It is all about exhibitionism! The fashion passionate desire of e-buyers

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the effect of social context on passion for fashion and the exhibitionist tendency. The study was conducted in two phases, the first one being exploratory (n=109), followed by a quantitative phase (n=425). The findings reveal that the social influence is very important in enhancing the desire to use fashion products. Further, the exhibitionist tendency acts as a mediator between passionate desire for fashion products and word-of-mouth.

Keywords: social influence, exhibitionist, passionate desire, word-of-mouth, fashion

INTRODUCTION

Coco Chanel, one of the most well-known fashion designers once said "*Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street; fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening*." The statement is updated since bloggers very frequently write about certain clothes or accessories they see in the street. Blogs and the communication that flow through social networking sites (SNSs) are becoming more and more influential in the purchase decision. These platforms are persuading consumers, particularly to use specific fashion products (in this study we consider fashion products as clothes and accessories that consumers buy not only for utilitarian reasons but also as a style, a trend, and a lifestyle expression). Bloggers and people who tend to be very active using SNSs, are regarded as open, having imagination, curiosity, artistic talent, intelligence, and diverse interests (Guadagno,

Okdie & Eno, 2008), and as such potential persuaders of others to buy products and brands (Aggarwal & Singh, 2013).

Blogs and SNSs represent the fastest-growing medium of spreading the word-of-mouth and social influencers. However, how social context influences the passion for fashion and the exhibitionist tendency has not been addressed in previous research. Moreover, the role of exhibitionist tendency as a mediator between passionate desire for fashion and word-of-mouth is not explored yet. In order to contribute to answering these questions the study used two steps. The first, a qualitative approach, gives some insights to the second. In the remainder of the article, we first present the conceptual framework of our study, followed by the research methodology and the measures used. Then, the data analysis and results are presented. The final section contains a discussion of the results, the contribution and implications of the study, and the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

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; Parrots, 2001), but for others it is a human feeling resulting from joy and trust (e.g., Plutchik, 2001). From the relationship viewpoint four main approaches arise. 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 consists of dimensions such as passion, intimacy, and commitment (e.g., Kamat & Parulekar, 1997; and Keh, Pang, &

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 & Bagozzi, 2009, p. 353). Thomson, MacInnis and Park (2005) also study the brand love phenomenon and present three dimensions: passion, affection, and connection. Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2008a, 2008b) propose two main components of brand love (what are they) that are also to be found in the interpersonal love literature. The seven first-order dimensions of love have been proposed to be idealization, pleasure, intimacy, long duration relationship, dream, memories, and uniqueness (Albert *et al.*, 2008b). The seven factors offer a second-order solution with two factors labeled passion and affection. Albert *et al.* (2008a) using exploratory correspondent analysis followed by cluster analysis found 11 dimensions which 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.*, (2008a, p. 1073) note, 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, and 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, 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, which breed infatuation, selfishness, and even obsessive dependency (Loureiro, 2012). Consumers who are passionate about fashion will enjoy extending their self through fashion products (clothes and accessories) and brands (Belk, 2003). Individuals who are passionate about fashion will enjoy exhibiting the clothes and accessories and be admired for their choices and end up communicating their consumption experience and suggestions.

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 & De Araujo, 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 the

society (Wiedmann, Hennigs & Siebels, 2009).

The social values are also related to social influence, which points out the interaction between the customer and other customers in the store or with a salesperson or customer service representative (Zhang *et al.*, 2014). Previous research has revealed that the social context can influence customer perceptions and behavior, particularly in the case of more hedonic products (Wakefield & Stone, 2004). Social influence has also been regarded as informational and normative. The first is related to the consumers' need to make informed choices through sources considered credible by them (e.g., experts and opinion leaders). Normative influence refers to the conformity with the expectations of other persons or groups such as family and close friends (LaTour & Manra, 1989; Bearden, Netemeyer & Teel, 1989; and Lee & Choong, 2001).

Strong primary ties (e.g., close friends) and individuals with certain similar characteristics (e.g., age, sex, education, and social status) are more likely to provide a conduit for social influence than weak ties (Brown & Reingen, 1987). Childers and Rao (1992) highlight that luxury products or at least more hedonic consumption appear to be more influenced by peers (friends or colleagues) while familial ties influence utilitarian consumption (especially in the United Sates). Yet, these findings are associated with a country considered as individualistic i.e., preference for personal accomplishment, success, heroism, severity, and material success, as opposed to a preference for relationships, attention to the weak and quality of life and related to masculinity i.e., people must care for themselves and only their closest relations, whereas in collectivist societies there is a greater emphasis on group welfare and loyalty (Hofstede, 2001) and so we may find a different situation in countries with other cultures.

The fashion industry is associated with 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 & Etzel, 1982). Thus, the 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 products which are accepted by others, friends and groups of belonging offer more incentive for the desire to have them and a feeling of wanting them. Therefore, it is expected that social influence will positively affect passion for fashion products (see Figure 1):

H1: Social influence has a positive effect on passionate desire to use fashion products.

Exhibitionism as a dimension of Narcissism

In Western cultures narcissism is regarded as a focus on individualism and concern for individual goals of wealth and fame (e.g., Fukuyama, 1999; and 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, therefore, 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 provide warmth and intimate rewards.

Narcissists tend not to get involved and do not commit to 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 their status (Lambert & Desmomd, 2013). In extreme cases, narcissists may be aggressive if that is 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; and Morf, Horvath & 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 distinguish them, that is, tend to search for products that are scarce, unique, exclusive, and customizable (Lee, Gregg & Park, 2013). Particularly, narcissists enjoy displaying material possessions such as fashionable clothes, (Sedikides, Cisek & Hart, 2011). New and impressive-looking clothes are used as an extended self instead of more reliable and practical clothes (Belk, 1988). Therefore, consumers who enjoy showing impressive-looking clothes, who desire material possession, follow new trends, like to be the center of attention, and admire their look in the mirror should be passionate for fashion.

H2: Passionate desire to use fashion products has a positive effect on the exhibitionist tendency.

Word-of-mouth

Consumers tend to buy products with images consistent with their mental representation of self and with in-group i.e., group of reference (Escalas & 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 an object, when they feel positive emotions, passion, then they are willing to talk about it and

recommend it to others, or even re-buy the brand (e.g., Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996; Caroll & Ahuvia, 2006; and Thomson *et al.*, 2005). Yet, individuals may also spread word-of-mouth about products, brands, ideas in order to be considered experts near their family and close friends, or want to be viewed as experts in the market and influencing others or gaining social status (e.g., Richins, 1983; and Feick & Price, 1987).

Nowadays, after the advent of Internet, individuals have several possibilities to express their ideas and opinions about products, brands, and objects, using blogs, SNSs, MySpace, YouTube and others. Individuals are using these platforms to spread their self-expression, exposing their true self through posts and photos. Many times they use 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 & Johnson, 2013). Therefore, consumers enjoy expressing themselves through the products and brands they buy and use and to communicate and advise others on their consumption. The passion for some fashion products may lead the consumer to want to express it to others. Thus:

H3: Passionate desire to use fashion products has a positive effect on word-of-mouth.

Individuals who desire displaying their new and impressive-looking clothes and other fashion accessories (Sedikides, Cisek & Hart, 2011; and Cisek *et al*., 2014) and enjoy to be the center of attention are expected to be more in the predisposition to talk about what products and services they use and communicate their consumption activities. Moreover, passionate desire to use fashion products may enhance the exhibitionist tendency which in turn may positively influence the willingness to communicate and recommend brands and products to others. Therefore:

H4: The exhibitionist tendency has a positive effect on word-of-mouth.

H5: The exhibitionist tendency mediates the relationship between passionate desire to use fashion products and word-of-mouth.

METHODOLOGY

Phase 1 Procedure

Data for this phase was gathered by means of online panel interviews, carried out among a sample of fashion enthusiasts. Respondents were selected from people who (a) were at least 18 years old, (b) search for fashion at least once a week using blogs and SNSs (c) buy clothes or accessories at least once a month. Participants were invited to talk about the posts in the blogs and webpages that they search, motivation for shopping, as well as other aspects and information outside the blogs and web pages may motivate them to buy. The sample contained 109 respondents aged 18–65 years. Most (72%) are between 19 and 25 years old. Regarding educational level 24% have higher education, 48% undergraduate degree and 29% graduate degree. Most of them (65%) buy fashion items (clothes, shoes and accessories) triweekly.

Phase 1 Findings

The analysis of the interviews followed McCracken's process (1988, pp. 41-48), which moves from analysis of the particular utterances as individual units up through higher and higher levels of generality. Participants were invited to talk about the posts in the blogs and SNSs pages that they search and what motivates their shopping, as well as what other aspects and information outside the blogs and webpages that motivate them to buy. The content analysis yielded four major aspects that participants seek in posts and online information that motivate them for shopping: inspirational outfits, products and brands posted, self-identification with the style and value for money. Inspirational

outfits (86%) and products and brands posted (72%) are the most cited aspects.

Inspirational for outfits. Respondents consider blogs and SNSs pages the most important vehicle to search for fashion trends and news. They receive the suggestions posted and adapt the trends to their own style. Blogs inspire new looks and help them to make choices.

Products and brands posted. The blogs and webpages influence product choice and purchase. Participants admit that they tend to go to a store to try and buy products and brands which were posted and commented. Consumers prefer to be aware and follow the posts in blogs than the more traditional advertising platforms through TV, magazines and newspapers.

Self-identification with the style. Participants mention that they identify themselves with the authors of blogs and webpages and trust their opinions. The information included in blogs and webpages can at least function like a first screening (triage) about what the trends are.

Value for money. Participants mentioned that blogs and webpages help them to find attractive sales and products with a good price/perceived quality ratio.

Regarding other information and influences outside blogs and webpages, participants point out mainly two aspects: friends and fashion magazines and runway shows.

Friends. Participants reported that they enjoy seeing what their friends are wearing, using and buying. Opinions of others count, particularly friends and close family.

Fashion magazines and runway shows. A small group of participants, particularly, females, mentioned looking at fashion magazines and runway shows.

Most participants (72%) also pointed out that they enjoyed posting their comment and photos in online platforms and giving their opinion to others (family and close friends).

In this vein, this exploratory study allows us to better understand that consumers who enjoy fashion and frequently browse through blogs and SNSs trying to become updated and get new ideas. Therefore consumers are persuaded by bloggers and other influencers from blogs and SNSs, but they tend to be active in posting comments and photos, too. They also persuade others through their comments and photos in SNSs or other webpages that allow comments. So, word-of-mouth goes beyond the traditional form in the nearby family, close friends and colleagues (e.g., Zeithaml et al., 1996; Richins, 1983; and Feick & Price, 1987), but above all through online platforms. Consumers are enjoying talking about the fashion products and brands they buy and use. They like that others pay attention to them and follow their advice as alluded by Saenger *et al.* (2013).

Consumers tend to exhibit their purchase patterns, brand, and product usages in socially in events and festivals, and also professionally. The 'Internet' has made it easier to expose tastes, interests, and fashions. This exhibitionism together with the belief that consumers are attractive to themselves and others using fashion products and brands (Wallace and Baumeister, 2002; Cisek *et al*., 2014) may enhance the passion for fashion. The impression of clothes and accessory on others, concerns with social standing, and interest of sharing knowledge and fashion products with friends (social values) will also impact positively in strengthening the passion for fashion. Based on these initial findings and previous studies, we proceeded with a survey study to further examine our hypotheses.

Phase 2 Sample, Data Collection and Measures

The survey was conducted in Lisbon for four weeks during March and April 2015. This shopping season (Easter and Spring) provided researchers with easy access to their target consumers at shopping complexes. The sample was a portion of general

population who is enthusiastic about fashion products (clothes and accessories). Shopping mall intercept field survey methodology has been utilized to collect data. Consumers who just completed their shopping and were about to leave the shopping malls were approached by trained interviewers. Among the approached consumers, those who have experience in buying fashion products at least once a month were asked to participate in a written survey (self-administrated). Of the 500 questionnaires distributed, 425 valid completed questionnaires were used for analysis, resulting in a valid response rate of 85%. The majority of respondents were female (69%). Most of the consumers who buy clothes and accessories in Portugal tend to be women, even when clothes are bought for men. In regards to age groups, 47% were between 18 and 25 years, 20% were between 26 and 35 years, 12% between 36 and 45 years, 14% between 46 and 55 years, 6% were between 56 and 65 years and, lastly, 1% was over 65 years of age.

The questionnaire was adapted from the previous studies and written first in English and then translated into Portuguese. Back translation was then used to ensure that the questionnaire communicated similar information as the original items (Sekaran, 1983). In the pilot study, 15 consumers (graduate students) who enjoy buying fashion products were asked to verify the content validity and psychometric properties of the measures. Based on the comments made by participants in the pilot study, several questionnaire items were revised to include more precise meanings. Passionate desire was measured by using four items from Batra *et al.* (2012). Social influence used 12 items based on Wiedmann *et al.* (2009) and Bearden *et al.* (1989). To measure exhibitionism, a dimension of narcissism, we used five items based on Raskin and Terry (1988). Finally, word-of-mouth was measured with six items adapted from Saenger, Thomas, and

Johnson (2013). All items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale. The last part of the questionnaire concerned socio-demographic data.

RESULTS

In order to treat data and after analyzing the quality of the same, we conducted several factorial analyses (principal components) and Varimax rotation in order to capture the dimensionality of each construct. As expected, the several constructs are one-dimensional except for social influence. Social influence (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of 0.916; $\chi2= 1953.3$, $p<0.001$) presents the factors called informational and normative. This constructs is regarded as a second-order formative construct.

To evaluate the adequacy of the measures at the first-order construct level, item reliability is assessed by examining the loadings of the measures on their corresponding construct. In this study the item loading of each item is equal or exceed the value of 0.707 (Wetzels *et al.*, 2009). All Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.7 and all composite reliability is 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. At the second-order construct level, we have the parameter estimates of indicator weights, significance of weight (t-student) and multicollinearity of indicators. Weight measures the contribution of each formative indicator to the variance of the latent variable (Robert & Thatcher, 2009). A significance level of at least 0.001 suggests that the indicator is relevant to the construction of the formative index (social influence), and thus demonstrates a sufficient level of validity. The recommended indicator weight is greater than 0.2 (Chin, 1998) and both informational and normative indicators have a positive beta weight above 0.2.

The degree of multicollinearity among the formative indicators should be assessed by variance inflation factor (VIF) (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). The VIF indicates how much an indicator's variance is explained by the other indicators of the same construct. The common acceptable threshold for VIF is below 3.33 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006). Table 1 shows VIF values are less than 3.33 and so the results did not seem to pose a multicollinearity problem. 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). Finally, the correlations between each first-order construct and the second-order construct is more than 0.71 revealing that they have more than half of their variance in common, as expected (MacKenzie *et al*., 2011).

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; and Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All path coefficients are found to be significant at the 0.001 (see Table 2). In addition to the bootstrapping approach, the Sobel test (MacKinnon, Warsi & Dwyer, 1995) was used for the mediating effect of exhibitionism as proposed in the model of this study. As shown in Table 2, the z-test for passionate desire → exhibitionism → word-of-mouth (z-test=2.944, $p<0.01$) reveals that the mediating effect of exhibitionism is confirmed.

The results show that social context has an influence on passionate desire to buy fashion products. Passionate desire for fashion products has a positive and significant direct effect on both exhibitionism and word-of-mouth. Yet, the strength of the relationship between passionate desire and exhibitionism (β=0.319, $p<0.01$) is stronger than the strength of relationship between passionate desire and word-of-mouth (β=0.212, $p<0.01$). On the other hand, the strength of the relationship between passionate desire

and word-of-mouth (β=0.212, *p*<0.01) is weaker than the strength of relationship between exhibitionism and word-of-mouth (β=0.597, *p*<0.001).

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) as the modeled constructs explained 48.2% of the variance in word-of-mouth. In fact, the acceptable value of GoF (0.50) as proposed by Tenenhaus *et al.* (2005), regarding the large effect size proposed by Cohen and Cohen (Wetzels *et al.*, 2009) and the good level of predictive power (R^2) reveal a good overall fit of the structural model (see Table 2). 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

This study explores the influence of social context on the desire to have fashion products, display those products and communicate this to others. The results imply a number of theoretical and practical implications that should be discussed. First, the findings seem to show that social influence is very important in enhancing the desire to use fashion products. Remarkably, normative dimension appears to be the most relevant in shaping the overall social shopping influence. This reveals the importance of the opinions about fashion in conformity with the expectations of the others or groups, i.e., family and close friends (LaTour & Manra, 1989; Bearden *et al.*, 1989; and Lee & Choong, 2001). The consumers who participated in the study come from a country considered as collectivist and related to femininity (Hofstede, 2001) and so they bestow more significance to the opinion of family and close friends and enjoy consensus than to

the information about the product. Secondly, exhibitionist tendency acts as mediator between passionate desire for fashion products and word-of-mouth. Consumers imbued with the passion for fashion are more likely to enjoy showing off fashion products, that is, displaying new trends in clothes and accessories. In this situation, consumers achieve self-esteem and tend to give information and recommend those products to others, i.e., spreading information.   Third, consumers are acting as persuaders and persuaded. In societies which are more collectivist and related to femininity consumers are strongly persuaders by the normative, that is, family and close friends. The opinion and considerations of those they know, in whom they trust, is more relevant then the information provided by experts. However, consumers tend to be very expressive in persuading others, not only through the more traditional word-of-mouth, but using SNSs. As mentioned in previous studies consumers when influencing others are gaining social status (e.g., Richins, 1983; and Feick & Price, 1987). Fourth, consumers who enjoy fashion and follow the new trends frequently browse through blogs and SNSs trying to be up to date and get a hold of new ideas. Consumers are persuaded by bloggers and posts in SNSs, but they tend to be active in posting comments and photos, too. Therefore, they like that others pay attention to them and follow their advice as alluded by Saenger *et al.* (2013). Nevertheless, Portuguese consumers tend to follow the bloggers they feel are close to them, as a close friend and almost family. The identification with the blogger is important, along with sense of belongingness to the close group and that the information is aligned to the normative of their family or close friends.

From a theoretical perspective, this research provides a more comprehensive assessment of how consumers persuade and are persuaded into the context of fashion products in a society regarded as collectivist and related to femininity. This is a first attempt to

explicitly consider the impact of social influence on passionate desire for fashion products and tested exhibitionist tendency as mediator between passionate desire and word-of-mouth. Therefore, future studies should follow this approach and analyze other drivers and outcomes of passionate desire for fashion.

Regarding managerial implications, the findings highlight the importance of normative social influence in enhancing the desire for fashion and the propensity to display clothes and accessories. In this vein, brand managers should invest more in SNSs and blogs and less in traditional TV advertising. The process should be subtle, i.e., the promotion of brands and clothes must be done by bloggers or other consumers. Consumers in more collectivist and femininity-related cultures tend to prefer the suggestions and opinions from people they consider as close friends. The information about the products and brands should be in such way that conveys an idea of the right choice, a good ratio price/perceived and, at the same time, offers a sensation of status.

Although the current study provides valuable insights, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to its limitations. First, the study used convenience sample of consumers. Even though we carefully considered consumers who buy different types of brands and different consumption styles, they may not have represented all consumers. Secondly, although the current research focused on the effect of social influence on passionate desire, and consequently on exhibitionism, in the future other drivers of passionate desire should be considered, for example, emotional variables and purchase experience. Thirdly, the model should be tested comparatively considering different types of fashion actors such as maverick, fashionista, fashion follower, fashion enthusiast. Lastly, national cultures and brand category could be moderating variables to be considered in analyzing potential differences in the model.

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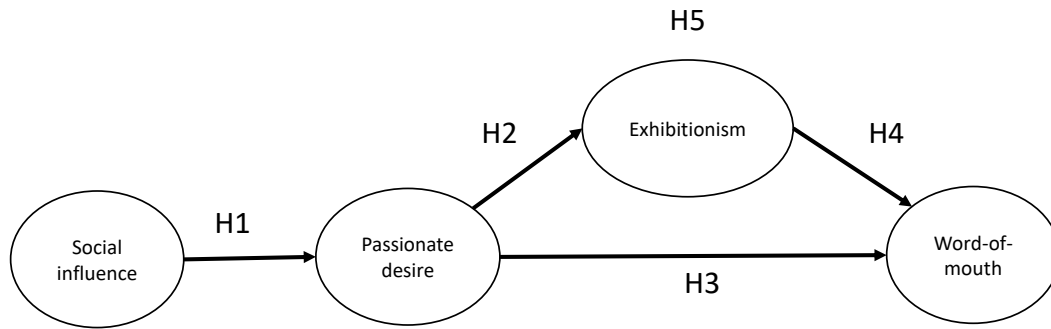
FIGURE AND TABLE

Figure 1. Proposed model

H5

Exhibitionism

H2

H4

Social influence

H1

Passionate desire

H3

Word-of-mouth

Table 1. Measurement results

Latent variables and items	Mean LV	Item loading (Reflective measure)	Cronbach Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Exhibitionism	2.0	(0.735-0.849)	0.825	0.878	0.592
Informational	2.7	(0.766-0.785)	0.706	0.820	0.534
Normative	3.0	(0.727-0.803)	0.877	0.905	0.576
Passionate desire	2.3	(0.759-0.857)	0.757	0.841	0.572
Word-of-mouth	2.2	(0.734-0.847)	0.886	0.907	0.471
Second order formative constructs	*First-order constructs/ dimensions*	Weights	*t-value*	VIF	
Social influence	Informational	0.343***	11.808	2.168	
	Normative	0.745***	24.350	2.444	

Note: Significant at ***p < 0.001

Table 2. Structural results

Path	Standardized Coefficient	Standard error (SE)	Test results
Social influence -> Passionate desire	0.419***	0.087	H1 supported
Passionate desire -> Exhibitionism	0.319**	0.100	H2 supported
Passionate desire -> Word-of-mouth	0.212**	0.084	H3 supported
Exhibitionism -> Word-of-mouth	0.597***	0.078	H4 supported
Mediating effects	Standardized coefficient	z-test	Test result
Passionate desire -> Exhibitionism-> Word-of-mouth	0.190	2.944**	H5: supported
R^2 Passionate desire	0.176	Q^2 Passionate desire	0.300
R^2 Exhibitionism	0.101	Q^2 Exhibitionism	0.392
R^2 Word-of-mouth	0.482	Q^2 Word-of-mouth	0.657
GoF	0.50	f^2 (effect size)	0.79

Notes: Significant at: **p<0.01 and ***p<0.001.
Mediation was tested via a z-test, which calculated using the Sobel's (1982) approach.