

SLOW FASHION AND THE ADOPTION OF CRAFT TECHNIQUES IN FASHION PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This article provides a theoretical analysis of the principles of slow fashion and their implications for the adoption of craft techniques in fashion product development, with a view to promoting Brazilian culture. In light of the negative externalities of the fast fashion model, the study investigates how craft practices emerge as strategic allies of slow fashion by strengthening local consumption, safeguarding traditional knowledge, and enhancing the symbolic value of garments. Methodologically, this is a qualitative, exploratory study based on bibliographic research. The discussion connects the pillars of sustainability (social, environmental, and economic) with product design, highlighting the role of textile crafts in building a competitive advantage grounded in exclusivity and cultural identity.

Keywords: Craft techniques, Slow fashion, Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary context, the fashion industry is predominantly governed by fast fashion, a production and consumption model based on accelerated trend cycles and the induced obsolescence of products (Veronese; Laste, 2022). This dynamic places intense pressure on the entire global textile supply chain (Fletcher; Grose, 2012), resulting in negative externalities such as the depletion of natural resources

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and serious ethical violations, including child labor and working conditions analogous to slavery (Mori, 2016).

By contrast, slow fashion has emerged as an ethical and sustainable alternative. The movement seeks to mitigate the harms caused by the prevailing model (Clark, 2008) through human-centered production processes and the integration of the social, environmental, and economic dimensions (Fabri; Rodrigues, 2015). From this perspective, local craft production constitutes a practice intrinsically aligned with slow fashion because of its manual nature, respect for the time required to make each item, and strong cultural ties.

Based on this perspective, this study aims to provide a theoretical analysis of the principles of slow fashion and their implications for the use of craft techniques in the development of contemporary fashion products, with a view to promoting Brazilian culture. Accordingly, this research contributes to studies that connect slow fashion with Brazilian craft techniques, supporting investigations that simultaneously integrate product design, slow fashion, and craftsmanship into apparel development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Slow fashion is a sustainable fashion movement based on the same concepts as the slow food movement, which was founded in Italy in 1986 to promote healthy consumption, oppose industrialization and fast food, and value traditions. In fashion, the movement advocates the consumption of higher-quality products made on a small scale, in opposition to the mass production that characterizes contemporary fashion. Slow fashion is therefore grounded in reducing the volume of goods produced and is understood as encompassing products characterized by durability, traditional and manual production techniques, and classic, timeless design concepts (Veronese; Laste, 2022).

The movement, which challenges the excessive production and consumption promoted by fast fashion, therefore uses environmentally responsible, long-lasting materials. Moreover, its production processes comply with environmental and labor laws, ensuring that the professionals involved are

properly valued, which affects the product's final cost. Slow fashion thus takes shape through small- to medium-scale production models focused on reducing waste through the use of quality materials and timeless design, minimizing environmental impacts, and valuing labor and the local market (Berlim, 2020). It thereby establishes an essential pathway for restructuring the apparel value chain.

In this context, craft techniques emerge as allies of slow fashion because they strengthen local consumption, value traditional knowledge, and enhance the cultural meaning of garments (Veronese; Laste, 2022). Textile craftsmanship is thus associated with knowledge acquired through the refinement and experience involved in manual work. It encompasses contemporary craft movements that employ traditional techniques both to produce textile artifacts and to create artistic works situated at the intersection of Art and Fashion (França, 2024).

By employing techniques such as lacemaking, embroidery, crochet, knitting, dyeing, and weaving (Brasil, 2018), Brazilian craftsmanship adds symbolic value, identity, and exclusivity to products, as artisans apply their techniques, knowledge, lived experiences, and ideas to create culturally meaningful items intended for sale. In this way, the appreciation of popular culture becomes embedded in the social imagination, where it is recovered through social representations and connected to cultural identity (Lóssio; Pereira, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of this study is to provide a theoretical analysis of the principles of slow fashion and their implications for the adoption of craft techniques in fashion product development, with a view to promoting Brazilian culture.

Exploratory research examines a problem in order to provide information for more in-depth investigation, with the initial characterization, definition, and classification of the problem as its objective (Rodrigues, 2007). Accordingly, this study is classified as exploratory and bibliographic research with a

qualitative approach, as it addresses elements of craftsmanship such as crochet, embroidery, lace, and macramé.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, the integration of craft techniques into fashion product development can be understood as a significant strategy for the slow fashion movement, enabling a global consumption paradigm grounded in sustainability. More than an alternative mode of production, slow fashion serves as a means of consumer re-education by prioritizing process transparency and enduring quality (Jung; Jin, 2014). This dynamic transcends the material dimension because, by promoting ethical practices among brands and consumers (Lammel et al., 2020), the movement reactivates the symbolic value and cultural capital intrinsic to the object, allowing consumption choices to function as expressions of identity and social belonging (Miranda, 2019).

Slow fashion proposes a production model based on valuing time, quality, and ethical relationships throughout the production chain, in contrast to the accelerated, mass-market logic of the fashion industry. Within this context, the use of craft techniques in contemporary fashion product development has significant cultural, social, environmental, and design implications. Craft practices incorporate traditional knowledge and manual processes that contribute to preserving cultural identity and valuing artisans' work, thereby promoting social sustainability (Fletcher, 2010).

Furthermore, these techniques support production processes with a lower environmental impact and reinforce the material and symbolic durability of garments, enhancing their emotional and cultural value (Papanek, 2005). From the perspective of contemporary design, the integration of slow fashion and craftsmanship redefines the designer's role, with designers acting as mediators between tradition and innovation and facilitating the development of fashion products that combine aesthetics, functionality, and socio-environmental responsibility (Manzini, 2008).

Thus, the use of Brazilian craft techniques strengthens the symbolic and cultural value of garments, differentiates products, and generates competitive advantages, while also helping to build an economically significant sector for local communities (Santana; Coppola, 2021). Accordingly, this research contributes to studies that connect slow fashion with Brazilian craft techniques, supporting investigations that simultaneously integrate product design, slow fashion, and craftsmanship into apparel development.

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