Facultad de Humanidades y Documentación

Grado en Gestión Industrial de Moda

Moda y marca personal: percepción del usuario

Moda e marca persoal: percepción do usuario

Fashion and personal branding: user perception

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-ABSTRACT

The establishment of a personal brand and personal branding as a practice are crucial elements towards the construction of a business-understanding business as a benefit obtained from the union of elements channelized through a representative figure, the artist-.

As social media evolves and globalization expands, the way in which we consume entertainment on its broader meaning has changed, too.

Likewise, given that the present world is run to a large degree by social media and the entertainment media, it is impossible not to affirm the important role that fashion plays-also understood on its broader meaning and not limiting it merely to dressing-on the creation of a brand.

In addition, many are the examples through which we can observe the symbiosis created between artist and consumer, and how it influences and even contributes to the creation of said brand. All these matters are the object of analysis in the present study, analyzing the theoretical framework with a larger scope so as to better grasp the concept of brand, brand creation and any and every other relevant concepts.

Lastly, the exemplification of the theoretical facts exposed above in several practical cases within the music industry I provide a larger understanding of how the usage of fashion, clothing and aesthetics affects brand creation and user perception.

-KEYWORDS: Brand image, brand identity, fashion, marketing, branding, positioning, market.

-RESUMEN: El establecimiento de una marca personal y la marca personal como práctica son elementos cruciales hacia la construcción de un negocio -entendido el negocio como un beneficio obtenido de la unión de elementos canalizados a través de una figura representativa, el artista-.

A medida que evolucionan las redes sociales y se expande la globalización, también ha cambiado la forma en que consumimos entretenimiento en su significado más amplio.

Asimismo, dado que el mundo actual está regido en gran medida por las redes sociales y los medios de entretenimiento, es imposible no afirmar el importante papel que juega la moda - entendida también en su sentido más amplio y no limitándose a vestirse- de la creación de una marca.

Además, muchos son los ejemplos a través de los cuales podemos observar la simbiosis creada entre artista y consumidor, y cómo influye e incluso contribuye a la creación de dicha marca. Todas estas cuestiones son objeto de análisis en el presente estudio, analizando el marco teórico con mayor amplitud para comprender mejor el concepto de marca, creación de marca y todos los demás conceptos relevantes.

Por último, la ejemplificación de los hechos teóricos expuestos anteriormente en varios casos prácticos dentro de la industria de la música proporciona una comprensión más amplia de cómo el uso de la moda, la ropa y la estética afecta la creación de marca y la percepción del usuario.

-KEYWORDS: Imagen de marca, identidad de marca, moda, marketing, branding, posicionamiento, mercado.

-RESUMO: O establecemento dunha marca persoal e a marca persoal como práctica son elementos cruciais cara á construción dun negocio -entendido o negocio como un beneficio obtido da unión de elementos canalizados a través dunha figura representativa, o artista-.

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Por último, a exemplificación dos feitos teóricos expostos anteriormente en varios casos prácticos dentro da industria da música proporciona unha comprensión máis ampla de como o uso da moda, a roupa e a estética afecta a creación de marca e a percepción do usuario.

-KEYWORDS: Imaxe de marca, identidade de marca, moda, marketing, branding, posicionamento, mercado.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this project aim to analyze the topic of Personal Branding putting the focus on the user's perception and all the ways in which fashion and dressing can influence customer's views on the brand. The goal is to demonstrate the pivotal influence fashion has on nowadays' society and market, exemplifying the research with several examples from the music industry.

1.2. THEME AND PROBLEM STATEMENT:

I have decided to develop this topic for my End-of-Degree Project since I show great interest in all dimensions of fashion (as an art, as dress, as a means of communication…). I am also intrigued by the psychological dimensions behind successful artists that have built their careers and grown their brand around the use of aesthetics, and how this affects spectators (see cases such as C.Tangana, Rosalía, Harry Styles, Maneskin and many others). I consider that, although perhaps it may be a slightly complicated, broad and multidisciplinary study, it can be a relevant topic to investigate and that can be of useful knowledge on my professional future.

I also consider it to be quite a relevant theme in today's entertainment business and market, seen as how branding is becoming more and more multifaceted and takes on a growing number of dimensions.

Therefore, it seems fit to conduct an analysis of said subjects, providing a guide and insightful review of the processes and influences that conform it.

1.3. HYPOTHESIS:

With the evolution of social networks and globalization, the way we consume entertainment has changed, and personal branding and personal branding are crucial elements for building a business—understanding the business as a benefit obtained from the union of elements that are channeled through a representative figure, the artist—. Likewise, since today's world is governed largely by social networks and entertainment media, it is impossible not to affirm the important role that fashion plays - understood in its broadest sense and not only limited to clothing - in the creation of our brand. In addition, there are many examples through which we can observe the symbiosis created between artist and consumer, and how it influences and even helps in the creation of said brand. All these issues will be analyzed in this study.

2. METHODOLOGY

After carefully reviewing each Final Degree Project modalities, I have reached the conclusion that the *Study of a Case* would be the most fitting one for the proposed topic. In this way, the phases to abide to would match the following:

1.- **Initial phase** where I will document myself through online and physical resources. This way I will narrow down the initial broader topic and select the documents through which I will work.

2.- **Development phase** in which I will expose the matter to be analysed (*How a personal brand is created through fashion and how it influences consumers*) through real-life and updated examples.

3.-**Final phase** in which I will extract any relevant conclusions to my study.

CHAPTER I: BRAND

3. BRAND IMAGE

A brand is a name, term, symbol, design or a combination of these, that identifies the company which makes or sells the product or service, and differences its products and services from those of its competitors (Calvo, 2018).

The brand image, which is a widely misunderstood concept, is all about the individual's perception, the consumer of the brand and what it (the brand) projects.

Another simplified definition of brand image would be that of your company's personality and the emotions you want to be associated with it. Thus, one part of branding and the creation of your brand's image are the intangibles: consumers perceive the brand as an important part of the final product, and the brand itself can add value to it (Calvo, 2018). The main objective would be, then, to create a brand image that adds value on its own and serves as a complementary asset to your final product. To create a symbiosis of co-operating concepts that nurture one another and generate success and revenue.

Starting at the very beginning, the first things to work on would focus around this seven-step guide, as described on The Fashion Business Manual (Fashionary, 2019)

First and foremost, you should decide on what your brand's core values will be, developing a brand story that clearly defines its history and background as well as displaying the reason for starting the brand altogether, and establish a coherent and set direction that will aid on the consolidation of your brand's image inside your consumer's mind. All of this with one goal in mind: generating credibility on your consumers from the start.

You should also define your brand's key features and benefits, developing a Unique Selling Point so as to stand out and keep account of your brand as well as defining a clear tone of voice. It is also worth clarifying the relevance of the development of the Unique Selling point, as its identification can help filter where focus should be placed in the moment of product development. This poses a very important step, since by choosing the right tone and aligning with it, consumers will more likely remember how you made them feel and your brand's overall communication will be more unified, bearing in mind the fact that the goal is to deliver one single unified message across all forms of communication.

The identification and characterization of your target customers is also very important, deciding who to sell to and conducting a thorough analysis of their spending habits, likes, dislikes, passions, and routines will undoubtedly help you create an irresistible offering.

Still on the grounds of analysis, a study of your competitors is also in order: Plot a perceptual map and identify your brand's positioning and how it may affect your decisions.

Perhaps one of the most critical steps falls on the creation of a visual identity, as within the fashion industry looks can tie your brand together and accompany your message, or on the contrary, considerably hinder progress and brand growth and consequently destroy your hard work. The solution to this would be building a bold image identity and having it reflect your style making sure that it is notable in any visual aspect of your brand: from logos to fonts, colors and merchandising. The goal is for it to represent your story and values, and complement them so much that, visually, the image would speak for itself.

Lastly, you must reinforce your brand values, constantly reviewing your core values, helping ensure your compliance to them as well as an early identification of any update needs.

Therefore and to sum up, it is a fundamental part of brand image to define each contact point between brand and consumer, as well as designing the actions, experiences and such that that could help define it and, overall, successfully get "what we say and believe we are" to go hand- in-hand with "what is thought of us" (Díaz, 2013)). And, since this early stage is all about the consumer and how it sees the brand, its spot-on definifion also appears as something critical.

This research project is all about how fashion can not only help the creation of a brand and drive it to success, but also about proving how pivotal looks and aesthetics are in the current society and how they affect brand creation and rise. Thus, and keeping in mind the overly saturated society and market we operate in, the most important question when beginning our branding path will be to ponder all the ways we have to differentiate ourselves as brands from potential competitors. This is: your brand identity.

4. BRAND IDENTITY

The identity of a brand are all those characteristics and elements that help us define our brand, everything that helps us build the brand, that grants it sense and differentiates it from the rest (Tarver, 2022).

The brand identity consists on the combination of tangible attributes including design and logo, as well as intangible attributes such as name and symbol (Gouitcheche, 2018)

Another definition explains this concept further: the brand identity is how the company wants to be seen by the audience (Gouitcheche, 2018). That is, everything that the firm can control. It is the company's vision for itself, joining together the intangible and tangible attributes.

In line with this, Kapferer developed what is called The Brand Identity Prism, which serves to identify six features of a brand's identity, and therefore is relevant to the present case. Those features are physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image:

-Physique: the physical attributes of a brand. They must constitute the basis for the brand, as if branding is developed correctly they are brought up in consumer's minds with the mere mention of the brand's name.

-Personality: The brand's character. A unique approach to communication which comprises elements such as the font, aesthetic references and any other creative decisions that must be chosen so as to communicate with consumers in a way that creates the feeling of cohesion and essentially resemble the traits of an actual person in order to approximate the brand to the customers (George Clooney's Nespresso ads, for example).

-Culture: The structure of values and standard precepts by which a brand supports its conduct: the offering, value-making and how it is communicated. Given that culture acts as a network between brand and company, these correlations often times are bonded to each country's experiences and societal history (culture), therefore brand managers must carefully study the societies they intend on penetrating and have the brand's values to match their target's to the highest degree possible. In addition, they should also conduct a careful analysis of any sensitive topics within each country so as to avoid controversies and eventual bad press (blackface in the USA. for instance).

-Relationship: Given that we are providing information on service-providing brands (even though they may also commercialize products), another nuance for the definition of a brand would be that of the allegory of one relationship amidst individuals or communities. This would need for the brand manager to communicate the relationship to be commercialized (for example, Lexus differentiates itself from BMW by giving a red-carpet treatment).

-Reflection: Alluding to the archetypal consumer of the brand, it does not have to mandatorily equal the target. It is not imperative for brand managers to display a true impression of the real target of the brand on each campaign, leaving room for the usage of a person or group of people that will seem appealing to their target customers. This is a practice now seen in many brands' runway shows: they choose to invite rather unknown and smaller influencers that more closely match the brands' energy and image instead of mainly 'big' ones, as they value brand the creation and solidification of brand image and the consequential intangible values.

-Self-image: The mirror the target group holds up to itself (Porsche driver thinks he is rich because he can afford the car). When developing a brand identity, brand managers should take this dimension into account, as insights into the intrinsic drivers of consumers can really boost the brand.

As stated by (Pirvani, 2009), these are aspects that are useful and truly awaken in each communication point between brand and consumer. In addition, powerful brands are capable of putting all these features together forming one concise, clear and appealing brand identity.

We can extract from these definitions of brand identity that the construction of the brand identity is a teamwork between the company and the target audience. Therefore, since proper knowledge of the brand's target is so important, it's worth noting that one of the best ways of properly understanding this sector is through introspection and reflection of the company itself. This way the brand will undoubtedly fit the demand needs and achieve the desired differential advantage.

The Brand Identity Planning Model developed by Aaker (1996) depicts four basic views. As depicted by Aaker (Gouitcheche, 2018)the construction of a powerful brand entails the contemplation of the brand individually in the shape of a product, an organization, a personality and a symbol.

Seeing the branded product conceived in such a variety of manners makes a forceful reflection: it does not revolve solely on the brand as a business, but also on the customer as an entity on its own, both directly and indirectly. In alignment with the aspirational facet of any brand, especially those that are fashion related, brand managers should match their view for all aspects of the brand with those of the consumers. This is how differentiation is first created.

The value proposition of a brand consists of the brand's processes aimed at affirming certain physical and emotional features to one distinguished buyer collective in exchange for some monetary benefits for the brand (Gouitcheche, 2018).

After having taken into consideration all of the afore-mentioned brand identity structures, it seems fit to outline the set of steps that will help define the brand's identity.

According to Gregory V. Diehl (Diehl & Miranda, 2017), the steps for the creation of a successful brand identity are the following:

-The discovery of your fundamental brand values.

-The development of your unique sale proposal.

-The creation of your brand personality profile

-Getting to know your audience.

Once your brand identity is properly defined the moment of "telling your story to the world" arrives (Diehl & Miranda, 2017).

As Gregory V. Diehl (Diehl & Miranda, 2017) states, one of the keys to identity creation and the active description of the brand to third parties is transcending the mere description of your business and placing the spotlight on the effects experienced by the buyers and the value the product is promised to deliver.

Another stage that seems primordial would be analyzing the market to identify opportunities, errors often suffered by companies-so as not to repeat them-, and search for inspiration when defining the route map. Therefore, it also seems mandatory to consider carrying out self-criticism: self-knowledge to define strong and weak points, substitute them on the best way possible and with different communicative strategies, and knowing if your business idea is really viable from a point of view that transcends the merely economic one: Is there room for me inside this market? If not, can I make room for myself? Should I re-evaluate my business idea in order to reach my goals?

5. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The mission, vision and values of a brand are a primordial step on the Strategic Definition Stage of a brand's Strategic Marketing Process. Defined by the CEO or the Board of Directors, they limit the brand's strategy and its future marketing choices.

The mission describes the needs which the brand covers either with their products, services, or both, the market in which it will operate and lastly the business' public image.

As for the vision, it characterizes the future the company plans and envisions for itself, controlling therefore all future moves with the aim of achieving these wishes. This is, what we desire the company to become within the following years, as well as the way in which we envision ourselves in the time to come.

Thirdly and to conclude, values are the fixed assortment of doctrines, laws and assumptions that rule the organization. These are the basis of the brand's culture and have to be reflected on each one of their public moves for the customers to see and understand.

The main goal of carrying out the tasks of properly getting to know the market, developing a competitive and updated business model, or defining the brand's mission is to properly and adequately identify the market's needs. This stems from the need to fulfill the audience's needs, which can be directly related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Annex 1).

These facts invite me to make a forceful reflection, which is the swift pace of information flow. Globalization and the rapid-pace of flow of information have generated new needs and as a result new

expectations and pressures have been created. As a consequence, a wide and ever-evolving set of new needs have been created.

The aforementioned rapid-pace flow of information also causes trends to be born, evolve and die faster than ever before, especially within the fashion industry, therefore brands must adapt quickly.

Going back to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we must return to the origins of fashion to better understand this reference.

Historically, humans only started manufacturing clothes for weather protection purposes, and it was only when communities started to settle and more complicated societies started to form that dressing up acquired a deeper societal and "positional meaning" (Laver, 2017).

Therefore, it is clear that at the very beginning of humankind, clothes, as primitive as they were, satisfied physiological and safety needs, whereas nowadays Fashion in itself fulfills a rather complicated set of societal expectations-or our own expectations which are highly influenced by society and social media culture-that blend aesthetic, self-actualization and transcendence needs. That is, growth needs that pose themselves as incredibly important/crucial to succeed.

This may seem slightly excessive to ponder at first, However, one must note that within our such fast moving industry and society, the first look is defining and will dictate how people perceive you and judge your persona.

After the proper definition of the mission, vision and values of the organization, the focus switches to the specification of the Strategic Objectives. These are essential, since the success of the brand is in great deal dependent on the construction of a clear direction, the proper evaluation, organization and motivation of the company which aids in the attainment of the final goal defined within the vision (Calvo, 2018).

These objectives have to be SMART:
-Specific.
-Measurable.
-Attainable.
-Realistic.
-Timebound.

Once the objectives for the brand are laid out, a strategy must be designed.

6. CONCEPT

When analyzing a brand, several different methods emerge, depending on where the focus is placed. One set brand can be examined according to the brand's purpose, their features or the added value they bring to a specific set of products.

As Leslie De Chernatony (Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998) explains, there are twelve different categorisations of the expansive assortment of explanations for a brand within literature

      i)As a Legal Instrument.
      ii) As a Logo.
      iii) As a Company.
      iv) As shorthand.
      v) As a risk reducer.
      vi) As an identity system.
      vii) As an image of consumers' minds.
      viii) As a value system.
      ix) As a personality.
      x) As a relationship.
      xi) As adding value.
      xii) As an evolving entity.

Going back once again to the very origins of Branding and the concept of Brand its worth noting that Branding has its roots in the societal needs all of us humans have. That is, the need to create a personal and social identity, to both blend in and stand out. This seemingly contradictory concept strongly relates to two of the above-mentioned definitions of the Brand explained by De Chernatony (Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998): the brand both as a sign and a symbol. A merge of all the material properties, trademarks, and tangible and intangible associations. Assigning a sign of distinction, a mark, to the product so as to denote property of an item in a straight-forward manner or rather indirectly through a label.

Brand as a notion in itself initially came into marketing back in 1922 in the form of a mixed expression denoting transaction or ownership (Bastos & Levy, 2012). This signified that the brand as a concept sparked initial feuds amid manufacturers and retailers fighting for the consumer's election.

On the other hand, branding at its very beginning was seen as a result of the increase of selling and the consequential advertising of a product or a set of products. This was when the relevance of advertising, intellectual property, and such was first truly seen and understood as an accessory to branding.

All in all, we can conclude that branding was a widely misunderstood and underdeveloped concept for a long time. It wasn't until the end of the 19th century and celebrating the 20th that this practice "took off", mainly thanks to the increase of research and business development and sophistication (Gouitcheche,

2018).

6.1. SCOPE: HOW FASHION CAN HELP THE BRAND TO PENETRATE NEW MARKETS

The scope of a brand is the breadth of the field of operation or subject matter that affects one thing.

Globalization is a process of evolution established by components at a climactic and business degree such as the incorporation of the position of a brand inside the big picture of a company's brand construction. A structure is then unfolded, integrating environmental insecurity and experiential concerns as they apply to brand globalization. The creation of a global brand is the result of a significant strategic balance pertaining to the brand's positioning and degree of internationalization.

Summing up, globalization is a term sparked as a result of a global system inside market development, and societies destroying trading barriers as well as the concentration of consumer's desires (Townsend, Yeniyurt2 , & Berk Talay, 2009).

CHAPTER II: DIGITAL DIMENSIONS OF BRANDING

7. SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL IDENTITY

7.1. IMPACT

Identity, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is defined as "who or what somebody/something is" and "the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that make people different from others".

This rises to the conversation of humans' inherent need to stand out and feel different within such a massified society. Since globalization and the rise and development of the internet and social networks, the way humans build relationships with each other has evolved. This forced a shift in the way business was made that had to occur at a faster pace than ever before. Information travels at an incredibly fast speed and the culture of online oversharing causes for needs to arise at a much faster pace, but also to expire much more rapidly as well.

We can understand, without dismissing its history and evolution since the early days up until today, that social media as we know it had its origins in what is known as Web 2.0. This term refers to the time when websites started to authorize communication among users, creating synergies and evolving into content creators (Sajithra & Patil, 2013).cThis allowed for an even speedier transfer of information across people and platforms, and it had an undeniable reflection in the way people connected with each other that has brought us to where we are nowadays as a society.

In a world where information travels at such speed and we are being stimulated continuously, it not only happens that competition between individuals and businesses grow, but the need of branding poses as crucial, as the need of differentiation becomes essential for social survival. This has caused people to become brands themselves, and perhaps we could conclude that it has solidified the concept of personal brand which I will explain shortly (Vitelar, 2019).

As mentioned above, the need for differentiation is more than palpable, as globalization and trend culture threatens to unify brand images, blending user experiences and causing what may be seen as ridiculous measures to stand out and make your brand seem unique and different from the others. This is especially apparent in North American social media and business culture (Grubb, 2017).

Generation Z is the latest addition to the list of generational definitions, preceded by Millenials (Dimock, 2019). There's no consensus as to where Gen Z begins, although the date sets itself around 1996 or even 1995 (Francis & Hoefel, 2018), but many seem to agree on them nowadays entering their early twenties.

This fast-growing generational group is defined by its diversity and their technology-ease, being that they are the first technology-native group. This characterizes their behavior in a great manner: consuming information faster than ever, and demanding technological stimuli constantly and through a simultaneous set of means.

(Ipsos-pdf) Since technological decisions don't actually expire and alternately are complemented by more novel ones, one of the most prevalent standards of Generation Z appears to be the rise of social media's usage, in large part due to their juggling habits and their custom of double- screening (Duffy, et al., 2018). Generation Z reportedly spend one third of their time communicating online.

Being that they have inherited an unprecedented variety of not-so-positive cultural and societal conditions, they have learnt to be reactive and demand change and justice (see the climate crisis or George Floyd's worldwide protests). Characterized by their anxiety and general caution, they are driven by technology and social media, which as we have seen is crucial for nowaday's branding processes and business activities (Dimock, 2019)

7.2. FASHION AND METAVERSE

It's undeniable that the pandemic situation has had a worldwide deep effect on society and business activities, leaving a new turning point that makes us question what the future holds for the fashion industry.

Amidst an already increasingly internet-based society, this rather unfortunate situation has set a precedent that draws what seems to be the defining characteristic of the following years: we will live in an increasingly online based world. But this will affect the way we live like it has never before.

Businesses have had to adapt to digital innovations and implement measures to allow for rapid experimentation and eventual conversion. This includes the fashion industry, of course, having to adapt their traditional runways to more doable circumstances, or additionally expanding online strategies amidst alternative actions.

This brings the metaverse into the conversation: we can understand it as a consequential result of this process of adaptation. Companies have invested large sums of money into digital innovations, understanding the need for renewal and thus entering the earliest steps towards the construction of a completely new era within fashion.

But, what is the metaverse exactly?

It is an online place where people work, play, socialize and shop, engaging more deeply and creatively with their customers and unlocking new value streams (Amed, et al., 2021)

According to Gucci's chief marketing officer Robert Triefus, they can be considered almost "second worlds" in which there's plenty of room for expression and where some people attribute a great deal of worth to doing so virtually through an assortment of goods and a digital identity.

This not only involves the building of an online cyberspace for consumption, but also for gaming and service-offering. Thus, an authentic real-life expansion.

The effect it will have on our everyday lives is still unsure, however we can conclude that fashion companies have seen its relevance and potential. Therefore, sales and marketing will undoubtedly take action, stretching all the way into new not-yet-discovered enclaves and forwarding artistry and community-building. Ultimately, consumers will be the ones to decide (Amed, et al., 2021).

8. FASHION, MARKETING AND PERSONAL BRANDING

The simplest definition of marketing consists of affirming it to be "the administration of any profitable relationships with the client" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). This means that any marketing activities must abide by main goals: attracting new clientele and growing the clientele list. All in all, satisfying needs, fulfilling and creating expectations and ultimately generating value constantly.

This brings me to expose a more updated version of the definition of marketing. If one means to develop a successful and updated brand and marketing strategy, the focus mustn't be solely put on the brand, but also-and especially-on the clients.

This makes the task of identifying client needs all the more important, as the more correct it is, the more accurately the service or product will be produced, and therefore the better the results will be for the brand.

The concept of social marketing also seems relevant to the present case. Introduced by Kotler and Armstrong (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012), this idea states that any marketing strategy should be centered around value creation, always with the ultimate aim of improving the wellbeing of both the consumer and society. This rather sustainable take on marketing is beginning to appear as the future usual custom within business-making, as the climate, ecologic and economic crisis are placed as the main concerns among the newer generations.

As described in the *Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion* (Steele, 2005), fashion covers both change and novelty, the notion of time, location and wearer. One could say that fashion, understood as a modernized concept deepened from the mere need of covering oneself, is a movement that arises as a result of the times: the societal response to the circumstances in the shape of garments and creativity (Steele, 2005). The results of self-expression, exploration and societal constructs.

8.1. FASHION AS A MASS INFLUENCER

Fashion has been a mass influencer for as long as the concept can be traced. It only takes a brief look into history to understand this assumption. Take queen Marie Antoinette, for example: she was passionate about fashion and looks, and that undoubtedly influenced the people's views on her eccentric and boastful way of life. For a more updated example: politicians, royals and any and every opinion-leader have a team of fashion advisors carefully curating their looks, from the shades of color used, to the pieces and even the slightest details noticeable such as the nail color or the earrings. This is because looks are the first thing one notices from a first encounter with a person and, as much as nowadays' politically correct society loves to deny it, we extract a preliminary judgment from it.

When mentioning the impact fashion has on the general public, it is imperative to reiterate the role the internet, social media and individual branding plays. This unprecedentedly rapid flow of information has made room for the proliferation of platforms that support sharing images and experiences in real time. This has made for trends to be born quicker, also creating opinion leaders at a much faster pace, influencing niche consumer groups and as a result of it all, generating a large volume of sales. In a more psychological and societal take, it also allows for the satisfaction of customers' needs, making them feel included within a greater whole and also collecting societal acceptance which indirectly leads to individual happiness (Steele, 2005).

Fashion has an undeniably aspirational component which gives people a sense of belonging. In a rapidly growing society that becomes more and more individualistic with the passing of each day, the feeling of forming part of something bigger and greater than oneself provides a sense of purpose sought by all, fulfilling one of the human's five main needs described by Maslow. In a way, influencers fulfill that need of belonging in the lives of their followers.

8.2. PSYCHOLOGY OF FASHION AND COLOR PSYCHOLOGY

Yet another idea that goes into building a successful fashion brand, and that at the same time is of the utmost importance towards understanding the impact of fashion within the consumers' lives is the psychology of fashion.

In order to properly understand this, it is important to observe the evolution fashion has experienced since the beginning of time, acting as a protective shield from poor weather conditions, into the multifaceted concept that it is today.

As defined by Mary Ellen Roach and Joanne Eicher (Higgins, B. Eicher, & P.Johnson, 1995), "the cult of appearance"-defined as *dress* by them on their book *Dress and Identity*- this term consists on a conglomeration of corporal alterations and bodily supplements (Higgins, B. Eicher, & P.Johnson, 1995). This broad term includes all forms of bodily modifications and creativity: from hairstyles, to accessories and to the most obvious of all: the pieces of clothing themselves.

Thus, as explained by Mary-Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joan Eicher, dressing covers a two-fold task that we have seen all throughout this document: as an alterer of the body as well as a means of conveying a message.

People, societies attach certain ever evolving connotations to clothes. Therefore, in the same way people assign meanings to certain garments, they do so as well about the individual wearing them. Color is also a significant part of silent communication (Obeng, Kwabena Danso, Abora Omari, & Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2018). Being that every color has different associations on the mass public, below are several appreciations regarding the use of color on fashion and branding:

-Colors as silent communicators. Colors suggest a varied set of concepts such as personality traits, social position, seasons, (personality, social position, time of the year/season, etc)

 -Red: danger
 -Blue: Safety
 -Yellow: Hope

-Cultural associations to colors. These meanings change depending on the geographical and societal context of each brand. Associations of a political, religion or customary type.

 -Color of mourning: Asia: White. West: Black.
 -Countries have color associations to political parties. In Spain: PSOE: Red. PP: Blue.
 -Color and creative expression (through fashion): The result of the combination of all
 connotations colors have, taking the geographical area into account, and developing an image
 from this.

8.3. PERSONAL BRANDING

As mentioned several times along this document, the ever changing nature of the current market holds space for fluctuation (Arqués, 2012, 2019). This makes for the relevance of brand differentiation to grow exponentially, as the main goal is to always be the top choice of our target clientele.

Therefore, the importance unequivocally switches from a mere ambition for fame, to an eagerness for particularisation and brand differentiation.

Now, what is personal branding, then? According to (Arqués, 2012, 2019) this first comes into existence the moment when the worth attributed to the brand by oneself deepens from a mere professional value, transitioning into a more complex and rather economic value. That is, when a person themself becomes a brand of their own, and therefore increases the monetary value of their brand. The importance lies, then, on the perceived value one has of its own self and how it's communicated outwards, creating the Personal Brand.

The decisions concerning the communication of one's own self-brand are also pivotal for future market positioning and reputation building, directly impacting the degree of recognition. In the creation of one's Personal Brand fashion and aesthetics play a pivotal role, as it is obvious, and as for the steps to follow, all the aforementioned ones are applicable. This means that a personal brand is run practically under the same rules as a regular brand, the difference lies in the fact that in this case the headliner happens to be a person/company instead of a company under a logo.

When developing the personal brand, a persona-focused approach helps with storytelling. A brand persona is a made-up character that emotionally connects with the intended audience, facilitating recognizability and more effectively communicating the brand's values (Long-duration Storytelling: Study of Factors Influencing Retention Ability of Brands, 2019). Creating a narration leaves an opportunity for the audience to grow their interest in the brand, boosting interest and mostly even generating indirect profit through actions such as social media buzz.

It can also serve for the artists themselves to feel more confident in the portrayal of their character and facilitating the brand value making.

8.4. POSITIONING

Positioning: "The attributes which are made to adhere to a product in order to give it attractiveness" (Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998).

In order to further and better understand the concept at hand, I find it suitable to reiterate the definitions of brand in itself, given that several of its nuances are intimately related to brand positioning.

A brand, as we have seen, can be viewed as an identity structure formed by several different dimensions: a cultural one, a personality one, a physical projection one, a reflective one and lastly a relationship-related one (Gouitcheche, 2018).

Another take by Aaker (Gouitcheche, 2018) hints at the relevance the brand identity occupies at the moment of positioning one's brand: a bold brand with a bold identity strengthens the associations made about it on the consumer, the message they intend to convey, enhancing it from a strategic business point of view (Gallart-Camahort, Callarisa Fiol,, & Sánchez García, 2019).

Kotler (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012) affirms the brand to be a notion within the own consumer's minds. That is, the connections they establish.

With all of this information in mind, we can draw the conclusion that if we want to build a strong brand positioning, we must pay close attention to how we transmit the message and in consequence we must monitor the connections made inside our consumer's minds. Lastly, we must cement said brand positioning we have so carefully built, and therefore cement our brand within the market and as a result also within our consumer's minds (Gallart-Camahort, Callarisa Fiol,, & Sánchez García, 2019).

Another positive outcome extracted from the action of monitoring the minds of consumers and their perception of our brand is the possibility of identification of gaps. This allows for any corrections within the strategic and marketing journey, and lastly to achieve the brand's goals faster and more efficiently.

We can also conclude that value-creation and positioning of the brand happens as a result of the symbiosis between brand and consumers. As it can be seen, both concepts go hand-in-hand.

Professor Iza Gigauri (Gigauri, 2019) mentions the use of perceptual mapping as an aid for marketing research when meaning to position a brand within the market.

Reiterating the relevance that product and brand positioning have on the act of gaining competitive advantage as well as solidifying brand image inside the consumer's minds, becomes a concept worth briefly expanding.

The action of positioning a product, as explained by Gigauri, consists of planning out the company's goods with the main objective of getting customers to understand the product and differentiate it from any similar product assortment made by competitors.

Perceptual mapping, therefore, alludes to the act of graphically representing the space the brand holds within consumers' minds in reference to competitors. This also provides useful insights into the way the consumers' minds work, which in return allows for the introduction of any corrective strategic measures that may be necessary.

The perceptual mapping model consists of the following methodology

       1.- Identification of attributes to analyze and compare.

2.- List main competitors in each product category.

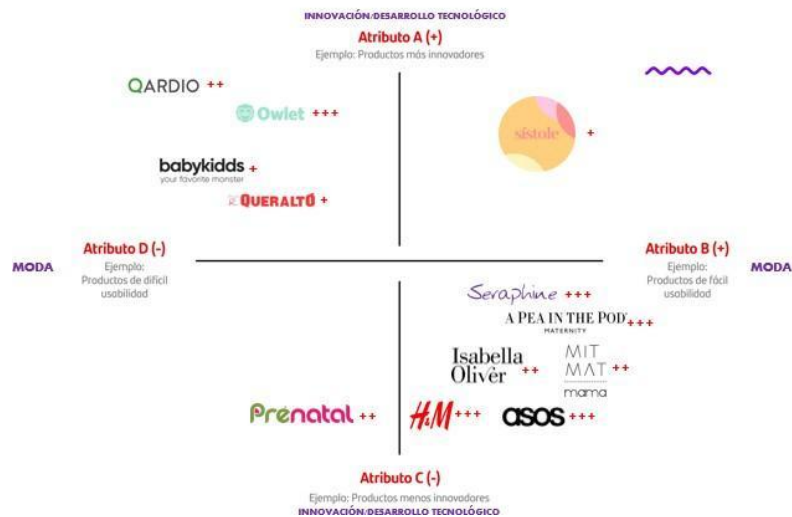3.- Create scores following an attribute scale.

4.- Map out your findings.

Figure 2. Perceptual Map. Source: own elaboration

PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER III: CASE STUDY

9.- CASE STUDY: *HOW A PERSONAL BRAND IS CREATED THROUGH FASHION AND HOW IT INFLUENCES CONSUMERS.*

After having carefully reviewed the theoretical influences and all relevant information pertaining to the present field of study, the time comes to develop the case study. This means to conduct a practical

analysis of the following question: *How a personal brand is created through fashion and how it influences consumers*.

The structure of the analysis will abide by a three-fold process:

     1.- Analysis of the brand image.

     2.- Analysis of their social media identity and presence.

     3.-How they use fashion to cement their image and message.

BRANDING SUCCESS CASES:

ROSALÍA

The pillar to any business, and to any marketing campaign is to have a well-developed product to offer your clients. Rosalia is perhaps one of the most fervent and timely cases to exemplify not only a good case of branding and marketing strategy, but also of proper customer knowledge and message communication.

Rosalia`s value proposition is unique to any other possible competitors among the industry. Her rather innovative approach to the communication of her brand and her music in itself, combining rhythms as varied as flamenco and R&B and even changing from mellow not-so-commercial- sounding songs to more mainstream-y ones inside the same album has been received as a breath of fresh air in a saturated and increasingly homogeneous industry.

Rosalia's life was always linked to music, however her success can be easily traced back to 2018 when she released her conceptual record *El Mal Querer* which started as a final degree project.

This record provided a three-fold value proposition: an excellent conceptualization, incredible storytelling and outstanding visuals.

It is important to note that *El Mal Querer* is reportedly inspired by El *Roman de Flamenca*, a french classic written in the XIII century about love and heartbreak (Palomo, 2019)

These facts added to the ambiguity of some of the lyrics, leaving those who have threaded the storyline told along the lines of the songs guessing the end of the story, began the rise of a true phenomenon.

It is also important to contextualize the industry in order to better grasp the reasons for Rosalía's success. She became part of a new trend amongst mainstream pop music, blending urban sounds with dancing and a bold image. She blends urban and traditional sounds, favoring her risky approach to songwriting by presenting herself and her brand boldly and unapologetically: communicating her message and inspiring consumers simultaneously.

In addition, the several rejections she had to experience early into her career complements the image she aims to portray, her brand: an ordinary hardworking girl with a passion for music and who didn't give up.

All of the above unquestionably fulfills the aspirational nuances of fashion and consumption, generating an almost addictive sentiment towards the artist.

Perhaps we can also observe a certain social and feminist background behind her artwork: she appeals to female empowerment through her lyrics, and celebrates minorities and cultures through her genres and videoclips.

Rosalía, therefore, has become a leader of opinion among the mass public in specific all throughout the teenager sector, partially thanks to her risky, daring and eye-catching clothing choices that, as mentioned above, perfectly compliment her music and unify her image.

When analyzing Rosalía's visual identity it is impossible not to mention several movements that have revolutionized pop and mainstream culture in recent years. The popularization of the *chav*, *ratchet* and *gipsy* aesthetics. This may attend to a larger issue: marginalized culture's iconic features are only valid when adopted by white people, however it is undeniable just how much of a phenomenon it has become. Bad Gyal, Nathy Peluso and on a previous take personalities such as Rihanna or Iggy Azalea are among a long list of female artists that have adopted this aesthetic, influencing the rise of fashion trends and generating public debate. Another relevant detail to note from this: all of the aforementioned singers happen to embrace a certain degree of polemic and public debate as a result of their creative brand choices, making space for talks of all kinds that grow the brand's name and popularity.

All of this grants a great degree of authenticity to their business-making endeavors (Castellsaguer & Polo Pujadas, 2022)

Motomami, Rosalía's latest work, has not been exempt from talks of all kinds. This, however, is a part of an always carefully planned marketing strategy. The aim was to reinvindicate herself and her freedom, proving that she can write songs of the highest quality and on the contrary, ironic and mainstream meaningless songs, too. The album therefore feeds public opinion, fueling the fans' passion and giving critics and haters something to talk about (Millan, 2022).

We can also observe a certain Rosalía impact on the most recent trends. The *motomami* aesthetic, combined with the revival of the ratchet style, enters the market at the perfect time: the chaotic and unstable situation that the world is going through evokes an undeniable sense of nostalgia that has brought back the so-called Y2K aesthetic (Stuart, 2021). This perfectly matches Rosalía's *motomami* on almost symbiotic relationship and bringing forth the latest trend of the biker fashion (Talon, 2022)

Rosalía's usage of fashion and attire should also be analyzed taking her nails into consideration: they act as a recognizable symbol, differentiating her brand from all others and positioning her in a privileged position in her audience's minds and in the industry as a whole. Her nail art makes for an identifiable sign that has virtually become a cult for followers and fashion geeks alike, reinforcing her brand: the first thing that comes into your mind when you see long, artistic, bold nails is Rosalía. A similar thing happens with the aforementioned biker jackets. In a way, Rosalía and her team are true experts at generating mass-recognizable symbols that help reinforce her brand image.

To sum up, we can conclude that Rosalía's artistic fashion choices compliment a rigorous and detailed marketing strategy through:

-Strategic product launches.

-Media presence in the shape of magazine covers and press notes.

-Generating talk and opinion: getting people to leave their opinion on anything you do, generating talks.

-Collaborating with brands such as M.A.C or Pull & Bear, other artists such as J Balvin or The Weeknd, and influencers such as the famous Kardashian Klan. Although unclear if it is the result of a collaboration, mentioning Fendi, Versace and several high-end fashion films throughout her music help to shape her brand, making it obvious how her marketing tea, understands marketing as a sum of actions to be carried out throughout a wide, simultaneous and both direct and indirect set of means (Scofield, 2022).

-Imaginative, urban and creative eye-catching videoclips and overall branding.

-Social Media expertise: Posting when she is with the Kardashians, with singer boyfriend Raw Alejandro, and posting when she is doing ordinary activities such as watching Netflix, which brings her closer to the Gen Z public.

-The creation of recognizable mass-symbols feeding off of and simultaneously influencing emerging trends.

As Rosalía is the best example of a well crafted brand image, the following images graphically showcase everything explained above:

Figure 3: *El Mal Querer* visual analysis. Source: Own elaboration

Outfit evolution

El Mal Querer

Spanish folklore

Pienso en tu mirá (2018)   *Sónar (2018)*   *MET Gala (2021)*

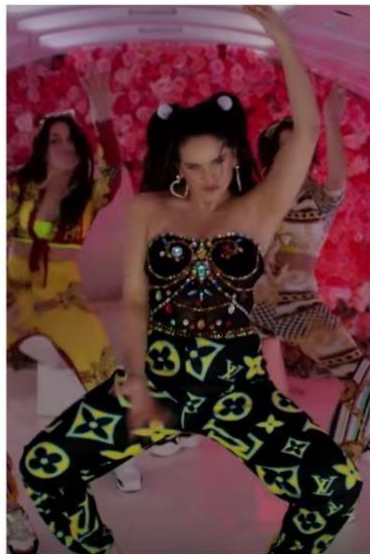*A palé (2019)*   *GRAMMYs (2020)*   *GRAMMYs (2020)*

Figure 4: *El Mal Querer* visual analysis. Source: Own elaboration

Ratchet aesthetic

SAVAGE X FENTY (2020)   Con altura (2019)   Coachella (2019)

Millonària (2019)   Motomami tour (2022)   Coachella (2019)

Figure 5: *El Mal Querer* visual analysis. Source: Own elaboration
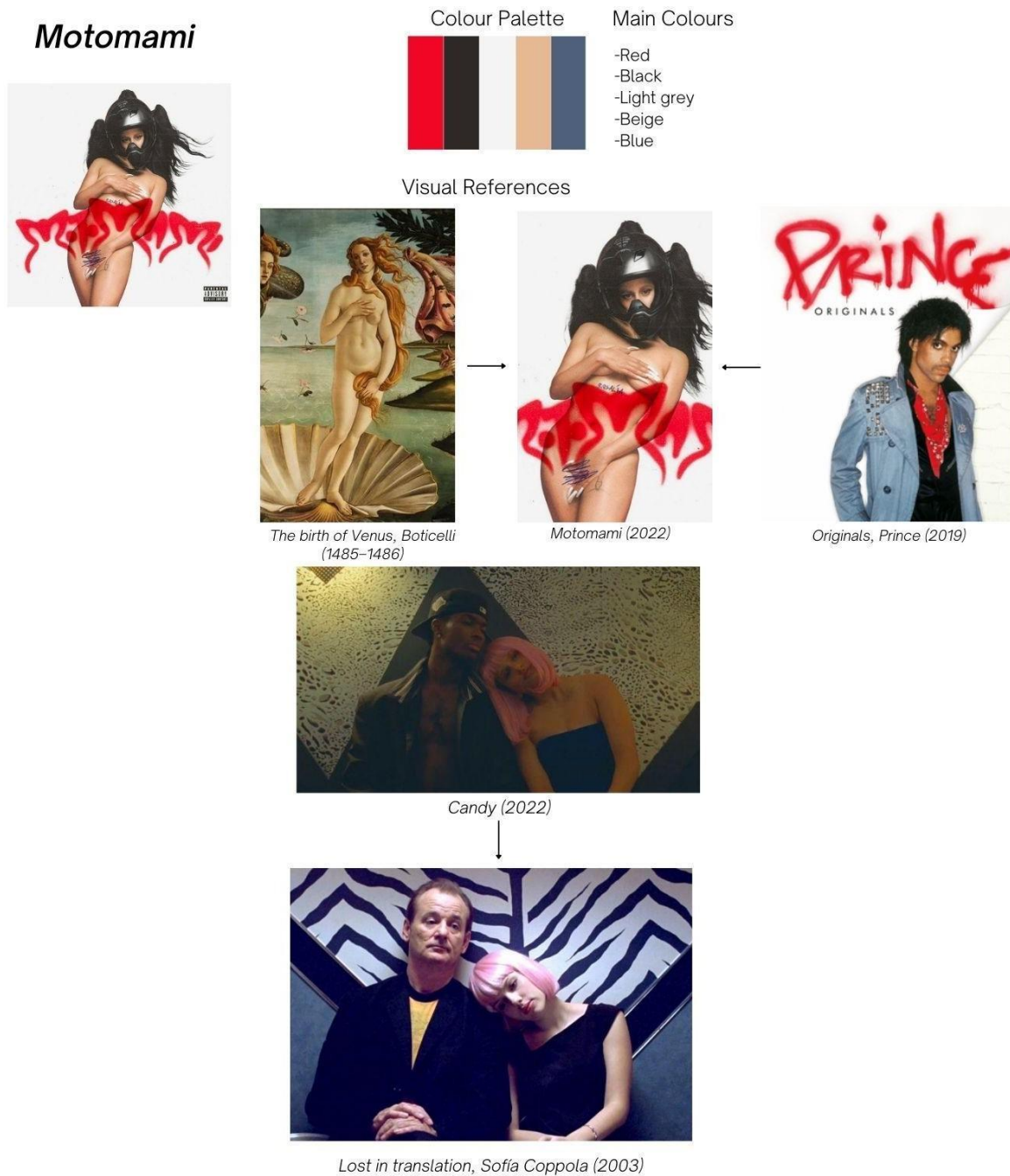
Rosalía

Visual Analysis

Figure 6: *El Mal Querer* visual analysis. Source: Own elaboration

Motomami

Minimalism & Monocromatism

Motomami world tour
(2022)

Motomami world tour
(2022)

Motomami world tour
(2022)

Motomami world tour
(2022)

Motomami press
release (2022)

Rosalía (2022)

Figure 7: *El Mal Querer* visual analysis. Source: Own elaboration

Motomami

Biker aesthetic

Motomami (2022)

El Hormiguero (2022)

Motomami world tour
(2022)

Figure 8: *El Mal Querer* visual analysis. Source: Own elaboration

Nail art

Aute Couture (2019)

Mad Cool (2019)

Lo vas a olvidar (2021)

Rosalía (2020)

Figure 9: *El Mal Querer* visual analysis. Source: Own elaboration

C.TANGANA

C.Tangana is a Spanish musician originally known as *Crema*. Tangana started as an underground freestyler, and later on became a part of the spanish rap collective Agorazein along with several colleagues.

He changed his pseudonym from *Crema* to C.Tangana in the year 2012 (Gutiérrez, 2021). It wasn't until 2017 when he landed a deal with Sony Music Spain that the artist began his branding venture, fabricating a persona and basing his every public move around marketing and promotion.

It is also important to mention the relationship between C.Tangana and Rosalía, beginning with the hit song collaboration *Antes de Morirme*, starting a relationship that reportedly sparked Rosalía's musical interest, and finally going through a breakup.

As for his first viral musical moment, we can observe the events surged with *Mala Mujer,* a song that propelled the singer to the mainstream media and set him up to become a part of the current pop culture.

Given this phenomenon, the singer aimed for the expansion of his brand: he intended to reach an even

wider audience through several musical collaborations that also broadened his musical repertoire with more commercial rhythms. This, at the same time sparked his fan's and underground music listeners' criticism (Europa FM, 2021), accusing him of changing his values and moving into commercial and mainstream music-making: something the underground urban music scene fervently opposed to.

Much like Rosalía, part of C.Tangana's musical brand goes beyond his adherence to one single musical genre: he understands the current musical market and expands his range to pop, reggaeton, and every urban sound that may fit his message and image.

We can conclude, then, that at this point C.Tangana had dropped a traditionally organic approach to his commercial evolution based solely on music-making, evolving it into a set of Viral Marketing campaigns promising to launch him straight into stardom.

He embraces polemic, he is aware of his origins and the changes he had to make in the name of his career, and he uses it all as one big marketing and publicity stunt that continuously places the spotlight onto him.

It is also important to appreciate the fact that this type of marketing campaigns are a customary practice among underground and urban artists. Perhaps not-so-much campaigns, but as results of frustration and societal demands, but nonetheless they are a habit among this group. Having said this, one could suppose that in a way, choosing this type of marketing makes C.Tangana stay somewhat linked to his humbler roots, although detractors will say otherwise.

Several public feuds with peers, PR stunts on public television and even purposeful plagiarism are among the marketing actions taken by C.Tangana that continue to place his music on the top of the charts. The objective is to get people to make noise, generating curiosity and indirectly increasing revenues.

As part of his rebranding, C.Tangana carefully curated an image to complement his music. This could later become his *persona*.

We can establish El Madrileño as the peak of this strategic branding process: his latest album, titled El Madrileño, was a celebration of his roots. It consists of an acclaimed blending of styles and rhythms that serve as a reinvindication of traditions and customs.

The usage of colors, clothing, creative resources and overall ambientation within this album shows an attention to details that we are only starting to see inside the music industry. His video clips are filled with references to classical movies, edited to achieve multilayered images that keep people entertained.

The usage of Virgin imagery is also to be highlighted here, given that their dramatic attires and demeanours evoke a sentiment in the listeners.

His clothes have evolved at the same pace as his music. We can differentiate, therefore, three different

fashion eras for C.Tangana (Annex 2):

> 1st.- Crema: Baggy pants, sweatshirts, t-shirts, muted colors and short hair. This aesthetic was nothing special, as were that of his then peers. He embraced street style in the name of the underground music scene.

> 2nd.- C.Tangana: This is the moment he switched regular clothes for flashy, expensive and bold items that would clearly define his new brand identity and make him look like the successful man he embodied.

> 3.-El Madrileño: This constitutes a natural evolution for his character, highlighting the dramatic consequences of success through the use of-yet again- an 80's infused ratchet aesthetic. His take on this is also multilayered: there is an inherent masculine component to his outfit choices. From using wide-legged pants combined with tank tops, or wearing tracksuits with chains and gold necklaces helps reinforce the image of an 'ordinary boy from the neighborhood' that has succeeded and earned a considerable amount of money. Part of this, as we all know, is patriarchy and the archaic ways that still rule our society nowadays. Having sparked conversations due to several queer-related polemics along his carreer, it is unsure where the artist stands on this (Albelda & Carmona Paredes, 2019). However we can understand that this is all part of his act, his persona, and his Viral Strategic Marketing customs.

BRANDING FAILURE CASES:

TRAVIS SCOTT

Travis Scott is a north american rapper that began his career in 2016 after signing a contract with Universal Music Group.

His first real chart success happened when he entered the infamous Billboard Top 100 music chart with the song *Birds in the Trap Sing McKnight*.

Nonetheless, we can place the breaking point to his mainstream success when he began his relationship with celebrity Kylie Jenner. This was the moment when he transcended the music scene and filtered into the mass media, attracting the general public's attention.

The development of their relationship can basically be threaded through tabloid headlines, which makes his one perfectly orchestrated marketing strategy.

After several public sightings, eventually confirming their relationship, several breakups and welcoming two babies, it seems apparent that one of the underlying aims of this public relationship is the

development of both celebrities' brands.

The way the rapper conceives his brand deals and endorsements is based on two main principles: working with the biggest brands while maintaining creative control. Forbes even called him "corporate america's brand whisperer". Choosing wisely, Travis has worked with a wide variety of companies in a reciprocal manner: solidifying each other's brand image and/or expanding their target audience to match their organic and commercial evolution.

Some of his brand collaborations include (Annex 3):

-The Dior x AJ1 campaign back in 2020 (Shgerry, n.d.)which mixed the brand's iconic blazers and logo along with Travis' laid-back style. This positioned his brand as an elevated successful rapper while still remaining true to his roots within the American urban scene.

-Various cannabis endorsements: American rappers are notorious for their liberalist views on marijuana, and Travis Scott could not be any different. Through these actions he could easily place himself in the radar of a young target, while at the same time fueling haters' and conservatives' anger. This way an online conversation is sparked between favorers and detractors, consequentially bringing spotlight to his music.

-The infamous McDonal's collaboration. Travis Soctt was the first celebrity to land a collaboration with the world-famous fast fashion chain McDonald's (Shgerry, n.d.). The campaign was an unexpected success, with establishments even running out of food facing an unprecedented demand.

-His innovative collaboration with video game and online platform Fortnite which left attendees speechless with an interactive concert experience that boasted, among many other traits, astonishing graphics .

Scott has a clear modus operandi: he prefers to remain rather silent about his drops and upcoming projects (Shgerry, n.d.), limiting his direct promotion, allowing the deals to naturally explode in popularity. This is, perhaps, the secret to his mediatic success: a bold physical image, smart strategic branding moves and a free, irreverent attitude allow for quick popularization.

We can extract one conclusion from all of his collaborations. Although working with the top companies has made immense amounts of revenues for the star and brands alike, this may actually pose the first branding issue to highlight: so many diverse commercial endorsements may dilute his brand image, seen as how each brand attracts a very different target customer. This wide variety of endorsement choices may create a diluted and confusing brand image inside his consumer's minds. Although virality can help escalate a brand, perhaps in the long run this could work against him.

The second issue I have identified within his branding strategy is the massively unfortunate Astroworld incident.

Scott celebrated a concert in Houston in november 2020 (The Guardian, 2021)that ended with 10 members of the audience dead and thousands injured as the result of a mass stampede. Although ruled an accident (Blistein, 2021), Scott has been wrapped amidst a convergence of criticisms, chaos and backlash.

The main allegations against him reported that he deliberately ignored the audience's cries for help (insider), and even though he denied knowing what had happened (Rindner, 2021), it is the public's opinion what sentences a brand to success, or in this case-failure. Meaning, only the public (the stakeholders') opinions matters in the branding process.

The aftermath of the horrific events went on to wrap him and his team among lawsuits, demolishing headlines and a plethora of bad press, causing brands to terminate their associations with the rapper (García, 2021) and his brand image to plunge. He was seen as an attention-seeker that didn't care about his fans or their wellbeing.

Brands did not want to be associated with him, and either denied commenting on the topic once the partnership had expired (Strange, 2022) or cutting all public (Epic Games removing his music, Qz). He did secure one brand deal out of this, though: Scott partnered with Better Help in offering support to those affected in the concert.

After a long silence, Scott launched project HEAL (Elle, 2022) as a somewhat corrective measure following the Houston disaster. This initiative promises to provide aid to "marginalized and at- risk communities" in the form of scholarships, mental health support and "event-safety solutions".

The rapper made his first public appearance since the tragedy during the Billboard Music Awards last may 2022 (Daly, 2022) in an attempt at getting back to normal, trying to regain his position, rebuilding his brand image and regaining companies' trust.

Checking Google Trends' rising searches associated with Travis Scott we can observe how 3 out of the top 5 searches are related to the concert incident. This is in no way good news, and shows that the rapper and his team still have a long way to go in regards to his brand rebuilding. Nowadays, he is continuing his career, and is sporadically active on social media, as loyal fans impatiently wait for his next album.

Placing our focus on his use of fashion for the creation of his brand, we must mention once again his flagrant use of high-end luxury fashion brands. His video clips are filled with brand logos, a very common phenomenon within the urban music scene.

Rappers are huge influencers within the underground scene, and we can infer that through the use of

high fashion brands in clothes, mentioning their names in their clothes and such, the artists are able to expand their own brands far beyond music.

His use of designer items does not take away from him being associated with the urban sector of music. His is a very common branding "strategy" that blends street style with high-end fashion, showing appreciation for the rapper's origins and approaching him to the fans, while simultaneously showcasing his evolution into a successful wealthy individual, supporting new business ventures and arrogant attitudes common among his sector.

KANYE WEST

Kanye West rose into music back in 2004 with the release of *The College Dropout*, an album that gathered public and critics' praise thanks to his "college boy" appearance and savvy and wise usage of the words. His presence was received as a refreshing take on rap music that considerably appealed to the public.

When analyzing Kanye as a brand in itself, it is important to note that Kanye himself happens to be both the propeller of his own success or, on the contrary, the perpetrator of his business failures.

His loud and unpredictable personality undeniably makes for the generation of public expectation in regards to his every move: all of his tweets and instagram posts make headlines and spark opinions of all kinds. We can, then, understand that opposite to Rosalía's case, Kanye West's brand is not the result of a carefully and strictly mapped out and followed marketing strategy, instead it appears to be rather accidental.

His loudness and the boldness with which he carries himself publicly acts as a part of his brand identity, allowing for more minimalistic and austere takes on his brand's collections and promotional strategies. His persona acts as a complementary to his brand, Yeezy, and to all his promotional ventures.

In addition to being a rapper, Kanye West is a notoriously political figure. The then-controversial video in which Kanye criticized president Bush's actions during hurricane Katrina supposed that a wider audience got to know Kanye and his music, expanding his brand and leaving a clear blueprint of who he is in the audience's minds. This continued all throughout the years up until recently, when the star made headlines once again for publicly being a Trump supporter.

Many were the public scandals that he was and is involved in: from the infamous MTV VMAs 2009 incident with Taylor Swift, to changing his legal name to Ye, or to publicly bashing ex-wife Kim Kardashian, it is assumed that any time Kanye makes headlines he does so for negative reasons. We can, then, establish that Kanye has mastered the *Bad Boy* image, which would provide an explanation to these actions. However, and as I have mentioned previously, it seems to be an unfortunate and

unforeseen result to his mostly regretful actions.

An important part of Kanye's brand is the entire KimYe era, too. That is, his marriage with celebrity and entrepreneur Kim Kardashian. As anything the Kardashian-clan does, this was a perfectly orchestrated plan of actions set to combine both their brands and catapult them to stardom. This supposed a change of image for West, seen as how being a seemingly family man and father to four kids changed the main public's opinion on him. Given his visceral nature, it is to be appreciated that this was his calmest era in which his personal life didn't seem to considerately bleed into his artwork, favoring his brand image and growth.

This is also the moment Yeezy comes into play, a clothing line born from Kanye's hunger for a new form of artistic expression. He published his first clothing line along with a song, and as for his second Yeezy line he chose to live stream the show to theaters across the USA. As with anything Kanye does, he received considerable backlash from critics and public alike. His latest collection, the Yeezy Gap Engineered by Balenciaga, released amidst a seemingly desperate set of marketing and otherwise genius pr moves by Ye and his team that mean to separate his image from that of Kim, continuing to generate media talk of any and every kind and approaching his image to that of a mundane individual, feeding the public's Kanye-addiction.

Nonetheless, these set of actions are nothing but merely performative acts with the aim of buzz-generation, but without actually achieving to provide the advertised value-creation that he publicizes (Bakcin, 2022).

Despite the fact that he presents himself so boldly and in such a multidisciplinary way, and although having amounted to a select niche group of die-hard loyal fanatics, I cannot help but feel as if his branding process was a partial failure.

Kanye is unable to abide by a set and defined strategy, is seemingly-and as we have seen-unable to generate an appropriate and fact-based promotional strategy, and is wildly irresponsible, disrespectful and insensitive. In addition, his problematic attitudes drive brands away, making Yeezy all the more pivotal to him and his business survival.

Despite his undeniable success, it is perhaps due to his chaotic, free-spirited and explosive personality that his brand never really solidified further than something born from yet another clout-chasing celebrity with high and eccentric artistic demands. Brands should be conceived as an ever-evolving entity, feeding off of and adapting to the industry's movements and clients' expectations and need-changes. However, this process must be reviewed carefully, as one may end up by acting and entering certain business endeavors that are contradictory to the image one wants to portray. This sends conflicting messages to our consumers and hinders the process of loyalizing them. Refer to Annex 4 for visual references.

10. CONCLUSIONS

This analysis has proven the all-rounded nature of brand construction: involving the company's own image, the customer's associations with the business, all of the technical aspects involved in its development and escalation, social media and the phenomenon of globalization and its effects on branding and, lastly, the Fashion dimension.

As I have detailed throughout this project, fashion has transcended its once merely weather-protective nature, forming into a symbol of status, influence and overall communication. In addition, there's an inherently psychological aspect to aesthetics and dressing, influencing people's perception and conditioning their primary judgment of oneself or a brand, in this case.

Brand creation doesn't only involve companies: sometimes individuals become brands of their own, too. So, in order to construct a personal brand that creates value and communicates it to customers in the most efficient way possible, it becomes useful to design a *persona*.

Keeping success and the maximization of revenues in mind, the character must be designed carefully and paying attention to every detail: the storytelling, the marketing strategies to follow, the visual references and color palettes, etc. All with the aim of drawing a clear value set with a defined and coherent image inside the public's minds.

As illustrated through the four analyzed musicians, building a successful brand is a demanding process. After a careful thought it becomes apparent that the best brand among the four is Rosalía. That she has known how to construct an intricate story through her visuals, complementing her lyrics and threading a sensorial experience that undoubtedly pleases the masses. She has also know how to correctly escalate her brand: *El Mal Querer* showcased more urban outfit choices that breathed spanish folklore and captured a national audience; by using bold garments and creating distinctive symbols like her nail art she made herself recognizable to the wider public and began her internationalization journey, culminating with *Motomami.*

C.Tangana doesn't sit far behind Rosalía either. If anything, their marketing strategies share a few common points such as the creation of a persona, the storytelling concept or the use of a bold image with daring outfits. I am unsure on whether C.Tangana conceives a worldwide escalation to his brand in the same way as Rosalía, so considering his branding to have a Hispanic and Latin scope, It could be affirmed that his branding is also quite good.

Travis Scott, on the other hand, did construct a somewhat good brand image for himself, wisely using his relationship to his advantage. However, the large and varied number of collaborations he amounts to in my opinion fade the limits of his brand and diffuse his value creation. His objectives are unclear, and the detonation of the concert scandal is a hard crisis to recover from.

Lastly, Kanye West is a difficult brand to sum up and extract a clear judgment from. He has worked alongside his ex wife Kim Kardashian to achieve the worldwide fame they now possess, making

headlines from their every move. As an artist, he has known how to begin new business ventures such as with his clothing brand Yeezy, transcending the music industry. However, it is his difficult personality that drives people away from his brand. Using the element of surprise, and even creating a persona based on unpredictability is good to a certain limit: at some point your actions and bad press will become harmful to your brand and take your credibility away.

All in all, I can conclude that measure, careful planning and bold aesthetic choices seem to be the key for a successful brand, as opposed to a diluted image with a large number of brand endorsements.
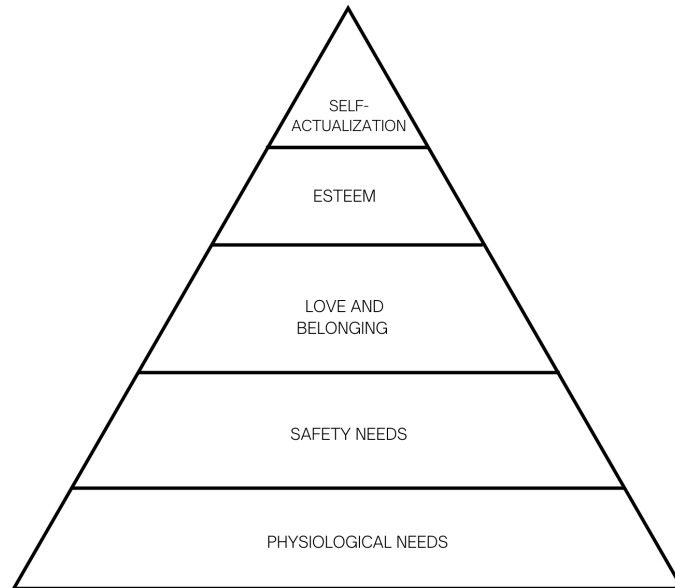
11. ANNEX

-Annex 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

Figure 9: Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Source: Own elaboration

-Annex 2:

Visual Evolution

Crema   *C.Tangana*

Crema

C.Tangana, Loewe (2027)

C.Tangana, in Cantar Ni Afinar Tour (2022)

Crema

C.Tangana, Goya (2022)

C.Tangana, Ingobernable(2022)

Figure 10: C.Tangana visual evolution. Source: Own elaboration

Collaborations

Dior x AJ1   *C.Tangana*

Travis Scott, Dior x Nike AJ1 (2020)

Cnnabis Farms, Travis Scott (2021)

Travis Scott, McDonald's (2020)

Travis Scott, Fortnite (2020)

Figure 11: Travis Scott's collaborations. Source: Own elaboration

Kanye

Kimye   *Yeezy*

Kim & Kanye, Vanity Fair
Oscar After Party (2020)

Kanye West, Yeezy
Fashion Show (2015)

Yeezy

Figure 12: Kanye West. Source: Own elaboration

-Taylor Swift MTV Incident:

https://people.com/music/kanye-west-famous-inside-his-and-taylor-swifts-relationship-history/

-Kanye West's "obsession" with ex-wife Kim Kardashian:

https://www.elle.com/culture/celebrities/a39110342/kanye-west-kim-kardashian-harassment/

-Gap x Yeezy deal terminated:

https://footwearnews.com/2022/business/legal-news/kanye-west-yeezy-terminating-deal-gap-1203338243/

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