SOME ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES OF PASSIONATE DESIRE FOR FASHION CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES

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ABSTRACT

Fashion trends and consumer-fashion brand relationships have been subject of study for both researchers and practitioners. Yet, as far as we know, there is a lack of analysis of the process behind the creation of a fashion trend, in previous studies. Therefore the main goal of this research was to start to understand the process behind the creation of a fashion passion for clothes and accessories, particularly to understand in what extend do narcissism and social values influence passionate desire and then, the way passionate desire influences positive word-of-mouth and affective commitment. Findings reveal that Social values have a positive and significant direct effect on Passionate desire. Yet, the strength of the relationship between Narcissism and Passionate desire is weak. The strength of the relationship between Passionate desire and word-of-mouth is weaker than the relationship between Passionate desire and Affective commitment. The current study also provides managerial implications and suggestions for further research.

Keywords: *passionate desire, narcissism, affective commitment, word-of-mouth, fashion brands*

INTRODUCTION

Karl Lagerfeld once said "Buy what you don't have yet, or what you really want, which can be mixed with what you already own. Buy only because something excites you, not just for the simple act of shopping." This sentences contain the relevance of emotional relationship that a fashion brand should create within its consumers. We even point out the passionate desire to buy and use fashion products, such as clothes and accessories. The passion for fashion may enroll consumers on being affectively committed, an antecedent of loyalty. The passionate desire could also be a lever to recommend and give suggestions to others. But, what could be the drivers for such passionate desire? The current study analyze two: narcissism and social values.

In this vein, the main goal of this research was to start to understand the process behind the creation of a fashion passion for clothes and accessories, particularly to understand in what extend do narcissism and social values influence passionate desire and then, the way passionate desire influences positive word-of-mouth and affective commitment.

The remainder of this article presents the theoretical background, the hypotheses and the proposed model. These are followed by the methodology and the results. Finally, conclusions and implications are presented and suggested.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Passionate desire

Passion and love have been analyzed from two perspectives: emotion (single, specific feeling akin to affection) (Richins, 1997) and relationship (can last for decades and involves numerous affective, cognitive, and behavioral experiences) (Fournier, 1998). Several typologies of emotions have been proposed. Some of them consider love as a basic emotion (e.g., Arnold, 1960; Parrott, 2001), but for others is a human feeling resulting from joy and trust (e.g., Plutchik, 2011).

One of these approaches is proposed by Sternberg (1986), who suggests a triangular theory of love. The interpersonal triangular theory of love adapted to the consumption context considers that brand love is made by dimensions such as passion, intimacy, and commitment (e.g., Kamat and Parulekar, 1997; Keh, Pang, and Peng, 2007). Ahuvia (1993) suggests that consumers can have a real feeling of love toward an object and conceptualizes the love feeling as having two dimensions: the real and the desired integration.

Based on the consumer-brand relationship paradigm, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) indicate that brand love is composed of five dimensions: passion, attachment, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand, and declaration of love for the brand. Here, passion is regarded as the "desire to invest mental and emotional energy in increasing or maintaining the extent to which an object is integrated into the self" (Ahuvia, Batra and Bagozzi, 2009, p. 353).

Albert, Merunka, and Valette-Florence (2008) propose two main components of brand love that are also to be found in the interpersonal love literature. The seven first order dimensions (idealization, pleasure, intimacy, long duration relationship, dream, memories, uniqueness (Albert et al., 2008). The seven factors offer a second order solution with two factors labelled passion and affection. Albert et al. (2008) using exploratory correspondent analysis followed by cluster analysis found eleven dimensions underlie brand love: passion, a long duration relationship, self-congruity, dreams, memories, pleasure, attraction, uniqueness, beauty, trust (satisfaction), and a willingness to state this love. However, Albert et al. (2008, p. 1073) note that they did not find the aspects of attachment and commitment.

Lately, Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012) try to bridge the gaps of previous studies and propose the brand love higher-order prototype model which comprises seven latent constructs: self–brand integration (current and desired self-identity, life meaning, intrinsic rewards, and frequent thoughts); passion-driven behaviors (willingness to invest resources, passionate desire to use, involvement);

positive emotional connection (intuitive fit, emotional attachment, positive affect); anticipated separation distress; overall attitude valence; attitude strength (certainty and confidence).

In the relational perspective passion emerges as a dimension of a love toward a brand (name, term, design, symbol, according to AMA), an idea, or an object or thing. An individual that is passionate about a brand and hence demonstrates passion-driven behaviors reflects a strong desire to use the brand or the object in question; he/she will invests time and money in that brand and frequently interacts with it. According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) the love for a brand involves the "*degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied customer* [develops] *for a particular trade name*". Love and passion are at the core of a strong brand relationship, meaning infatuation, selfish, and even obsessive dependency.

Consumers passionate about fashion will enjoy to express their inner-self through fashion objects and brands. Individuals who enjoy to exhibit the clothes and accessories and be admired for their choices will enhance the passion for fashion and the willingness to communicate their consumption experience and suggestions.

Narcissism

In Western cultures narcissism is regarded as a focus on individualism and concern for individual goals of wealth and fame (Fukuyama, 1999; James, 2007). Lasch (1991) characterizes the culture of narcissism by an "entitlement mentality", which comprises an unjustified sense of privilege. Therefore, consumers feel the compulsion of consumption to feed their self-esteem and self-image. Narcissists are, thus, concerned about reaching individual goals, rather than on communal ones. They also carefully select partners who will improve their image instead of seeking partners who improve warmth and intimate rewards. Narcissists tend to do not involve and commitment themselves in relationships, since the focus is on the individual. This may even reflect playing games with romantic partners, by being superficially charming, in order to attempt to enhance status (Lambert and Desmomd, 2013). In extreme cases, narcissists may be aggressive if that's what it takes to achieve their goals and objectives. So, narcissists tend to value their inner-self more than they value others, such as partners, with whom they have a relationship. Narcissism may be defined as an egocentric, self-aggrandizing, dominant, and manipulative orientation (Sedikides et al., 2004; Morf, Horvath and Torchetti, 2011).

Cisek *et al*. (2014) argue that narcissists are addicted to self-esteem as well as striving for self-enhancement. Their self-dignity lay on the admiration that they receive from others rather than on building long-lasting relational bonds. They are exhibitionists who value vanity and have a relentless need to validate their self-beliefs in front of others (Wallace and Baumeister, 2002). Additionally, they show a desire for material possessions (Cisek *et al*., 2014) and prefer products that positively

Source: Batra et al. (2012)

distinguish them, that is, tend to search for products that are scarce, unique, exclusive, and customizable (Lee, Gregg and Park, 2013). Particularly, narcissists enjoy to display material possessions, such as fashionable clothes, (Sedikides, Cisek and Hart, 2011). New and impressive-looking clothes are used as an extended self and not more reliable and practical clothes (Belk, 1988). Therefore, consumers who enjoy to show impressive-looking clothes, desire for material possession, new trends, be the center of attention, and admire their look in the mirror should be passionate for fashion (see Figure 1).

H1: Narcissism has a positive effect on Passionate Desire to use fashion products (clothes and accessories).

Social influence

Solomon *et al.* (2006, p.113) define value as "*a belief about some desirable end-state that transcends specific situations and guides selection of behavior*". Consequently, values play an important role in the consumption process. Individuals may use fashionable clothes to assert their professional position or demonstrate their social status, or even to classify or differentiate themselves from others (Li et al., 2012; Loureiro and De Araújo, 2014). Individuals may buy clothes and other products mostly to impress others, (Lawry et al., 2010). Therefore, social values are related to what others say and reflect the participation of the community, the group of belonging and society.

Fashion industry is associated to conspicuous consumption. The term coined by the sociologist Veblen emerges to consider a type of consumption connected to the symbolic, unnecessary, that goes beyond the utilitarian. Conspicuousness of a product is related to its susceptibility to the reference group, to be displayed in public (Bearden and Etzel, 1982). Thus, social "needs" and the potential prestige that a fashionable clothe may confer to an individual (Kort *et al.*, 2006) are related to the feeling of recognition within their social group.

The importance of the others, the feeling of being accepted may contribute to the passion for fashion. Fashion items or products that are accepted by others, friends and groups of belonging provide more incentive for the desire to have it, desire to have and use.

Therefore, such fashion products seem likely to enjoy more passion from consumers.

H2: Social values have a positive effect on Passionate Desire to use fashion products (clothes and accessories).

Affective Commitment

Although commitment has been considered as a core construct in consumer-brand relationship, love and commitment are two distinct dimensions (e.g., Fehr, 1988; Chang and Chieng, 2006). Commitment happens when mutual motivation and efforts exist, therefore ensuring and maintaining an on-going

relationship, which is defined as very important for all parties (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Fullerton, 2003; Stanko et al., 2007; Bobot, 2011).

Commitment is an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship (De Wulf, Oderkerken-Schröder and Iacobucci, 2001; De Ruyter, Moorman, and Lemmink, 2001; Morgan and Hunt, 1994), which reflects a psychological connection, a voluntary willingness and intention to remain in and develop efforts toward maintaining a relationship (De Wulf, Oderkerken-Schröder and Iacobucci, 2001; Palmatier et al. 2008). Different motivations can underlie this intention to maintain a relationship, thus leading to two different types of commitment, one more economic, designed calculative commitment and another more emotional and called affective commitment. The calculative one captures the more rational dependence due to the difficulty to change to other brand or firm or switching costs (Fullerton, 2003; Anderson and Weitz 1992; Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh, 1987). Affective commitment reflects the affective nature of the relationship between the individual and the product or brand (Gruen, Summers and Acito, 2000). Thus, we propose:

H3: Passionate Desire to use fashion products (clothes and accessories) has a positive effect on affective commitment.

Positive word-of-mouth

Consumers tend to buy products with images consistent with their mental representation of self and with in-group (group of reference) (Escalas and Bettman, 2003, 2005). Possessions allow consumers to extend, expand, and strengthen their sense of self (Belk, 1988). When consumers develop a favorable relationship with a brand or object, feel positive emotions, a passion, then they are willing to talk about and recommend it to others, or even re-buy the brand (e.g., Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1996; Caroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Thomson *et al.,* 2005). Nevertheless, individuals are spreading word-of-mouth about products, brands, ideas in order to be consider experts near their family and friends, or want to be viewed as experts in the market and influencing others or gaining social status (e.g., Richins, 1983; Feick and Price, 1987).

Nowadays, after the advent of Internet, individuals have several possibilities to express their ideas and opinions about product, brands, objects, using blogs, Social Networking Sites (SNS), MySpace, YouTube and others. Individuals are using these platforms to spread their self-expression, exposing the way they are through posts and photos many times using the brands to be more explicit or as a means of communicating their interests and attracting attention. The way consumers desire to self-express about the products and brands they buy and use may act as a motivator to spread word-of-month (Saenger, Thomas and Wiggins Johnson, 2013). Therefore, consumers enjoy to express themselves through the products and brands they buy and use and communicate to other about their

consumption and advise others. The passion for some fashion products may lead the consumer to want to express it to others through social networks. Thus,

H4: Passionate Desire to use fashion products (clothes and accessories) has a positive effect on word-of-mouth about consumption activities.
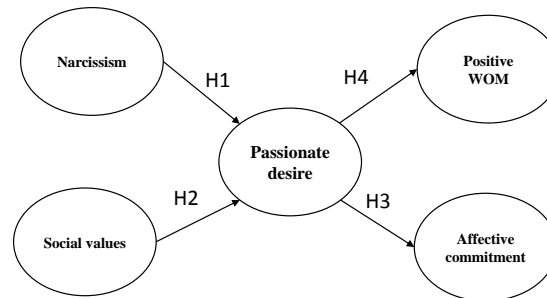

Figure 1. Proposed model

METHODOLOGY

Data collection

A questionnaire was formed based on the literature review and all measurement items were adapted from existing instruments. The original questionnaire was written in English, then translated to Portuguese and translated back to English. Back translation was used to ensure that the items in Portuguese and English communicated the same information (Sekaran, 1983). The structure of the questionnaire took several aspects into consideration in order to avoid common method bias, such as the disposition of the items of each construct and the items and questions were prepared to avoid ambiguity. Additionally, the Likert-type questions appeared random, so that the order and constructs were not obvious.

The last part of the questionnaire concerned socio-demographic data. Then the questionnaire was pilot tested with the help of ten consumers to ensure that the respondents understood the questions and there were no problems with the wording or measurement. After this, only a few adjustments were made.

Data collection was conducted over two weeks, March 26th and April 8th, 2015. Respondents were contacted in the Lisbon area through a panel sample.

The categories of fashion brands were used as a control variable, considering Haute-couture brands (ex: Chanel, Hermés, Prada, etc.); High-fashion brands (ex: COS, Hackett, Massimo Dutti, Uterque, etc.); Fast-fashion brands (ex: Zara, Asos, H&M, Pull&Bear, etc.); and Sports brands (ex: Adidas, New Balance, Nike, Reebok, etc.)

Sample Profile

Of the participants in this questionnaire, 69% were female and 31% were male. In regards to age groups, 1% was less than 18 years old, 46% was between 18 and 25 years old, 20% was between 26 and 35 years old, 12% between 36 and 45, 14% between 46 and 55 years old, only 6% was between 56 and 65 and, lastly, 1% was more than 65 years old. Looking at marital status, 67% were single, 25% married, 7% divorced and 1% widowed. Then, educational level, 1% has less than a High School diploma, 12% finished High School, 50% completed a Bachelor degree (university), 35% completed a Master degree and finally, 2% a PhD. Lastly, the monthly income level was also relevant to analyze. So, 46% of respondents earn less than €1,000, 29% earn between €1,000 and €2,000, 9% between €2,000 and €3,000, 5% between €3,000 and €4,000, 3% between €4,000 and €5,000, and to conclude, 8% earn more than €5,000.

Variables and Measurement

The constructs were measured with multi-item scales (see Table 1). All items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale.

Construct	Items: statements	Source
Brand Categories	**B1**: Haute-couture brands (ex: Chanel, Hermés, Prada, etc.) **B2**: High-fashion brands (ex: COS, Hackett, Massimo Dutti, Uterque, etc.) **B3**: Fast-fashion brands (ex: Zara, Asos, H&M, Pull&Bear, etc.) **B4**: Sports brands (ex: Adidas, New Balance, Nike, Reebok, etc.)	Tungate (2014)
Passionate desire	**LP1**: I feel myself craving to use it. **LP2**: I feel myself desiring it. **LP3**: I feel a sense of longing to use it. **LP4**: I have a feeling of wanting toward it.	Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi (2012)
Affective commitment	**BL1**: I am committed to the brand. **BL2**: I'll continue the relationship with this brand, through good times and bad. **BL3**: I have a lot of faith in my future with this brand.	Johnson, Herrmann, & Huber (2006)
Narcissism	**N1**: Modesty doesn't become me. **N2**: I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in public. **N3**: I like to be the center of attention. **N4**: I would do almost anything on a dare. **N5**: I really like to be the center of attention. **N6**: I like to start new fads and fashions.	Raskin, & Terry (1988)

	N7: I like to look at my body.	
	N8: I like to look at myself in the mirror.	
	N9: I like to display my body.	
Social Value Dimensions	**SV1**: I like to know what brands and products make good impressions on others.	Adapted from Wiedmann et al. (2009).
	SV2: I usually keep up with style changes by watching what others buy.	
	SV3: Before purchasing a product it is important to know what kinds of people buy certain brands or products.	
	SV4: Before purchasing a product it is important to know what others think of people who use certain brands or products.	
	SV5: I tend to pay attention to what others are buying.	
	SV6: Before purchasing a product it is important to know what my friends think of different brands or products.	
	SV7: I actively avoid using products that are not in style.	
	SV8: If I were to buy something expensive, I would worry about what others would think of me.	
	SV9: Social standing is an important motivator for my luxury consumption.	
	SV10: For me as a luxury consumer, sharing with friends is an important motivator.	
	SV11: I often consult my friends to help choose the best alternative available from a product category.	
	SV12: My friends and I tend to buy the same brands.	
Positive W-O-M	**W1**: I like to talk about what products and services I use so people can get to know me better.	Saenger, Thomas, & Johnson (2013).
	W2: I like the attention I get when I talk to people about the products and services I use.	
	W3: I talk to people about my consumption activities to let them know more about me.	
	W4: I like to communicate my consumption activities to people who are interested in knowing about me.	
	W5: I like the idea that people want to learn more about me through the products and services I use.	

W6: I like it when people pay attention to what I say about my

consumption activities

<p style="text-align:center">Table 1. Constructs and multi-item scales used in the questionnaire</p>

RESULTS

In order to treat data, we first analyzed the quality of the same and captured the dimensionality of each construct by conducting several factorial analyzed (principal components) and Varimax rotation. As expected, the several constructs are one-dimensional except two: Narcissism and Social Values. Each of these two constructs is composed by two factors. Social values (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of 0.916; $\chi 2$= 1953.3, sig.=0.00) presents the factors called prestige and informational. Also, Narcissism (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of 0.815; $\chi 2$= 1472.0, sig.=0.00) presents the factors called Vanity and Exhibitionism, according to the adapted scale. Next, these two constructs are regarded as second order formative construct. The PLS (Partial Least Squares) approach was employed to test the relationships presented in the proposed model with a second order formative construct, using the repeated indicators method (Chin *et al*., 2003; Kleijnen *et al*., 2007).

Measurement Results

A PLS model should be analyzed and interpreted in two stages. First, the measurement model, or the adequacy of the measures, is assessed by evaluating the reliability of the individual measures, the convergent validity, and the discriminant validity of the constructs. Then, the structural model is evaluated.

Analyzing the measurement model, in this study the item loading of each item exceeds the value of 0.707 (see Table 2). All Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.7 (0.694) and all composite reliability values are above 0.8. Therefore, all constructs are reliable since the composite reliability values exceed the threshold value of 0.7. The measures demonstrate convergent validity as the average variance of manifest variables extracted by constructs (AVE) is above 0.5, indicating that most of the variance of each indicator is explained by its own construct.

Latent Variable	LV Mean	Item loading Rang	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Narcissism-Exhibitionism	2.0	(0.714-0.866)	0.594	0.878	0.825
Narcissism- Vanity	3.0	(0.749-0.810)	0.622	0.831	0.704
Social values	2.7	(0.716-0.785)	0.534	0.820	0.706

Informational

Social values Prestige	2.2	(0.713-0.785)	0.576	0.905	0.877
Passionate desire (brand love)	3.0	(0.716-0.824)	0.578	0.845	0.757
Word-of-mouth	2.2	(0.728-0.828)	0.643	0.915	0.889
Affective Commitment	2.9	(0.735-0.839)	0.618	0.829	0.694

Second order formative construct (LV)	Weight		Second order formative construct (LV)	Weight	
Exhibitionism → Narcissism	0.760***	Significant	Informational→ Social values	0.345***	Significant
Vanity → Narcissism	0.362***	Significant	Prestige →Social values	0.743***	Significant

Note: ***p<0.001

Table2. Measurement results

At the second-order construct level, the parameter estimates of indicator weights, which measure the contribution of each formative indicator to the variance of the latent variable (Robert & Thatcher, 2009). A significance level of at least 0.05 (in the case of this study, a significant level of at least 0.001) suggests that an indicator is relevant to the construction of the formative index (Narcissism or Social Values), and thus demonstrates a sufficient level of validity. The recommended indicator weight is > 0.2 (Chin, 1998). Table 2 shows that all indicators of both Narcissism and Social values have a positive beta weight above 0.2.

Regarding discriminant validity, the square root of AVE should be greater than the correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AVE$^{1/2}$	0.786	0.771	0.731	0.760	0.759	0.788	0.802
1 – Affective Commitment	1.000						
2 – Exhibitionism	0.286	1.000					

3 – Informational	0.3 31	0.4 89	1.0 00				
4 – Passionate desire (love& passion)	0.6 58	0.2 97	0.3 86	1.0 00			
5 – Prestige	0.3 83	0.6 57	0.6 43	0.3 77	1.0 00		
6 – Vanity	0.2 11	0.5 27	0.3 43	0.1 53	0.3 73	1.0 00	
7 – WOM	0.4 12	0.6 51	0.5 55	0.3 92	0.6 58	0.3 83	1.0 00

Table3. Discriminant Validity

Structural Results

In this study, a non-parametric approach, known as Bootstrap (500 re-sampling), was used to estimate the precision of the PLS estimates and support the hypotheses (Chin, 1998). All path coefficients are found to be significant at the 0.001 level, with the exception of H1 (see Figure 2).
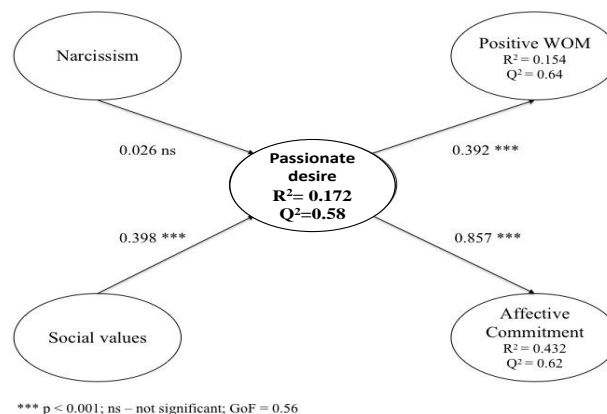
Figure 2. Structural results

The results show that the Social values construct has a positive and significant direct effect on Passionate desire for fashion products (clothes and accessories). Yet, the strength of the relationship between Narcissism and Passionate desire is weak. The strength of the relationship between Passionate desire and positive word-of-mouth is weaker than the relationship between Passionate desire and Affective commitment. Although this is the first attempt to test the influence of Narcissism (its two dimensions) and Social values on Passionate desire, the findings are aligned with the study presented by Loureiro and De Araújo (2014), where social values create the subjective norm and consequently the desire to use. The fact that Narcissism did not reveal an active and strong role on

Passionate desire to use may be explained by the fact that the sample was composed by people from a collectivist Nation (Hofstede model) and so more studies should be done in order to properly understand the phenomenon. On the other hand, the outcomes are aligned with the studies developed by Caroll and Ahuvia (2006) and Loureiro (2012).

As models yielding significant bootstrap statistics can still be invalid in a predictive sense (Chin *et al.*, 2003), measures of predictive validity (such as R^2 and Q^2) for focal endogenous constructs should be employed. All values of Q^2 (chi-squared of the Stone-Geisser criterion) are positive, so the relations in the model have predictive relevance (Fornell & Cha, 1994). The model also demonstrated a good level of predictive power (R^2), particularly in explaining Affective commitment. The good value of GoF (0.56) proposed by Tenenhaus *et al.* (2005) reveal a good fit. As Wetzels *et al.* (2009) proposed, a GoF greater than 0.35 in the social science field indicates a very good fit.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The main goal of this research was to start to understand the process behind the creation of a fashion passion for clothes and accessories, particularly to understand in what extend do narcissism and social values influence passionate desire and then, the way passionate desire influences positive word-of-mouth and affective commitment.

The findings reveal that Social values have a positive and significant direct effect on Passionate desire. Yet, the strength of the relationship between Narcissism and Passionate desire is weak. The strength of the relationship between Passionate desire and word-of-mouth is weaker than the relationship between Passionate desire and Affective commitment. Although this is the first attempt to test the influence of Narcissism (its two dimensions) and Social values on Passionate desire, the findings is aligned with the study presented by Loureiro and De Araújo (2014), where social values create the subjective norm and consequently the desire to use. The fact that Narcissism did not reveal an active and strong role on Passionate desire to use may be explained by the fact that the sample was composed by people from a collectivist Nation (Hofstede model) and so more studies should be done in order to properly understand the phenomenon. On the other hand, the outcomes are aligned with the studies developed by Caroll and Ahuvia (2006) and Loureiro *et al*. (2012). Finally, Portuguese population is regarded as being collectivist. Therefore, they tend to make purchases according to their groups of friends and family.

Regarding managerial implications, there are several suggestions for fashion brands. First, blogs and bloggers who promote fashion brands are continuously growing in terms of readers and followers on social networks. Therefore, fashion brands should invest in product placement in the blogs with the brand identifies the most with. They should also invite bloggers to events such as new store openings;

or create events specific for bloggers, where they meet in a common place and see the new collection, having access to discounts and asking to make contests on their blogs for readers to win a prize or to get discounts as well. Lastly, blogs in Portugal should rethink their focus, since the blogs that were born as fashion and style are now converging to other topics and forgetting somewhat their origin. Nowadays, blogs and social networks are preferment vehicles where consumers search, post and follow trends or put away other products and brands. This enrolment is particularly important in more collectivist nations, where the population tends to value the social opinion and social impression.

Although the study has been conducted with caution, the limitations may work as avenue for further research, such as: (i) conducted in other countries and regions (e.g.: Anglo-Saxon countries – more individualist and thus narcissist – and Asian ones – even more collectivist, in comparison to the Portuguese culture) in order to better understand the phenomenon and understand the cultural effects of the different constructs presented; (ii) other potential drivers of Passionate desire should be considered, as well as the inter-relationship among constructs.

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