

Fashion collection for people with functional diversity: the space age lands to fast fashion in Spain

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Abstract

The social and cultural changes that our society has been affected by, has a narrow connection with the trends of each moment, as well as the habits of each person's daily life. According to Entwistle (2002), human beings and the reflection of themselves are connected to their bodies, which in every case has clothes on. Nudity is considered to be inappropriate in almost every social occasion, with very few exceptions, these might be a reason why garments and the way each person chooses them and wears them, has that much importance up to the point of reflecting their identity. In fact, fashion is contemplated as a tool of expression or even empowerment, but it might not be equal for each one of us.

The fashion industry has experienced many changes throughout its history, thanks to well-known designers such as Pierre Cardin, during the 1960s a new way of consumption appeared, better known as Ready to wear or Prêt à porter. The industrialization stepped in fashion which led to standard clothes and sizes, as well as cheaper prices available for almost everybody. Nowadays, one of the greatest businesses leading this area is Inditex, the Spanish conglomeration who owns worldwide fast fashion brands such as Zara, Bershka or Pull & Bear. Followed by Mango or Tendam. Spanish fashion is one of the most important industries in the country, a piece of information supported by its 3.8% growth and a 2.8% contribution to the Spanish Gross Domestic Product in 2019 (Gutiérrez, 2021). During the past years the products offered by these brands has been questioned due to the similarities they have in common, a fact reported by the journalist Verónica Lechuga (2019), who claimed a hypothetical case of plagiarism between Zara and Mango, referred to the release of the Slouchy Jean in both mid-season collections of 2019. This garment is a high wasted and wide leg jean tight to the waste and ankles, that also has French type pockets. Far for being an exceptional case, these coincidences may have been repeated not only between different companies but between different brands that belong to the same enterprise.

Although the Coronavirus Pandemic has been the late most important change for our society that has made a significant impact in fashion, there were changes happening before in favor of sustainability, equality, or diversity. Taking into consideration this last term, according to the Disability Observatory (OED, 2020), there

are 4.12 million people with disability in Spain, which is translated into a 9% of the whole Spanish population. Furthermore, 31.1% of these people is in risk of social exclusion and their unemployment rates appeared to be ten points above the unemployment rates of people with no disabilities. This data has a direct impact in these people's life, as there might be occasions in which they may be treated in a different way because of their disability. Here comes fashion, an industry that is starting to notice this gap in the market.

Keeping these answers and needs in mind, the main purpose of this project is to develop a fashion collection both practical and fashionable, to fill a gap in the Spanish fashion market in favor of equality, diversity, and a fairer kind of fashion. To meet this aim, we firstly researched the main concepts regarding to fashion and functional diversity in Spain and then conducted a survey among people with functional diversity that belong associations. We asked them about their way to consume clothing, what they care about the most when they must choose a garment, where do they usually buy them, if they often need to fix the clothes, they buy according to their needs or what they think fashion brands should take into consideration when they design and release a new collection.

The answers to this survey where varied and concluded with the need of a wider range of options in the stores, considering different aspects such as the quality of the textiles used, how do the chosen material stretch, how they may affect the skin or the facilities they can offer in term of getting dressed easily. Regarding to the e fashion collection designed, it is inspired by the 60's and 70's decades, when the fast fashion market was being developed, as well as the Space Age aesthetic embraced by the Space Race between U.S.A and the USSR. The Space Age had a major repercussion in the different artistic disciplines and culture of the time, when literature, films or fashion laid their eyes on a hopeful future full of new materials, structures, and geometrical shapes (Motta G. y Biagini A., 2017). This pioneer research might contribute to leave a mark in the Spanish fashion industry. Recommendations to practitioners are to promote the fast fashion involvement in people whose needs to wear fashionable clothes are the same as the ones offered nowadays: to express identity and to enable relationships. The cultural impact of a new era integrates these needs and expectations of a wide population that uses tailored clothing, more expensive and less trendy.

Keywords: Spanish fashion, diversity, collection, practicality, aesthetic

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