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Trend networking: Social networks and circular economy

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Abstract

The present paper is based on the study of the relationship between current consume patterns and social networks, specially referred to fashion. Social networks seem to be returning to their origin, i.e. to the social perspective itself, since almost half of the interactions generated on a website through social networks finally translate into action, putting the management of social networks in the scope of attention (Benedetti, 2017). Consumption has turned into an essential function for biological survival and relies on an endless number of unsatisfied and insatiable needs of human beings with constantly changing desires and aspirations. Therefore, acquisition and disposal of objects has become an everyday and almost automatic activity (Bauman, 2007).

Social networking applications foster a circular movement to be observed in many sectors. The high number of profiles in social networks with styling and clothing-related content has led to new applications within the fashion sector based on the circular economy, thus creating a new scenario for designers still to be exploited.

With the uprising of social networks contributing came the cult of consumerism in fashion, consisting in a frenetic change of styles that are quickly and thoughtlessly disposed and not repeated on a daily basis. In some way, social networks equal higher live quality and therefore a mass passion (Lipovetsky, 2007). While the amount of clothes in the wardrobe is rising very quickly, fast fashion is on its way. Nevertheless, with the new decade that has just begun, social networks have also contributed to the rejection of abovementioned profiles specialized in styling and clothing. The controversy is served. -Mankind uses to show two kinds of attitudes: the tendency towards differentiation and the tendency to be uniform and integrate themselves as for achieving security (Saulquin, 2010). This large number of people who offers fashion content needs to be filtered for reliability, looking for the authenticity, avoiding false and unsafe content, and favoring features of the slow fashion concept.

Thus, it seems that the link between social networks and consumption is changing. Social networks enhanced consumption, fast fashion appeared, and now slow fashion comes to the rescue. In this context, reselling applications use the same tools as social networks focusing on reusing. A thorough study of garments is provided, the community is more involved both as buyers and sellers and new trends and brands are shared.

The main objective of this paper is to analyse the role of fashion culture and prestige in the above-mentioned context. New concepts of the nature of luxury in fashion underlying the revolution that is taking place in the sale of second-hand clothes are also addressed.

To this end a specific tool specific marketing and communication has been used: the PESTEL analysis. PESTEL is the acronym for Political and Legal, Economic, Social, Technological and Ecological trends. It consists of a descriptive technique that will be complemented with a bibliographic review of the current trends dealing with the fashion industry.

The sample of second-hand clothes selling apps includes Grailed, Vestiarie Collective and Depop. They have been selected due to their similarity with social networks, offering communication, community, and cooperation.

Once the PESTEL is completed, data gained from the three applications is reorganised in a matrix by way of synthesis, showing two major movements promoted by these platforms and to which we refer to as two new types of luxury.

The growing expansion of these applications involve new ways of considering luxury. Luxury is a subjective and relative concept, but given the time spent by users towards a more conscious fashion consumption, these two features can be directed: one, guided by creativity, reflection, exclusivity, innovation and reuse, and the other, by returning to vintage, collaboration, authenticity, the iconic and redesign.

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