

**1st International Congress and Exhibition on
Sustainability in Music, Art,
Textile and Fashion (ICESMATF 2023)
January, 26-27 Madrid, SPAIN**



**YAŞLILARIN MODA TÜKETİM PROFİLİ: BREZİLYA'DAN KANIT
ELDERLY FASHION CONSUMPTION PROFILE: EVIDENCE FROM
BRAZIL**

Italo Jose de Medeiros Dantas, Gideão Lucas Estevão de Figueiredo, Livia Juliana Silva Solino de Souza, Anyelle Cristina Silva de Lima, Isa Karen Fernandes de Araujo, Joana Darc Bezerra de Brito, Joseildo De Araujo Aureliano and Maria Helena Santos e Silva

Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte – Brazil

Özet

Birkaç yıl içinde üçüncü yaş grubunu oluşturacak konuların sayısı, çağdaş toplumsal bağlamda endişe verici bir sayı olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Yaşlı nüfusun artmasıyla birlikte, yaşlılara ulaşan insan fizyolojisine özgü hastalıkların bir sonucu olarak özel bakım talepleri de artmaktadır. Bu şekilde Moda ürünlerinin tüketiminde bu pazar segmentinin ergonomik, teknik, estetik ve sembolik ihtiyaçları göz önünde bulundurularak düşünülmesi gerekmektedir. Böylece Brezilya'nın Rio Grande do Norte eyaletindeki Caicó şehrinden yaşları 60 ile 75 arasında değişen 22 yaşlı kadın sorgulandı. Böylece şu sorular gündeme geldi: yaş, aylık gelir, mevcut çalışma durumu, moda trendleri, tüketim, karşılaşılan zorluklar, tercihler ve baskılar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: yaşlı, üretim süreci, giyim, ürün geliştirme, tüketici ihtiyaç araştırması.

Abstract

The number of subjects that will compose the age group of the third age within a few years presents itself as an alarming number within the contemporary social context. With the increase in the elderly population, the demands for specific care grow due to diseases inherent to human physiology that reach the elderly. In this way, there is a need to think about this market segment because of its ergonomic, technical, aesthetic, and symbolic needs in the consumption of Fashion products. Thus, 22 older women between 60 and 75 years old from the city of Caicó, in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Norte, were questioned. Thus, we raised the following questions: age, monthly income, current work situation, fashion trends, consumption, difficulties encountered, preferences, and fashion prints.

Keywords: elderly, production process, clothing, product development, consumer need research.

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1. Introduction

Fashion, in contemporary society, is a phenomenon that transcends materiality, starting to relate to social and cultural aspects, which are perceived, for example, in the ephemerality of style, which dictates to the consumer that the fullness of his satisfaction and recognition can only be achieved if the consumer assimilates this ephemerality (Treptow, 2013). Although the elderly tend to be subjugated in this context, there is a change in this scenario. We noticed that with more and more media representations of these individuals.

The population rate of the elderly has been increasing every year. This demographic transition is a result of the decrease in the birth rate and the increase in life expectancy, and this increase has generated changes in the approach and health care of these individuals. According to statistics from the United Nations (UN, 2013), the number of people with advanced age should triple by 2050. In Brazil, this change is confirmed, as the elderly population was 19.8% in the 2000s, increasing to 30.7% in 2010 (Souza et al., 2017). Ageing is a natural biological phenomenon divided into two types: senescence and senility, and senescence correspond to the natural, progressive, and degenerative process; these changes affect all body systems and result in the functional decrease of an individual. However, depending on the external factors in which the person is inserted and their lifestyle, they will have pathological aging, called senility (Guedes et al., 2017).

The fashion market for seniors until a certain period was extremely closed; Ballstaedt (2007) explains that the fashion market came to create a differentiation only in the 60s when there was a separation of fashion trends that young people and older people would follow, but it was not until the mid 80's that there was targeted marketing. Through all the data exposed, it leads us to realize that the market is still highly closed to thinking and producing Fashion for this particular target audience.

According to previous research, older people's clothing is a discreet, neutral outfit; there are no stylistic exaggerations, fluff, ruffles, and fads. The cut and pattern of the fabrics are discreet and traditional, with no transparency and necklines and nothing that adheres to the body. It is an outfit, although oriented to the female gender, where seduction and erotic tension are absent; it is a neutral outfit, vertical line, straight skirt. Nothing is intended to accentuate the curves (Motta, 1998, apud Ballstaedt, 2008).

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With this thought exposed, it can be understood that the market tends to follow the path of developing basic products, not putting the consumer in evidence when in public, and mainly avoiding all aspects linked to the social concept of young, healthy, and with high self-esteem. Queiroz (2015, apud Tonarque, 2012) argues that this idea generates a process of exclusion of the elderly in Fashion because far beyond aesthetic issues, this public needs products that meet in functionality and adapt to their body, with the reason of age, needs specification.

Therefore, there is the premise that clothing is the product resulting from the movement of all the gears that make up Fashion; that is, in order to reach a market-oriented clothing product as a final result, it is necessary to articulate a set of actions, whether creative or technical, through methodologies and creative processes devised by fashion professionals and their stakeholders (Jones, 2005; Treptow, 2013; Sanches, 2016). The development of a survey can be compared to drawing up a map, specifically to plan the realization of the market research project. It details the procedures necessary to obtain the required information, and its purpose is to provide adequate methods for obtaining the necessary information for decision-making (Zamberlan, 2008).

Needs research is a method to understand how the market works, so it is a way of collecting data and information that, once collected, can help designers, companies, or brands select the best decisions. In such a way, the consumer needs to research what will verify if the product will be consumed or not, so Mike Baxter (2011:181) justifies that “Understanding consumer needs is fundamental to identify, specify and justify an opportunity of product.”

Market research is understood as a process consisting of six stages (Malhotra, 2001), which are: a) definition of the theme and formulation of the research problem; b) elaboration of an approach; c) formulation of the research project; d) fieldwork; e) preparation and analysis of data and f) preparation and presentation of the report. Market research is generally described as an activity that involves the interests of four segments: (1) the researcher, (2) the client, (3) the interviewee, and (4) the public.

In summary, when well-designed, market research greatly benefits product creators. By understanding the need of the market, the objective of developing a product that meets the needs of consumers is achieved (Baxter, 2011). With that in mind, this paper aims to outline a profile of elderly Brazilian fashion consumers.

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2. Method

This study is a virtual survey conducted with women between 60 and 75. This survey instrument used sociodemographic questions such as age, monthly income and current work situation. In addition, we applied three scales to measure – using the Likert Scale – the influence of fashion trends on the consumption of the elderly and the difficulties encountered by this age group in consuming clothing products (Table 1).

Table 1. Questions raised in the Research

Fashion Trends Scale

- For me, Fashion is an important product
- Fashion means a lot to me
- Fashion is an important part of my life
- I think a lot about Fashion
- I'm very involved with Fashion
- I am interested in Fashion
- I consider myself a person up to date on fashion trends for each season
- I follow fashion trends and news, but I do not consider myself an expert
- I don't follow fashion trends and news, but I would like to follow
- I don't care about fashion trends as I have my way of dressing

Fashion consumption Scale

- I buy when my clothes are old, worn out or tight
- I buy it when the season changes and I need to renew my wardrobe
- I buy when I'm sick of my clothes
- I shop on impulse

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- Shop when apparel products are on sale

The scale of difficulties encountered in the consumption of clothing products

- I cannot find clothes in my size
- I cannot find pieces that are up-to-date with current fashion trends
- I cannot find pieces that are fashionable and have a good fit for my body type
- Clothing is expensive
- I cannot find a variety of parts, models and colors in stores

In addition, we raised questions about the size of the clothes used by the elderly, preferred closure type for top and bottom, types of clothing most used, preferred fabric types, and preferred colors in Fashion products. Finally, we asked questions about favorite prints used in clothing.

3. Results

The survey carried out among women between 60 and 75 raised the following questions: age, monthly income, current work situation, fashion trends, consumption, difficulties encountered, preferences and patterns. These questions lead to constructing a sociodemographic profile of the group under study. We questioned Older women of different ages, where 27.2% corresponded to women aged 60 years, another 27.2% corresponded to women aged 62 and 63 years, 18.2% to women aged 72 and 75 years and the remaining 27% corresponded to the ages 61, 64, 65, 70 and 73. However, we observed the audience of 60 as predominant.

In the current work situation, we identified that 59.1% of the women interviewed are retired, 31.8% are still in the labor market, and the remaining 9.1% are unemployed. We asked the interviewees about what it is like and how they see their relationship with Fashion, having to classify, through a Likert scale, how they relate to Fashion based on the following statements: if Fashion is an important product, what it means to them; if it is important in their life; if they think a lot about it; if they are interested in Fashion. The median closest to 1 corresponded to “strongly disagree”, while the median closest to 5 to “strongly agree.”

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We observed that the results for the question about Fashion being an important product showed a neutral level of agreement, with a median of 3.5. Regarding Fashion meaning something in their lives, a neutral level was identified, with a median of 3. Respondents responded as neutral about Fashion being an important factor in their lives, with a median of 3. On thinking about Fashion, the median was 3, being a neutral result. Being very involved with the subject of Fashion had a median of 2, so they disagree with this idea. Moreover, regarding interest in Fashion, the result was a median of 2, so they disagree about this interest.

We found that, with a median of 3, this result being neutral, they consider themselves women up-to-date in fashion trends for each season. They also stated that they follow trends and news, with a median of 3.5, a neutral result, but they do not consider themselves experts. When asked about not following trends and news in Fashion but that they would like to follow, the median was 3, being neutral, and with a median of 3, also neutral, they replied that they do not care about trends because they have their way of dressing.

When asked about the consumption and acquisition of new pieces, we obtained a median of 2.5, a neutral for disagreement. As for the station, with a median of 3, a neutral result for disagreement. Regarding obtaining new pieces when sick, the median was 3, again the neutral result for disagreement. Purchases acting on impulse reached a median of 2.5, a neutral result for disagreement and finally, the purchase of clothing products on sale obtained a median of 4, where there was an agreement for this item.

Regarding the purchase of parts monthly, 72.7% of the interviewees answered that at least once a month, they buy a fashion piece, while 18.2% do not buy any, 4.5% answered that at least a month they buy three times, and the rest buy at least two times. In this way, we understood that the collection's focus, such as the choice of material and relationship with current fashion trends, should focus on individuals who consume products only once a month.

Next, we investigated issues related to the supply of products in the local market. With this, the result was neutral disagreeing that they did not find garments for their size and had a median of 3. With a median of 2.5, a neutral result, they disagree that they do not find pieces up to date with current fashion trends. The interviewees were neutral, with a median of 3.5 and did not find fashionable

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pieces that fit their physical size well. They agreed with a median of 4 about the pieces being expensive, stayed neutral with a median of 3.5 and agreed not to find a variety of pieces, models and colors.

Regarding the clothing sizes used by older women, we identified that 27.3% of the volunteers wear size 36 in the Brazilian anthropometric table, 22.7% wear 42, 13.6% wear 44, and 18.2% represent women who wear 38 (P) and 40 (M). For the fashion collection prototypes, it recommends going with the large, size 42.

Another relevant issue we considered when developing a collection focused on the elderly is the usability focused on the closures of the products, allowing a university to interact, and facilitate the day-to-day. When approached in this investigation, the types of closure that the respondents indicated they prefer to have in their clothes, more specifically in blouses/shirts, the button stood out over the other options in the part of the shirts with a percentage of 77.3%, while the zipper invisible presented 13.6%. Therefore, for the tops of this collection, it was decided to use a button when applicable. The zipper was the favorite over the bottoms at 68.2%, while the invisible zipper and button represented 13.6%. Therefore, in the case of this collection, it was decided to use the zipper.

As for the types of clothes they usually wear, we observed that pants and blouses had the highest percentage (72.7%) among the interviewees, followed by the dress (63.6%), then shorts (54.5%) the set with shorts (40.9%) and skirt (22.7%), finally, we observed the overalls with the lowest percentage (4.5%) of preference.

Regarding fabrics, aiming at comfort and well-being, the interviewees declared their preferences for fabrics where cotton had the highest percentage among the interviewees (86.4%), followed by viscose fabric with 63.6%, in third place, polyester with 36.4% and, finally, silk satin with 18.2%. The result shows a sum of more than 100%, as respondents could choose more than one answer.

Colors are attractive and capable of conveying messages and producing sensations. We know that in Fashion, it would be no different since each color has its association; we decided to question the color preferences of elderly consumers in Brazil. We can see the result below (Figure 1):

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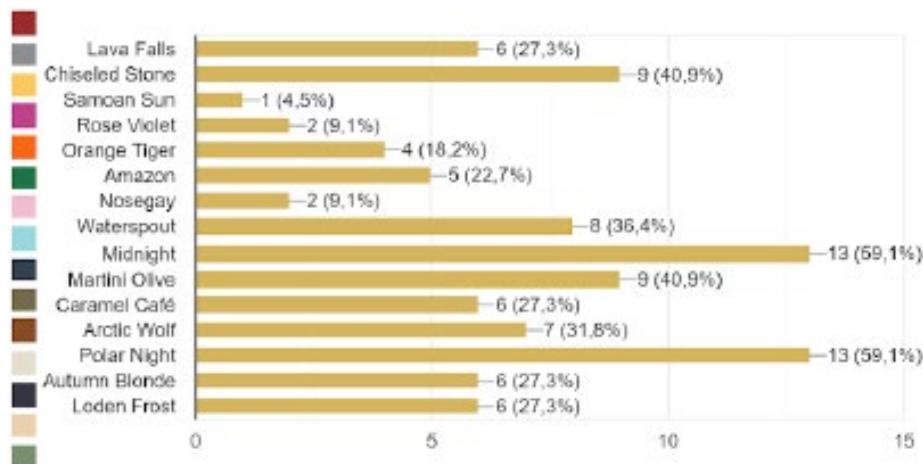


Figure 1. Favorite colors among elderly fashion consumers



Figure 2. Colors most preferred among the elderly

The colors “midnight” (59.1%) and “polar night” (59.1%) were the interviewees’ favorites for fashion products (Figure 2).

Furthermore, 59.1% of the interviewees answered that they prefer patterned clothes, and 40.9% prefer plain ones. Flower prints had the highest percentage (66.7%) among the interviewees who prefer

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patterned clothes, followed by list prints (55.6%), seabed with 44.4%, tropical 22.2%, poá with 22.2%, the animal also 22.2% and finally the checkered print that did not get votes.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The elderly public is gradually increasing in society, demanding garments with specific characteristics. With that in mind, this paper developed a survey to trace a profile of elderly Brazilian consumers, focusing on optimizing the creative and technical elaboration of fashion products for women over 60. In summary, the profile of Brazilian elderly consumers was made up of women between 60 and 75 years old, with 60 years old being predominant, where more than half of the interviewees are already retired, buy only one piece per month, prefer cotton clothes, printed, and with trims.

For future research, we suggest the application of the knowledge obtained in developing a fashion collection oriented to older women.

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