

Marketing of independent fashion brands through social media

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to describe the shopping habits of social media users, specifically about independent fashion consumers. The research was conducted between May and June 2020 by applying an online questionnaire. There were 226 responses from participants in different regions of Brazil. This mapping of consumption brings a reflective mode of marketing yet to be explored, and, maintained in an organized way by independent brands looking to improve their practicality in electronic media. It was possible to conclude from this consumption mapping, how the segment can take advantage of these data, which shows the need for improvements in the form of commercialization through social media of independent fashion brands. This business emerges as a retail alternative of the future, since it unites several small producers in search for sustainability, and it is an important way of communication with customers in times of social distancing.

Keywords: clothing and accessories; retail; social media

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The commerce of independent fashion brands through social media has appeared as a frequent innovative business modality in recent years among small Brazilian producers. The category seeks with its organization the establishment in the textile and fashion sector for the sustainability of the enterprises.

Independent fashion includes independently produced clothing and accessory brands that are marketed on a small scale or even handcrafted. In other words, these fashion businesses are run directly by the producers who distribute products to the final consumer.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2007), a market is the set of actual and potential buyers of a product, where buyers share a specific desire or need that can be satisfied through exchanges and relationships.

Independent brands seeking economic sustainability of their business benefit from the research selection that organizes the consumer profile. According to Yanaze (2011), correctly identifying and satisfying the consumer's needs, and focus of marketing, are the main goals of any and every enterprise that wishes to profit and grow. Still according to Yanaze, it is necessary to know well the portion of the public that is most accessible and most suitable to the consumption of our product, because the consumer is ultimately the greatest asset of an enterprise. In this way it is understood that by presenting the consumption profile of independent fashion customers, brands can better adjust their merchandise. Therefore, mapping enables independent fashion regulation for general consumers.

This requires the proper use of marketing in digital sales networks. Kotler and Armstrong (2007) point to advertising as the way to manage profitable relationships with the customer. Its main goals are to attract new customers by promising them superior value, and to cultivate current customers by providing them with satisfaction. The development of independent fashion gives the category a commerce adjusted to the concise functioning of social media. Marketing satisfies customers' desires by creating and exchanging value with the brand (Kotler and Armstrong, 2007). In other words, advertising strategies contribute to the strengthening of this market when they manifest the consumer's willingness and model actions for the business.

To Yanaze (2011), the main goal of any e-commerce company should be establishing a relationship with its consumers. This means that a commercial profile on social media designates a more intimate relationship between brand and user. Also in line with Yanaze's reasoning, the Web allows the company's dialog with its potential customers to be expanded, facilitated, and accelerated in

a way that is impossible to achieve through other means. Social media are digital means of communication, where people relate to each other by exchanging messages and sharing content. Thus, independent brand profiles on social media open up a store space on the internet beyond the websites, with closer connections to the consumer and a more intimate contact.

Corresponding to the negotiation between the parties involved in the purchase process in social media, according to Yanaze (2011), interactivity aims to establish a relational communication with the users that are recognized as connected communities and protagonists of the communication themselves. Communication is no longer only the actions that aim to make a message or announcement common, but now aggregates a set of platforms for exchanging information and establishing relationships (Yanaze, 2011). Interlocution which works as the agent in the link between brand and customer, central in the mode of purchase effectuation by message exchange.

This consumption inclination defines a new product acquisition reality. Bringing a reflective mode of commercialization still to be explored and, maintained in an organized way by independent brands that intend its best functionality in electronic media. Such practice of purchase disposition can be associated with a retail aspect of the future. Where exchanges carried out interactively between brand and customer demonstrate the engagement of people with the content of social media. It is important to describe the shopping habits of social media users, independent fashion consumers, showing this commercial relationship.

The survey, conducted between May and June 2020 using an online questionnaire, obtained 226 answers from participants in several states of the country, such as: São Paulo, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Santa Catarina, Bahia, Pernambuco, Ceará, Sergipe, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, Distrito Federal, and Goiás.

The profile of independent fashion e-commerce consumption by young and adult Brazilians in social media was evaluated. All the data showed throughout the research are part of the answers from the questionnaire. After analyzing the results, it was possible to gather knowledge about the characteristics of this commerce that precedes even the 2020 pandemic (COVID-19), and indicates the need for the digitalization of the shopping process as opposed to physical sales.

In this manner, this consumption is described by mapping the age range, location, and buying behavior of consumers, verifying particularities about the functioning of this segmented market.

According to the results of the applied questionnaire, 100% of the Brazilian young and adult participants are social media users (Table 1). Of the total respondents, 70.1% buy clothes and accessories from independent fashion brands (Table 2). Also, through these media, 60.4% of the people who answered the questionnaire acquire the products without intermediaries by exchanging direct messages with the brand (Table 3), signaling the purchase and sale of the piece.

This realization of internet consumption, focused on marketing through social media, demonstrates the growing form of communication and relationship, evidencing the consumption habit of this era. Even before the social distancing caused by the pandemic in 2020 (COVID-19), this was already a marketing trend.

The survey points out that 62.4% of consumers, respondents of the questionnaire, buy clothes and accessories from general stores over the Internet, distinguishing themselves from other traditional shopping places such as commercial areas and malls (Table 4). Evidencing, therefore, changes in the shopping behavior and profile of the consumer who chooses e-commerce.

This new shopping trend is manifested mainly in the adult age group (20 to 59 years old, Table 5), among those who answered the questionnaire, determining new relations between purchases and consumption.

The survey shows that most consumers buy clothes and accessories from general stores over the Internet, which indicates changes in shopping behavior and consumer profile, who nowadays choose e-commerce, the preferred alternative in a pandemic situation. Yanaze (2011) says that any action of goods acquisition generates an experience to the buyer. Thus, expressing the consumption characteristics of this public in the practice of buying products of independent brands through social media, improves the knowledge about this trade giving opportunity for growth of the stores, through the structuring of several businesses of the same type.

By understanding the current activity of independent fashion brands, further studies are directed toward market stability through social media to the economic sustainability of the business. As this trade is driven by many small producers it has the possibility to stimulate a future, more inclusive retail. Transforming the economy of the textile and fashion sector by implementing a new method of marketing goods, a possibility highlighted by Schumpeter (Barki, et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

The insertion of this habit of selling independent brands through social media has a scalable reach that develops the national retail market and establishes an active participation of small producers. Therefore, there is the need and improvement of the advertising method so that this extension becomes feasible. In other words, the understanding of the consumer is one of the great advantages of small business, its proximity to the buyer and the awareness of their needs, allow the producer to have clarity and knowledge of this market (Barki, et al., 2013).

Rethinking the means of commercialization is one way of establishing the clothing and accessories market in the current digital age. Where independent brands of small producers carry out this kind of pioneering retailing, formulations are needed for the category that will firm up this movement of the future by creating an effective sales network.

In this way, it was possible to conclude that, from the mapping of this consumption, the segment can take advantage of the structuring of the category's data, which shows the need for improvements in the form of commercialization through social media of independent fashion brands, so that this market can establish itself in a lasting manner. Moreover, it digitally moves the consumption of clothes and accessories through social media, the current communication method of this era, and develops the functioning of the remote exchange activity in times of social distancing.

Tables

Social media user	
Yes 100%	
WhatsApp	92,90%
Facebook	68,10%
Instagram	93,40%
Twitter	32,30%

Table 1- people who answered the questionnaire and who are users of social media.

Where do you buy products from independent fashion brands?	
Social media	70,10%
Sites	51,80%
Fairs	42,40%
Collaborative stores	47,30%

Table 2-- where the people answering the questionnaire buy products from independent fashion brands.

Have you ever bought clothes and accessories by direct message on the social network of an independent brand?	
Yes	60,40%
No	39,60%

Table 3- questionnaire respondents who buy clothes and accessories by direct message on an independent brand's social media.

Where do you buy clothes and accessories?	
Internet	62,40%
Commercial areas	53,50%
Thrift store	50%
Shopping	49,10%
Collaborative Stores	46,50%
Fairs	35,80%

Table 4- where consumers responding to the questionnaire buy clothes and accessories from general stores.

Age range	
Young (up to 19 years)	7,60%
Adult (20 to 59 years)	92,40%

Table 5- age range of people responding to the questionnaire.

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