the forms of clothing, a study of human silhouette, the knowledge of fabrics and other elements part of clothing to be produced. The pattern-making takes place through the interpretation of a fashion design sketch and its transformation into a model. In this sense, pattern design is a decisive factor for a quality product and meets the required market. There is a two-dimensional pattern-making, hand crafted, and later from the flat pattern, in order to facilitate the manufacturing process industrially, emerges the pattern-making assisted by computer. In the three-dimensional plane, a technique also known as moulage, derived from “moule” French word meaning form, or drapping, another name originated from English – the basis being worked on is the fabric or the canvas.

Twintex Invest Group



Figure 3. – Inside Twintex Factory.

Font: available in www.twintex.pt

The Twintex (Figure 3.) is a Portuguese family business dedicated to the production of high quality outdoor wear for men and women since 1979. These 37 years of experience have allowed to research and developed the ability to produce tailored garments, blazers, coats, trousers, skirts and dresses of high quality. Are produced about 800 pieces per day. The Twintex currently employs about 385 people and now lives a mature stage, meaning it is quietly able to develop and produce extraordinary pieces at a competitive price. Their customers are some of the most prestigious clothing brands, the world of today, more than twenty customers that prove the very high standards required of a garment industry in a luxury market.

Regarding the construction of blazers and coats, the Twintex makes use of hair canvas, broadcloth interfacing and fusible interfacings. However, the company focus on quality clothing manufactured industrially producing blazers that contain only half canvas that is, only used in the area that starts in the shoulder until the chest zone. As for the fabrics and subsidiary materials that are used, they already depend on customer requirements. According on this, the product development team works to meet the needs and requirements of each customer, giving the best of what is done in the industry. (REIS, 2013)

The Study Case

This study case aimed to identify the differences between tradition tailoring and industrial tailoring, identify the phases of the construction process and see if there is room/space in the market for these two sectors simultaneously.

The Construction of Blazer

The bespoke suit may require numerous fittings, dozens of different sewing operations, making this process time consuming compared to a suit produced industrially. The tailor has already stitched the blazer for the first fitting. After adjustments, the blazer is sewn properly, a combination of hand sewing and machine. The buttonholes stitched by hand, the last sewing procedure to be done, are usually a visible sign of a fact of high quality. The piecework assembly line is now common in the men's fashion industry, and the tailoring is threatened with extinction

Ana Margarida Magalhães, in her research work "*The tailor makes suits and bodies*", features twenty-two stages for the production of a jacket, this document was further published in the *Revista Vestir*, of ancient CIVEC by Diana Regal naming the article as the "*Emmanuel Kant scissors*". The phase's construction of a blazer, which the following are presented: wet the fabric; take customers measures; scratching and cutting the suit; put the blazer ready for the first fitting;

first fitting; making the canvas; making pockets; baste the canvas to blazer and prepare it for a second fitting; second fitting; do the bands; line the blazer; sew the sides and the blazer hem and shoulders; make the collar; preach the collar in blazer; making the sleeves and lining sleeves; apply the sleeves to blazer; iron the blazer; preach the buttons.

For a blazer be considered well done there are two options, half-canvas in which the blazer consists of half of the horsehair canvas or full canvas in the total front of blazer in animal hair canvas, it may be horse or camel, both are considered high quality canvas. Fused is a method developed in the garment industry, where it is used fused interfacing in the process of building a blazer, replacing the animal canvas, or sometimes is used a cheaper canvas but is only placed in the chest area.



Figure 4 – three different examples of canvas that can be used in the manufactured of a blazer: Half Canvas, Full Canvas and Fully Fused.

Font: “KNOW YOUR SUITS: FULL CANVAS VS. HALF CANVAS VS. FUSED”, in GOTSTYLE: THE MENSWEAR STORE (ONLINE) <http://blog.gotstyle.ca/style-tips/know-your-suits-full-canvas-vs-half-canvas-vs-fused> consulted in 19-03-2016.

In the garment industry, most companies use synthetic interfacing, resulting sometimes in absence of quality and in a garment that will have short term of life. Overtime, with use and cleaning of the blazer, it is possible that defects appear during the life of blazer. The fitting of blazer also

becomes different, giving it a look that is not as structured, as a blazer that is constructed with animal canvas, full canvas or only half canvas (Figure 4.).

After an approach to the tailor and the company selected, was then asked the questionnaire to these two entities, which were exposed questions that they answered. Consequently, was made an analysis of results.

QUESTIONS	CRAFTMANSHIP TAILORING	INDUSTRIAL TAILORING
How long it takes the Conception of a complete suit?	50 Hours	310 minutes (5 hours e 10 minutes)
How long it takes, on average, a blazer to be executed?	40 Hours	220 minutes (3 hours 40 minutes)
What is the process used in developing a blazer?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cutting; 2. Horsehair Canvas Interfacing; 3. Adjustments; 4. Finishing. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cutting; 2. Tagging; 3. Hot Fusibling Interlining; 4. Scratch and Mark fronts; 5. Preparation; 6. Assembly; 7. Finishing and the Prensing; 8. Packing and Shipping.
What is the price of a suit? (including raw materials)	From 400€ to 900€	From 150€ to 300€
What is the price of a blazer? (including raw materials)	From 500€ to 600€	From 80€ to 100€

<p>What are the differences between a cheaper and expensive suit?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fabric b. Labour c. Details d. Raw materials subsidiaries (horsehair canvas, interfacing, linings, buttons etc.) 	<p>In industrial tailoring, a suit it is cheaper, because due to industrialization process does not exist much intensive manual labour. There is a use of cheaper raw materials, which makes the finished product cheaper, achieving thus a good price /quality ratio.</p>
<p>On average, during the construction of a blazer, how many fittings you do?</p>	<p>Two fittings</p>	<p>Between zero a two fittings to obtain the approval of the prototype.</p>
<p>What other male clothing pieces do you produce?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shirt; b. Vest; c. Overcoat; d. Tuxedo; e. Other pieces (jackets and coats). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Vest; b. Overcoat; c. Tuxedo; d. Parkas; e. Blouson.
<p>Customers seek advice from the tailor or already have some idea of what they want/seek?</p>	<p>Costumers look to be different, but always ask the opinion of the tailor.</p>	<p>Customers are looking for new models (some based on older models of the brand), new fabrics, in most cases, seek innovation and fashion.</p>
<p>Customers attending your establishment or travels to the home of the customer?</p>	<p>Both.</p>	<p>In this case, are the representatives of brands moving to Twintex, or representatives and/or pattern designers of Twintex moving to the ateliers of customers.</p>
<p>How you consider, your relationship with customers?</p>	<p>A relationship of friendship.</p>	<p>In most cases this is a business relationship, in a specific case it is a relationship of friendship and business.</p>

They are appearing new costumers or just regular customers?	It remains the usual customers who bring always new customers.	Through the commercial department action, there is a constant search for new customers.
Who are your customers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Politicians; b. Lawyers; c. Doctors; d. Grooms. 	The company's customers of Twintex consist essentially of international luxury brands.
How do you save the measurements of your customers?	In a notebook.	In this case, use it at the computer level with a database, each brand has its own tables of measurements for each piece.
On average, what ages are your customers?	Since 30's to 40's years old.	In this case, it depends on the target audience that each brand has.
You make pieces exclusively for men?	Yes.	No.
By using a tailor, what do you think customers are looking for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Quality; b. Perfection; c. Elegance; d. Tradition; e. Construction technics; f. Exclusivity of materials; g. In the current market, do not found his size; h. Durability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Quickness; b. Fashion; c. A good relation between coast and quality in the final product.
How many articles do for a client?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. In a season: two suits. b. In a year: four suits and one over coat. 	Depends on the client and the production of piece cloths in question.
You are concerned about following trends in the respective seasons?	Always.	It is something that depends only, customers of Twintex company, and also implies to the target for who they are creating.

Do you make the elaboration of technical files?	No.	Yes.
Do you use existent base patterns and from there develop a pattern for each customer?	No. Each client has its own measures, therefore also has its own pattern.	Yes. Whenever possible, we try to find a identical base pattern to the piece that is proposed by the customer, and from there make the necessary changes to reach the final pattern. The whole process is done with the aid of Modaris program. Sometimes the client, send its own base patterns to the company being changed after being part designed according to the requirements that the customer does.
Do you have more than one pattern for each costumer?	No.	Yes. Each pattern has its own reference so that it easier to identify it, there are several patterns of diferente pieces of clothes for each customer.
Besides the suit fabric, which other materials that complement a suit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Interlinings; b. Linings; c. Horsehair canvas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Interlinings; b. Linings; c. Horsehair canvas.
How many people work in your atelier?	Just the tailor.	320 people in the entire company.
Do have any apprentice working in the atelier?	No, but I would like to have.	In this case, we have trainees that are assistants, in the pattern designing, product development and production line.

<p>Has anyone in the family or neighbour who will be interested in continuing your business?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>In the case of Twintex is a family business, this comes from another generation and have family who leave the business in order to continue (in the future) in the Mineiro family.</p>
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Table 1. – Questions and answers on Craftsmanship Tailoring and Industrial Tailoring.

Font: Alfaiataria na Contemporaneidade: alfaiataria artesanal e alfaiataria industrial um estudo caso (Master's Thesis). Universidade da Beira Interior, Covilhã. Available at:

<http://ubibliorum.ubi.pt/bitstream/10400.6/1729/1/Disserta%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20Benilde%20Reis%20Final.pdf>

Results and Analysis of Questioners

It was verified that in the craftsmanship tailoring a blazer takes much longer to be produced. The handmade process has fewer operations although take longer, because all labour-work is manual giving importance to the smallest details.

In traditional tailoring there is one difference between a cheaper and an expensive blazer is given by different fabrics, manual and skilled hand labour, possible details and subsidiary materials like hair canvas, interfacings, linings and buttons. In the industrial tailoring a suit is cheaper, because to the industrialization process where there is not much manual hand labour.

In traditional tailoring the client makes two fitting per suit, in the case of industrial tailoring, the company carries out a first proto, depending on the sketch that the client sends and possible requirements it may have. After this phase, is carried out a first fitting, where the client makes a fitting in a model to adjust possible errors or requirements. Consequently, the piece is sent to the company as amended what the client wants, through the production of a second proto, which later back to the client with the necessary changes already implemented, in which if approved by the customer, shall pre-production. This is, the prototype becomes pre-production sample, as a green light for the production, always according to the number of pieces the customer wants.

In handmade tailoring customers seek difference and a customizing suit, asking however always an opinion to the tailor, where this can be or not based on trends for the realization of a suit. These tailor customers can be lawyers, politicians, public figures or actors, consuming a handmade

technical conception of suits, where they seek for quality, perfection, elegance, tradition, exclusivity, durability or even the fact that they do not find their size in the ready-to-wear market. In the industrial tailoring, customers of luxury brands are looking for new designs (some based on older models of the brand), new fabrics, in most cases, seek innovation, speed, fashion and a good relationship between cost and quality in the final product.

The fact sheets are something that industrial tailoring uses constantly, calling it processes, these are made in addition to the sketch, with a code that immediately identifies the pattern of garment, has a shipping deadline, customer feedback about the garment, information of all constituent's materials of the garment, fabric sample that is being produced and a measure chart having respective sizes to correspond with measurements. This process always goes with the garment, for each stage in which these pass, to in the production line there are no doubts about the garment, thereby maintaining customer requirements for the final product be of high quality.

In case of craftsmanship tailoring, the tailor does not use data sheets, have only a notebook where indicates the measurements of customers and their requirements, whether these in terms of shapes, fabrics or subsidiary materials.

In pattern making techniques, while the tailor making a handmade pattern, always keeping in account the measurements of each customer; while industrial tailoring whenever possible, tries to find a base pattern as identical to the garment that is proposed by the customer, and from there make the necessary changes to reach the final pattern. The whole procedure is done with the assistance of Modaris program. Sometimes the client himself sends his base pattern to the company being changed after being part designed according to the requirements that the client does.

While the tailor Paulo, for now as no one to leave his business, since the Twintex factory is a family business that comes from another generation and have family who leave the business in order to continue (in the future) in the Mineiro family.

Conclusions

This article shows that currently there is a wider dissemination of craftsmanship tailoring in order to recover traditional techniques, in order not to let lose a tradition. According to the tailor Paulo, there has been a constant demand for this art, where customers are no longer just men in the age group above 40 years of age, but there is a new demand from younger customers, starting this age group by around 25 years old. However, the level of market, because of high prices, is only

accessible to some clients, as a consequence making handmade tailoring a luxury only available to a few. (REIS, 2013)

With this case study aims to analyse and identify the process of building a blazer. Identified the differences in the construction processes, to further contribute to the dissemination whether the techniques of traditional tailoring either the industrial tailoring a luxury market and fundamentally its advantages and thus can contribute to the dissemination of these two sectors both nationally and internationally.

In a more contemporary language craftsmanship tailoring is equivalent to the present author designs and develops customized products for its clients, while the industrial tailoring identifies with the associated work with fashion designer's teams, where develop and make industrialization product for a major international luxury brands. However, the tools currently available in industrial companies, such as Modaris and Fit net of Lectra Systems program that allows customization of the same product, since the company has this kind of customer service offering. But it is considered that the traditional tailoring enables more personalized contact that customer may have while the loyalty of that customer.

One of the drawbacks of traditional tailoring is the waiting time for the completion of orders, while industrial tailoring is much faster, giving the client the product in less time. However, the manufactured product has the disadvantage of an inferior quality.

Nevertheless, the craftsmanship tailoring is possible to identify a new concept of contemporaneity, the slow fashion, which means a new way to fashion consume. This is characterized by a greater ethical consciousness, leading consumers to think about their real needs in order to don't buy impulsively, but in a conscious way with respect for the environment. Taking into account the durability of the garments of tailoring, the methods of construction, manufacturing and materials used, may therefore be concluded that tailoring allows an increase in life cycle of the product and thereby a conscious form of fashion consumption. It also allows the possibility of consumers who do not have standards measures, seek tailoring to meet their needs and desires, a situation that has a tendency to increase in the general population.

In the case study accomplished, it appears that the said industrial tailoring, although industry has favourable characteristics that fast fashion does not have. The Twintex is a company that stands for quality and customer satisfaction according to their needs as the luxury brand consumers are rigorous in their choices.

There is indeed place in the market for these two sectors and they could coexist in the same space at the same time. For there are many male target groups that, increasingly, some seek traditional tailoring and what it has to offer, a customized attendance to the public, the elegance of a bespoke

suit, quality and durability of the garments. In industrial tailoring the customer demand quickly and good relationship between cost and quality of the product.

Limitations and suggestions for future research – this study case has some limitations that should be taken into account in future research on the topic. The results of this study are not exact, are only valid for a tailor and a company, it is suggested do a study to reach a larger number of tailors and a larger number of industrial tailoring companies, in order to later compare results. The questionnaire was only done at national level; it is suggested to cover the artisanal and industrial tailoring in other countries.

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