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STRATEGIES TO DESIGN CLOTHING COLLECTIONS USING A MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE: A PROPOSITION OF GUIDELINES

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study presents the partial results of the research "Strategies to design clothing collection", carried out from 2017 to 2021, by researchers associated with the research group Viés-Moda & Design. **Methods:** delimited as an applied, qualitative and exploratory research. It was realized an extensive review of the literature, as well as the design and analyses of clothing collections. **Conclusion:** the guidelines can be used together with design methodologies to develop clothing collection, due to make the process of designing a clothing collection more efficient, improving the creative process steps and reintegrating stocks in an efficient way.

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INTRODUÇÃO

This research is a continuation of studies carried out as a doctoral thesis concluded in 2014, entitled "A study about management strategies to design clothing collection in six companies from Pernambuco". Other investigations were realized using the research project "Strategies of clothing collection management", started in 2017 and concluded in 2021, part of the research group Viés – Moda& Design certificated and registered in the National Council of Scientific and Technological development (CNPQ). The discussion about strategies of clothing collection management goes beyond the creative point of view. It is suggested guidelines that boost the reflexive and decisive thinking for designing new clothing collections articulated with the previous ones, regardless of the design methodology adopted to develop collections of new products. The competitive strategy "it is related to being different. What means to choose deliberately a diverse group of actions in order to offer a unique combination of values" (MOZOTA, KLOPSCH & COSTA 2011, p.180). Mendes, Sacomano& Fusco (2006a, 2006b) point out the strategy as a competitive advantage for companies and, for being directly connected with the market, it must be updated regarding the business competition, so as to achieve the success. It is important to highlight the business flexibility as crucial for the businesses to react

rapidly to the alterations of the business competition.(PORTER, 2005). In practical terms, the business flexibility is what has been motivating many companies to design diversified collections especially when it is intended to reach a variety of target consumers or to boost the sales for the same consumers, because of the variety of products. There are in the contemporary literature, 4 typologies for clothing collection, and each of them has its specific details. They are: collection(TREPTOW, 2013; MENDES 2010; JONES 2011; RECH,2002, 2006; NAVALON, 2008; FRINGS, 2012), groups (FRINGS, 2012), collection-unity (SIMÕES-BORGIANI, 2014, 2016)and collection-mix (SIMÕES-BORGIANI, 2014, 2016). So, the choice for one type instead of the other must be connected with the strategy desired. For Slack; Chambers; Johnston (2002), the decision-making will compromise the actions and direct the path. The following-decisions reflect the commitment tofollowinga certain direction. Having reflected that, it is suggested that collections can be managed taking strategic decisions, not by random pathways. When it comes to the process itself, independently of being collection, groups, collection-unity or collection-mix, management of collection is the most important point. This process does not refer to the final esthetic of the collection. But it is related to how the new collection is designed, using management practices referring to the previous collection or, in case, without any reference to past results or experiences. This collection management proposal corroborates the strategic planning, a chain of actions that has the objective desired

and allows readjustments as the actions are taken so as to assure the final objective. Kotler & Keller (2012) defines strategic planning as a management process guided through the market. In other words, this is a conception to sustain the businesses related to the business opportunities needs for changing. It has the function of generating much more profit and business growth. Following the proposition of being strategic, reducing the operational costs and newresearch, some companies have included in their practices the management of collection, implementing in an articulated way. Designing continuities of previous collections, often, with similar or the same themes, what is based on the same research and it reduces the time and investment, continues a collection that had a good market acceptance. Besides this, the process of management allows to insert in the new collection pieces that did not have the same sails results and turned into stock, once they can receive new values in a new context.(SIMÕES-BORGIANI, 2018). "[...] a clothing collection that presents a maturation of process development. It is improvedby the designing of the collection. There must not be randomly chosen the themes, pieces, colors, models. […] it will be firmer. It will provide a better company image for repeating its characteristic features. This process will be also understood as a management of the collection, once it concerns the administration of the strategic decision-making" (SIMÕES-BORGIANI, 2014, p.129). The strategy is to design a new collection using the preceding collection analysis as a reference, considering two perspectives: what was a sail success and what turned into stock. Reflecting and planning according to what was already done, in other words, making possible the reinsertion of a piece from a past collection, which became stock, as well as the inclusion of complementary pieces that was a best-seller, as a strategy of keeping or maintaining the same client from the past collection .

Before the global economic issues, it is essential to discuss and spread the management of collection, intending to improve the creative process and economic process of a company. Designing administrated collections allow new collections with guidelines and it saves time of research, creative imagination of ideas. Making use of management, analyzing the extremes of the preceding collection, it might generate new propositions more rapidly, for having a past to administrate and generate new products.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to carry out this research, it was proposed the use of actions to find the solution in an organized, systematic way and using the classifications and delimitations that follows the point of view of Silva e Menezes (2001). In the perspective of its nature, this is an applied research, because it has the final intention of generating knowledge for practical application and concerns the solutions of specific problems(SILVA & MENEZES, 2001), which in this study is guidelines to manage collections. "The problem is approached qualitatively, not needing data or statistical analysis for its confirmation. The natural environment is the direct source of information collection and the researcher a key-instrument. It is descriptive because the researchers tend toanalyzethe information inductively. The process and its meaning are the main focus of this approach" (SILVA & MENEZES, 2001, p.20). It is exploratory, once it presentsfamiliarity with the problem, due to make it explicit(GIL, 2010) and, at this situation, to provide solutions (guidelines) for consolidation. It was also realized a bibliographic search and case study in companies, analyzing and experimenting on the design of the collections, which are usual technical procedures in exploratory researches. During the study, were designed collections for companies located in Recife and Poção, cities part of Local Productive Arragement (APL) from Pernambuco. It was deployed the methodology guidelines to design collections of Simões-Borgiani (2018) to design collection-mix with management principles. There was the need for adaptation of the research experimental stages as a consequence of the covid-19 social restrictions. Therefore, the methodology was adapted, and the analyses were amplified to internationally known brands, great national companies and some local ones.

These analyses used the same typologies: collection-mix or collection-unity, and congruent points were identified among the collections, an aspect indicated at this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using the literature search as reference, collection analyses and experimentations in the design process, it was decided to use 4 strategies: (1) to analyze the previous collection according to the sales; (2) to define the size of the collection using the precedent one as a reference;(3) to define the variety of products after stages 1 and 2; (4) touse Laver's Law. These strategies are part of the guidelines for collection management that can be used together with design collection methodologies to make better decisionsto take advantage of the sources. The adoption of the first 3 stages guides a design of articulated collection, with the reuse of the stock and design of new ones in complementary and strategic manner. The last guideline proposed, is in fact a new strategy for management of collections, independent of the articulation of its precedent.

To analyze the previous collection according to the sales: Before starting a collection, an analysis of the previous collection must be carried out. Two extreme points are fundamental in the decision-making process: (1) the mostrapidly sold productand (2) the least sold product or the ones which became stock or took too long to be sold and there was a delay to sell. These two extremes will be useful to make the decisions for the new collection: the best-seller pieces are a guidance to design new compositions for it in the new collection. It is a strategy to involve again the consumers of these pieces. Regarding the pieces which was not sold well, these pieces can be slightly modified and reinserted into the new collection, considering the costs of these modifications and the new price of these pieces. What's more, it can be as it is in the new collection, but planning new outfit compositions, adding a visual value to it together with the new collection pieces.

To define the size of the collection: There is a business trend of designing smaller collections, a lot of them are designed throughout the year, instead of bigger collections with a major number of pieces. It is an strategy to bit by bit understand the market reaction to it, differently from gambling on a reduced number of collections with a major number of pieces in a long period that can have a good acceptance or not. It is suggested to consider the time foreseen as ideal for the commercialization, manufacturing productive potentialas well as economic and social context. When it is defined the ideal size of the collection, it must be cut down on the total number planned for the current collection, all the pieces reinserted from other collections.

To define the variety of products: Defining the variety of products, without an analysis of the previous collection, it can lead to an unbalanced design of collection, regarding the proportion of bottom pieces, top pieces and full pieces. Treptow (2013) highlights the importance of in each bottom piece, must have 2 or 3 options of top pieces. Consequently, depending on what was reinserted from other collections, there must be a balance in compositions.

To use Laver's Law: Lurie (1997) brings back the Laver's Law from 1945, presented, in a grid, the reactions and/or the sensations thatclothes showsover time. This grid is the result of a study of the historian James Laver which presents how the clothes react regarding the past or the future. It is recommended as a last guideline of the management of collection proposal to make use of Laver's Law on account of being an excellent tool to boost the creative process. The adoption of this law admits a choice of theme, concept or characteristic for the collection, with guidance towards the craved sensation for the products. For one of the collections designed at this research, it was adopted an exploration of references that would delight the consumer through the products. It was carried out a search for reference elements from 70 years before this time, what brought us to the 1950's (the year of reference is 2020).

Grid 1. Laver's Law

Time	Reaction/ sensation
10 years before its time	Indecent
5 years before its time	Shameless
1 year before its time	Daring
Current fashion	Smart
1 year after its time	Dowdy
10 years before its time	Hideous
20 years before its time	Ridiculous
30 years before its time	Amusing
50 years before its time	Quaint
70 years before its time	Charming
100 years before its time	Romantic
150 years before its time	Beautiful

Source: Lurie (1997).

Using the 1950's as a starting point, it was investigated, the historical facts of this decade, highlighting the various aspects of it: habits, political and ideological milestones, successful movies, soup operas, songs and current garments, colors and any other important facts. Therefore, the designer has the elements to work with according to Laver (1945), once all this elements are available to provide the sensations to the consumers. It is a manner of choosing a theme, concept, or details of the collection in order to be more assertive with what is desired, it does not matter if it is romantic or daring, among other aspects. Designing clothing collections require methods and strategies that assure or come close to success. Horn, Meyer e Ribeiro (2013) propose the use of design methodologies to develop collections together with product design methodologies, resulting in an adapted methodology, of a major completeness, covering stages not usual for fashion design methodologies analyzed, referring to Sorger e Udale (2007) e Treptow (2013).

Another similar suggestion that joins fashion design methodology together with methodologies centered in the user is exposed by Merino, Varnier e Makara (2020).It is also worth mentioning that softwareapplications for collection development are being developed and enhanced over time, with the goal of optimizing, facilitating, and perfecting the collection development process. It is essential for each company to choose a specific methodology to design its collections and in case of necessity, to adapt for its reality, trying to turn the process more smooth, agile and efficient. At this research, the literature search investigated the fashion design methodologies more regular in the academic and professional field, in the words of Frings (2012), Jones (2011), Navalon (2008), Rech (2002), Simões (2009), Simões-Borgiani (2018), Sorger e Udale (2007) e Treptow (2013).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The strategies of collection management are discussed at this research, purposed to generate a closer approximation between the dynamic designing of collections and its management, realities not exploited before by other authors that are reference for fashion collection, despite being of extreme importance to be taken into account together. Therefore, using the guidelines of collection management requires the simultaneous use of project methodologies to design collections by the creative staff. The use must be complemented by the collection management involving the 4 stages of decision-making. It is important to highlight that the 4 guidelines are neutral and do not interfere in decisions such as the collection typology, whether being TREPTOW, 2013; MENDES 2010; JONES 2011; RECH,2002, 2006; NAVALON, 2008; FRINGS, 2012), groups (FRINGS, 2012), collection-unity (SIMÕES-BORGIANI, 2014, 2016) and collection-mix (SIMÕES-BORGIANI, 2014, 2016). It is therefore presented as a versatile proposal of management so as to improve the new clothing collections.

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