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ORIGINAL

Analysis of the acceptance of independent women with regard to “Anthony Fierro” jewelry in Dijon (France)

Análisis de la aceptación de mujeres independientes frente a joyas “Anthony Fierro” en Dijon (Francia)

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ABSTRACT

For the expansion of a brand it is necessary to know the acceptance it will have in its target market. In the present case of the Colombian brand “Anthony Fierro”, an internationalization is sought towards the city of Dijon in France, where there are strategic allies for the collection of information in the framework of the execution of the research. The purpose of the research is to analyze the acceptance that independent women in Dijon have of Colombian handmade designs with natural materials. The data collection through a qualitative approach allows obtaining relevant information on the perception of the target public, their consumption habits, preferences and disposition towards the type of jewelry proposed. The study highlighted jewelry design as a determining factor in the purchase decision, which is generally impulsive, and shows the handcrafted and natural characteristics as additional positive arguments.

Keywords: Jewelry; Handicrafts; Marketing; Acceptance.

RESUMEN

Para la expansión de una marca es necesario conocer la aceptación que tendrá en su mercado objetivo. En el caso presente de la marca colombiana “Anthony Fierro”, se busca una internacionalización hacia la ciudad de Dijon en Francia, donde se cuenta con aliados estratégicos para la recolección de información en el marco de la ejecución de la investigación. El propósito de la misma es analizar la aceptación que tienen las mujeres independientes de Dijon frente a los diseños artesanales colombianos con materiales naturales. La recolección de datos a través de un enfoque cualitativo permite obtener información pertinente sobre la percepción del público objetivo, sus hábitos de consumo, sus preferencias y su disposición frente al tipo de joyas propuesto. El estudio destaca al diseño de las joyas como factor determinante en la decisión de compra, la cual generalmente es impulsiva, y muestra las características artesanales y naturales como argumentos positivos adicionales.

Palabras clave: Joyería; Artesanías; Mercadeo; Aceptación.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2018, in Pasto (Nariño, Colombia), in the mind of designer Anthony Fierro, the idea of capturing the beauty of the natural plant elements that surround him in the department with the most incredible biodiversity in Colombia, to immortalize them in unique jewelry and accessories made by hand with the help of biological epoxy resin. His designs have been diversifying, with all kinds of accessories (necklaces, bracelets, earrings, rings) with various plant materials used, shapes, and colors, associating them with other materials such as leather, silver, and stainless steel for chains and terminals.

Its designs have gained importance in the city of Pasto, and the brand has managed to expand to Colombia through various channels of publication and distribution of its creations, such as social networks, physical points of sale, commercial showcases, and craft fairs.

Epoxy resin has been around since the 1930s, but its use in jewelry became fashionable in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with voluminous and colorful designs. Since 2020, the resin has made a stronger comeback, driven by the "Y2K style" fashion of Generation Z and social networks, with more elaborate designs and the use of transparent resin to wrap other elements, objects, and materials as part of the design.[1]

Fenalco (2022) indicates that, in Colombia, the jewelry sector is in total growth, with an increase in sales of between 7 % and 9 % for 2019, 2020, and 2021, higher than the international average, both nationally and in exports.

According to Procolombia (2018), "the trend of the jewelry and costume jewelry sector in world markets is towards handmade products with emphasis on the quality of the details that imprint differentiation and exclusivity." additionally, it mentions that Colombia has 12 trade agreements with tariff preferences, among which is the European Union market. In this Trade Agreement between Colombia and the EU, "jewelry and bijouterie products have immediate relief and total access to the European market."

In France, the prices of jewelry products have increased after the war in Ukraine due to the scarcity of precious materials and the increase in energy costs.[2]

Despite this, France is the third largest jewelry buyer, behind the United States and the United Kingdom. French consumers "prefer silver and costume jewelry to jewelry made of gold, platinum or diamonds" and attach great importance to design and the image it projects. "In France, there is a great acceptance for ethical jewelry, i.e., that which does not harm the environment and whose production does not affect fundamental rights".[3]

In this context, the present research is born, which starts from the desire to expand the Colombian handmade jewelry business of Anthony Fierro to new international markets, taking their designs to the French market and, more specifically, to the city of Dijon, seeing the opportunity to take advantage of local strategic allies. In order to achieve this internationalization of a local Colombian brand, it is first necessary to analyze its acceptance with the target public.

Therefore, this research seeks to answer the question about the acceptance of French women between 25 and 40 years old with purchasing power who reside in Dijon in front of Colombian handmade jewelry with this type of design in the second half of 2023.

The "Anthony Fierro" brand is born in a globalized, changing world, where fashions can appear and fade in the blink of an eye, where business opportunities and new markets flourish, just like skills, fertilized by the availability of information and the ease of communication and exchange increasingly advanced offered by new technologies. At this juncture, it is essential for "Anthony Fierro" to erase geographical boundaries and expand its activity, conquering new markets and spreading its designs and products.

It can take advantage of the presence in the target city of strategic allies interested in the project to bring the brand's products to be marketed locally. For this reason, this particular site in France was chosen.

The research is carried out within the framework of the studies in the Specialization Program in Brand Management at the Corporación Unificada Nacional de Educación Superior CUN, as part of its Research Seminar.

The project is intended not only to provide an answer to the need of the "Anthony Fierro" brand but also to participate, through its methodology, in the generation of knowledge and its application in the academic field, contributing to the intellectual capital of the University, and radiating, through its execution and dissemination, the quality of its training.

The marketing and brand management field is constantly evolving, where its methods and techniques are nourished by technology and the constant contribution of experience from the same environment. In this aspect, the project aims to contribute to the area of knowledge in terms of the application of data collection methods to a target population and in the identification of their response to the possibility of introducing a new handicraft product originating from a region that, for them, is considered distant and unknown.

The objectives of this research are collecting and analyzing information to evaluate the acceptance of a target population to the possibility of introducing a new product before initiating a process of exploration of this market that could lead to a significant investment. It is based on the statement of Vargas (2017), who determines that "the reasons that make market research necessary in companies are: to know the consumer in terms of their habits and consumption preferences, to decrease investment risks and to inform and analyze information on consumer behavior in a specific context."

The research is based on the principles of the scientific method, which, for Tamayo (2001), consists of "a process that allows explaining phenomena, establishing relationships between identified facts and enunciating laws that explain the world."

More specifically, Benassini (2001) clarifies that "market research is a procedure that seeks the application of appropriate techniques involved in the design, such as data collection, analysis and presentation of information for decision making."

Sandhusen (2002) states, "Marketing research is a systematic collection, recording, analysis, and distribution of data and information on marketing problems and opportunities."

For the research presented in this paper, the products for which we want to analyze the acceptance by French women in Dijon are Colombian handcrafted jewelry, original, whose design includes natural materials and non-precious metals.

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Kotler and Armstrong (2013) define the product in marketing as "Something that can be offered to a market for its attention, acquisition, use or consumption and that could satisfy a desire or need."

Costume jewelry is fashion accessories whose design or artistry may resemble conventional jewelry but not made of precious materials.[4] It has become popular worldwide and offers an extensive range of possible materials and techniques for its designs and production.

Since prehistoric times, humans have made personal adornments from shells, stones, wood, and other natural materials found in their environment.[5]

Fischer (2015) tells us that, until World War I, jewelry had a connotation of power, social position, and everlastingness and was worn mainly by the aristocracy. They were mainly worn as an integral part of clothing or coif ornaments since people did not uncover their skin much. In the 19th century, with the Industrial Revolution, a new class of bourgeois people who felt the need to show off their new wealth and social status appeared with increasing prosperity. High jewelry houses such as Chaumet in 1780, Mauboussin in 1827, and Cartier in 1847 were born to meet this demand. After the First Empire of France, the petite bourgeoisie also wanted to enjoy the luxuries of the old aristocracy but did not have the latter's wealth. Therefore, tiny manufacturing houses were created and created jewelry pieces with less expensive materials in a more industrialized way to reduce costs. Initially, this new kind of "fake jewelry" was not convinced unanimously. However, with time, thanks to the diversity of its designs, its accessibility, and its extraordinary capacity to adapt to fashions, it became more and more popular. In 1901, the term "Bijouterie de fantaisie" appeared to designate this type of costume jewelry made with non-precious materials, and its concept extends beyond the simple imitation of jewelry.

No one less than Coco Chanel was the one who introduced costume jewelry in the fashion industry as part of her struggle to liberate women, with the idea that "women did not have to depend on men to wear beautiful and eye-catching jewelry".[6]

Finally, Anton Heunis, designer of the Spanish brand that bears his name, states that "with gold and diamonds you have to think more eternal, more classic, something for life. With costume jewelry, on the other hand, you can have more fun, more trendy and fresher. Costume jewelry has changed a lot in recent times, before it was seen as an alternative to real jewelry, but today it has become a more daring accessory that is worn for the design and not so much for the value of the materials."[7]

The article presents the methodology used for data collection and the analysis results, with the conclusions derived from the work developed.

METHOD

The present research approach is qualitative, an inductive research method frequently used in the social sciences for its flexibility and holistic perspective.[8] This approach often allows for understanding a studied phenomenon and refining this understanding by going from the particular to the more general.[9]

First, to conduct research, "the problem is identified and then its definition, in which the appropriate objectives of the research are established, the problem or opportunity is formulated".[10]

The question that the research seeks to answer through the methodology presented is: What is the acceptance in the second half of the year 2023 of French women between 25 and 40 years old independent of the city of Dijon in front of Colombian handmade jewelry designed by "Anthony Fierro"?

Its objectives are To measure the perception of independent French women in Dijon of handcrafted jewelry and designs based on natural materials. Determine the consumption habits of independent French women in Dijon regarding jewelry. To evaluate the proportion of independent Dijon women willing to purchase "Anthony Fierro" jewelry.

The object of study is constituted by women in the city of Dijon (Department Côte-d'Or, France) who are independent and have the purchasing power for the acquisition of similar luxury products, who are in adulthood between 25 and 40 years old, belonging to the French upper-middle class and who are socially active.

The data collection method should be chosen according to "the data collection strategy, the type of variable, the required precision, and the researcher's training".[11] Among the primary data collection methods are questionnaires and interviews.

Alonso (2007) indicates that "the research interview is a conversation between two people, an interviewer and an informant, directed and recorded by the interviewer with the purpose of favoring the production of a conversational discourse, continuous and with a certain line of argument, not fragmented, segmented, pre-coded and closed by a previous questionnaire of the interviewee on a topic defined in the framework of the research."

The qualitative instruments applied are then semi-structured interviews, which allow probing the target and obtaining relevant insights about handcrafted jewelry, designs with natural, vegetable, and unique materials, the designs they know how to get, what they look at as main criteria when buying, their preferences, their jewelry consumption habits in terms of frequency, budget, type of designs, materials, etc., and their willingness to consume the type of jewelry proposed by designer Anthony Fierro.

The interviews, being conducted virtually due to the scope of the research, individually to three people belonging to the object of study, are organized in such a way that the interviewees can be located in a quiet environment and without distractions, allowing developing a neutral and fluid conversation and avoid biases.

The interviews are audio and video recordings, with the prior authorization of the interviewees for using their answers within the framework of the study to facilitate the reliable collection of the answers and reactions obtained and their use for the study, developed in an academic environment.

The interviews are prepared by constructing a table of categories, as shown in table 1, which allows for organizing and redirecting the semi-structured discussion to focus on the subject and obtain timely responses for the study.

Table 1. Table of categories of the interviews

Category	Definition	Sub-Category
Acceptance	Acceptance of a new product is the extent to which consumers are willing to receive, purchase and use the product offered by a brand.	Consumption habits: The habits of the target audience in terms of acquisition and use of jewelry, in terms of frequency of acquisition, budget, acquisition channels, brands purchased and/or used, preferred type of jewelry, context of use, Acceptance criteria: The most important characteristics for the target audience when choosing and acquiring jewelry. Preferences in designs and materials: Tastes and preferences of the target audience in terms of styles, designs, materials, colors and shapes of jewelry. Perception of handcrafted jewelry and natural materials: Perception of the target public on the use of natural materials in jewelry and on the acquisition and use of foreign handcrafted jewelry versus industrial and/or local jewelry.

The instruments are applied with the support of the brand's strategic allies in the geographical area of the object of the study, in French, with their help in translating the questions and transcribing the answers.

After the interviews, transcription, and translation, the data is organized in the form of a word cloud, which helps us carry out a thematic analysis of the information collected to draw relevant conclusions to answer the research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The participants were three women, aged between 25 and 39 years, residents of Dijon. The occupations and socio-professional levels of the participants, determined using the Nomenclature des Professions et Catégories Socioprofessionnelles (PCS) classification of the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE, 2020), correspond to "Employée Qualifiée" (Qualified employee), "Professions intermédiaires administratives et commerciales des entreprises" (Intermediate administrative and commercial professions in companies) and "Professions de l'enseignement" (Teaching professions). Two of them work in the creative sector.

The interviews were conducted individually, using the Google Meet video call tool, recording video and audio using the OBS Studio tool. The interviewees were in a personal and silent environment, in their own homes and unaccompanied, in order to be able to focus on the interview.

At the beginning of each interview, questions were asked about the characteristics of each participant to ensure that they corresponded to the group under study. Then, the conversations were guided by the questions defined in the table of categories, allowing the participants to express themselves on the related topics organically, reorienting the discussion whenever necessary to obtain their opiniones in all the defined categories, according to the semi-structured interview methodology.

At the end of the interviews, they were transcribed and translated from French to Spanish in a reliable manner for the analysis.

The organization of the data presented in the Word Cloud (figure 1) shows that the factor most frequently mentioned is price and one of the ideas that stands out the most is that of taste.



Figure 1. Word cloud of interview results

It is also shown that the most used and purchased type are earrings, in such a way that they match with the wardrobe, the idea of "outfit" and "style" having been widely mentioned as well.

In the first instance, this shows the importance of jewelry that suits women's tastes, matches their clothes and style, and is priced according to its quality.

The French women in the study group tend to buy jewelry on average every quarter, allocating a budget of around thirty euros and up to fifty euros for this purpose. However, they all admit that the "coup de Coeur" effect (falling in love at first sight) comes into play and that, therefore, the frequency and value of purchases can vary greatly depending on their moods and especially on what they see in the stores or shop windows so that depending on the circumstances, they are willing to invest more in a piece of jewelry if, at the time, it seems worth it for its appearance and perceived quality. In the same vein, the women surveyed say that they buy their jewelry mainly through physical channels and very rarely online because they like to measure their jewelry, see how it fits, be able to detail the designs and colors, and feel the quality.

For the sample, the origin of the jewelry is not a criterion, as long as it is of good quality, unless it is for a unique gift or if it comes from a place they have known or where they have gone on vacation.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Colombian origin of the pieces will not be a strong argument at the time of the decision to buy jewelry, nor will it be a reason for rejection.

As for materials, for the target group, the "nobility" of the materials used is not of primary importance, and they will not be inclined to buy a piece of jewelry for having precious materials significantly if they do not contribute to the design and increase the price, on the contrary, they will prefer costume jewelry pieces in order to have more and be able to use them according to their whims and the situation and clothes used.

From all the interventions of the participants, it is concluded that at the end of the day, when deciding to accept or not a piece of jewelry for purchase or use, the most important criteria will be its appearance, its design, and colors, seeing above all that it corresponds to the wardrobe and personal tastes. However, a preference is shown for unique designs, and importance is given to authenticity, denoting by these criteria a particular attraction to handmade pieces with a broad acceptance of natural materials.

Studies on the acceptance of jewelry products such as this one are essential to identify whether the jewelry market in Europe, particularly France, represents an opportunity that could be taken advantage of. It is vital for a brand seeking to prosper today to expand into new markets and investigate the possibilities it has in the international arena. This paper invites emerging brand students and professionals in brand management to investigate new horizons through methodologies that allow them to determine the acceptance of these audiences to the products and services they offer.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, from the study, it can be deduced that the consumption habits of women in the target group tend to buy jewelry frequently but pay attention to their finances and that for the purchase decision, the factors of design and colors are a priority and must be consistent with their wardrobe to highlight their style. That the origin, the history of the jewelry, and its manufacture with natural materials can be an appreciable plus but will not be the determining factor at the time of making the decision, and that the handcrafted feature provides the guarantee of having a unique piece, which enters into the design and exclusivity factor. At the moment of truth, emotions and the mood the jewel makes you feel at first sight are also very important.

In short, according to the analysis developed, for the Colombian handcrafted jewelry designed with natural materials "Anthony Fierro" to be accepted by the independent French women of Dijon, the designs must be original and authentic to the varied tastes of these women. Highlighting their natural characteristics, respecting biodiversity, their handmade manufacture, and highlighting the unique meaning behind each piece of jewelry can be critical additional arguments for their acceptance by French customers.

Of course, the research was conducted in an academic environment, as part of the training of its authors, with limited resources and time, in order to verify the present conclusions and to further deepen the criteria and optimal conditions for the introduction of the brand's products in France as part of its internationalization strategy, it is recommended to conduct further studies, with mixed methodological approaches and larger sample size.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

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