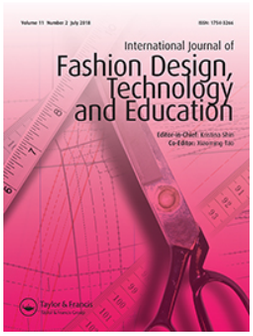

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# Value segmentation of adolescents: a performance of appearance

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**ABSTRACT**

An understanding of youth culture is fundamental for attracting new consumers. However, few qualitative studies have analysed adolescent fashion consumer behaviour. Utilising a dramaturgical framework, this qualitative research aims to understand the adolescent's relationship to fashion by identifying the values guiding adolescent social performance. The ethnographic study proceeded with 16 participants between the ages of 13 and 18 from various socio-economic strata in Medellín, Colombia. Four value segments were used to describe these teens' performances: Trendy, Undercover, Luxury Pink, and Free Style. The values of these adolescent consumers prioritised 'being well respected', 'a sense of belonging', 'excitement', and 'fun and enjoyment of life'. Findings indicated that while some of these emerging market adolescents adhered to global generalisations made about teenagers, certain specific contextual influences were found to express their values and, by extension, their fashion wants. Additional theoretical contributions were found by examining differences in the expression of values across value segments.

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Adolescents; clothing; fashion; consumer; values

## 1. Introduction

Many cultures are fascinated with youth, which explains the success of fashion products such as Disney's wedding dresses, diamond-encrusted Hello Kitties, and other examples of adult nostalgia for children's brands (Greene, 2009). Some experts such as Tully (1994) claimed that 'tomorrow's parents' are the 'most global' market of all and that teenagers have become the primary target demographic for giant brands. Similarly, the market research company Nielsen (2013) stated that young adults serve as a crucial market for businesses and advertisers. Even Euromonitor (Euromonitor, 2011; Malison, 2015) recognised that the globalisation and digitalisation of society has exerted great influence over the consumers of 'Generation Z' (known as 'Gen Zers'), since members of this age group around the world tend to share common traits, such as technological prowess, a sense of community, and an age compression phenomenon. Still, Euromonitor (2011) identified Gen Zers as a diverse group in terms of life stage, nationality, and creed. Consequently, while teen consumers belonging to Generation Z might share global similarities, marketers also must account for their contextual differences.

Research on marketing and consumer behaviour – as well as on psychology, family studies, health, and other fields – can be useful for understanding adolescents. Steinberg and Morris (2001) noted an increasing interest in this population segment since the 1990s, describing adolescence as a period of self-exploration during which an individual can discover his or her relationship to the social world. Parker, Hermans, and Schaefer (2004) suggested that teenagers are important for marketing because (a) teens have significant discretionary spending power, spend heavily on fashion products, and serve as influential trendsetters; (b) they are 'impressionable and their brand loyalties are in the process of formation'; and (c) they spend family money and influence parents' purchases (p. 177). Adolescents are also open to interpreting or socially adopting the meaning of consumer goods as their own (Ritson & Elliott, 1999). Furthermore, 'cool appears to have a high value to both the marketer and the teenage demographic' (Cassidy & Schijndel, 2011, p. 175). Fashion-related research has revealed that adolescents tend to be fashion innovators (Beaudoin, Lachance, & Robitaille, 2003; Rogers, 1995), are more fashion-conscious, are highly influenced by their peers, and attach high importance to fashion products (Beaudoin et al., 2003). Even male adolescents today show interest in their looks and are more 'risky' than were past generations (p. 24). As for early adolescence, female consumers tend to be concerned about the functional aspects of clothing, such as fit, in addition to the emotional effects (de Klerk & Tselepis, 2007).

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Reviewed academic research on fashion and young consumers has mainly covered regions such as North America (e.g. de Klerk & Tselepis, 2007), Europe (e.g. Klimstra, Hale III, Raaijmakers, Branje, & Meeus, 2010), and Asia (e.g. Wee, 1999). These studies have included limited discussions about the Latin American, and particularly the Colombian consumer – even though Colombia is the third most populated country in Latin America after Brazil and Mexico. In addition, teen global studies such as that of Stock and Tupot (2006) have often neglected both Latin America and the importance of fashion products. A published market study on Colombia (Cómo es el adolescente de hoy, 2009) stated that adolescents live mainly on their parents' money, with their primary expenses being spent on transportation, food, technology, and entertainment. Among these categories, fashion brands tend to be most favoured and remembered. The majority of analysed peer-reviewed studies relevant to this topic have been quantitative and cross-cultural (e.g. Gentina, Shrum, & Lowrey, 2016). However, such quantitative studies on adolescent influences over family decision-making (Beatty & Talpade, 1994) have engendered problems in the interpretation of results, suggesting that 'further studies should incorporate in-depth interviews of respondents' (p. 138). Yet, few studies have utilised more qualitative methods. As explained by Ritson and Elliott (1999), most consumer research has focused on buying behaviour, with little attention being given to deeper levels of consumption regarding the use of certain products in specific contexts.

Despite the scarcity of academic literature on this population segment, the consumption power of young people is growing. Teens are relevant to business because they influence home purchases. According to a study in Latin America, 70% of young consumers make their own purchase decisions, and 52% of teens spend their income on clothing and accessories (Dinero, 2012). The youth population is especially significant in Medellín, the second largest city in Colombia. Most updated official governmental statistics by 2017 indicate that Medellín had approximately 352,040 adolescent residents between the ages of 10 and 19 in 2011, comprising 14.87% of the population with a projected 13.33% for 2015 (Perfil Sociodemográfico, 2005–2015, 2005). Despite their relevance, adolescents were excluded from the *Estudio Colombiano de Valores* (Colombian Values Study), a longitudinal study in Colombia led by Raddar and McCann Erickson based on the World Values Survey (Raddar, 2006).

In order to fill these academic gaps, this interpretative research sought to gain a deeper understanding of the adolescent's relationship to fashion. This relationship can be explained in terms of personal values that act as criteria influencing evaluations or choices regarding persons, objects (e.g. fashion products), and ideas related to behaviour, understandable only in the context of specific environments (Vinson, Scott, & Lamont, 1977). An additional goal of the present study was to identify the main values guiding adolescent social performance by classifying adolescents into value segments. However, Durgee, O'Connor, and Veryzer (1996) claimed that within specific target groups, the same value can hold different meaning to different people. Therefore, four research questions were developed to guide the research: (1) *What is the relationship that adolescents share with fashion?* (2) *What are the main values that can be used to assess segments in relation to their fashion goals and wants?* (3) *Are there differences in the expression of values across value segments?* (4) *In what ways does each segment resemble the global consumers?* A qualitative examination of the adolescent value segmentation in the selected context provides both theoretical and managerial applications, specifically in relation to differences in the expression of values across value segments – an issue not yet addressed in the literature.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Elucidating the concept of fashion and how it shapes the individual can provide cues to theoretically explain how adolescent actors relate to their appearance. Fashion and clothing coexist because fashion encompasses not just the visible but also the invisible elements that comprise clothing (Kawamura, 2005). Clothing functions as a means of self-expression and an essential social tool for the young (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004), even to the point where it is defined as a 'second skin' (Belk, 1988, p. 151) for its importance in defining the self. It can also explain how fashion products and brands might influence an actor's social performance. Kawamura's (2005) sociological investigation defined fashion as a collective activity and a context-dependent phenomenon inseparable from social interaction. She distinguished between dress/clothing and fashion, where fashion was manifested by material clothing. Furthermore, fashion as a concept 'signifies additional and alluring values attached to clothing' (p. 4), suggesting that clothing holds the key to unlocking the values behind the appearance of an individual. The latter is further described using Goffman's (1959) metaphor.

### 2.1. The metaphor of theatrical performance

Goffman (1959) compared life to a theatre in which actors play a performance on stage, constituting a

'machinery of self-production' (p. 253). The actors' drama parallels the way in which individuals create their own reality. In theatre, the term *front* refers to 'the expressive equipment' employed by an individual during his or her performance (Goffman, 1959, p. 22), consisting of *setting* (the expressive equipment of a physical place) and *personal front* (a performer's expressive equipment conveying signs and cues). Fashion (e.g. clothing) is connected to appearance and serves as an example of personal front for Goffman. In addition to the front region, the back region or *backstage* signifies where plays are rehearsed, adjusted, and scrutinised. Miller-Spillman, Reilly, and Hunt-Hurst (2012) included dress in Goffman's assessment of front and backstage behaviour.

Goffman (1959) stated that values act like guides during the presentation of an individual before others, ensuring that the performance exemplifies the values of society. He further indicated that values determine the way actors feel, establishing a structure of appearances that must be maintained. This suggests a direct relationship between an actor's values and personal front, especially in terms of appearance. Culture also influences the rules of the theatre, for Goffman stated that his metaphor was not 'culture-free' (1959, p. 244). He suggested a need for studies separate from Anglo-American cultures.

### 2.2. Values

Goffman (1959) implied that values function as guiding principles behind actor performances and the systematic choosing of appearances. Vinson et al. (1977) saw values as responsible for determining what we want and how we get what we want, by serving as tools of cultural and social learning stimulating motivation and behaviour. Schwartz (1994) concluded that values are (a) beliefs that (b) pertain to desirable end states; (c) transcend specific situations; (d) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour, people, or things; and (e) are ordered by relative importance. Flyvbjerg (2001) even argued that the strength of the social sciences lies in the reflexive analysis of values. Durgee et al. (1996) wrote the following: 'What is most important to consumers? Not the products. It's the values they care about' (p. 91). These statements suggest that values serve as guidelines for adolescent social performance. Therefore, values also become goals themselves, dictating ideals in the adolescents' lives.

Because values are more stable than attitudes (Kamakura & Novak, 1992), they help to classify consumers (Durgee et al., 1996). However, Schwartz (1994) warned that there can be an 'almost infinite number of values one could study' (p. 20), suggesting that there are theoretical and practical advantages to using a limited set of values. There are different ways to assess values and classify consumers, such as the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS), List of Values (LOV), and Values and Life Style (VALS), among others. The RVS is a psychological classification of values that uses instrumental and terminal values (Rokeach, 1973). Based on the Rokeach's list of 18 terminal values (i.e. desirable end states of existence) and the Maslow's hierarchy of values, LOV proposes a list of nine personal values used to classify people according to their daily lives: (1) sense of belonging, (2) excitement, (3) warm relationships with others, (4) self-fulfilment, (5) being well respected, (6) fund and enjoyment of life, (7) security, (8) self-respect, and (9) a sense of accomplishment (Kahle, 1983; Kahle & Kennedy, 1989). Contrary to RVS, LOV has proven to be useful for academics involved with marketing research (Solomon, 2013). Furthermore, LOV has greater predictive utility over VALS in consumer behaviour (Kahle, Beatty, & Homer, 1986). Additionally, LOV is often linked to clothing interest and behaviour (Kim, 2005), thus being more suitable for the present study than are other methodologies. Furthermore, conceptual structures such as the means-end value chain can link values with behaviour and consumption (Durgee et al., 1996). Since the means-end value chain associates the physical aspects of products with values (Gutman, 1982), this structure can connect personal values with the appearances and choices of the actors through a dramaturgical analysis of adolescent participants.

## 3. Method

Since marketers cannot rely solely on adolescent demographics and numbers (Spero & Stone, 2004), this study utilised an ethnographic methodology to emphasise participant observation of consumers in their natural environments through prolonged direct contact (Mariampolski, 1999). Table 1 presents the criteria used for selecting participants based on gender, age, and socio-economic status (SES). Similar to Klimstra et al.'s (2010) research, male and female adolescents were divided into two age groups. Younger teens were 13–15 years of age, and older teens were 16–18 years, with 18 being considered the first age of adulthood in Colombia. Medellín is stratified by SES on a scale from 1 to 6 (Ley 142, artículo 102, 1994), with 5 and 6 representing the wealthiest neighbourhoods. The convenience sample included SES levels ranging from 2 to 6. The recruitment of potential teens was carried out through public calls on social networks, e-mails, and person-to-person contacts. Among potential candidates, participants were intentionally chosen from different geographic locations throughout the city. Teenagers

**Table 1.** Participants' classification for the field research.

| Age group (years) | Women | | | | | Men | | | | | Subtotal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Socio-economic strata | | | | | Socio-economic strata | | | | | |
| | Medium–low | | Medium–high | | | Medium–low | | Medium–high | | | |
| | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| 13–15 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 8 |
| 16–18 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 8 |
| Subtotal | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 16 |
| | 8 | | | | | 8 | | | | | 16 |
| Total | 16 | | | | | | | | | | 16 |

and their parents/guardians were then contacted by phone using an interview approach protocol.

An initial 2- to 3-hour preview visit at each teen's home was arranged to gain rapport with the participants and parents/guardians. During this site visit, the parent/guardian and the adolescent signed a consent form. Three of the initially selected participants were excluded from the study as they were found to be ineligible after the first visit. The second visit was 6–8 hours in length and included (a) an unstructured interview with the teen accompanied by family members, (b) a tour through all areas of the home, (c) observation of the teen at a public setting with friends outside the home, and (d) a values assessment with laddering questions that fluctuated between addressing values and fashion products (Durgee et al., 1996), in order to ascertain which values were most important for the teen in relation to fashion. The later term considered products such as apparel, accessories, shoes, and technology. A modest financial compensation and sponsor gifts (e.g., notebook, socks) were given at the end of each second visit.

For data analysis, each researcher completed a detailed site report right after conducting fieldwork, which included (a) a demographic profile; (b) relevant quotations transcribed verbatim; (c) insights on the most important topics, fashion possessions, and main themes for the participant; (d) a list of LOV values that best described the participant; (e) main ideas about the relationship between the participant and fashion; (f) 'means-ends' product–value chains (Durgee et al., 1996; Gutman, 1982) for favourite fashion possessions; and (g) selected pictures and video/audio clips. Researchers held a debriefing meeting in order to share first impressions (Mariampolski, 1999) after two or three visits. When the fieldwork was finished, researchers and research assistants met for 3 complete days in order to conduct data analysis based on the detailed reports of the participants. During the meeting, researchers presented participant reports, individually classified the participants into value segments, and then shared these classifications. When consensus was achieved among researchers, six value segments were proposed. Some weeks after this meeting, researchers held an informal 2-hour focus group. The participants included five experts (e.g. anthropologists) from nationally recognised market research firms with minimum research experience of 5 years, most of whom had previously researched adolescents in Colombia. The objective was to perform triangulation of the findings (Patton, 2002) in relation to adolescent value segmentation. During this meeting, some value segments were merged due to additional similarities identified among the participants. The last part of the analysis consisted of an additional meeting among researchers to analyse the ways in which the segments resembled global consumers. The researchers individually classified the value segments in accordance with certain characteristics of the global consumers, and then, a discussion was held until consensus was reached.

## 4. Results and discussion

The findings are presented in three sections. The first, *Value segmentation*, describes adolescent interactions with fashion products based on the proposed value segmentation, while addressing the first and second research questions. The second section, *Value paradoxes*, explores the third question by discussing differences in the expression of certain values across segments. The third and last section called *In what ways do the segments resemble the global consumers?* discusses the fourth research question.

### 4.1. Value segmentation

Data interpretation led to the classification of four value segments explaining participant relationships with fashion: (1) *Trendy*, (2) *Undercover*, (3) *Luxury Pink*, and (4) *Free Style*. Each segment represents a system of values with various 'means-ends' product–value chains (Durgee et al., 1996). Similar to other studies (e.g. Kahle, 1983), this classification mainly relies on the highest ranked value from the individuals that define the segments. The following description will use pseudonyms to

name the participants and the cited verbatim will be translations from Spanish.

#### 4.1.1. Trendy: 'not being fashionable means to be destined to be among the geeks'

This group belongs to higher social economical strata and tends to be characterised by a relaxed and cool presence. Teens classified as Trendy are early adopters with high fashion consciousness who yearn for status. They enjoy customising looks and garments while seeking material comfort. Technology plays a key role in their lives by providing the value of 'excitement', as well as control, status, and power. Thus, the highest ranked value for Trendy is 'being well respected'. They are also resolved in their apparel buying decisions and prefer having control over what they wear, since it gives them a 'sense of accomplishment'. A male 'Trendy' participant stated the following:

> Fashion is generated by the lack of personality, many people do what others do, and look at them as idols. Cristiano Ronaldo [soccer player] wears a red shirt, then we all must wear a red shirt, everyone gets a red shirt... my friend who is the tough one [leader] is wearing the red shirt, so all my friends are wearing red shirts, and then, we all dance tectonic [music], even though we do not like tectonic, because that is fashion, because fashion does not bother … (Nicolas, age 16–18, SES 6)

Nicolas appears initially reluctant to take note of fashion; however, he recognises that he imitates what others wear rather quickly. For Nicolas, fashion is a means by which he can be 'well respected' and the 'head of the tribe' to have influence over his friends. He adds, '… To be one of the tough ones, among the heads of the tribe, you must be fashionable … The one with more updated fashions is the one with status.' He believes that being fashionable provides him with power and peer followers. Consequently, Nicolas feels a 'sense of fulfilment' when buying clothes that are in style with renowned, expensive, and imported brands. However, his choices are 'safe' and would not be characterised as eccentric.

Another Trendy participant named Amalia (age 13–15, SES 6) has a dressing table in her room that looks just like one from a theatre. During her home visit, Amalia spent nearly 2 hours with her best friend getting ready at the dressing table before going to a shopping mall. This backstage behaviour shows some indication that Amalia and her friend might perceive their appearance as a show performance, in which the shopping mall becomes their front space. Almost all participants, including Amalia, demonstrated high levels of technology and media usage. While they enjoyed social settings, they preferred being 'connected' as the primary way by which to interact with others. High online interaction and media access exposed them to wider sources of influence with respect to fashion trends and opinion leaders. This online connection both erased and created boundaries in their worlds, in addition to merging their front and back regions. Boundaries were created when despite their proximity to others the teens still appeared distant due to technology. On the contrary, boundaries were erased when technology brought people closer who were separated by distance, as exemplified by Esteban's (age 16–18, SES 6) behaviour. During his visit, Esteban responded to the interview in his room while simultaneously playing Xbox (with team players located in other countries), chatting on his cell phone, and chatting online with multiple friends on his laptop.

#### 4.1.2. Undercover: 'if all the world is dressing that way, I want to dress the same way'

The Undercovers are fashion followers that fear social risk. They seek 'security' and a 'sense of belonging' by maintaining 'warm relationships with others'. At the end, what they most want is represented in 'a sense of belonging', which is their highest ranked value. They trust fashion advice from someone they admire or appreciate. Undercover adolescents neither overshadow nor flaunt their appearance, since they tend to blend in and camouflage with their peers. They are not afraid to follow or imitate what their friends are using, and they were found to be common in most socio-economic strata. A participant named Jason represents this value segment quite aptly. Upon returning to Colombia after living abroad for some years, he felt he had to change his wardrobe completely to fit in. He elucidates:

> I went from here to there [United States] when I was 5 years old and found people wearing clothes very differently, Jordan tennis with extravagant tongues, all clothes were wide, all very different, but one must adapt to the new culture and the way they dressed. I arrived here [Colombia] and everyone wore Converse [shoes] with slim jeans with slim cardigans. Then, the extreme change was difficult for me because it was a very extreme change. (Jason, group 16–18, SES 4)

Everywhere Jason goes, he chooses to wear popular local brands since they offer the path of least resistance towards a comfortable life. A person lacking elite branded goods tends to be perceived as easy-going, friendly, and down-to-earth (Chan, 2006). Jason also feels distressed when receiving lots of attention. Despite investing time into looking 'normal' and 'simple', he places high emotional importance on his fashion possessions. For instance, Jason remarks, 'I love tennis shoes, clothes, everything, for me they mean everything; if you do not have clothes you have NOTHING' (Jason,

age 16–18, SES 4). This suggests that fashion products for Jason function as part of himself, communicating his identity. Similarly, Belk (1988) states that our possessions serve as reflections of our identities and are especially valued as self-extensions during adolescence. Accordingly, appearance creates a desired personal front for a social performance and defines the identity of an actor (Goffman, 1959).

#### 4.1.3. Luxury Pink: 'fashion … is drawing attention to you'

Luxury Pink adolescents as a group typically include determined trendsetters and status-seeking teenagers. They are creative, vain, provocative, and challenging. Their highest ranked value is 'excitement', as clothing is equated with 'pleasure'. Apparel is a tool for 'being well respected' and even for arousing envy. Social recognition provides Luxury Pink adolescents with a 'sense of fulfilment'. Their most treasured fashion possessions are unique products and renowned brands, even if they might be popular brands, replicas, or counterfeits. These fashion items embody 'quality' and status. They express the need to compensate for financial restrictions and want to literally 'shine', valuing sexiness while sacrificing material comfort. Here, a typical Luxury Pink female participant explains her goal when dressing herself:

> I like flashy things … I can confirm that I am drawing attention to myself because people stare at me, boys come to me and say that I'm very pretty, ask me where I come from, or that the glitter looks good on me … I know that I'm attracting lots of attention because people ask me 'Are you the birthday girl?' [Laughs] … also because of the way they look at me, people approach me and tell me that I look good and ask me where I have bought them [my clothes] … (Beatriz, age 16–18, SES 2)

Beatriz equates receiving attention from others with gaining their respect. She also has a strong concept of femininity. Beatriz spent nearly 2 hours with her friend in front of her closet listening to music, talking and laughing while trying clothes, applying make-up, and experimenting with various hairdos. The closet functions as a passive protagonist in this teen's drama of apparel consumption and fashion-meaning creation, while the setting represents the backstage of her teenage social performance. This enjoyable grooming session allows them to look more attractive and thereby achieve the differentiation and distinction made possible with fashion (Kawamura, 2005).

Jovanny (age 16–18, SES 2) is also a good example of the Luxury Pink value segment. When referring to his Converse shoes as 'luxury' and 'friends', he shared a detailed story about how this last pair of branded shoes 'died'. Jovanny referred to these shoes as if they were still alive, suggesting a strong attachment to this possession and its role as a self-extension of his identity (Belk, 1988). Based on Fournier's (1998) utilisation of theories of animism to provide insights into how consumers relate to brands, Jovanny's consumer–brand bond can be interpreted as significant since he sees the Converse brand as an active relationship partner in his life performance.

#### 4.1.4. Free Style: 'they all look like "clones," all dressing the same way'

These Free Style teens present themselves as comfortable, relaxed, and honest. They tend to be innovators and early adopters in fashion, seeking freedom and 'fun and enjoyment of life', the latter being their highest ranked value. They dream about having an easy life, travelling, and welcoming 'new experiences' and 'excitement'. As a means of self-expression, they prefer what is dissimilar, not wanting to be labelled or limited in how they dress. They do not want to be subordinated and see themselves as creative humanists, rejecting certain material things. Consequently, Free Style teenagers tend to be the least technologically savvy of all value segments. Since they confront life with authenticity, 'security' and 'self-respect' are important, even if they lead to criticism. Moreover, sports, music, and family are especially meaningful. A strong representative of Free Style comments:

> The more different the people, the more I can learn … It is nonsense, why would I choose to stay here locked up knowing that there are lots of people, lots of ways of looking at life? Why stay with just one? (Lucas, age 16–18, SES 4)

Lucas explains how he likes to be open-minded to new experiences and people, as well as clothing styles. When asked about fashion, Lucas responds, 'What is fashion? I say that for me it is not in the clothes, but in the attitude … .'

Carlos is also a Free Style teenager who has a strong relationship with, interest in, and excitement for his fashion belongings. Carlos achieves the value of 'sense of fulfilment' by becoming involved with fashion and sharing his personal history through clothing. Carlos introduces each garment in his closet as if they were friends. He transforms fashion products and brands into live actors playing interactive roles in his everyday performance. Clothes also provide time to play. Carlos introduces one of his polo shirts and starts playing with it while laughing and saying:

> I like Gef [brand] shirts that can be transformed. This one has the sleeve like this, then, if I put it to the

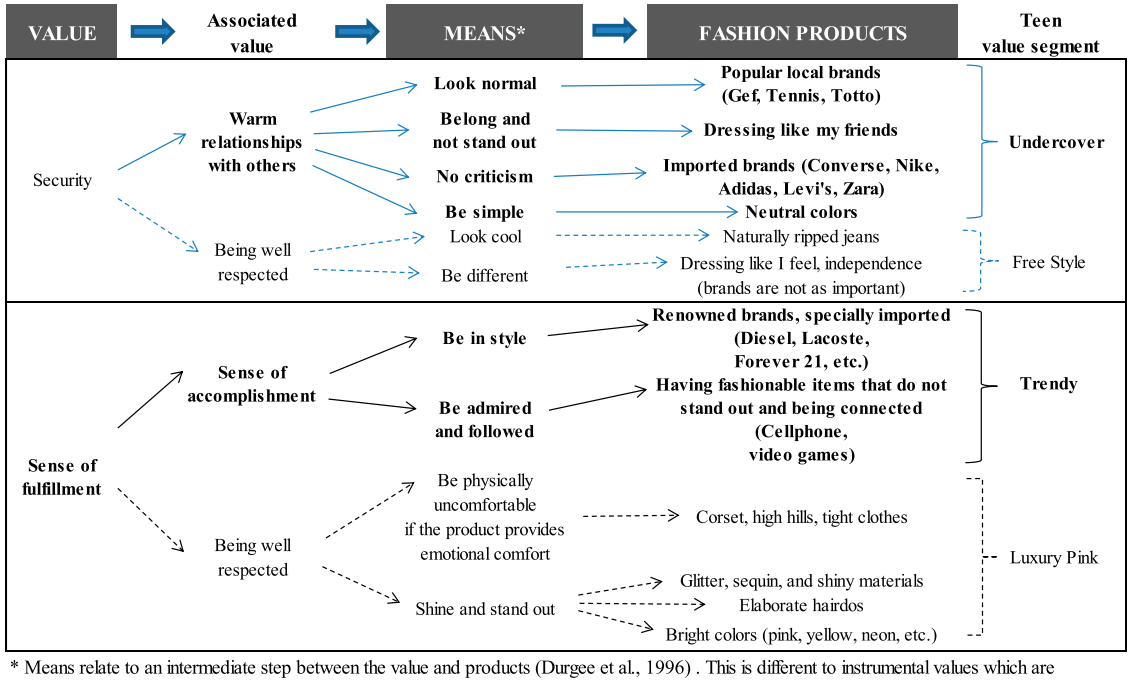
back, then it stays like this. And then, if I take out this other thing and remove the buttons, then it is more bacano [local slang for cool]. (Carlos, age 13–15, SES 2)

### 4.2. Value paradoxes

Data analysis and interpretation – specifically, the means-end–value chain analysis – exposed additional differences in the expression of values across value segments. Paradoxically, these differences initially appeared self-contradictory but ultimately revealed certain truths. Figure 1 supports this explanation by including a chain similar to that of Durgee et al. (1996). The *fashion products* that participants selected as their favourites are indicated in the fourth column. The third column includes the *means* through which participants facilitated and explained the manifestation of their identified *value* (first column). For researchers, an *associated value* (second column) is defined as a value that complements the identified value in the first column. The influence of the associated value determines the means of the value, which sometimes can result in an apparent contradictory expression of that value. For this reason, the means of a value can differ between value segments due to the associated value. In other words, the same value can have different means depending on the associated value of the respective value segment. For the sake of clarity, the values of security and sense of fulfilment in the figure are important but not the highest ranked values that define the segments.

As shown in Figure 1, the value of 'security' is seen as important for both Undercover and Free Style adolescents. However, these two value segments have different associated values. The associated value for the former is described as 'warm relationships with others'; Undercover teenagers feel secure when making safe choices in clothing that help them to adapt, camouflage, and avoid making others feel uncomfortable around them. On the contrary, participants classified as Free Style value 'security' as well as the associated value of 'being well respected.' This implies that wearing what they want regardless of what others think might grant them a sense of safety. Hence, they typically choose products that generate final outcomes such as respect, envy, criticism, and standing out.

Another paradox emerges with the value of 'sense of fulfilment'. Both Trendy and Luxury Pink adolescents give importance to this value but use different means to achieve it. Luxury Pink teenagers frequently sacrifice material comfort in order to become 'well respected', contrary to Trendy teenagers who seek a 'sense of accomplishment' through becoming fashion leaders among their peers. Both Trendy and Luxury Pink adolescents are leaders; however, the former are more eager to have followers, typically gravitating toward safer choices instead of the shiny and risky




* Means relate to an intermediate step between the value and products (Durgee et al., 1996) . This is different to instrumental values which are considered means to achieve terminal values (Rokeach, 1973).

**Figure 1.** Means-end product–value chain with 'associated value'.

outfits worn by the latter. Luxury Pink teenagers achieve a sense of fulfilment by wearing striking clothes, while Trendy teenagers achieve the same results by doing just the opposite and wearing more neutral options.

### 4.3. In what ways does each segment resemble the global consumers?

The field data analysis in all value segments showed that most of the participants in Medellín continually invest great effort into performing their roles as adolescents while emphasising appearance. They demonstrated high involvement with fashion and played their part as social performers seriously. Similar to teens in numerous other countries, they are 'rapidly becoming global consumers, developing tastes similar to those in the developed Western countries' (Park, Burns, & Rabolt, 2007, p. 68). The term of global consumers is not a new one. Since the 1990s, even before the widespread use of the Internet, global Western brands were already using the term to address a critical mass of consumers that was forming worldwide (O'Reilly, 1991). The emergence of this type of consumer is a result of the effects of globalisation (Ammi, 2007). The global consumer usually has global brands, which represent a sense of belonging to the global consumer culture (Okazaki, Mueller, & Taylor, 2010), are highly informed and aesthetically sophisticated (Arnould, 2010), and have technological skills (Malison, 2015). Euromonitor (2011) has suggested that teens rarely have expenses and that their incomes tend to be discretionary. In fact, the main differences between the adolescents in Medellín and the global teens relate to discretionary income and access to branded products, information, and technology.

In order to answer the research question number 4, and based on how the literature describes the global consumer, the researchers identified nine characteristics in the participants that could make them similar to the global consumers. For example, researchers identified that access to global brands was usually achieved by participants who had access to national and international travel, disposable expenditures, and better access to information. Based on interpretation of data, Table 2 presents a comparison of each value segment to the global consumer. The eight characteristics are classified with low (1), medium (2), and (3) high levels per segment. The table includes examples for each characteristic (high/low). The overall mean ratings provide support for the value segments to be classified, to a certain degree, as global consumers. These classifications were mainly based on observational data from the fieldwork, but also from the conversations with the adolescents. For example, a high access to international travel was determined by observing the adolescent's room, among other information collected during the fieldwork. In the case of Amalia (SES 6), a Trendy adolescent, the level of international travel was easily determined by a dragon found in her room, which she brought from a trip to Asia. Table 2 also includes the SES of the participants that were classified in each value segment.

As shown in the table, more similarities to the global teenager were found for value segments with high SES: Trendy and Free Style. These value segments have high access to global brands and international travel. Since they are highly influenced by international fashion trends and brands, the way they dress can be described as aesthetically sophisticated. As these adolescents are proficient in English and have discretionary expenditures, they also have privileged access to information through smartphones, among other means. High SES teens usually belong to double-income families, while lower SES teens tend to come from large, complex, or sometimes non-traditional families that solely rely on one or two minimal wages per household. Lower SES teens mainly belong to the Undercover and Luxury Pink value segments. They have more expenses and hardly any disposable income, leading them to undertake informal paid housework or borrow money in order to achieve aspirational fashion purchases. These adolescents are more likely to have restricted national and international travel and have limited access to global brands. They are more aesthetically influenced by local fashion trends and brands so they can be classified as being less aesthetically sophisticated than other value segments. Consequently, adolescent social performance in relation to fashion can be described via value segments, in which the expression of such values depends greatly on demographic characteristics such as income level. In fact, values 'cannot be understood or efficiently predicted except in the context of a specific environment' (Vinson et al., 1977, p. 45).

Despite their similarities with adolescents around the world, not many participants would be described as global consumers. Among the value segments presented above, Trendy adolescents most closely align with the description of the global consumer, as most of the characteristics in Table 2 have the highest rating (3). On the contrary, the value segment most different to the global consumer is Luxury Pink, with a medium–low mean rating. In addition to demographic differences, culture also affects adolescent performance for many participants. Particularly those classified as Undercover exhibited characteristics common in collectivistic cultures, such as imitating clothing to achieve a sense of belonging. In Table 2, this can be seen as a low level of

**Table 2.** Comparison of each value segment to the global consumer.

| Teen value segment | | Trendy | | Undercover | | Luxury Pink | Free Style | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SES | | 5 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| $n$[a] by SES | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Total $n$ [a] | | 4 | | 6 | | 3 | 3 | |
| Characteristics of the global consumer | Examples from observation or interviews (High/low levels) | Level (1 = Low, 2 = Medium, 3 = High) | | | | | | |
| | | Trendy | | Undercover | | Luxury Pink | Free Style | |
| 1) Discretionary expenditures | **High:** Adolescents would explain activities they do with friends that are somewhat expensive (e.g. eating at Crepes & Waffles) **Low:** 'Sometimes I collect coins for a few weeks so I can purchase a Mayonnaise sachet in the corner store and do a Mayonnaise hair treatment' (Jovanny, SES 2, Luxury Pink) | 3 | | 2 | | 1 | 2 | |
| 2) Access to information | **High:** 'I check my favourite brands online and fashion trends before going to the shopping mall' (Viviana, SES 4, Undercover) **Low:** Low access to Internet | 3 | | 3 | | 2 | 3 | |
| 3) Access to global brands | **High:** Apparel from global brands were found in the adolescent's closet (e.g. Nike, M&M, Adidas) **Low:** No global brands and only counterfeits of global brands were found in the closet | 3 | | 2 | | 2 | 2 | |
| 4) Access to travel | **High:** Objects in the adolescent's room (e.g. stuffed bear) were brought from foreign countries **Low:** No mention of trips | 3 | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | |
| 5) Technological skills | **High:** The adolescent (e.g. Esteban, SES 6, Trendy) is observed using various technological devices (e.g. Xbox) with proficiency **Low:** The adolescent does not have a cell phone or computer at home (Carlos, SES 2, Free Style) | 3 | | 2 | | 2 | 2 | |
| 6) Over-connected consumers | **High:** The adolescent needs to check his smartphone and chat with friends periodically during the fieldwork **Low:** 'I go every week to the Internet Café in the neighbourhood so I can go online' (Beatriz, SES 2, Luxury Pink) | 3 | | 2 | | 1 | 2 | |
| 7) Aesthetically sophisticated | **High:** The way the adolescent dresses is more influenced by international fashion trends **Low:** More influenced by local fashion trends | 3 | | 2 | | 1 | 3 | |
| 8) English as a second language | **High:** Schools in high SES usually include a second language (English) in their curriculums **Low:** It is difficult for the adolescent to pronounce English (e.g. global brands) | 3 | | 2 | | 1 | 2 | |
| 9) Individualistic traits | **High:** Wearing clothing with unique designs **Low:** Wearing popular and local brands | 2 | | 1 | | 3 | 3 | |
| | Total | 26 | | 17 | | 14 | 21 | |
| To what degree is this segment similar to the global consumer? | | (2.88) High | | (1.88) Medium | | (1.55) Medium–low | (2.33) Medium–high | |

[a]Number of participants.

individualistic traits. South Korean and Chinese adolescents similarly show behaviour indicative of collectivistic cultures (Chen-Yu, Hong, & Seock, 2010; Schaefer, Parker, & Hermans, 2009). Hofstede (2003) reported a low individuality score for the Colombian culture, lower than that of South Korea and China. This implies that most participants in the present study, specifically those classified as Undercover, tend to be driven by their sense of belonging to a group and therefore value relationships (Hofstede, 2003). However, despite the

influence of Colombia's collectivistic culture, Free Style and Luxury Pink still exhibited the highest levels of individualistic traits. Free Style appeared to be the most individualistic value segment, since they did not usually consult other people's opinions on how to dress. Luxury Pink teens enjoy being different (an individualistic characteristic) but also place great importance on the opinions of others (a collectivistic characteristic). Consequently, the findings in the present study are similar to those of Parker et al. (2004) and do not support the concept of a global teen, as it relates to the Undercover and Luxury Pink value segments. However, the Trendy and Free Style value segments present various similarities with those of the global teen. This represents opportunities for global brands 'to achieve scale economies through standardized product offerings and common marketing strategies around the world' (Parker et al., 2004, p. 176), including the Colombian market.

## 5. Conclusions

The aim of this ethnographic study was to gain a deeper understanding of adolescents and their relationship to fashion products and brands by identifying value segments. Based on a dramaturgical framework and interpretations of fieldwork data, the findings suggest the drama metaphor to be an appropriate framework by which to describe adolescent participants as consumers in a play. Four value segments described these teens' performances and their relationships with fashion: Trendy, Undercover, Luxury Pink, and Free Style. The highest ranked values per value segment and the means through which they facilitate those values are: The value of 'being well respected' is achieved through being admired (Trendy), 'a sense of belonging' is achieved by connection with others (Undercover), 'excitement' is achieved by standing out (Luxury Pink), and 'fun and enjoyment of life' is achieved by being different (Free Style). The analysis suggests that all value segments show a strong emotional relationship with fashion. According to this segmentation, the values pertaining to 'fun and enjoyment of life', 'excitement', and 'sense of fulfilment' are important to most value segments. Each segment reflects relevant personal values that act as guidelines in the systematic choosing of appearance and the desire for fashion products and brands. This suggests a direct link between their performances and their values, the means to achieve these values, appearances, and concepts of fashion. Some of these emerging market adolescents coincided with global teen stereotypes, but specific contextual influences (e.g. income level) were identified for representing values and fashion wants. Lastly, the understanding of value segments should not be taken lightly. The expression of a single value should be interpreted in relation to other associated values within the same value segment, since paradoxes can be found in the expression of the same value across value segments due to differences in the overall goals of each segment.

This research theoretically extends the dramaturgical theory by explaining how theatre performances are influenced by value systems and fashion. Fashion, culture, and demographics affect the choices of products and brands in relation to an actor's appearance. This deeper examination of differences in the expression of values across value segments provides theoretical contributions. It extends the understanding of values as a system and how an associated value can alter the expression of a value. Although multiple studies have been conducted on values, few have explained how they can influence each other in the choice of fashion products and brands. In terms of managerial implications, these research results can be useful to brands targeting adolescents or appealing to the nostalgia of youth. Marketing managers can also benefit as international advertising campaigns reflecting local cultural values communicate consistency, and therefore are more effective, than those that ignore them (Gregory & Munch, 1997). Brands should decide which value segment(s) to target in order to align their multichannel strategies without overgeneralising the stereotype of the global teen. Finally, findings of this qualitative study are limited to teenagers in Medellín and it may not generalise well to the entire teen population of Colombia because of regional differences. Some opportunities exist for further research on quantifying value segments and conducting empirical examinations in other Colombian cities that include more product categories.

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