The Consumer Interpretation of Social Networks Publications: A Case Study about Luxury Fashion Brands in Portugal

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ABSTRACT

Today luxury is everywhere. Everybody wants his products to be luxury. The concept of luxury is attractive and fashionable.

In the current digital communication landscape, social networks represent an important brand communication channel. The general objective of this research is to understand consumer interpretation owing to the publications of luxury fashion brands in social networks.

Specifically analyzed were the dimensions of information, word of mouth, trends, personalization, interactivity, brand value and purchase intention. Starting with the use of the quantitative method, a questionnaire survey was conducted, and the instrument was created based on the model of Yadav and Rahman (2017).

It was found that Portuguese consumers consider that luxury fashion brands make publications on social networks that contain useful information, spreading trends, responding to consumers' needs and interacting with them. As a result, consumers value these brands and manifest intention in purchasing them.

Keywords: social networks, luxury fashion brands, attitudes, consumers

INTRODUCTION

Luxury fashion brands offer consumers differentiated products, high quality and high price. These marks allow the expression of individuals to others based on the opulence of luxury objects (Reinach, 2005).

The reality is that there is a growing representation of luxury fashion brands in the economic sector, but also an intrinsic relationship between the concept of luxury and its support for the success of brands (Maia & Costa, 2015).

Attentive to the new dynamics of interaction, the brands have been questioning the communicational paradigms. The growth of social media impacted the communication processes, presenting new possibilities. Thus, luxury fashion brands have sought to adapt to both to ensure visibility and strengthening their identity (Cunha & Valente, 2019; Pereira & Schneider, 2017). It is in this context that social networks gain expressiveness, allowing consumers to interact with brands or share messages published by them.

The general objective of this research is to understand the consumer's perception of the publications of luxury fashion brands in social networks. In concrete, we analyzed the dimensions of information, mouth to mouth, trends, personalization, interactivity, brand value, and purchase intent.

Based on the use of the quantitative method, a questionnaire was carried out, and the instrument was created on the basis of the model of Yadav and Rahman (2017).

In terms of relevance and contribution of research, it is believed that the results obtained can assist in the planning of the communication actions of luxury brands and bring new information about the attitude of the consumer towards social networks.

The article begins with a conceptual approach to the studied dimensions. The following is the explanation of the method used, the analysis of the results and the conclusions.

LUXURY FASHION BRANDS, SOCIAL NETWORKS, AND CONSUMERS

The luxury fashion brands have been studied in several areas. There are studies on luxury fashion brands in the area of communication, history and even sociology.

The reality is that there is a growing representation of luxury fashion brands in the economic sector, but also an intrinsic relationship between the concept of luxury and its support for the success of brands (Maia & Costa, 2015).

Since the year 2000, the luxury market has grown exponentially, and its expansion has seen much due to the notoriety that these brands have gained (Maia & Costa, 2015).

The luxury fashion is the characteristic segmentation of a society in which the distinction between classes is verified by the opulence of luxury objects (Reinach, 2005) and where the talent of the creator is valued as if an artist was treated (Cunha, 2014). The luxury fashion presents, therefore, fashion products and high-quality garments indicated for a niche market with the capacity to withstand its high prices, enjoying a capacity of innovation and design at the highest level.

Following the trends of the luxury fashion industry is part of the everyday life of many. However, in the year 2000, the internet took a different turn and opened doors to luxury fashion. The products began to be marketed more open to all (Raposo, 2016; Ferrari, 2017). The world began to have access to information in a simpler and more practical way. And this fact did not only happen at the computer level but also at the mobile level.

The digital reaches a huge number of possible consumers. It is cheaper in terms of investment, is moldable and is an excellent way to disseminate luxury fashion products, diversifying the means and platforms to work in the digital world (Ferrari, 2017; Raposo, 2016).

Social networks are platforms formed by individuals or companies connected by some specific type of relationship (friendship, kinship, affinity, beliefs). There are currently dozens of social networks that are used by luxury fashion brands to interact with consumers. The connectivity offered has changed the behavior of users by creating new concepts (Gabriel, 2010).

Attentive to the new dynamics of interaction, the brands have been questioning the communicational paradigms. The growth of social media at the beginning of the 21st century impacted the communication processes, presenting new technical possibilities. Thus, the brands have sought adaptation to ensure their visibility and to reinforce their identity in a clear and efficient way (Pereira & Schneider, 2017).

By incorporating these new innovative and disruptive tools, consumers have the possibility to create and share photographic, audio and video content. And it is in this sense that the brands opted for also disseminate campaigns, messages, products, services, and promotions, through social networks. In this way, they can advertise their product and philosophy, interact with consumers, answer doubts, receive complaints and make a presence. The brands begin to make social networks activating agents for the propagation of content (Cunha, G., Cunha, J., & Monte, 2015).

According to Gabriel (2010), this process of the active presence of the consumer works as a reversal of the marketing vector. This is because, thanks to the digitization and the advent of social networks, the user seeks the brand where, when, and how he wishes. Torres (2009) states that the strategy should be part of the brand's communication planning, creating integrated actions that allow better use of available resources. Weinberg, Ladwig, and Pahrmann (2010) and Terra (2012) mention some advantages of corporate communication on social networks (the possibility of exploiting a community, which may not be available in traditional advertising means, visibility and credibility acquired by the company).

Lapolli, Silva and Santo (2009) also explain that social networks gain expressiveness in the advertising sector, allowing the consumer to interact, through response to the brand, advertiser or the sharing of messages. They also have the advantage, the fact that people are on social networks in moments of relaxation (as a form of entertainment), being the ideal height for companies to offer their services and/or pleasant experience to the public.

In social networks, the strategy of creating good experiences, as a way of narrowing relationships, has been shown to be more and more assertive. The brands invest in relevant and updated content, which will meet their positioning, but also in the interest of the public. It is important to realize that this information is consumed very quickly. Therefore, the brand must transmit focused, accurate and brief messages.

At this time, advertising is already placed directly on social networks, so it is necessary to understand the consumer, speak directly, accept the distance, take into account the subtleties and their criticisms. To reiterate that the communication model has been substantially altered, the consumer is no longer in a passive reception position, on the contrary, he actively collaborates by becoming the protagonist of corporate communication.

The possibility of widespread dissemination (a large number of people, geographically dispersed) allows considering that social networks enable the pluralization of emissions. What can be set risk for luxury fashion brands (Martins, Ikeda, & Crescitelli, 2016).

DIMENSIONS IN THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

First Dimension: Information

In the sector of luxury fashion brands, in the context of social networks, information assumes a fundamental role (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006). The essence of the luxury fashion product in an online context is centered on information, which makes it a research product, whose evaluation goes through the consultation of information related to it. Similarly, because the product cannot be tested in advance, it must be evaluated by the consumer as a reliable product (Bhat & Shah, 2014). In the online context, it is impossible to perform a global pre-assessment of its quality because the time and space between the purchase decision making and the due consumption are usually separated. The time distance can be diminished by the information that is acquired in advance by consumers on the various platforms available.

The high number of knowledge required by consumers when seeking information refers to the need to develop strategies in order to select the best sources. Depending on the type of products of luxury fashion brands, consumers are looking for different types of information, using distinct sources of information and assigning greater or lesser importance to the information found (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007).

Second Dimension: Trends

Erner (2005, p. 104) explains that it is called a trend "any polarization phenomenon by which the same object – in the broadest sense of the word – simultaneously seduces a large number of people." The difficulty to predict when an impulse will stop, as well as what will replace it make the author characterize the tendencies as a modern circus, an organization- in theory - without organizers. The phenomenon of the polarization causes apprehension to the industrialists, which require a constant survey of the trends of the moment. It is difficult to imagine that a machine as powerful as the trend does not possess a central power. The notion that fashion is the result of a collective choice, whose influence comes from all places, is so difficult to accept that it leads individuals to believe in conspiracies that would determine trends (Erner, 2005).

Based on recent studies, it can be affirmed that in the contemporary context of fashion, the products developed and distributed by apparel companies are no longer the main focus of the communication of their brands (Campos, et al., 2013; Garcia & Miranda, 2014; Miranda, 2008). This is because the material products operate as exchange elements, whose greatest benefit is to operate as physical and marketable media for the projections of the imaginary content that is disclosed by the brands (Campos, 2013).

Third Dimension: Customization

According to Prahalad and Ramaswany (2004), the value creation of the supplier to the consumer happens in multiple points of interaction, through joint experiences that occur throughout the service life, and not just at the time of the meeting. For the authors, the creation of value will exist and evolve by means of personalized experiences with the brand, in which the consumer is one of the active elements. Also, these joint experiences

may include other members beyond the company and the consumer, such as community members, supplier partners, etc.

For Tynan, McKechnie, and Chhuon (2010) who have specifically studied the luxury market, this should be regarded as a social construct in which the process of creating value involves complex interaction networks, from the most obvious interaction between consumer and the brand, but also other relevance with other social groups, for example, with party people of brands, opinion leaders, luxury companies from other sectors other than the analyzed and other consumers of the same brand or the same social style. The form of differentiation of luxury brands will be precise in the personalized experiences that each company will be able to present the ability to engage its consumers in a dialogue rather than several options of single-hand communication.

The tools for this, according to the authors are: well trained and skilled employees who can talk adequately with the public of luxury – "eager to help consumers, rather than just pushing the product" (Tynan et al., 2010, p. 1161) – and spaces that represent a destination in themselves, with the values of luxury and the brand in evidence, for example the concept stores, rich in design, exclusivity, status, beauty and other values of luxury. From this perspective, it can be thought that interaction with contact staff and the physical environment is important for the creation of value in the luxury brand (Pinto & Iwata, 2013).

Fourth Dimension: Interactivity

In the physical world, the multisensory experience at the point of sale is regarded as an important basis for the luxury business (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008). According to Sá and Marcondes (2010), who investigated four fashion stores and luxury women's accessories in São Paulo, "the differentials of luxury shops are centered on the environment of the point of sales, in customer service, in the identification and maintenance of relationship with these and the most diverse services offered" (Sá & Marcondes, 2010, p. 517). In other words, at the time of the sales meeting, all the elements that differentiate the consumer experience in luxury - environment, service, relationship, and services – are built based on interaction.

But in the online environment, there are differences that drastically change the way the physical world interacts. For example, the website becomes the main interface with the consumer, and no longer the contact staff. The environment loses relevance on the Internet and the interference of other customers in the virtual purchase experience is nil. On the internet are also excluded the human senses of smell, taste, and touch, besides the stimuli of vision and hearing occur differently and not as controlled as in the physical world (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009, Okonkwo, 2005, 2010).

Fifth Dimension: *Word Of Mouth*

Given the growth in the use of the Internet and its key role in e-commerce, the eWOM (Word Of Mouth Digital), which represents the exchange of mouth-to-mouth messages in the digital environment, has been altering consumer decisions and behaviors. People rely on the information and opinions of other users and often make offline decisions based on information they collect online (Lee et al., 2008). Varajadan and Yadav (2002) Highlight four important changes that the emergence of the eWOM provoked in the purchasing environment: access to product attributes (related or not with the price); Comparison and evaluation of different solutions based on buyers' considerations; Higher quality of the information conveyed; More organized and structured information.

The literature also maintains that social influence is potentiated by other factors inherent to the online world, such as the dimension of social networks and communities and the strength of online relationships (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006; Schlosser, 2006). However, it is important not to forget that in the digital context, the emission and reception of the eWOM are passive processes, without any face contact (Andreassen & Streukens, 2009). Lastly, these two authors state that consumers may be more open to eWOM since they will be actively seeking information, i.e. motivated to process the information they receive.

Sixth Dimension: Brand Value

In a way very succinct, brand equity is related to the fact of obtaining with a brand different results from those that would be obtained if the same product or service was not identified by that brand (Keller & Machado, 2006). However, as regards a concrete definition, the authors Christodoulides and De Chernatony (2009) state that the literature on brand equity remains substantial, largely fragmented and inconclusive.

Irrefutable is to realize, as Knowles says (2008), that brands are, in the online world and nowadays, the main topic of business. And when marketers use the term brand equity, they tend to signify the strength of

the brand, based on the customer, to differentiate it from the meaning of asset valuation (Wood, 2000). This force is being strengthened with the online world.

The actions of online branding in the area of fashion and clothing, act in order to enable a strong, lasting and reliable bond with the client and provide a tremendous competitive advantage in this competitive market. To stand out, companies need to understand that having a brand strategy makes it strong and often remembered and present in the life of the consumer.

Seventh Dimension: Purchase Intent

The intent of purchase is defined as the predisposition of the consumer to make a possible acquisition, according to certain factors or motivations of the general framework of the decision-making process of the consumer (Kotler & Keller, 2009). The intention is, therefore, one of the stages of the purchasing process and is seen as a conscious response by the individual to different stimuli to which he is subject.

The intent to purchase a brand or product is always dependent on the attitudes of the brand, but also of the consumer's own characteristics, sometimes overcoming the personal attitude of the consumer. The motivation and the personality of the consumer are seen as constraints of purchase intent (Spears & Singh, 2004).

Previous studies conducted in Malaysia, the Czech Republic and the USA have attempted to perceive the factors that may affect online purchase intent (Ahuja et al., 2003; Alam & Yasin, 2010; Bednarz & Ponder, 2010; Lee et al., 2011; Pilík, 2013). Lee et al. (2011) did a study in Malaysia and identified that the perceived value, perception of ease of use, perceived usefulness, company reputation, privacy, trust, security, and functionality have a relationship with the intention of an online repurchase. Pilík (2013) argues that the decision of the web consumer is influenced by many factors. In his research conducted in the Czech Republic, a strong relationship of the factors, trust, security, and privacy with the intent of purchase was identified.

METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives

The literature review has exposed the concept of luxury fashion brands and the importance of social networks in their communication. Some of the main dimensions that may relate to this relationship between the brand and the consumer in the social media channels were also addressed.

Based on this exhibition, the present research has started from the following research questions:

1. In the context of Portuguese consumers of fashion and apparel products, what is the applicability of the model of Yadav and Rahman, (2017) and, in concrete, the dimensions that constitute it?
2. What are the attitudes of these consumers regarding the components of information, trends, interactivity, and mouth to mouth involved in the publications that luxury fashion brands do on social networks?
3. What correlations exist between these dimensions and what value do these consumers attribute to the luxury fashion brands that make these publications?
4. What is the correlation between the value of the brands and the intention to buy them?

Instrument, Sample, and Procedures

For the development of the investigation, we used the quantitative method of the survey type, with a self-completed questionnaire survey.

The survey is suggested by Quivy and Campenhoudt (2008) as a method of gathering information, as a way to ascertain ways of life, behaviors, values, knowledge, expectations, opinions and attitudes towards options.

Its use is recognized and applied in various fields of analysis, such as consumer behavior (Wimmer & Dominick, 1996), and therefore its design should be based on clear, concise questions, according to the research objectives. In other words, its structuring must, on the one hand, integrate clear and unambiguous questions and secondly, allow researchers to collect accurate information.

Regarding this last point, Quivy and Campenhoudt, (2008) report that the quantitative treatment of data resulting from the application of a questionnaire survey implies the pre-coding of the questions, aiming to establish limits of responses by the respondents.

The use of the survey by questionnaire and the quantitative analysis of data by means of different techniques and statistical methods can be observed in a multiplicity of research work.

The quantitative method is conclusive, and it aims to quantify a problem and understand its dimension. In short, this type of research provides numerical information about consumer behavior (Cunha, 2019).

The data collected through this method directly impact decision making, as well as those provided by qualitative research. However, in practice, they can better express the information to be presented, especially when the objective is to convince themselves about some direction.

Because of its statistical nature, the sample size is very important for quantitative research and should be defined with great care. This is because quantitative research generates accurate metrics that are based on a given sample — they can even be replicated to the universe studied as a whole.

The questionnaire in question consisted of two parts. Conventionally associated with the social area, the survey is, according to Babbie (1999), particularly similar to the type of research of 'census', where what differentiates the two surveys is that the survey examines a sample of the population, while the census usually implies an enumeration of the entire population.

A Survey, according to Babbie (1999), can have one of three purposes:

Description: It aims to discover the distribution of certain traits and attributes of the population studied. The investigator's concern is not the reason for the distribution, but with what it is.

Explanation: It aims to explain the observed distribution. In this case, the researcher is concerned about why the existing distribution.

Exploration: It aims to function as an exploratory mechanism, applied in an initial investigation situation of some theme, trying not to let critical elements cease to be identified, presenting new possibilities that can subsequently be worked on a controlled survey.

The questionnaire used consisted of two parts. Firstly, a set of questions about the demographic profile, the individuals and their habits of social network consumption were put in place. The second part of the questionnaire was elaborated based on the Yadav and Rahman scale (2017). The use of this scale is extremely important since it intends to measure the perceptions of consumer attitudes of luxury fashion brands, such as the researchers involved in this study. Having already been tested in another investigation becomes more reliable, facilitating the comparison of results. A 5-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the scale of perceptions of consumer attitudes of luxury fashion brands.

The Yadav and Rahman scale (2017) was adapted and translated into Portuguese for the purpose of measuring the perceptions of consumer attitudes of luxury fashion brands. The final version of the questionnaire was pre-tested with 50 consumers. After small semantic adjustments were made, the questionnaires were then distributed to self-completion, obtaining a non-probabilistic sample of convenience consisting of 607 individuals.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

Sample Characterization

With regard to the sample, it can be affirmed that a convenience sample was used. This technique is very common and consists of selecting a sample of the population that is accessible. That is, the individuals employed in this research are selected because they are readily available, not because they were selected by means of a statistical criterion. Usually, this convenience represents greater operational ease and low sampling cost.

In terms of characterizing the general profile of the sample, more specifically regarding age, the individuals were grouped into 5 age groups, as can be analyzed in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Age groups

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
	18-25	105	17
	26-35	123	20
Age groups	36-45	197	33
	46-55	111	18
	56-65	58	10
	66-79	13	2
	Total	**607**	**100.0**

Source: Own

Table 2. Age groups

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
	Male	235	39
Sex	Female	372	61
	Total	**607**	**100.0**

Source: Own

Table 3. Professional status

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
	Student	38	6
	Unemployed	82	14
Professional status	Self-employed	73	12
	An employee on behalf of another person	409	67
	Retired	5	1
	Total	**607**	**100.0**

Source: Own

Table 4. Academic level

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
	Secondary	240	39.5
Academic level	University	291	47.9
	Graduate	76	12.5
	Total	**607**	**100.0**

Source: Own

Table 5. Area of residence

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
	North Zone	228	37.6
Area of residence	Central Zone	246	40.5
	South	101	16.6
	Islands	32	5.3
	Total	**607**	**100.0**

Source: Own

Regarding the gender of the 607 individuals present in the sample, the existence of a balanced relationship between the two genders was verified. However, the existence of a number of women higher than the number of men does not have the pretension of a proportional statistical rigor, respecting, however, the tendency of Portugal signed by the National Institute of Statistics.

Regarding the sociodemographic characterization of the sample, it seems important to understand its origin at a professional level.

With regard to the academic level of the sample, the sample shows that 240 of its elements, (corresponding to 39.5% of the total of respondents) hold qualifications at the secondary level, 291 of the individuals (47.9% of the sample) have a university level and only 76 individuals (12.5% of the total sample) are holders of qualifications such as, post-graduate, master's or doctoral degrees.

As a way of completing the socio-demographic characterization, it is important to perceive its geographic origin. Thus, it is possible to verify that the sample in question is composed of individuals from the North Zone of Portugal in a total of 38%. The center of Portugal presents 41%, and the south with 17%, finally the islands of Madeira and the Azores emerge with only 32 individuals (5% of the sample).

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha-reliability

Cronbach´s Alpha	Reliability
Alfa > 0.9	Excellent
Alfa between 0.8 and 0.9	Good
Alfa between 0.8 and 0.7	Reasonable
Alfa between 0.7 and 0.6	Weak
Alfa < 0.6	Unacceptable

Source: Cunha (2019)

Table 7. Internal consistency of the dimensions-Cronbach's Alph

Dimensions	Items	Cronbach Alpha
Information	These pages provide useful information about your products	0.741
	The information these pages offer is easy to understand	
	The information these pages offer allows your fans and followers to stay informed	
Trends	The content published on the social networks of luxury fashion brands show the latest trends	0.883
	Tracking these pages means being really trendy	
	Everything that is fashion trend is posted on these pages	
Customization	The social networking pages of luxury fashion brands give recommendations for purchases that meet the consumer	0.866
	These pages satisfy the needs of consumers	
	These pages make it easy to search for personalized information	
Interactivity	The social networking pages of luxury fashion brands allow consumers to share content...	0.734
	These pages make it easy to interact with colleagues and friends	
	These pages interact regularly with your fans and followers	
Mouth to Mouth	Share the social networking pages of luxury fashion brands with their colleagues and friends	0.788
	I would recommend these pages to your colleagues and friends	
	I would advise your friends and colleagues to visit these pages	
Brand value	I consider these marks to be strong	0.884
	These brands have quality products	
	These brands are very well known	
Purchase Intent	I'm willing to buy these marks in the future	0.741
	I intend to buy these brands	
	The products of these brands are on my list of future purchases	

Source: Own

Analysis of the Internal Consistency of the Dimensions

After the characterization of the sample and since latent variables were used, each consisting of several items, the first step was to verify the internal consistency of the scales. Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to do this. We proceeded to analyze the internal consistency of the scales so that they could be subsequently fused into the respective composites since each of the dimensions to be analyzed consisted of several items and this would make the analysis more difficult.

Cronbach's Alpha (α) as an important statistical indicator of reliability, is sometimes called a reliability coefficient of a scale. The greater the correlation between the items of a dimension or scale, the higher the Cronbach's Alpha (α). For this reason, it is also known as internal test consistency. Cronbach's Alpha (α) can take values between Zero (0) and one (1) as mentioned in **Table 6**.

Since this study came from dimensions built beforehand in a previous investigation, it was intended to confirm the internal consistency of these dimensions using Cronbach's alpha. According to what can be seen in **Table 2**, all dimensions are above 0.7, considered acceptable.

The next step, the verification of the average values between the items of each dimension. Thus, the dimensions were transformed into variables for later analysis.

Descriptive Analysis of the Dimensions

It was considered important to make a descriptive analysis of these dimensions. It is noteworthy that for this analysis it was taken into account that these variables were measured with a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree.

Table 8. Descriptive analysis of the dimensions

Dimensions	Average	Standard deviation
Information	3.99	0.77
Trends	3.91	1.17
Customization	3.91	1.01
Interactivity	3.99	0.76
Mouth-to-mouth	3.88	0.90
Brand value	3.91	1.17
Purchase Intent	3.99	0.77

Source: Own

Table 9. Correlational analysis between the dimensions

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Purchase Intent	1						
2. Brand value	.505**	1					
3. Mouth-to-mouth	.979**	.501**	1				
4. Information	.499**	.997**	.500**	1			
5. Trends	.498**	.511**	.494**	.511**	1		
6. Customization	.987**	.507**	.988**	.506**	.498**	1	
7. Interactivity	.637**	.958**	.629**	.954**	.511**	.638**	1

** Significant correlation for $\alpha \leq 0.01$

Table 10. Multiple linear regression

Independent variables	Dependent variable: Tag value		
	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Trends	0.896	76.549	0.000
Mouth to mouth	0.114	8.832	0.000
R2		0.994	

Source: Own

Thus, it was possible to verify that the respondents positively value the five dimensions related to the publications of luxury fashion brands in social networks (information, trends, personalization, interactivity, and mouth-to-mouth). In addition, they express appreciation for these marks due to the positive classification that gives the brand value dimension. Finally, they show the intention to buy through a positive score (**Table 3**).

Correlational Analysis between the Dimensions

In order to understand how the variables correlated with purchase intent, a Pearson correlation was performed. According to Pereira (2006), the statistical correlation procedure determines the degree of association between variables. The correlation coefficients may vary between-1 (a negative association) and + 1 1 (perfect positive correlation). The zero value indicates the absence of a linear relationship enters the variables.

According to **Table 9**, it can be verified that the correlations presented are all positive and statistically significant. In view of the positive result of the correlation, it was advanced to perform the linear regression.

Linear Regression

The aim was to evaluate the dimensions related to social networks that can best predict the value of the brand. For this, a multiple linear regression was performed using the dimensions related to the publications of the luxury fashion brands in social networks (information, trends, personalization, interactivity, and mouth-to-mouth) as independent variables and the dimension "Tag value" as the dependent variable (**Table 10**).

The final model, relative to the dependent variable: the value of the marks, found explains 99.4% of the total variance of the data. The "Trends" and "mouth-to-mouth" dimensions were only retained in the final model. The independent variable with the greatest predictive power, in this case, is "tendencies", with a positive relation (ß = 0.896). The "mouth-to-mouth" dimension arises with a lower impact on the dependent variable (ß = 0.114).

Table 11. Dependent variable: Purchase intent

Independent variables	Dependent variable: Tag value		
	Beta	**t-value**	**Sig.**
Brand Value	0.515	14.393	0.000
R2		0.26	

Source: Own

β=0.515

Purchase Intent		Brand value	Trends

β=0.898

Mouth-to-mouth

β=0.115

Figure 1. Variables that have an impact on brand value and purchase intent

Subsequently, we attempted to determine the impact of the variable "brand value" in the "Purchase intent", and a simple linear regression was performed in which the latter was assumed as a dependent variable (**Table 11**).

The final model found explains only 26% of the total variance of the data, and the variable "brand value" assumed a positive value (ß = 0.515). **Figure 1** summarizes the final model resulting from the regressions performed.

CONCLUSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The growing diffusion of digital channels, driven by the rapid development of information technologies, mitigated physical distances and triggered profound changes in the way of researching, communicating and shopping. Companies have diversified their ways of interacting with customers and doing business.

Consumers have modified their purchasing behavior and started using different digital channels throughout their journey. This constant channel swap also extends to contact points. We, therefore, witnessed the creation of a new journey of consumption, driven by digital channels, which places an alert on organizations that aspire to attract customers and retain them in a loyalty cycle.

Social networks are a platform used to have social exposure, develop an awareness of the website, are vehicles for the implementation of marketing campaigns and frequent interaction with consumers (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Rawat & Divekar, 2014). They are also a channel of advertising, consumer research, provides them with a voice through interaction and sharing of opinions with the network (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Yadav & Rahman, 2017).

In this article, several studies have been exhibited that refer to the importance of exploring the dimension of persuasion, conversion, loyalty, and bonding. For example, Teng et al. (2017) created a conceptual model to test the determinants of the persuasion of word-of-mouth messages between users of social media, known as eWOM, and the impacts they have on changing attitudes and behavior of consumers. Enginkaya and Yılmaz (2014) explored the conversion phase from the point of view of consumers' motivations to interact with and on brands in social media. LaRoche, Habibi, and Richard (2013) explored how communities of brands established in social media, influence brand loyalty and relationships between customers and brands, products, companies and other customers.

The quality of the information captures the quality of the content and the value perceived by the client and includes characteristics such as updated information, accuracy, informative and relevance (Hernández, 2009; Huizingh & Hoekstra, 2003; Lopes & Melão, 2013). The content can be seen as useful, but it can also be an important source of pleasure if the use of the website is intrinsically a motivator (Treiblmaier & Pinterits, 2010).

These aspects were addressed in the conceptual part of this article, which also highlighted the main dimensions that are present in the consumer's perception of the publications of luxury fashion brands in social networks.

The empirical component of this study allowed us to answer the previously placed research questions:

1) Applicability of the model of Yadav and Rahman, (2017) to the Portuguese context: The study showed that the model of Yadav and Rahman (2017) can apply to the Portuguese reality since the analysis of the internal consistency of the dimensions demonstrates that there is robustness in the model.

2) Consumers' attitude towards the components of "information", "Trends", "interactivity" and "mouth-to-mouth": All the dimensions of the model proved to be pertinent for Portuguese consumers since positive responses were obtained in all of them. Consumers especially value the informative and disseminating component of trends that can have the publications of these brands on social networks. However, it is also noteworthy how important is the personalization of communication and the interactivity that is provided by these channels.

Thus, the results emerging from the analysis elaborated on the impact of each of the variables in question demonstrate very reasonable and even high levels in some cases. The impact of the credibility of the publications and the cognitive and emotional involvement in the publications as well as the mouth-to-mouth showed that the credibility of social networks is on the high. This result is in line with that proposed by Lu et al. (2014), which indicate that the fact that consumers believe and seek content contributes to a positive attitude towards luxury brand products, which will have a positive impact on the future Product, as well as in the dissemination and sharing.

3) Correlations between the dimensions: It was found that all dimensions correlate with each other. Moreover, they correlate with the brand's value dimension, demonstrating that they can, in fact, have an influence on the component of consumer attitudes.

Thus, it is verified that the main motivations of buying luxury brands are not only with the characteristics of the brand itself, but also with some factors relevant to the consumer, as is the case of quality and exclusivity, but also by hedging characteristics and also by the consumer's lifestyle (Cunha, 2014).

4) Existing correlation between the value of the brands and the intention to buy them: There is also a correlation between the value attributed to these marks and the intent of purchase demonstrating that the behavioral component is also implicated and is stimulated by those dimensions. Therefore, the results showed a positive correlation in the case of purchase intent, which is in agreement with the studies by Lu et al. (2014).

Therefore, it is confirmed that consumers reveal a positive attitude towards publications, which in turn impacts the intention.

Studies show that luxury brands when they are present in social networks and online platforms "lose" value. Since its greatest value is personalized service and exclusivity in its whole (Wiedmann (2009), Keller (2009). However, the results of this study point in the sense that the brand value increases the purchase intent.

There are limitations that should be mentioned and, if possible, mitigated in future contributions in this context. The questionnaire, made available online, proved to be quite extensive. Future contributions in this area are advised to simplify or even limit issue items.

With regard to data collection, although the sample was reasonable, it has some limitations, such as the fact that it is of convenience. A larger and more diversified sample may reveal other relationships between the variables in studies and make the results more robust.

The results obtained provide important guidelines for future investigations. It is recommended to develop the model presented, with successive interactions, with a view to be improved and rugged.

A larger sample, if possible collected by a probabilistic criterion, with other statistical analyses, could give new visions and orientations.

In fact, the theme of social networks and their use in the communication of the brand is broad and essential in the current panorama of marketing, which makes pertinent the continuation of this line of research in the future.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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