Plus-size Fashion Brands: Market, Branding and Fashion Design Collection of baubo
(versão final após defesa)

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Dissertação para obtenção do Grau de Mestre em
Branding e Design de Moda
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Declaração de Integridade

Eu, Maria do Rosário Rodrigues Martins, que abaixo assino, estudante com o número de inscrição M11994 de Branding e Design de Moda da Faculdade de Artes e Letras da UBI (em parceria com o IADE — Universidade Europeia), declaro ter desenvolvido o presente trabalho e elaborado o presente texto em total consonância com o **Código de Integridades da Universidade da Beira Interior**.

Mais concretamente afirmo não ter incorrido em qualquer das variedades de Fraude Académica, e que aqui declaro conhecer, que em particular atendi à exigida referenciação de frases, extratos, imagens e outras formas de trabalho intelectual, e assumindo assim na íntegra as responsabilidades da autoria.

Universidade da Beira Interior / IADE - Universidade Europeia, Covilhã / Lisboa, 2 de agosto de 2024

Maria Martins

”Esse que em mim envelhece
assomou ao espelho
a tentar mostrar que sou eu.

Os outros de mim,
fingindo desconhecer a imagem,
deixaram-me a sós, perplexo,
com meu súbito reflexo.

A idade é isto: o peso da luz
com que nos vemos.”

Mia Couto

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My journey as came to an end, and in this stage, there are people who were crucial and indispensable to ensure my success. In this moment my heart is filled with joy, positivity and self-realization.

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Resumo

O conceito de beleza tem assumido um caráter dinâmico ao longo dos anos, desafiando padrões e funcionando como motor de mudança. Atualmente, o expoente máximo desta mudança centra-se na aceitação, valorização e promoção de corpos plus-size, refletindo uma crescente consciencialização sobre a diversidade corporal. Deste modo, o desenvolvimento de marcas e vestuário direcionados para este segmento de mercado pode promover a autoestima dos consumidores, é certo também que vários obstáculos necessitam de ser ultrapassados, como, por exemplo, a criação e adequação das marcas inclusivas e a sua perceção do consumidor como parte integrante de um nicho de mercado.

O objetivo desta investigação centra-se em conhecer na atualidade e em Portugal como o mercado e imagem das marcas de moda se adaptam a um consumidor plus-size e, identificar atributos importantes para o desenvolvimento de uma marca e coleção para corpos e consumidores plus-size.

Para a recolha de dados, foram utilizadas metodologias qualitativas e quantitativas. Numa primeira fase, para entender as necessidades do consumidor plus-size e a sua perceção do mercado, foi realizado um focus group para conhecer os hábitos de consumo e preferências por determinadas marcas e produtos, obtendo-se informação qualitativa. Numa segunda fase, para posterior análise quantitativa, foram recolhidos dados através da elaboração de um inquérito, para analisar quais as características das marcas e produtos de moda mais importantes para as consumidoras plus-size. Combinadas as duas análises, tornou-se evidente a insatisfação dos consumidores com o atual estado do mercado plus-size, quer pela falta de representação sentida, quer pela ausência de opções que satisfaçam as suas necessidades. Perante a análise dos resultados obtidos, foi apresentada e desenvolvida nesta investigação uma Marca de Moda plus-size e uma coleção cápsula. Assim sendo, a marca ”baubo” e a coleção cápsula ”Womb”, focam-se no conforto e celebram as curvas dos corpos plus-size, através de tons neutros e pastel, materiais de alta qualidade e design inclusivo.

Palavras-chave

Marcas Plus-size; Branding; Comportamento do consumidor; Design de moda.

Abstract

The concept of beauty has taken on a dynamic character over the years, challenging standards and acting as a driver of change. Currently, the pinnacle of this change centers on the acceptance, appreciation, and promotion of plus-size bodies, reflecting a growing awareness of body diversity. Thus, the development of brands and clothing targeted at this market segment can promote consumer self-esteem. However, it is also certain that several obstacles need to be overcome, such as the creation and adaptation of inclusive brands and their perception by consumers as an integral part of a market niche.

The objective of this research is to understand how the market and the image of fashion brands currently adapt to plus-size consumers in Portugal and to identify important attributes for the development of a brand and collection for plus-size bodies and consumers.

For data collection, qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used. In the first phase, to understand the needs of plus-size consumers and their perception of the market, a focus group was conducted to learn about their consumption habits and preferences for certain brands and products, obtaining qualitative information. In the second phase, for subsequent quantitative analysis, data was collected through a survey to analyze which characteristics of fashion brands and products are most important to plus-size consumers. Combining the two analyses, it became evident that consumers are dissatisfied with the current state of the plus-size market, both due to a perceived lack of representation and the absence of options that meet their needs. Based on the analysis of the results obtained, a plus-size fashion brand and a capsule collection were presented and developed in this research. Thus, the brand ”baubo” and the capsule collection ”Womb” focus on comfort and celebrate the curves of plus-size bodies through neutral and pastel tones, high-quality materials, and inclusive design.

Keywords

Plus-size Brands; Branding; Consumer behaviors; Fashion design.

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Nomenclature

Acronyms

NHS	National Health Service
UBI	Universidade da Beira Interior
NAAFA	National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance
BMI	Body Mass Index
WHO	World Health Organization
INSA	Instituto Nacional de Saúde Doutor Ricardo Jorge
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
EU	Europe
BBW	Big Beautiful Woman
MVV	Mission, Vision, Values

Chapter 1

Introduction

Since we know fashion, the female body has been subject to beauty standards and stereotypes, submitted to aesthetic oppression throughout history, the corset, the silhouette. However, while contributing to construction, fashion also has it is ways of breaking its paradigms, such as the plus-size segment.

In 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) affirmed that there are 2.1 billion overweight people, which represents almost 30% of the world population. The increase in people considered obese in the last three decades has occurred in all regions and is considered a public health problem in both rich and poor countries. In Portugal, a study carried out in 2015 by the Instituto Nacional de Saúde Doutor Ricardo Jorge (INSA), published on the website of the National Health Service (NHS), indicated that 38.9% of the adult population (25 to 74 years old) were overweight and 28.7% were obese. The increase in the overweight population has an impact on all sectors, one of them the fashion industry [1].

In the fashion industry, the diversity of bodies has not yet settled definitively on the catwalks, but slowly the world is witnessing changes, in the way brands see women's bodies. Body positivity is a phrase that, in recent years, has become common in fashion, affecting all ramifications in this industry. The social movement focused on the acceptance of all bodies encourages self-acceptance and questions the idea of the ideal body imposed by contemporary society [2, 3].

New fashion lines have appeared and become more and more inclusive with this new wave of positivity, frequently the moniker ”Curve” has been used to fill the negative words that were used to describe voluptuous bodies. One of the first ways to characterize in a non-pejorative way was plus-size, which today is often used in a widespread form. To characterize a range of models, a category of products, the physiognomy of a body, and a type of consumer. In a literal translation plus-size means bigger size and this term is used in fashion to classify people who wear clothes size 42 or 46 and more, depending on the chart of the country where the clothes were made from.

Seeing the enormous potential of the plus-size fashion market, plus-size professionals may indeed have contributed to normalizing the stigma associated with weight and obesity. Not only have clothes for bigger bodies been altered to flatter curvy women but changing clothing size labeling skew consumers' perceptions of size. In the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), “vanity sizing” or size inflation, whereby clothing manufacturers label clothes smaller than the actual cut, is widely worked on. While purchasing a small size tag helps promote self-esteem and self-esteem imagery, conceited value can lead to a misperception of weight status and, consequently, actions to reduce weight [2, 4].

Unfortunately, not all markets recognize the plus-size consumer or are ready to satisfy their needs. In some ways, the variation of the clothing sizing systems, due to cultural norms and consumer preferences of each country or region, do not help the consumers to guide themselves when buying clothes. The brands installed in the Portugal market or with Portuguese origins are trying to change, but they are not adapting to the speed of the larger plus-size fashion markets, such as the United States of America, Brazil, and the United Kingdom [5].

1.1 Motivation

In recent years, the market has seen more and more plus-size fashion, and with this work, I intend to analyze whether this phenomenon is here to stay or whether it is just an event passing that sooner or later will be forgotten. I intend to present the emergence of the term plus-size and its evolution throughout history. It is possible to see that this term has changed in the last two decades in terms of its meaning and application and at times it causes doubts in people. By understanding the origins of plus-size, and how it is currently used, I will be able to study the behavior of this consumer, and how they are often neglected. The body-positive social movement brought a wave of acceptance to the world of fashion, forcing it to bring plus-size models to the catwalks and recognize their value in the media. These changes are seen all over the world, but in some countries, there is resistance to accepting that these consumers exist, and they no longer accept being overlooked. Many recognized fashion brands on the market are starting to increase their size range and include plus-size, but there are increasing clothing sizes and not adapting to larger bodies. The study of plus-size consumer behavior in Portugal will allow us to characterize them and learn about their problems, from their body physiognomies to their tastes and preferences. Also, through this study, we can understand how they see the fashion market, which brands satisfy their needs, and which ones are not being satisfied. Through this work, companies can improve their brands and adapt products aimed at plus-size consumers.

1.2 Objectives of the Dissertation and Research Questions

The plus-size consumer can no longer be neglected by fashion brands, as they occupy a very significant space in the fashion market and contribute substantially to business volume. This investigation aims to understand Portuguese plus-size consumers and identify their issues. The table bellow summarizes the research questions and the objectives of this work.

The first objective is to understand the historical evolution of the plus-size consumer and determine if the current impacts on the fashion industry are permanent. Additionally, it is necessary to analyze certain beauty standards that continue to be perpetuated in fashion communication, as well as movements such as ”body positive” that empower women. Understanding the fluctuations over time is crucial to assess how brands are evolving in this era, whether they are adapting, and what challenges they face.

It is also important to understand the visibility and impact of this issue in Portugal and compare it with the impact in other countries. In the first part of this work, a focus group will be conducted, which will also serve as guidance for preparing a survey to gain further insights into the plus-size consumer living in Portugal. With this detailed information, a brand targeting this consumer demographic will be created.

Table 2: Research questions and objectives.

Research questions	Objetives
1. How is the market adapting to meet the needs of plus-size customers?	- Historically examine the origin and development of the term plus-size and the characteristics of individuals who fall under this category. - Study the evolution of brands regarding sizes. - Study the plus-size body characteristics.
2. How does the individual see the plus-size image?	- Study how the plus-size body is seen in the media. - Understand the different receptivity to the plus-size body image before and after COVID 19. - Study how brands have adapted to new eras of inclusion in fashion
3. What are the most important characteristics for the development of Fashion collections for plus-size bodies?	- Examine the brands that focus on meeting the needs of plus-size consumers. - Understand and develop clothing that favors the body of the plus-size consumer. - Create a brand and develop a capsule collection that meets the needs of plus-size consumers identified during the studies.

1.3 Purposes of the Dissertation

Plus-size fashion has played a crucial role in promoting body acceptance and breaking stereotypical beauty standards. This subject helped create a paradigm shift, emphasizing the idea that all people deserve to feel confident, beautiful, and comfortable in their bodies, regardless of size. Despite advances in the representation of plus-size bodies in the media and fashion industry, there is still a need for greater diversity and inclusion in advertising campaigns, fashion shows, and on the catwalk. Discrimination and stigma towards larger bodies persist in many aspects of society, which can affect people’s self-esteem and confidence. There isn’t always a wide enough variety of styles, designs, and fashion options for plus-size, which can limit consumers’ choices. The lack of standardization in plus-size clothing sizes across different brands can be confusing and frustrating for consumers, making it difficult to find pieces that fit correctly, and some brands charge higher prices for larger sizes, which is unfair and limits access to stylish, well-fitting clothing for everyone.

1.4 Dissertation Structure

The study begins with the introduction of the topic addressed, contextualizing it, and presenting the research question, as well as the intended objectives. From this point on, the thesis will be divided into five chapters.

- Chapter 2 - Includes a literature review and a detailed investigation into historical moments when plus-size consumers stood out and beauty standards influenced society. It also covers how brands are adapting to the demands of these consumers in the fashion market and how society perceives these bodies across various communication channels. In this chapter, there is an analysis of the representation of plus-size bodies in these channels, both generally and specifically in Portugal.

- Chapter 3 – Consists of methodology, which includes the explaining of both exploratory and quantitative research. A market study will be conducted to understand how the population views inclusion regarding plus-size bodies.

- Chapter 4 – At this stage, the results obtained from the focus group and the survey are analyzed. During the focus group, the topic addressed will be ”plus-size Consumer Behavior,” focusing on their perception of the market as consumers of plus-size fashion. In the survey, the objective will be to understand whether the information obtained during the focus group also reflects in more plus-size consumers. The insights regarding the survey gathered will be used to create a capsule collection with clothing that flatters this body type.

- Chapter 5- Brand Project and Capsule Collection, contains the creative process of building a brand and the development and creation of the brand, "baubo", with a Capsule Collection that contemplates eight looks, targeting plus-size consumers.

- Chapter 6- consist in the conclusions and future work, in this phase are contemplated the challenges encountered in the research and some aspects to be explored in the future regarding the plus-size consumer.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

It is important to analyze changes in the fashion industry related to the inclusion of different sizes. The dissertation investigates the psycho-social impact of plus-size fashion on self-esteem and self-image, by assessing how brands are responding to the growing demand for plus-size fashion. By understanding consumers' perceptions and experiences regarding plus-size fashion in the world and in Portugal, it is possible to preview future consumption behaviors. By addressing these topics, the dissertation can contribute to a more holistic understanding of the Portugal female plus-size consumer and promote meaningful discussions about the evolving concept of beauty and inclusivity in the fashion industry.

2.1 History of Plus-size and Beauty Patterns

The understanding of body size and beauty ideals is influenced by cultural and historical factors. What is considered attractive or healthy can vary widely across different societies and time periods [4]. If we look to the past, it is possible to see the change in beauty standards over the centuries. In Figure 1 it is visible the inclusion of different bodies. The plus-size body has already been considered ideal in different periods of history, in prehistory, voluptuous bodies, with large breasts and hips, were a symbol of fertility. In the Renaissance Period, a fat body was associated with a wealthy life related to wealth. In the painting "The Birth of Venus" from 1485, which can be seen in Figure 1 by Botticelli, the representation of a curvilinear woman is visible [6].

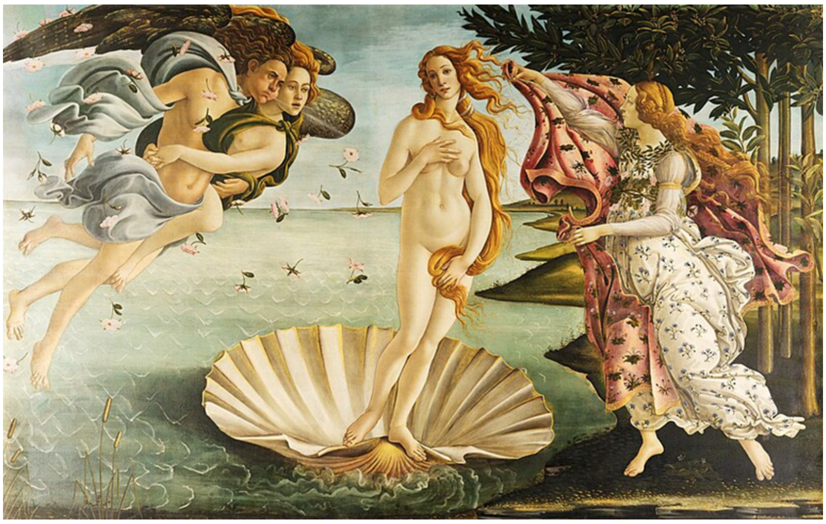

Figure 1: The born of Venus, painting by Sandro Botticelli [6]

It was from the XVII century onward that the ideal female body began to demand more delicate shapes with thin waists shaped by corsets, as illustrated in Figure 2. In the following century, for a short time, this garment fell into disuse with the appearance of the bra. The appearance of fins allowed greater flexibility to the piece and put the use of the corset back in fashion.

Figure 2: Corset from the XVII [7]

In the XVIII century, differences between social classes and hunger spread throughout the world, so at the time a well-nourished body was a sign of great possession. Women from the wealthier classes had robust forms, while those who experienced financial difficulties had thin bodies, punished by hunger. This social impact brought back the standard of beauty from the Renaissance period, bringing back the corset, which transformed the slim silhouette and left the hips wide.

Lillian Russell (Figure 3) and Theda Bara (Figure 4) were female sex symbols between the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century. Both women had voluminous bodies, which nowadays would be considered outside of beauty standards [6].

Figure 3: Lillian Russell, actress, and singer, known as the American beauty in 1900 [8]

The term plus-size was first used in 1920 by Lane Bryant. In 1904 she opened her first store, where she produced and sold maternity clothes. Around the 1920s, Bryant noticed a big gap in the market, robust women were being ignored by the big manufacturers, so they had to resort to ateliers. More than 4,500 of her customers were measured and with that she developed a clothing line with good quality for women outside of standard measurements [6].

Figure 4: Theda Bara, actress in the movie Cleopatra in 1917 [9].

From 1922, the brand's catalogs (Figure 5) featured the "Misses plus-size", spreading the term. Bryant's success was so great that, a few years later, almost all department stores in the United States started to offer plus-size coats and dresses in their catalogs. In 1930, the Evans brand appeared in the United Kingdom, with a proposal similar to that of Lane Bryant, which took on a global reach.

At that time, the term plus-size was used to describe clothes and not people. Women were usually described as robust and, in very few cases, "chubby". The expression plus-size women was used for the first time only in 1953, in an advertisement for the Korrel brand. This announcement was the watershed, marking the exact moment when the term began to be applied to designated people, a custom maintained until today [6].

Medicine in the mid-19th century started to have an impact on the construction of beauty ideals, at this time several health manuals were published indicating the need to perform physical exercises to achieve an "ideal" body, these manuals presented physical exercises for the whole family, starting the relationship between health and physical appearance in several generations. It was at this time that beauty standards began to vary between almost extreme thinness and a curvy body, this image was reinforced by the average, and little by little it

Figure 5: Lane Bryant catalogs from the 1920s [10]

became a worldwide obsession [6]

During the '70s and the '90s there was a significant increase in plus-size fashion, especially in the USA, this phenomenon occurred because the population born after the Second World War grew and an increase became visible, in average weight, going from 63.6 kilos to 74.5 kilos. Consequently, it brought an increase of around two sizes in the female mannequin and brands slowly began to follow this change by providing quality clothing that fit the body well [11]. Mama Cass Elliot (Figure 6) was a famous singer and represented the shift in sizes in the USA.

In the 1970s, with the increase in women's participation in the job market, there was significant growth in the women's magazine market. During this period, magazines emerged that portrayed women not only as housewives or mothers but also as professionals in search of personal and professional fulfillment. As a result of this movement towards broader and more diverse representation of women, in 1979 the first American magazine dedicated to fashion and style for the plus-size audience was launched, called Big Beautiful Woman (BBW Magazine). This magazine was a pioneer in focusing on women with clothing sizes beyond the standard established by the fashion industry, regularizing and celebrating the beauty and diversity of bodies.

The creation of BBW Magazine was an important milestone in the fashion industry, as it contributed to a more inclusive and positive representation of different body types, challenging the stereotypical beauty standards prevalent in the media at the time. This initiative reflected a progressive shift toward flexibility and appreciation of diversity in body shapes and sizes [11].

Figure 6: American pop singer Mama Cass Elliot, an icon of plus-size style in the 70s [12].

Mary Duffy (Figure 7) is a feminist fashion expert, spokeswoman, entrepreneur, author, and motivational speaker who has worked to expand the concept of beauty for most women who do not fit the ideal stereotypes popularized by the entertainment and fashion industries. In 1984, she founded Big Beauties / Little Women in New York, the first plus-size modeling agency in the world, in 1988 it was sold to Ford Models, and today she owns Fashion for the Rest of Us, a company that informs and encourages the self-esteem interests of all women [6].

Figure 7: Mary Duffy [13].

Italian brand Miroglio, with Elena Miró, played a crucial role in promoting plus-size fashion in Europe, showing that women with curves deserve representation and recognition in the fashion industry [14]. Created in 1984, today it has 11 brands, five of which are dedicated to large sizes. It was the first in Europe, specializing in this segment, to walk the catwalk at Milan Fashion Week, in 2005.

In 1980 the Italian Max Mara Fashion Group launched a specific brand for plus-size women, Marina Rinaldi. The brand created a concept of luxury and elegance for women with non-standard measurements ranging from sizes 42 to 58 and defines "style is not a size, it is an attitude", as a slogan that transformed it into one of Max Mara's most powerful brands in the Group [15].

The late 1990s marked a significant shift in the fashion and modeling industry regarding body inclusivity and the representation of plus-size models. Emme, Melissa Owens Miller born Melissa Owens Miller; on June 30, 1963, is recognized as one of the pioneers in the plus-size modeling movement, played a crucial role in challenging the traditional standards of beauty prevalent in the industry at that time [16, 17].

Figure 8: Representation of plus-size women in magazines [16].

In the early 2000s diet culture and weight, stigma were very strong, and the media promoted it, for two and half decades it was very common for women to want to put themselves at that level and during this process, they acquired eating disorders [18].

To this day, the Lane Bryant brand operates in the segment, with inspiring campaigns (Figure 9) that showcase women with real bodies.

Ashley Graham indeed played a significant role in challenging traditional beauty standards and pushing for greater inclusivity in the fashion industry, particularly for plus-size women.

Figure 9: Lane Bryant 2016 campaign with plus-size models [19].

The involvement in Marina Rinaldi's 2017 campaign was a pivotal moment in the fashion industry. Marina Rinaldi is a luxury plus-size fashion brand, and having Ashley Graham as the face of their campaign was a statement that plus-size models could be just as glamorous and fashionable as their straight-size counterparts. This campaign contributed to changing perceptions about plus-size fashion.

In the same year, the model made history by becoming the first plus-size model to walk the runway at a Victoria's Secret fashion show. This was a groundbreaking moment for the brand, which had previously been criticized for its lack of diversity and limited representation of body types. Graham's inclusion marked a step toward greater inclusivity in the modeling industry. There has been a notable increase in media representation of women with plus-size bodies, in recent years. This shift has been driven by both consumer demand for more diverse and realistic portrayals of beauty and the efforts of models like Ashley Graham who have been vocal advocates for body positivity. More brands have recognized the demand for stylish clothing in extended size ranges and have expanded their offerings to cater to a wider range of body sizes. This includes not only expanding their product lines but also collaborating with plus-size influencers and models to reach a broader audience. As a result, the plus-size fashion industry has become a lucrative market worth billions.

The plus-size market experienced growth in 2020, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this growth represents 10% than the previous year. During the pandemic, people spent more time at home, which led to a preference for comfortable and casual clothing. Plus-size fashion brands may have adapted to this demand by offering comfortable yet stylish options. With physical stores facing restrictions and lockdowns due to the pandemic, many consumers turned to online shopping. E-commerce platforms offer a wide range of clothing options, including plus-size fashion, making it easier for people to access these products. Some fashion brands and retailers have implemented marketing strategies and initiatives specifically targeting the plus-size market. This can include advertising campaigns featuring plus-size models and influencers, as well as collaborations with well-known figures in the plus-size community [20].

However, the fact that this representation appears to have declined in 2023 suggests that for some brands, it may have been a short-lived marketing strategy rather than a genuine commitment to inclusivity. The preference for slim models never truly changed within the fashion industry. Some brands may have embraced diversity temporarily as a marketing tactic to appeal to a wider audience, but once they achieved their desired status or saw that it was no longer as profitable, they reverted to their old practices.

Despite these setbacks, it's important to note that there have been significant strides in promoting inclusivity in fashion, driven in part by the activism of "Generation Z" and changing societal attitudes. These changes may lead to a more permanent and inclusive shift in the haute couture industry. younger generations have been vocal advocates for diversity and inclusion in fashion and other industries. Their continued efforts and demands for representation can contribute to pushing fashion brands to embrace more inclusive standards [21].

2.2 Body Image

A person's perception of what is "beautiful or ugly" is considered subjective and can change depending on cultures, countries, or historical moments. The adoption of a single concept of beauty, in addition to being restrictive, can reinforce feelings of contempt and prejudice towards all forms of aesthetic presentation that are different from what was chosen and determined as beautiful.

In the book BEAUTY, Mukrimaa made a point of logic in which people associated beauty with their efforts and the absence would be incomprehensible, they measure it and find it essential for their life. He also describes the body as an assembly of parts, made of flesh and when it comes to a beautiful body, is a tangible and visible form of an idea, quality, and feeling [22].

"men appreciate women for their beauty just as much as if not more than, women appreciate men; that women too are active in the production of beauty, both in art and in everyday life; that people associate beauty with their highest endeavors and aspirations, are disturbed by its absence, and regard a measure of aesthetic agreement as essential for life in society" [22].

In the excerpt above taken from the book BEAUTY, aesthetic agreement or shared appreciation of beauty can contribute to social cohesion and a sense of belonging within a community or society. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that perceptions of beauty can be diverse, and not everyone may share the same aesthetic preferences.

"When we speak of a beautiful human body, we are referring to the beautiful embodiment of a person, and not to a body considered merely as such". [22].

When Scruton [22] refers to a beautiful human body, it extends beyond conventional aesthetic standards. Beauty, in this context, encompasses the expression, uniqueness, and lived experiences of the individual embodied within. It emphasizes the idea that the beauty of a person's body goes beyond surface appearances, reflecting their character, experiences, emotions, and essence as a whole.

Friendman described body image as a personal perception and judgment of the size, shape, and weight when compared with another that is visually more appealing. It can be influenced by individual feelings, thoughts, and attitudes about their own bodies. Body image is often subjective, meaning it varies from person to person and can be influenced by cultural, societal, and personal factors [23].

Both Clark et al. [3] and Friedman [23] explained that body image is described as the way an individual sees themselves in terms of their appearance and how they feel about their own body. It can encompass both positive and negative aspects, including self-esteem, self-worth, and the desire for changes in one's appearance. It's important to note that body image can be a complex and sensitive topic, and it's influenced by a wide range of factors, including media representations of beauty, peer comparisons, family attitudes, and personal experiences. Exposure to weight-related stigma on social media is associated with various negative outcomes, including increased energy intake, a higher likelihood of binge eating, reduced adherence to weight loss treatments, and decreased engagement in physical activity. In addition to discussing the influence of social media, it is visible a variation in weight stigma across different racial/ethnic groups. Black men and women, report lower weight internalization compared to their white counterparts. However, the coping mechanisms and internalization processes may differ among racial and ethnic groups, adding complexity to the understanding of weight stigma.

In the book Body, Myth Fiedman also explains that people often mistake their belief in self-worth and others' worth based on how their body looks, what they weigh, and what they eat. Adjectives such as fat, short, bald, and redheaded are what describe a body, and the current culture uses the word fat to insult or belittle. Unfortunately, the term overweight is used as a substitute, but this word reinforces harmful body myths about weight and diet [23].

The National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) was founded in 1969 and is a non-profit organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of fat individuals. It is often considered one of the earliest and most prominent organizations in the fat acceptance movement. NAAFA's primary mission is to promote body positivity, challenge weight-based discrimination, and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society for people of all body sizes.

Over the years, NAAFA has engaged in various activities and initiatives aimed at raising awareness about the issues faced by fat people, including advocating for fair treatment in healthcare, employment, and public spaces. They have also provided resources and support for individuals dealing with weight-related discrimination and body image issues. Therefore, it is impossible not to relate the movement to what is plus-size and everything that surrounds it. The movement seeks to make women and men see their bodies positively and feel good about them, wearing clothes that value them, without shame and discomfort. The organization's goals are centered around promoting acceptance and equality for people of all sizes and challenging societal biases and prejudices against fat individuals. NAAFA does not promote or encourage unhealthy lifestyles but rather focuses on advocating for the fair treatment and respect of individuals regardless of their body size [24].

"As adult women, we have come to live under the terms of a widely accepted Body Myth: that the answer to life's meaning and challenges lies in our body's appearance. We believe that our self-worth (and our worth to others) is (and ought to be) based on how we look, what we weigh, and what we eat. This book reveals why and how body image, appetite, and hunger have become so central to women's lives. The voices and stories of real women in this book expose the deep pain and disruption brought on by body image crises" [23].

Dr. Wolf explores the societal pressures and cultural norms that have led many adult women to place an excessive emphasis on their physical appearance, body image, eating habits, and weight. She argues that this preoccupation with appearance has a significant impact on women's self-esteem and their perception of their own worth. She also suggests that women have been conditioned to believe that their value and meaning in life are closely tied to how they look and what they eat. This "Body Myth" creates a constant struggle for women to meet unrealistic beauty standards, leading to body image crises and emotional distress. To support her arguments, Dr. Wolf includes the voices and stories of real women in her book. These personal accounts serve to illustrate the emotional pain and disruption that can result from the societal pressures related to body image and appearance. "The Body Myth" is part of a broader conversation about body image, feminism, and the impact of societal expectations on women's lives. It encourages readers to critically examine these cultural norms and consider how they affect individual well-being and self-worth [23].

Today in the digital world there are more and more content creators who define themselves as plus-size and have legions of followers, affirming themselves as body-positive. Accompanied by women who appreciate looks created around a voluptuous silhouette, they are a source of inspiration for the female population with similar contours. Individuals from all walks of life can find representation on social media, where they can share their stories, perspectives, and experiences. This has given a platform to marginalized voices that may not have been heard otherwise [23].

However, not all countries react the same way, in some places this subject has a slow reaction and it's still manifested in a rogue way. Being body-positive means accepting your body, not conformism. Dissatisfaction is part of human nature, so the goal is to be aware that there are some parts of the body we don't like so much, but even so, we choose to accept them instead of hating them [25].

This movement demystifies that "perfect body" that is often shown around. Women and men have different bodies, each with their characteristics, and they can, and should love them, without hiding, while living free from the "rules" that society has imposed on the beautiful being just the voluptuous and thin [26].

Body-positivity encourages individuals to shift their mindset from self-criticism and self-hate to self-acceptance and self-compassion.

It's about recognizing that everyone has imperfections or things they might want to change but choosing to love and respect your body as it is while working towards a healthier and more positive relationship with it. It's also about challenging and questioning the unrealistic beauty standards perpetuated by society and the media and understanding that there's no one-size-fits-all definition of beauty [27].

"Previous experimental studies revealed that exposure to beauty advertisements depicting plus-size models improve women's body image via downward comparisons" [28].

Promoting body positivity can have a significant impact on mental and emotional well-being, helping individuals build confidence, reduce self-criticism, and foster a more positive and healthy relationship with their bodies. Women who see other women, mainly plus-size in advertisements, help them accept themselves.

This movement called body-positive, encourages stores to invest in plus-size clothing and promotes body positivity and self-acceptance. When people of all sizes can find stylish and comfortable clothing, it sends a powerful message that their bodies are valued and respected. Plus-size individuals have the same desire for fashionable clothing as anyone else. By offering trendy options, stores can tap into a market eager for stylish choices.

In the book FASHIONING FAT, Czerniawski [4] describes that we sometimes associate the word "fat", "overweight" and "obese", but plus-size is not measured in absolute terms, as there are some inconsistencies when we try to categorize the modeling and retail industries. clothing She describes it as the plus-size category defined by the industry itself. This is consistent with the idea that the fashion industry has historically had narrow standards of beauty and body size, often excluding individuals who do not fit into these standards. The concept of plus-size in the fashion world can be fluid and subjective, making it challenging for individuals who do not conform to traditional beauty norms to find clothing that fits and is designed with their bodies in mind [4].

2.3 Plus-size Consumers

2.3.1 Plus-size

The concept of plus-size fashion has evolved over time. While larger-sized clothing has always been available, the terminology and emphasis on plus-size fashion have gained more attention in recent years. The history and trajectory of plus-size fashion is indeed an interesting subject, reflecting changing societal norms, fashion industry dynamics, and the growing recognition of the importance of body diversity and inclusivity.

“Instead of expressions like ”fat, unhealthy”, they start to use language that includes a variety of people. When we look at the meaning of the word plus-size, we see the explanation of ”measurements over standard size”.” [29]

Language plays a significant role in shaping perceptions and attitudes. Shifting from stigmatizing terms like ”fat” or ”unhealthy” to more inclusive language is part of a broader movement toward body positivity and inclusivity. This change in terminology reflects a more diverse and accepting approach to body sizes and shapes [29].

The term plus-size typically refers to clothing sizes that are larger than the standard or regular sizes, which are often based on a set of measurements and proportions. These standard sizes have evolved and are influenced by factors like historical trends, the sizing practices of major brands, and regional variations. There isn’t a single global standard for sizing in the fashion industry.

Even with the growth of these market segments, it is still necessary to point out that the so-called plus-size fashion is something recent, however, large-size clothes have always been sold, albeit on a smaller scale. About thirty years ago, plus-size fashion was not called that, and currently, there is still some confusion regarding its spelling. What would be correct would be plus-size, plussize, or plus size? Regardless of the answer, there are more and more reports on news portals and academic research on the topic, which shows that there has been an increase in interest in this area of fashion, both on the part of researchers and market professionals [29].

“Plus-size clothing is referred to as oversized clothing for overweight people. It is recommended for several body types and sizes, which vary from country to country.” [30]

Table 3: Clothing size chart for women [31].

France	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
UK	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
USA	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32

Plus-size clothing is designed to accommodate individuals with larger body sizes and is not necessarily synonymous with ”oversized” clothing. It is created to provide comfortable and stylish options for people who may have body types that differ from what is considered standard or ”straight” sizes in the fashion industry. Plus-size clothing typically encompasses a range of sizes that go beyond the standard sizes found in most clothing stores. The specific sizing labels and definitions can indeed vary from country to country and brand to brand, but generally, plus-size clothing is designed for individuals who wear sizes larger than what is considered standard [32]. This can include sizes like 1X, 2X, 3X, 4X, 5X, and 6X. In some cases, there are extended sizes like 7X and above to cater to even larger body types. It’s important to note that the labeling and size ranges can differ between countries and brands. For instance, in the UK, plus-size clothing may encompass sizes from UK 16 to UK 28, while in the United States, sizes like 14W, 16W, 18W, and up are often considered plus-size [30].

The emergence and recognition of the plus-size segment in the fashion industry, encompassing women who wear clothing sizes labeled at or above certain thresholds (such as 12 in the UK, 42 in the EU, and 44 in Brazil) [30].

“Typically, the industry considers anything over a woman’s size eight as plus-size.” [4]

The fashion industry often uses the term plus-size to describe models who are considered larger than the industry’s standards. According to the fashion industry, anything over a size eight is considered plus-size. The definition of plus-size in the modeling industry often differs significantly from the cultural perception of a ”fat” woman [33].

The term plus-size typically refers to models who wear clothing sizes above a certain threshold, which is often considered anything above a size eight. This definition doesn’t necessarily align with what most casual observers might consider as plus-size or ”fat”. Many plus-size models in the fashion industry can be of what the public might perceive as an ”average” size and weight. According to retail industry estimates, the average American woman weighs around 72.6 kg and wears a size fourteen, which is considered plus-size in the fashion world. These models may appear average to ordinary consumers but are categorized as plus-size within the fashion industry. It’s worth noting that even within the fashion industry, there are often strict and sometimes extreme standards regarding body size and shape. For example, some designers have been known to terminate contracts with models who are deemed ”too fat” by industry standards, despite these models being within what many would consider a healthy weight range. The term plus-size in the modeling industry is defined differently from the cultural image of a ”fat” woman. It often includes models who may appear average to everyday consumers but are categorized as plus-size by fashion industry standards, which can sometimes be highly demanding in terms of body size and shape [34].

O termo plus-size (do inglês “tamanho grande”) é na moda utilizado para adjetivar um perfil de consumidor.” [35] [1]

The term plus-size is used in fashion to describe a consumer profile that wears clothing sizes

[1]The term plus-size is fashionably used to adjective a consumer profile.

larger than those considered typical in conventional fashion collections. This term was created to categorize inclusive fashion, catering to a wide variety of body sizes and types. It aims to promote acceptance of body diversity and encourage self-esteem in people who wear larger sizes [35].

The fashion industry has traditionally labeled sizes 0-12 (AU 0-16) as ”straight sizes” and anything beyond as plus-size, but this classification doesn’t accurately represent the diverse body sizes of women. An option suggests that sizes 0-12 (AU 0-16) should be labeled as ”petite,” sizes 12-18 (AU 16-22) as ”straight,” and sizes 20-30 (AU 24-34) as ”plus” [36].

Clothing sizes can vary from country to country, and there is no universal standard for plus-sizes. The starting point for what is considered a plus-size can indeed differ depending on the region. According to [37], variations in sizing standards can sometimes lead to confusion for shoppers, especially when they are shopping for clothing from different countries or regions.

- In the UK, the starting point for plus-size is often considered to be size 10.
- In the United States, plus-size are often designated with a ”W” (for example, 14W) and typically start around size 14.
- In France, plus-size might start at size 42.
- In Germany, it’s common for plus-size to begin around size 40.
- In Australia, plus-size might begin at size 16.

These variations can be attributed to differences in clothing sizing systems, cultural norms, and consumer preferences in each country or region. Consumers need to be aware of these differences when shopping for clothing internationally, as sizes may not always directly translate from one country to another. Additionally, many clothing brands and retailers provide sizing charts and guidance to help customers find the right fit for their body type, regardless of the sizing system used. The following tables (Table 3, Table 4,Table 5, Table 6 and Table 7) show the variation in sizes according to country and region [37].

Tables 3, Table 4 and Table 5 show that EU clothing sizes to USA standards can be tricky due to variations between manufacturers, and in addition the different styles. However, here is a general guideline, but this information is not absolute, and it can change from brand to brand or in the retailer size information.

Women’s Clothing:

- EU Size 40: This is roughly equal to a US Size 10.

Table 4: International dress measurements [37].

USA/CAN	USA/Later	UK/AUS	Europe	Italy	Portu-gal/Spain/France	Japan
2	X-Small	6	32	38	34	7
4	Samall	8	34	40	36	9
6	Small	10	36	42	38	11
8	Medium	12	38	44	40	13
10	Medium	14	40	46	42	15
12	Large	16	42	48	44	17
14	Large	18	44	50	46	19
16	XL/1X	20	46	52	48	21
18	1X/2X	22	48	54	50	23
20	2X	24	50	56	52	25
22	3X	26	52	58	54	27
24	4X	28	54	60	56	29

Table 5: Double sizes [37].

USA/CAN	UK/AUS	Europe
XXS	XS	XS
XS	S	S
S	M	M
M	L	L
L	XL	XL
XL	XXL	XXL

Table 6: Shirts, coats, and blazers sizes [37].

Later	USA/Canada	UK	Europe	Japan
XXS	30	30	40	32
XS	32	32	42	34
S	34	34	44	36
S	36	36	46	38
M	38	38	48	40
M	40	40	50	42
L	42	42	52	44
L	44	44	54	46
XL	46	46	56	48
XXL	48	48	58	50
XXXL	50	50	60	52

- EU Size 42: This is approximately a USA Size 12.
- EU Size 44: This is close to a USA Size 14.
- EU Size 46: This is around a USA Size 16.
- EU Size 48: This is roughly equal to a US Size 18 [38].

Table 7: European size chart for women [38].

International	USA Women's Size	EU Size Women's	UK Size women's
XS	0	30	4
XS	2	32	6
XS	4	34	8
S	6	36	10
S	8	38	12
M	10	40	14
M	12	42	16
L	14	44	18
L	16	46	20
XL	18	48	22
XL	20	50	24
XXL	22	52	26
XXL	24	54	28

USA to EU Pant Sizes Women's are the same as the US to EU Jean Size Women's (Table 7), conversions vary slightly between different brands or designers due to differences in sizing standards. Some brands use different sizing systems altogether, elaborating a specific brand's size chart, making it more difficult for customs to understand their size. In Table 8, it is illustrated different pants sizes for women.

Table 8: USA to EU women's pant and jeans size [38].

Women's Pant Size	Pant Size	International Size	EU Pant Size	Women's Waist (cm)
00	23/24	XXS	28	58.42-63.5
0	25	XXS	30	63.5-66.04
2	26	XS	32	66.04-68.58
4	27	XS	34	68.58-71.12
6	28	S	36	71.12-73.66
8	29	S	38	73.66-76.2
10	30	M	40	76.2-78.74
12	31	M	42	78.74-81.28
14	32	L	44	81.28-83.82
16	33	L	44	83.82-86.36
18	34	XL	46	86.36-88.9
20	36	XL	48	91.44-93.98
22	38	XXL	50	96.52-99.06
24	40	XXL	52	101.6-104.14

The model's size in the plus-size category (Table 8) is determined by a combination of bust, waist, and hip measurements. There is an emphasis on proportionality, and there is typically a minimum gap between hip and waist measurements. industry-standard measurements for a size fourteen model, which is 44–34–44 inches. However, it notes that few models match this standard exactly due to natural body variations [4].

Czerniawski [4] discusses the lack of standardized sizing practices and the fluid nature of plus-size in the modeling and fashion industry (Table 8, Table 9). standardized sizing practices in the modeling and fashion industry, particularly concerning plus-size models. Unlike ”straight-size” models which have specific size guidelines, plus-size models do not fit into a particular mold. Plus-size models in modeling agencies typically range from a woman's clothing size ten to size eighteen, with specific height requirements. However, most of the top plus-size models fall within the size range of ten to fourteen. Mentions the concept of ”vanity sizing,” which refers to the practice of brands inflating clothing sizes to make consumers feel better about themselves. This adds further complexity to the issue of sizing. While there is no static dimensional of plus-size, the baseline for quantifying plus-size is often considered to be a woman's clothing size ten in modeling agencies with plus-size divisions. However, this definition doesn't align with the retail clothing definition of plus-size, which generally starts at size fourteen [4].

Table 9: Retail clothing size chart [19].

	Size 14	Size 16	Size 18	Size 20	Size 22	Size 24
Bust	101.6-106.68	106.68-111.76	111.76-116.84	116.84-121.92	121.92-127	127-132.08
Waist	85.09-88.9	88.9-93.98	93.98-99.06	99.06-104.14	104.14-109.22	110.49-114.3
Hip	106.68-113.03	111.76-118.11	116.84-123.19	121.92-128.27	127-133.35	132.08-138.43

Table 10: Model size chart [19].

	Size 10	Size 12	Size 14	Size 16	Size 18
Bust	34C	36C	36C	36DD	38DD
Waist	71.12	76.2	81.28	91.44	96.52
Hip	101.6	106.68	111.76	116.84	121.92

In the fashion industry (Table 9), the prevailing prototype often epitomized by supermodels sets a standard that differs significantly from the average woman's body. Supermodels typically wear a size 34 and are over 1.75 meters tall, representing a body type that is far from the norm in terms of body measurements. This idealized image, while celebrated in the fashion world, stands in stark contrast to the reality of the female population at large. In France, the most common size sold is size 40, showcasing a notable discrepancy between the sizes promoted by the fashion industry and those that are most prevalent among consumers. This discrepancy highlights the need for greater diversity and inclusivity within the fashion industry to better represent and cater to the diverse body types and sizes of the general population [31].

“In the non-fashion world, the term plus-size is used to describe anyone size 16 and beyond.” [39]

It is worth noting that there have been some positive changes within the fashion industry. Some brands have expanded their size ranges, and there are now more dedicated plus-size fashion brands and designers who cater specifically to this market. Despite some progress in recent years, there are still significant gaps and limitations in the availability of plus-size clothing and representation in the industry. Many brands do indeed restrict their clothing sizes to smaller ranges, typically ending at size 14 or even earlier. This leaves a significant portion of the population with limited options and can reinforce exclusionary beauty standards. It’s important to recognize that there is a strong demand for plus-size fashion, as the average apparel size for women in the U.S. is between 16 and 18. This demonstrates a missed opportunity for brands that do not offer inclusive sizing. Even when some brands do offer plus-size clothing, the options can be limited in terms of style and variety. Plus-size individuals deserve access to fashionable clothing, just like anyone else. Advocacy groups and individuals continue to raise awareness about the need for better representation and inclusivity in the fashion industry. Their efforts are driving change and pushing for more size-inclusive practices [39].

The term plus size indeed exists within a context of negotiations and manipulations, and it’s subject to different interpretations and perspectives. This can have significant implications for the industry, models, and professionals involved. There is an ongoing debate within the industry about where the line is drawn between conventional sizes and plus-size. This lack of consensus reflects the subjectivity of the term and shows that it can vary depending on different stakeholders’ perspectives. The discussion about the definition of plus-size is not just a matter of semantics. It has real-world implications, including market segmentation, sizing standards, and body positivity efforts. These definitions can impact how the fashion industry addresses the needs of larger-sized individuals. Defining the plus-size segment is essential for justifying the existence and importance of this market. It acknowledges that there is a demand for clothing and fashion options for larger-sized individuals, which can help boost the self-esteem and confidence of these consumers. Establishing clear norms and standards for plus-size fashion also recognizes and values the work of models and professionals working in this segment. It highlights their contributions to the industry and emphasizes the importance of diversity and inclusivity [40].

“Our fieldwork emphasizes the difficulties of defining a plus-size prototype.” [31]

The passage above highlights the challenges associated with the absence of prototypes in the adjacent plus-size fashion market. This emphasizes the difficulties in defining a specific plus-size prototype. The subject was also mentioned in the theme and is visible in the various tables, although there are plus-size busts available for seamstresses, fit models, and advertising models, which can fulfill the requirements for finalizing measurements and communication in plus-size collections, there is a lack of a standardized plus-size model prototype. The absence of a clear and universally accepted plus-size model prototype contributes to difficulties in providing an inclusive representation for customers across various sizes. This challenge extends beyond mere measurements and encompasses the perception and identification of customers with the models showcased in plus-size fashion [29].

2.4 Plus-size vs Obesity (obesity and the perception of plus-size)

Numerous meta-analyses of experimental studies have consistently demonstrated that exposure to media images featuring "idealized" models has a significant effect on individuals, specifically women. The primary consequence of exposure to such idealized media images is the development of body dissatisfaction among women. This implies that women who are exposed to these images are more likely to feel dissatisfied with their own bodies. This suggests that individuals who are unhappy with their bodies are more prone to engage in unhealthy eating behaviors or develop eating disorders. Paradoxically, some individuals may attempt to cope with body dissatisfaction by overeating or adopting unhealthy weight management practices, potentially leading to obesity. Body dissatisfaction can contribute to the development or exacerbation of depression, which is a serious mental health condition. Finally, it mentions that body dissatisfaction is linked to low self-esteem, which can affect various aspects of a person's life, including their self-worth and confidence [41].

The study confirms previous experimental research [42, 43] that exposure to beauty advertisements featuring plus-size models can have a positive effect on women's body image. This suggests that seeing images of models with diverse body types can help women feel more positive about their own bodies. Seeing plus-size models in ads with similar body types to the models may experience a stronger positive effect on their body image compared to those with very different body types [28].

Table 11: Body mass index [44].

BMI	index
Underweight	Below 18.5
normal weight	18.5–24.9
Pre-obesity/overweight	25.0–29.9
Obesity class I	30.0–34.9
Obesity class II	35.0–39.9
Obesity class III	Above 40

Healthcare professionals use these categories to assess the risk of certain health conditions associated with being underweight, overweight, or obese. It's important to note that while BMI (Table 11) - Body mass index is a convenient and widely used tool, it has some limitations. It doesn't consider factors like muscle mass, bone density, and distribution of fat, which can vary among individuals. As a result, two people with the same BMI may have different body compositions and health risks [4].

According to [1], 67.6% of the Portuguese population is overweight or obese, this indicates that approximately two-thirds of the Portuguese adult population (67.6%) are overweight or obese, with the prevalence of obesity being 28.7% [45].

There is a growing normalization of overweight and obesity in England. This means that an increasing number of individuals who are overweight or obese do not perceive themselves as such, which can have implications for their health and lifestyle choices [45].

The study suggests that using non-idealized body types in media campaigns can help individuals reduce social comparisons. This is important because excessive social comparisons can lead to negative self-perceptions and mental health issues. By showcasing a variety of body types, media campaigns can encourage viewers to embrace their uniqueness and reduce the tendency to compare themselves to unrealistic standards. Health promotion campaigns, particularly those related to body image and self-esteem, can benefit from using a more diverse range of body types in their media materials. Instead of exclusively featuring thin or idealized body types, incorporating plus-size models can lead to better outcomes in terms of body satisfaction among the target audience. Embracing diverse body types in media campaigns promotes a more inclusive and realistic representation of people's bodies. This can help challenge the pervasive cultural trend of promoting only one narrow and often unattainable beauty ideal. Promoting diversity and inclusion can contribute to a more positive and accepting society [42].

The terms "fat," plus-size, and "overweight/obese" are often used interchangeably which can lead to confusion and reinforce societal biases and stereotypes. "Fat" is a subjective term that doesn't have a clear medical or scientific definition, whereas "overweight" and "obese" are defined by specific ranges of Body Mass Index (BMI) in the medical field. Plus-size is a term often used in fashion to describe clothing sizes beyond the standard range. The perception of what constitutes "fat" can indeed vary significantly among individuals and across cultures. What one person considers fat, another may not. This subjectivity can contribute to body image issues and societal judgments [4].

The definition of a "fat body" is not fixed and has evolved over time. What is considered "fat" can vary significantly between different cultures and historical periods. It is a socially constructed concept, and its definition is influenced by prevailing cultural norms and attitudes towards body weight and appearance. Susan Bordo emphasizes that cultural norms and values deeply influence how we perceive and evaluate bodies, and these perceptions are often gendered. This means that society's ideas about what is considered an ideal or acceptable body shape or size are shaped by cultural and gendered meanings [4].

"A vitória será quando os tamanhos grandes deixarem de ser noticia" [46] [2]

[2] Victory will be achieved when larger sizes stop being news.

2.5 The Plus-size Silhouette

Each woman has her individuality when it comes to body shapes, but according to Godfrey Deeny, there are five types of silhouettes: Rectangular, oval, and triangular. The lack of this knowledge can result in choices of pieces that don't fit so well, affecting self-esteem and security [47].

It is crucial to understand that all body types can be valued when clothing is selected correctly for each type of female silhouette, regardless of shape. By choosing clothes that fit well and highlight the right features, it is possible to create a more proportionate silhouette and highlight the positive points of each body type, as mentioned by Cruz in 2017. The key is to learn to highlight the best in yourself. each silhouette through appropriate clothing choices and feel confident and comfortable in your own body.

Today in fashion there is no more space for the discourse of can and can't, what prevails is to wear what makes us feel good. The professional opinions are to advance women in choosing the right pieces for their body types.

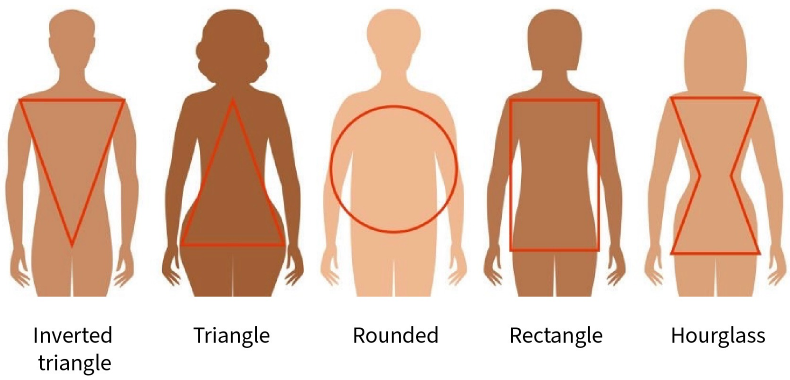

Figure 10: Body types silhouette.

Cope's Rule, proposed by American paleontologist Edward Drinker Cope in the late 19th century, suggested that evolutionary lineages tend to increase in body size over time. However, the traditional explanation for this hypothetical trend, which implies that there might be a fitness advantage associated with larger body size, has been recognized as a valid evolutionary driving force but might not universally apply as a strict law in evolutionary biology [48].

"A roupa para gordos das grandes cadeias não é nada adaptada. É que uns são gordos na barriga, outros nas pernas, outros têm os ombros finos" [14]. [3]

Plus-size fashion at large chains is not always tailored to suit the diversity of body shapes. Clothing often follows a generalized pattern, which may not be comfortable or suitable for people who have different weight distributions and varying body shapes. Each person has a

[3] Plus-size clothing from major chains is not well-adapted. Some people carry weight in their stomachs, others in their legs, and others have narrow shoulders

unique body type and their own comfort areas and preferences. Some may have more weight on their stomach, others on their legs, shoulders, or other areas of the body. The lack of variety and adaptation in clothing for larger sizes can be frustrating and limiting for many individuals. This issue highlights the need for the fashion industry to take a more inclusive and diverse approach to creating clothing for plus-size. This involves not only increasing the size of existing pieces but also considering different body proportions, fits, and cuts to accommodate different body shapes. Fortunately, there is a growing movement in the fashion industry to improve inclusion and diversity, encouraging brands to develop lines that are more tailored and designed to meet the needs of a wider range of bodies. It is important to continue pushing for more options and representation in fashion so that people feel comfortable, confident, and well cared for, regardless of their body shape.

2.6 How Society Sees Plus-size Bodies

Social media may have both negative and positive influences on weight stigma. It can be a platform where harmful stereotypes and negative attitudes towards individuals with different body sizes are perpetuated, potentially exacerbating weight stigma. However, it can also be a space where advocates and organizations work to reduce weight stigma by promoting body positivity, healthy attitudes toward body image, and acceptance of diverse body sizes [3].

Assunção, describes ”Generation Z” as champions of the inclusion agenda, emphasizing diversity and body positivity. This generational shift in values and advocacy could potentially lead to a more permanent and authentic inclusion of plus-size fashion in *haute couture*. This suggests that younger consumers are influencing the industry’s approach to diversity and inclusivity. Something has changed the trend in the fashion industry, a decrease in the representation of plus-size models in the 2023 winter collections, despite an increase during the pandemic period. One hypothesis suggests that some brands included plus-size models during the pandemic to cater to changing consumer preferences and demands. However, once they achieved their marketing goals, they may have reverted to using slimmer models. This raises concerns that some brands view diversity and inclusion as a temporary trend rather than a long-term commitment. This suggests that the fashion industry’s commitment to diversity may be driven more by short-term marketing strategies than genuine inclusivity. The second hypothesis suggests that the use of the drug Ozempic, which is used primarily to treat diabetes but can also be misused as a weight-loss aid, may have led to more people losing weight rapidly. If this trend continues, it could potentially affect the demand for plus-size fashion. This highlights the complex relationship between health trends and fashion industry dynamics [21].

There is a set of factors that judge women’s judgment, factors that are external when it comes to body mass index, waist-to-hip ratio, body fat, race, clothing style, and size. Internal factors relate to culture, mental state, body composition, and state of body satisfaction. All these aspects are evaluated through the human eye, thus body size and attractiveness are conditioned to stereotyped standards. It is possible to support the need for social comparison in a healthy way by establishing the increase of one's attractiveness through the media [49].

"Today we criticize an adult woman because she no longer has the body of a sixteen- or twenty-year-old; any weight gain, no matter how natural it is for the adult female body, is considered wrong. We scrutinize any gray hair, any wrinkle, any sign of natural aging—in others and in ourselves." [23]

According to Petroff et al. [50], in recent decades mass media have become the strongest means of communicating sociocultural patterns. The mass media portrays attractive men as muscular and elegant women as thin. Both genders tend to gain weight as they age, but women are more likely to gain substantial weight.

Federal argues that there is a growth in the media regarding the plus-size theme, but that despite this growth being notorious, the products advertised by plus-size bodies are still not very well accepted by consumers, even if they are plus-size consumers. Although this image is not very well accepted when it comes to products for the body, in cases where it is not directed at the body, there is no record of a negative impact. Thus, this consumer finds himself trapped in a market governed by the ideals of thinness, where this concept is constantly reinforced and excludes all those who are different from it. Therefore, we can consider the consumption of plus-size fashion a negative experience, where the consumer does not have much diversity in garments such as size and is subjected to a non-inclusive standardization. To find solutions to their problems, these consumers look for more basic, multifaceted garments or choose to shop online, which despite having great potential, still faces some reception by consumers. Much of this reception proves that the individual does not understand his own body and an idea of the ideal body ingrained. Dressing is not simply covering the body, but it is also a way for human beings to express themselves. The plus-size individual is a reference in a society that privileges the thin body in different areas. Studies reinforce the protection between a fat body and a thin body when we talk about brands and products. Today these ideas can be deconstructed through movies, blogs, advertisements, and actions by organizations that seek to fight against prejudice. In this way, the plus-size market will stop being a niche market and become more expressive, with a monetary impact on the consumption of this type of clothing, problems with numbering and variety of clothes can be solved [51].

"In popular discourse, the terms "fat," plus-size, and "overweight/obese" are often used interchangeably." [52]

According to Czerniawski [52] and Gaspar et al. [53] terms such as those used in the phrase cited above are often associated. This can lead to confusion, as these terms have distinct historical and cultural connotations. Medical professionals use specific quantifiable criteria to determine overweight and obesity, while the fashion industry often has subjective and extreme standards for body size. For example, the fashion industry may consider a woman above a size eight as plus-size, while the medical field relies on established metrics like BMI.

The definition of ”fat” in the fashion industry often relies on subjective evaluations by viewers. This means that plus-size models, according to fashion standards, may be considered ”fat,” even if they don’t match the cultural image of a fat woman. There is a disconnect between cultural norms and fashion norms when it comes to body size. What is considered ”average” or even ”thin” in everyday life may be considered plus-size or outside the norm in the context of fashion [52].

Despite the setbacks mentioned, the source acknowledges significant advances in recent years toward greater inclusion in the fashion industry. Plus-size fashion is no longer seen as a seasonal trend but as a legitimate and growing market segment. This suggests that there is progress being made in recognizing and addressing the needs of a diverse range of consumers.

“Ainda há poucas opções de peças no setor plus-size, o que torna difícil para uma pessoa gorda comprar uma roupa porque se identificou com a peça; muitas das vezes, é preciso comprar o que há disponível na loja.” [54]. [4]

A persistent problem in the fashion industry is the lack of suitable options in the plus-size sector. This has been a source of frustration for many people who don’t fit into traditional clothing sizes. However, it is important to note that in recent years there has been an increase in awareness and demand for plus-size clothing, which has led to some improvements in the market. Some steps have been taken to address this issue, but there is a long way to go. Many manufacturers have not yet fully adjusted to these needs. Plus-size clothing often requires more material, which increases production costs. This can make plus-size pieces more expensive.

“Gordofobia é o preconceito contra as pessoas gordas e que está intimamente relacionado aos meios hegemônicos de comunicação.” [54] [5]

Fatphobia is a term that describes discrimination and prejudice against people who are considered fat or overweight, often based on stereotypes related to their physical appearance. Constant exposure to negative portrayals and fat-shaming can take a toll on the mental health of overweight individuals. It can lead to anxiety, and depression, and even contribute to the development of eating disorders. When media and popular culture consistently portray overweight individuals in a negative light, it sends a message to society that it is acceptable to discriminate against or ridicule people based on their size. This can lead to systemic bias in areas like employment, healthcare, and education.

“A representação de pessoas gordas na mídia e na cultura popular desempenha um papel importante na perpetuação da gordofobia. Quando a mídia retrata pessoas gordas de forma

[4] There are still few options in the plus-size sector, making it difficult for a plus-size person to buy clothes because they identify with the piece; often, they have to buy whatever is available in the store.

[5] Fatphobia is the prejudice against fat people, which is closely related to hegemonic means of communication

negativa, estigmatiza a obesidade ou promove padrões de beleza inatingíveis que enfatizam a magreza, isso pode influenciar negativamente a sociedade e reforçar atitudes preconceituosas." [54] [6]

"This inclusive approach seeks to ensure that everyone has access to stylish, well-fitting clothing, regardless of body size, and promote the idea that fashion is for everyone." [54]

2.7 Plus-size Representation

The fashion industry has undergone a significant transformation in recent years. Consumers have become more vocal and influential in shaping fashion trends and industry practices. Social media and online communities have provided a platform for individuals to express their preferences and demand more inclusive options. This shift has led to a greater emphasis on diversity, representation, and body positivity in fashion.

Tess Holliday (Figure 11) is a groundbreaking size 22, 165,1 model, entrepreneur, social media star, tattoo enthusiast, and body-positivity activist and she carved out her own path in the fashion industry through social media, particularly MySpace and she represents the prejudices and achievements of this segment of this type of consumption.

Figure 11: Tess Holliday, activist and plus-size model [55].

For fashion week in fall 2020 and spring 2021, only 46 models out of 6,879 and 34 models out of 2,293 were plus-size, respectively. The luxury fashion industry is notorious for its exclusivity and can be seen as lacking representation, which can be considered one of its biggest downfalls. In recent years, luxury fashion brands have opened their doors to a more diverse variety of models from different ethnicities. But when it comes to extending their size

[6]The representation of fat people in the media and popular culture plays an important role in perpetuating fatphobia. When the media portrays fat people negatively, stigmatizes obesity, or promotes unattainable beauty standards that emphasize thinness, it can negatively influence society and reinforce prejudiced attitudes.

ranges to include plus-size, we don't see many changes.

Ashley Grahame in 2016, made history by being the first plus-size model on the cover of Sports Illustrated, and in the same year, she made the cover of Maxim [56]. However, the problem was the negative comments, which suggested too much Photoshop for the model to look thinner. Christina Hendricks, an American actress in the series Mad Men has been praised for revolutionizing the concept of beauty in the world of television, with her generous and well-defined curves, the antithesis of what is usually seen on screen [57]. Tyra Banks in 2007, was criticized based on a photograph in which she showed that she had gained some weight [58]. Adele the singer was called "She is a little too fat, but she has a beautiful face and a divine voice" by stylist Karl Lagerfeld [58].

In April 2009, Ralph Lauren fired Filippa Hamilton, a model who was five feet ten inches tall, weighed one hundred twenty pounds, and wore a woman's size four. Despite her relatively slim and healthy appearance, she was considered "too fat" for the industry, indicating the extreme thinness standards in the fashion world. Coco Rocha faced criticism for being "too big" for high fashion, even though she wore a size four, which is considered small by everyday standards. This highlights how even models who are within a healthy weight range can be deemed overweight in the fashion industry. Gemma Ward lost work opportunities due to weight gain, which prevented her from fitting into the common sample size-a size zero used for magazine shoots and the runway. This illustrates the pressure models face to maintain an exceptionally small size to secure jobs in the industry [4].

These cases demonstrate the distorted perceptions of body size and beauty within the fashion world. The fashion industry's preference for extremely thin models has been criticized for promoting unrealistic and unhealthy body standards, contributing to issues such as eating disorders and low self-esteem among both models and consumers. It also highlights the importance of promoting diverse body types and inclusivity in the fashion industry to encourage a healthier and more balanced perspective on beauty and body image.

Excess weight is a reason for discrimination and a social stigma that is scientifically documented but difficult to address. This subject is everywhere, not only in advertising and the media but also in clothing stores and health services, it's internalized the idea that rejecting excess weight is the best for health. The social stigma based on being fat is unhealthy and threatens the right to body diversity, although they have not yet arrived in Portugal, activist movements for the acceptance of overweight bodies claim the right to exist as they are, with no pressure to change [59].

"The models that we see being used for plus-size sponsorship, e-commerce photography, lookbooks, [and more] aren't plus-size, they are mid-size [typically categorized as size 8 to 14]" [39]

There is often a lack of true representation when it comes to plus-size and body diversity in fashion campaigns. The use of mid-size models rather than genuinely plus-size models in plus-size campaigns has been a topic of discussion and criticism [39].

The fashion industry has been making some progress in recent years in terms of promoting body positivity and diversity, but there is still much work to be done. Many people believe that genuine representation of all body types, along with a shift away from unrealistic beauty standards, is crucial for improving the self-esteem and body image of individuals and promoting a more inclusive and accepting society [39, 42].

2.8 The Characteristics of the Plus-size Market

2.8.1 Global Plus-size Market View

As previously reported the consumption of plus-size clothing is part of a growing market, but one with many issues, such as the lack of precise direction in the production and sale of these garments and the prejudice that surrounds the different areas of the body fat [51].

According to Seetharaman [60] and Anderson et al. [33] in recent years, the plus-size community is now being celebrated and embraced like never before. This cultural shift has extended to the fashion industry, as plus-size models grace the runways, and retailers are racing to adapt to this evolving market. However, despite these positive changes, the conditioning against plus-size individuals still lingers, challenging the progress made.

Plus-size women are buying clothes in direct-to-consumer websites, Supermarkets, Hypermarkets and Specialty stores. However, plus-size brands are favoring the DTC model, because it allows them to have more control over their product offerings, marketing, and customer experience. It can also help in reaching a wider audience and collecting valuable customer data [60].

The plus-size shopper no longer wishes to be relegated to the shadows, seen as different, or excluded from the world of fashion. Instead, demands what any straight-size consumer would, stylish clothing that complements her unique body type, and the right to feel confident and empowered. According to custom market insights the global plus-size clothing market size was valued at USD 250.56 million in 2021 and it is projected to reach around USD 685.87 million) by 2030 [30].

Seetharaman [60] estimated that the global plus-size women's market in 2020 was worth USD 152.8B and is expected to accumulate over USD 264.4B in 2027 and the USA is the leader in terms of gross market value. Women´s clothing in percentage represents 99.4% of the plus-size market.

According to Custom Market Insights (CMI), The Global Plus-size Clothing Market Size was valued at USD 291.32 Billion in 2023 and is forecast to reach USD 594.32 billion by the end of 2032 at a compound annual growth rate of approximately 5.9% during the forecast period 2022-2030 [30].

The increasing demand for plus-size apparel and the push for body positivity and inclusivity in the fashion industry have indeed led to significant changes in the market and the way plus-size individuals are represented and catered to. Plus-size influencers on platforms like Instagram and other social media have played a crucial role in promoting body positivity and advocating for fashion that caters to larger sizes. They have sizable followings and are often seen as role models, showing that confidence and style are not size-dependent [33].

"Only 8% of fashion brands today offer plus-size options. Plus-size women want collections based on the latest trends and styles that standard-size customers buy, only of a different size." [60]

Several key players are actively contributing to the growth of the plus-size market. Brands like Torrid, Lane Bryant, ASOS Curve, and Eloquii are making waves by offering stylish clothing options for plus-size individuals. These brands are challenging traditional norms and actively promoting inclusivity in the fashion industry and paid search plays a significant role in driving traffic for both D2C brands and retail chains focusing on plus-size clothing [60, 61].

According to Seetharaman [60], the fashion industry doesn't have a universal standard for clothing sizes. Sizes can vary between brands and even between different lines within the same brand. This lack of consistency can be frustrating for consumers and adds complexity for manufacturers. Producing extended-size clothing often requires more material, which can increase production costs. The fashion industry is highly competitive, and keeping prices low is a priority for many brands. This pressure to keep costs down can discourage investment in diverse size ranges. The plus-size clothing market size can go from below 15 the age 60 and above, by the size 1XL to above 4XL, and most of the sales go from economy, mid-range, and premium prices. The most requested categories are casual wear, formal wear, and sportswear.

The fashion industry has become more inclusive, with the inclusion of plus-size models on runways and in advertising campaigns. This is not only a reflection of changing societal attitudes but also a strategic move by the industry to tap into this growing market. Plus-size influencers on platforms like Instagram have played a significant role in shaping trends and promoting body positivity. They have also driven demand for fashionable plus-size clothing. Many retailers have recognized the need to diversify their product offerings to include plus-size options. Brands like Forever 21, Torrid, and Hot Topic, for example, have expanded or added plus-size departments to their stores. This expansion is in response to the increasing demand for fashionable clothing in larger sizes [60].

The prevalence of obesity has contributed to the growth of the plus-size clothing market. The rise in body confidence and activism has led to a demand for plus-size apparel that reflects the latest fashion trends. Plus-size women are advocating for better representation and inclusivity in the fashion industry. The rise in body confidence and activism has led to a demand for plus-size apparel that reflects the latest fashion trends. Plus-size clothing is not just about size, it's also about providing comfort and style to individuals who may not have had as many fashionable options in the past. This boost in confidence among plus-size individuals is driving demand for inclusive fashion. The role of fashion magazines like Vogue, Cosmopolitan, Elle, and Glamour in promoting plus-size clothing is significant. These magazines help shape fashion trends and are now actively promoting body positivity and diverse body types.

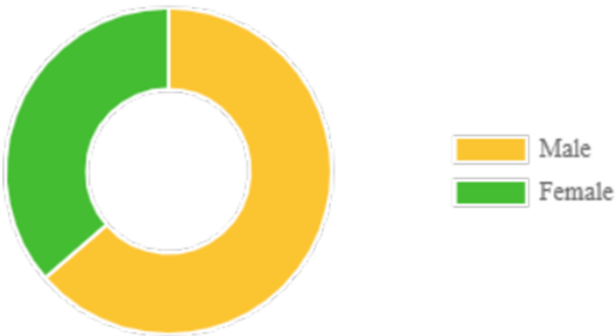

Figure 12: Global plus-size market 2023-2032 [62]

"The global plus-size clothing market is studied across the 1 XL, 2 XL, 3 XL, 4 XL, and above 4 XL. It is expected that the global 3 XL size segment will hold a dominant position during 2022 -2031 with a total market share of 29.56%." [60]

The analysis (Figure 12) provided by Seetharaman [60] indicates that within the global plus-size clothing market, the 3 XL size segment is projected to hold a significant and dominant position between 2022 and 2031, accounting for a total market share of 29.56%. This implies that among the various sizes studied—ranging from 1 XL, 2 XL, 3 XL, 4 XL, and above 4 XL—the 3 XL size category is expected to have the largest share of the market during the specified period. This dominance in the 3 XL segment might be indicative of several factors. It reflects a substantial consumer base within this size category, potentially driven by evolving demographics, changing body shapes, and preferences among consumers globally. Additionally, this suggests a growing demand for plus-size clothing in this specific size range, indicating a need for more varied and tailored offerings within the 3 XL segment.

"It is expected that mid-range Price is expected to hold a dominant position in upcoming years with a total market share of 38%." [60]

The mid-range segment typically caters to customers who are looking for a balance between quality and affordability. Seetharaman [60] suggests that a significant portion of plus-size shoppers are willing to invest in clothing that provides both style and comfort without breaking the bank. The 38% market share indicates that a substantial portion of the plus-size clothing market is expected to be captured by mid-range price offerings. The prevalence of the mid-range segment's dominance in the plus-size clothing market reflects the evolving preferences of these consumers. They are increasingly seeking fashionable clothing that not only fits well but is also reasonably priced. This trend underscores the importance of offering stylish, well-fitting, and affordable options to cater to the needs and preferences of the plus-size demographic [30].

The key players in the plus-size market are ASOS plc, Adidas AG (Adidas), Forever21 Inc., Ralph Lauren, MANGO, H&M Hennes & Mauritz AB, Hanesbrands Inc., Evans, FTF IP COMPANY, INC., Lucky Brand LLC, Lauren Corporation, Old Navy LLC, PUMA SE, Nike Inc., Torrid LLC [30].

In response, there is a growth in e-commerce, and the availability of plus-size clothing through online platforms and apps has made it more convenient for people to find and purchase clothing that fits their body types. This convenience has significantly contributed to the expansion of the plus-size clothing market [30].

"Mas o aumento da representação em campanhas publicitárias e nas passarelas não correspondeu à presença do tamanho grande nas lojas." [62] [7]

In many cases, we see an increase in the representation of certain groups, such as larger-sized people, in advertising campaigns and fashion events, but this representation does not always translate directly into the offering of corresponding clothing or products in retail outlets [62]

2.8.2 The Portuguese Plus-size Market

"Metade dos portugueses tem excesso de peso e 17% da população activa é obesa." [14] [8]

The fight for representation and inclusion in the fashion industry is an important and constantly evolving topic. Body diversity is crucial for everyone to feel represented and accepted. Candice Huffine's interview highlights the aspiration for plus-size to no longer be news, establishing a desire for a normalization of body diversity in fashion, rather than it being something exceptional. The recognition that a significant proportion of the population is overweight highlights the need for a more inclusive and sensitive approach to body diversity in all areas of life [63].

"Num ano, os portugueses gastaram 16,2 milhões de euros só em produtos específicos de perda de peso." [63]. [9]

Weight loss products exceeding 21.5 million euros in a one-year period, can be indicative of a widespread concern about physical appearance and the pressure to meet certain beauty

[7] But the increase in representation in advertising campaigns and on the catwalks did not correspond to the presence of plus size in stores.

[8] Half of the Portuguese population is overweight, and 17 % of the active population is obese.

[9] In one year, the Portuguese spent 16.2 million euros solely on specific weight loss products.

standards. The fact that the Portuguese spent 16.2 million euros in just one year on specific weight loss products indicates a significant investment in this aspect of health and physical appearance. Not to mention capsules, teas, or powders for sale in dietetics and hypermarkets, the value of which is not known [63].

It is encouraging to see recognized brands such as C&A and H&M expanding their lines to serve this segment of the market. The increased supply of larger sizes not only reflects a shift in fashion industry norms but also meets real consumer demand.

Despite progress, there are still challenges to be overcome. Availability of plus-size is not always widespread, and many brands are still evaluating sales potential before making decisions about inclusion in their lines. The statement by Magda Santos [14], from C&A, about the importance of meeting the needs of this audience and customer satisfaction demonstrates the existing demand and the importance of inclusion for the success of the business.

"Apenas sete das 21 lojas da sueca H&M em Portugal oferecem uma gama de vestuário para este mercado" [14]. [10]

Only a portion of H&M stores in the country offers a selection of clothing aimed at a specific market. Magda Santos, a spokesperson for C&A in Portugal, reveals that plus-size clothing accounts represent 8% of the total sales of the Dutch chain, C&A.

2.8.3 Plus-size During the Pandemic

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the plus-size community and the retail industry, in general, has indeed been significant. Even before the pandemic, many commercial brands did not prioritize the plus-size community, offering limited options and often relegating them to smaller sections within stores. The pandemic likely exacerbated this issue as companies faced financial strain and made cutbacks.

The pandemic forced businesses to adapt quickly to new circumstances, such as lockdowns, supply chain disruptions, and shifts in consumer behavior. Companies that successfully navigated these challenges often did so by rethinking their strategies and priorities, demonstrating resilience in the face of adversity. Many businesses had to reevaluate their approach to work and consider remote work options. This shift has led to a significant acceleration in digital transformation efforts, as companies invested in technology to enable remote work, e-commerce, and online customer engagement [59].

The pandemic-induced budget cuts and profit declines hit the retail industry hard, affecting not only plus-size retailers but also many others. Retailers had to make tough decisions to stay afloat, including store closures and staff layoffs. Government-mandated store closures, aimed at controlling the spread of the virus, had a direct and immediate impact on retail

[10] Only seven out of the 21 H&M stores in Portugal offer a range of clothing for this market.

businesses. These closures disrupted the shopping experience for everyone, including plus-size consumers.

According to Eliza Ronalds-Hannon and Coleman [64], Tyko [65] and Huber [59] the bankruptcy of Ascena Retail Group, which owns Lane Bryant, Catherines, and Cacique, is indeed a significant blow to the plus-size community. It resulted in the permanent closure of Catherine's stores and the closure of some Lane Bryant stores. Such closures limit access to plus-size clothing options, making it harder for individuals to find what they need.

Patrick Herning's statement highlights an important aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on individuals and businesses. The pandemic has indeed brought about significant financial challenges and disruptions to various industries. However, it has also prompted many individuals and companies to reevaluate their priorities and adapt to the changing landscape [36].

Supply chain disruptions during the pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains. Companies have had to rethink their supply chain strategies, diversify suppliers, and implement better inventory management practices to mitigate future risks.

Consumers' priorities and preferences changed during the pandemic. Companies that paid attention to these shifts and adjusted their product offerings and marketing strategies accordingly were better positioned to meet evolving consumer demands. Individuals and businesses also prioritized health and safety measures to protect themselves and their communities. Companies that adopted stringent safety protocols and communicated their commitment to health and well-being gained the trust of consumers. The pandemic underscored the importance of corporate social responsibility and sustainability. Many companies reevaluated their environmental and social impact, leading to increased efforts in sustainability, ethical sourcing, and community support. To adapt to the pandemic, businesses invested in digital innovation to enhance their online presence and customer experience. E-commerce, contactless payments, and virtual events became essential components of many companies' strategies.

The fashion industry is gradually adapting to the demand for plus-size clothing. The pandemic serves to show the fashion industry that brands can't afford to ignore the population who wear a size 14 and above. Ignoring this substantial customer base is not a viable option in today's economic climate.

"the plus-size apparel market as of 2019 was estimated to be worth 9.8 billion dollars." [59]

Previous addresses referred by Seetharaman [60] and Insights [30] estimated much more significant market values than those of Huber [59], and the growth in the years following COVID was quite significant.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought its own set of difficulties for the plus-size community, including stigmatizing comments and potential health disparities. The link between obesity and COVID-19 complications is a complex issue, and it's crucial to consider the role of stigma and discrimination in this context. The closure of stores that carry plus-size clothing can also compound the challenges faced by individuals in the plus-size community [59].

The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed had a significant impact on various industries, including the plus-size clothing market. The pandemic disrupted global supply chains, affecting the manufacturing and distribution of various products, including plus-size clothing. Shutdowns of manufacturing plants and disruptions in the supply chain led to challenges in sourcing materials and producing clothing. The pandemic resulted in a decline in economic activity, affecting the building and construction, textile, and apparel industries. As a result, the demand for plus-size clothing was affected, as people may have reduced their spending on non-essential items.

It is clear that while the market faces challenges, there is also a notable shift towards greater inclusivity and acceptance of diverse body types, leading to increased opportunities for plus-size fashion. The industry is adapting to meet the evolving demands of consumers and the changing cultural landscape [30].

Many designers argue that extending their size range is a difficult transition, as it requires a shift away from conventional design practices. According to Huber [59] design schools often focus on smaller dress forms and slopers, making it challenging for up-and-coming designers to create clothing for curvy bodies. However, some argue that it's not as difficult as it may seem, suggesting steps like using larger dress forms, fit models, and thoughtful pattern grading. While many businesses across industries faced closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision to close plus-size stores based on ”lack of profitability” sends a negative message to those in higher-weight bodies. It also highlights the vulnerability of larger-size brands during challenging economic times. The closure of chain stores during the pandemic has left a void in the market, but independent brands are stepping up to ensure that plus-size consumers continue to have access to stylish and well-fitting clothing.

The recognition of these concerns and a focus on inclusivity and diversity are helping to create a more equitable and empowering space for plus-size individuals in the fashion world. This is a step in the right direction, and it's encouraging to see these designers advocating for progress and positive change in the industry [59].

These developments underscore the importance of advocating for greater inclusivity in the fashion industry, where all body types are catered to and ensuring that the needs of the plus-size community are met. Additionally, they highlight the broader economic challenges brought about by the pandemic, which have had far-reaching consequences across various sectors. It's crucial for consumers and advocates to continue supporting and promoting brands that prioritize inclusivity and diversity, and to stay informed about the evolving landscape of the retail industry [59]

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been significant changes in the luxury retail sector, and the sales of luxury products were impacted, resulting in a substantial drop in sales. Although production costs are typically higher, they would sow the plus-size market as an opportunity to get back the losses [21].

2.9 Brands and Plus-size Fashion

“marcas têm de aprender a lidar com estes novos consumidores - que mudaram de tamanho ou têm medo de engordar - ou correm o risco de perder vendas” [63]. [11]

The fashion industry has seen the emergence of plus-size models who are breaking barriers and challenging traditional beauty standards. These models are not only promoting body positivity but also showcasing that beauty comes in various sizes and shapes.

Figure 13: Ashley Graham in Dolce & Gabbana fashion show in 2009 [63]

“It’s taken a long time to get here, but change is happening, faster than it ever has before.” [36]

Emme made history as the first plus-size model to sign a major beauty contract when she became a spokesperson for Revlon in 1998. Amy Lemons is a notable figure in the fashion industry, recognized for her successful career as a model and her advocacy for ethical standards within the field. She began her modeling journey as a straight-sized model and later on returned to the industry and transitioned to become a plus-size. Her resume includes promi-

[11]Brands need to learn to deal with these new consumers - who have changed size or fear gaining weight - or risk losing sales.

nent features on the covers of Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Elle, and Marie Claire, along with campaigns for esteemed fashion brands like Abercrombie and Fitch, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Jill Sander, and Louis Vuitton [66]. Moreover, Kate Upton's story is a testament to the narrow standards that have existed in the fashion world for too long. In 2010, her curvy silhouette and undeniable confidence brought a refreshing change to the industry's often narrow definition of beauty. It's unfortunate that she faced challenges and rejections due to not fitting into the traditional categories, highlighting the need for a more inclusive and diverse representation in the fashion world. The model which measured 1.78m and weighed around 63 kilos, was categorized as a plus-size model. Her sensuality and physic made her stand out in campaigns for Guess and Sports Illustrated Swimsuit [61].

Over the years, there has been a gradual shift towards embracing different body types, and it's inspiring to see models like Kate Upton contributing to that positive change. Ashley Graham Figure 13) and Candice Huffine have played a crucial role in shifting perceptions and advocating for body positivity [4, 61]. The industry's recognition of different body types has not only empowered models but also resonated with a wider audience, fostering a more inclusive and representative environment [66].

Plus-size influencers on social media platforms have gained substantial followings and have become important voices in the body positivity movement. They use their platforms to promote inclusive fashion and to celebrate body diversity, inspiring others to embrace their bodies and personal styles.

"Wow, there's such an incredible group of plus-size women that very few brands are speaking to" [36].

As described in a Vogue article, Carmen Figure 14 is an advocate for plus women all over the world, first discovered in 2016, Miss Top of The World plus-size in 2017, Miss Top of The World Plus-size in the Netherlands in 2021, appeared in magazines such as Panorama, Beauty&Lifestyle Magazine, in newspapers and on TV West. Today she models for DMA and has experience with editorials, catwalks, and presentations [67].

The fashion industry has been gradually increasing its representation of plus-size individuals in advertising campaigns, runway shows, and fashion magazines. This helps to normalize diverse body types and promote a more inclusive vision of beauty. This shift has been driven by a growing demand from plus-size women for clothing that aligns with the latest fashion trends, as well as a desire for more representation and inclusivity in the industry. Brands are integrating plus-size sections in-store and online, this is a significant step towards creating a more inclusive shopping experience. This approach helps eliminate the division between standard and plus-size clothing, making it easier for consumers to find the styles they want in the sizes that fit them best [36].

Technology and e-commerce platforms play a role in the plus-size fashion industry. Estab-

Figure 14: Photography by M.Kwintera [66]

lished retail chains and direct-to-consumer (D2C) brands have their own preferences when it comes to these platforms. The versatility of platforms like Shopify or multi-brand retail chains like Forever 21 and ASOS 11 Honoré might be one reason it's popular among independent brands, providing them with the flexibility needed to cater to their specific audience [60].

Europa Press in 2015 proposed five websites as the 5 best online stores for shopping for plus-size fashion. The objective was to find brands that satisfy the needs of women looking for clothes exceeding size 44. Because size shouldn't be an obstacle to style. The first one is Asos Curve, which ranges from 46 to 56, from 'casual' pieces for everyday life to dresses and party clothes for special occasions. The second is Dorothy Perkins, who goes up to size 50 and does not have an exclusive plus-size line, only the sizes. The pieces can be chosen according to the customer's height. F&F or Clothing at Tesco is a British brand that has a great ratio of quality. Violeta By Mango is the fourth brand, it is spread across most of Europe, is dedicated to large sizes, and offers pieces from 42 to 52. The fifth and final is AD+ from Adolfo Dominguez, the line range from 44 to 56 [68].

Brands like Oysho, Nike, and Primark (Figure 15) have taken a more inclusive approach to their campaigns, utilizing a wider range of models representing different body types, rather than categorizing them as plus-size or "regular size." This reflects a shift towards a more realistic and inclusive representation of body diversity in the fashion and retail industry [61].

The brand H&M caters to a more diverse range of body sizes in their offerings, especially in the US market. Tess Holliday's (Figure 16) involvement as an advisor likely brings valuable

Figure 15: Primark inclusive campaign [61]

insights into the needs and preferences of the plus-size community. Increasing the size range to 2XL in stores for both women and men and offering larger sizes online, demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and accessibility in fashion [69, 70].

Expanding the size range not only reflects changing consumer demands for more inclusive sizing but also signifies a positive shift toward promoting body positivity and diversity in the fashion industry. This move might encourage other fashion brands to follow suit and broaden their size ranges to accommodate a wider audience [69].

The efforts by brands like Mary Katrantzou, Diane von Furstenberg, Carolina Herrera, Adam Lippes, Christian Siriano, Versace (Figure 17), and the platform 11 Honoré to introduce more inclusive sizing in luxury fashion represent a positive shift towards addressing the longstanding disparity in representation on the catwalk and availability of plus-size clothing in stores. In 2019, Dolce & Gabbana announced an inclusive initiative by expanding its ready-to-wear line to include larger sizes, going beyond size 50 and up to size 52. This decision made the brand the first luxury house in history to offer ready-to-wear pieces above size. Dolce & Gabbana's first two collections on 11 Honoré indicate that the first two collections sold 70% and 80%, which indicates strong consumer interest and could be indicative of a successful partnership [62].

"It's taken a long time to get here, but CHANGE is HAPPENING, faster than it ever has before" [62].

Achieving genuine representation requires a multifaceted approach. Fashion brands need to

Figure 16: Tess Holliday Contesy for H&M [70]

Figure 17: Versace summer runway show in 2021 [62]

reassess their production practices, expand size ranges, and integrate diverse models consistently in campaigns, runway shows, and other promotional efforts. Additionally, fostering a culture of inclusivity demands an internal shift within the industry, from casting directors to designers and executives, to recognize the importance of representing all body types. While progress has been made in acknowledging the need for diversity and inclusivity, there's still a long way to go. Advocacy efforts, continued dialogue, and increased accountability are vital to driving real change in the fashion industry and ensuring that representation is not just a trend but a permanent and authentic commitment.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Bibliographic research was conducted to clarify certain terms and consolidate previous knowledge, followed by market research. The market study will take place in Chapter 4, where the qualitative/exploratory and quantitative are organized into two different stages and are represented in Figures 18 and 19. In the qualitative/exploratory research, a focus group is conducted to provide information concerning plus-size behaviors. Based on the knowledge acquired through the focus group, in the quantitative research, a survey will be carried out to understand whether the answers obtained represent a generality of opinion regarding the plus-size market. The survey makes it possible to understand how the topic of plus-size is seen today. After obtaining and analyzing the answers from the respondents, the information will be used to create a capsule collection aimed at this type of customer.

3.1 Market Research

The market research process involved gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information, data, and statistics on:

- Market size: This study was carried out in Portugal, where the population is 10.33 million (2021), and according to information already referenced in Chapter 2, the overweight population represents 38.9%, with the object under study being plus-size women.

- Market trends: We have entered an era where straight, oversized, and comfortable fashion has gained a lot of power in the fashion market.

- Competitors and their market share: COVID-19 brought different types of difficulties to the fashion market, and in plus-size fashion, as previously mentioned, this impact was also very significant, setting back the advances that had already been made. Despite the obstacles at a global level, there is an increasing number of plus-size brands as well as brands that expand their sizes to satisfy these consumers.

- Consumers: the consumers are informed and value the shopping experience and care about companies' values.

The explanation provided by Baker [71] and Posner [72] offers a comprehensive understanding of research methodologies used in business and marketing contexts. Once research information has been gathered then its relevance can be assessed, and the data analyzed. The aim is to establish facts that can help with business and marketing decisions. Research data obtained by first-hand investigation is termed primary research. New data is gathered to address a specific question, using direct methods such as interviews, or indirect methods such as observation. Information gathered by reading reports and surveys compiled by someone else is called secondary research. This involves collecting and analyzing the data found to explore the question being addressed. Furthermore, research can be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative research investigates the quality of something and provides evidence about how and why the market is the way it is. Qualitative research is exploratory and is useful for gathering facts on what consumers think or feel about particular issues relevant to the investigation [73].

3.2 Qualitative Research-Exploratory Research

Exploratory research is characterized by its flexibility, lack of formal structure, and the absence of a strict desire to measure specific variables. Its primary purpose is to explore and define the parameters of the environment where problems or opportunities exist [71]. This research aims to uncover critical variables essential for a comprehensive understanding of that environment. The method chosen to gather data is the Focus Group.

Rousseau [74] mentioned in his work stages (Figure 18) for the development of qualitative research and they are going to guide the development of the Focus Group. Each of these stages is interconnected and iterates between them through the research process.

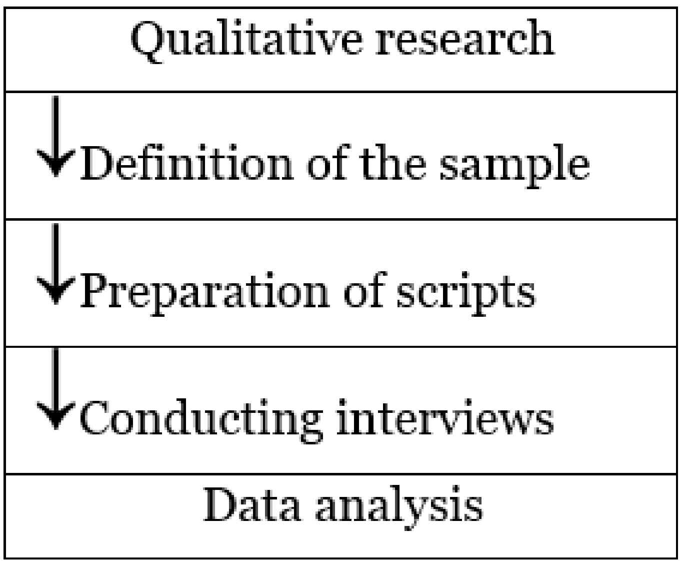

Figure 18: Stages of a qualitative research [74]

3.2.1 Sample Definition

To gather preliminary data to better understand the nature of the problem or formulate working hypotheses, a focus group will be organized with open interviews with a selection of consumers with similar characteristics to determine what they value when they consume clothing [75].

The Focus group is composed of 5 (five) participants and takes into account the following characteristics:

- All participants identify themselves as women.
- All participants are between the ages of 24 and 30 years old.
- All participants fall into the plus-size category.
- All participants have different purchasing power.
- The participants' bodies have a triangular silhouette.

To keep the names of the participants anonymous, they will be replaced by letters of the alphabet A-E. In the table below are some data that classify the participants with the necessary characteristics to continue the focus group.

Table 12: Personal data of participants.

SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION
A	27 years old, 127 kg, 172 cm height, bottom: 50 or 2xl, top: 52 or 2xl, paralegal, 2250 €salary, triangular silhouette.
B	26 years old, 78.5 kg, 167 cm, top L, XL, bottom 42 or 44, 1200 €, Optometrist, triangular silhouette.
C	30 years old, 84kg, 167 cm, top L or XL, bottom 44 or 42, small business owner, 1054 €salary, triangular silhouette.
D	25 years old, 77kg, 156 cm height, 40 pants and L/XL top 950€, sales assistant, triangular silhouette.
E	25 years old, 101kg, 167 cm, 1XL top and 2XL or 48 bottom, Optometrist, 1490 €, triangular silhouette.

3.2.2 Preparation of Scripts

To carry out the conversation, a script (Appendix A) was prepared with five (5) fundamental questions, and each one has three (3) others to further develop an answer.

Table 13: Fundamental questions, adapted from [74].

1	Talk a little about the clothes you wear.
2	What are the criteria used to choose your clothes?
3	How do you find the clothes you wear?
4	Do you see changes in the production of plus-size products in the last five years?
5	How do you evaluate this segment focused on larger sizes?
6	Currently, do you see plus-size products being advertised?
7	Age, height, size, weight, profession, and salary.

3.2.3 Conducting Interviews and Data Analysis

The facilitation and animation of the groups will be carried out in a video call session. To later analyze the content of the call, an audio will be recorded, and a report made, containing the participants' responses.

Tables will be made with the analysis of the participant's responses. Considering the results obtained in the Focus Group, a quantitative survey will be conducted, based on the results of the exploratory study [74].

3.3 Quantitative Research

According to Baker [71], qualitative research is increasingly employed due to rapid social changes, which expose researchers to new social contexts and perspectives. It is at this phase where the survey is constructed and carried out.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the research is its objective approach, where data is found and analyzed in a systematic and numerically measurable way. This methodology assumes that practically any manifestation can be quantified, allowing the translation of opinions, behaviors, and events into tangible numbers. The research requires care when choosing the sample, as the representation of this sample is crucial for the generalization of the results. The larger the sample, the more robust and significant the results obtained, providing a solid basis for the study. Data collection for quantitative research has become more accessible due to the facilities provided by the Internet. The network's global reach allows it to obtain data from a diverse sample and reduce geographic barriers when conducting research. This not only speeds up the collection process but also expands the possibility of reaching participants from different contexts and realities. Rousseau [74] delineates eleven (6) stages for the development of research, sample selection, preparation of the preliminary investigation, pre-test, Application of the definitive survey, Data processing, and Data analysis. Each stage (Figure 19) builds upon the previous one, creating a logical flow that ensures a well-structured and comprehensive research study [76].

Quantitative studies
↓ Sample selection
↓ Preparation of the preliminary investigation
↓ Pre-test
↓ Application of the definitive Questioner
↓ Data processing
↓ Data analysis

Figure 19: Stages of a quantitative research [74]

3.3.1 Sample Selection

When considering sample size as a crucial component of this study, it is imperative to adopt a sampling strategy that ensures representation of the plus-size female population residing in Portugal. Clearly defining the criteria for considering someone as plus-size, in this case, is an essential step to guarantee the consistency and validity of the results.

The goal is to obtain as many responses as possible, as a substantial sample tends to provide more robust results. However, the sample is carefully designed to avoid bias and ensure the inclusion of a variety of participants. It may be useful to use probability sampling methods or techniques that ensure diversity, such as stratification by geographic region, age, and other relevant factors.

The sample is defined as being all plus-size women who wear size 42 or larger or XXL or larger, to avoid ambiguity and ensure consistency in inclusion criteria. This facilitates the identification of the target audience and contributes to precision in the analysis of results.

The survey is to be available to any individual, regardless of their identification as plus-size, further enriching the approach of this study. By including participants who do not fall into the plus-size segment, it is possible to capture a more comprehensive view of the dynamics between different demographic groups about fashion and body representation. Therefore, the sample also includes men and women who do not fit the plus-size standard. In addition to understanding the experience of plus-size women, the expanded objective of the study now encompasses the perception of non-plus-size people about this market segment. This can allow us to explore attitudes, prejudices, and aesthetic standards that can influence the fashion industry and society in significant ways.

3.3.2 Preparation of the Preliminary Investigation

The objective of the questions is to discuss a variety of topics, from size and style availability to media representation, the shopping experience, and social acceptance. Topics such as the relationship between consumers and plus-size brands, influences on building self-esteem and perceived barriers can be explored to identify patterns and areas of opportunity. Furthermore, survey responses have the potential to validate and consolidate observations made in the Focus Group. The comparative analysis between the qualitative responses from the Focus Group and the quantitative responses from the survey can offer a more holistic view of the dissatisfactions and challenges faced by the plus-size segment.

3.3.3 Pre-test

To ensure that the questions are relevant and sensitive to the specific experiences of each group, the survey is divided between men and women, with specific sections aimed at the plus-size audience.

Therefore, the survey presents sections, where only people who identify as women considered plus-size can answer all the questions. The questions follow a gradual approach from general to specific, covering a variety of topics related to the plus-size segment. To provide rich data collection and offer different perspectives on the topic, closed questions, multiple-choice, and the Likert scale were included in the survey.

When the survey is finalized, a pre-test will be carried out, and sent to three (3) people representing three types of respondents, a man, a non-plus-size woman, and a plus-size woman. If some problems are identified, with feedback, arrangements will be made, and as soon as possible, another test will be conducted to ensure that the changes made are effective. The same people responded again, and three (3) new people were added, making it 2 men, four (4) women, and two (2) plus-size women.

3.3.4 Survey and Data Analysis

The survey is initially shared online, especially on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, on pages related to plus-size fashion, or interested in clothing for larger sizes. This is a strategic approach, as these platforms are often frequented by people interested in specific topics, such as inclusive fashion. By using social media, a specific audience can be targeted, while directly engaging those who have an interest or experience in the world of plus-size fashion.

This can provide a solid foundation of relevant data and opinions for analysis, especially if the objective of the survey is related to fashion trends, purchasing preferences, specific challenges, or any other topic relevant to the plus-size community.

All survey responses will be analyzed considering the tables and graphs prepared. The aim is to understand whether the opinions and difficulties of the focus group participants represent this consumer in Portugal.

3.4 Plus-size Brand

The essence of a brand according to Posner extends beyond its tangible elements like logos, slogans, and products. While these concrete features contribute to its identity, the true essence of a brand lies in the intangible realm. It's a paradox, a fusion of internal company strategy and external consumer perceptions and experiences. A brand is a blend of both tangible and intangible aspects, encompassing not just physical products and retail environments, but also the meanings, values, and associations consumers attach to it. As Walter Landor, a branding pioneer, famously remarked, "Products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind." Allen Adamson further defines a brand as something residing in the consumer's mind, an image, a feeling, built upon associations evoked by its name. The values, messages, and ideas underlying a brand are expressed through various channels such as brand name and logo, the product design, packaging and presentation, the sales environment, social media and online presence, advertising and promotional activities, company reputation, and conduct [72] . During this phase, all the processes of creating a brand will be portrayed, with the case study being ”baubo”.

Creating a fashion capsule collection is a complex process that involves a series of creative and strategic steps. Descriptive memory of the collection, mood boards of environment, colors, materials and fittings, clothing pieces inspirations and final Sketches (clothing names, description, materials, colors, and patterns), and lastly the technical files and prototypes.

Chapter 4

Results

In this chapter, the Focus Group is mentioned, which consisted of a video conference meeting with the participation of five (5) women who fit the characteristics of a plus-size body. The summary of the meeting, along with the questions addressed, is presented in Table 14. The Focus Group aims at gathering insights and opinions from plus-size women and guiding the survey construction.

4.1 Focus Group

After research on the topic of plus-size, it was visible the lack of data in Portugal, regarding consumer behavior. Therefore, the objective of the focus Group is to better understand this consumer, their history as a plus-size, what are their opinions towards the fashion industry, and how they feel when they buy clothes today.

During the Focus Group meeting, the participants were welcomed and directed to the online room where they would take place. The most important statements during the meetings were written down as well as the reactions of the participants. The meeting was recorded as an easier and faster analysis tool to re-analyze whenever necessary [75].

The meeting began with a group of plus-size women, a group animator (person in charge of making the questions), and an analyst (person in charge of writing down the behaviors and answers provided by the respondents), with the initial objective of defining the Guide for the meetings. At this meeting, the group animator is responsible for asking questions and reinforcing the dialogue between the participants. An analyst (student developing the dissertation) pointed out the participants' responses, as well as reactions, feelings, and reactions.

During the meeting with the participants, it was possible to answer some initial questions about this study from their perspective. The women explained what it means to be plus-size in today's market and their difficulties. As they answered the study questions, their opinions emerged and showed that they were often in agreement with each other. One agreement is that the plus-size industry, despite improving significantly in recent years, continues to neglect this type of body [75].

Table 14: Summary of participant responses.

Questions	Summary of answers
Tell us a little about the clothes you wear	The style that was often referenced by the participants was casual or formal and they don't appreciate tight fabrics, as well as they do not wear clothes with many colors. Often prefer neutral tones, such as nudes, black or white. One of the most mentioned pieces was jeans, but made from an elastic fabric for ease of usage, body shaping, and comfort. In general, the legs are the part of the body that is most uncomfortable to show, and wearing pants makes them feel more comfortable. The jeans are often combined with a loose shirt, sweater, cropped, and half-sleeved. Participants "B" and "C", despite not feeling well in some cases, choose to wear dresses in the summer. On some occasions, the same participants prefer to look sporty, especially on days when they go to the gym or stay at home. They mix lots of clothes from different seasons because they look for quality clothing that suits them better. After all, obtaining quality clothing for their size is difficult. Four of the participants stated that over time they began to choose clothes with better quality and versatility. In general, prices per piece can fluctuate between 30 and 100 euros. But most times to have fashionable clothes they spend more or resort to buying in ateliers. Most of the participants avoid Inditex because it is expensive when comparing price-quality, so they prefer to buy something expensive from a premium brand, but unfortunately, premium brands have had a very slow evolution in plus-size sizes. Participant "C" likes to consume brands such as Karl Lagerfeld, and Guess, but there are few pieces that she can wear, and few tend to be in an oversize model. She was disillusioned because, in her point of view, brands don't pay attention when moving from small sizes to plus-sizes. The participants agree that cheaper brands offer more sizes and a variety of designs. they explained that they felt discriminated against when entering stores like Tommy, and Guess. One of the things that bothers them most are bikinis and swimsuits, there is no consideration for the anatomy of bodies.
What criteria are used to choose your clothes?	All participants shared the same opinion about C&A, this brand has a wide variety of sizes and can easily be found in its stores, but the brand does not consider the physiognomy of its customers as well as the diversity of products when it comes to plus-size sizes. These clothes do not always give you better self-esteem. Participants look for stylish, trendy, comfortable clothing that hides some of their body's imperfections and increases their self-esteem.

How do you find the clothes you wear?	A few years ago, they found it more difficult than now to find clothes in larger sizes. In general, the balance is becoming positive. All participants look for their sizes in shopping mall stores. Clothes have become increasingly more comfortable and oversized, which is why they have become easier to find. But most of the time they buy online, due to a lack of stores with their size, or because they only offer larger sizes online. The brands of choice when they go to shopping malls are Zara, Tifosi, H&M, Tiffossi, Lefties, Springfield, Primark, C&A, Mango, Kiabi, and Stradivarius. When it comes to online brands, the participants listed SHEIN and ASOS. participant "A" was the one who had the most difficulty buying clothes, when she finds her size in the stores and tries it on, she feels bad and sometimes the size does not correspond to the real size or fits. She often looks for brands through recommendations or on social media, preferring to go to a store to try them on. She likes shopping online, but she doesn't feel very safe because sometimes the returns processes are tedious.

Do you see changes in the production of products for plus-size in the last five years?	All participants share the same opinion, that they have felt great changes in recent years. They notice that the sizes have become larger and more comfortable. All of them were overweight as children and often had to resort to older sizes and often made the jump to adult sizes. At that time, there were very few plus-size sizes in physical stores and when there were, the models were very little elaborated, and basic and did not follow fashion trends. They were pleased that recently Mango introduced Violeta, which is oriented towards large sizes, and just recently Zara introduced the XXL size, which is a size that, despite being a large size, still does not fit many people plus-size women. In the case of H&M, they already had large sizes, but they started to see greater diversity and much more fashionable clothes. They show more significant changes in e-commerce, as many brands only make these sizes available on their websites and others create specific and fashionable models for the plus-size category. The emergence and recognition of celebrities who fit into the plus-size category have helped a lot in the evolution of recognition in plus-size fashion. Some examples of the participants are the Kim Kardashians, the brothers created brands where they develop clothes for large sizes, singers such as Lizzo, Adele, Beth Ditto, Amber Riley, Megan Trainor and actresses such as Mindy Kaling, Kate Upton, Kate Winslet, Chrissy Metz, Amy Schumer, Nikki Blonsky, Queen Latifah and more celebrities have changed the way society looks at fat bodies. The participants feel that more and more brands are focusing on large sizes, but they have forgotten to adapt the pieces for fat people. There is a lack of suitable designers for different types of bodies.
How do you evaluate this segment focused on plus-size?	This question raised anger among the participants, they feel that this market segment is not yet inclusive. Society does not want to encourage obesity but ends up neglecting this segment. The clothes sell out very easily given the amount of demand, the participants with the larger sizes often must activate notification on certain products to be able to purchase as soon as stock is renewed, and in many cases, this does not happen. The sizes, despite having the same number and measurements of their bodies and fitting the clothing, do not fit the body very well making it very difficult to purchase. Whether in person or even on the internet. Still, many brands do not have large or even straight sizes. They shared that they felt that there is still a stigma regarding the 'perfect bodies' and small sizes.

Do you currently see plus-size products being advertised?	All participants do not know any Portuguese plus-size brands, whether physically or online. They feel that in Portugal, plus-size bodies are nowhere to be seen. The brands that they know to have larger sizes or specific plus-size categories rarely advertise their products. There is a change in the mannequins in some stores to larger sizes and some posters are beginning to appear of chubby models. They only see advertising on websites, and even then, very little, and when plus-size models appear, they do not demonstrate reality or the majority of plus-size women. He only watches online advertisements and sees more plus-size advertisements from the SHEIN brand despite not buying. SHEIN and ASOS are the only places where they see plus-size advertised.
Sensations transmitted by the participants:	Discomfort, lack of self-esteem, anger, neglected, forgotten.

When analyzing the participants' responses in detail, the consensus between them on several issues was visible (Table 14). In general, all participants pointed to a more comfortable, casual style and sometimes, because of their work, a more formal style. They all pointed out characteristics of their bodies that make them feel most uncomfortable when wearing clothing and highlighted that often what they buy does not make them feel beautiful or does not hide these characteristics that make them uncomfortable. When it comes to using colors, they opt for neutral tones or pastel tones, but most of the clothing items are black. The most mentioned item of clothing was jeans, which are often difficult to find sizes for and few models have elasticity, which often makes them uncomfortable.

Purchasing plus-size clothes in conventional places such as high street stores or shopping malls is very difficult, which is why they mostly choose to buy from online sites. On some more special occasions, such as weddings or baptisms, they turned to the fashion atelier to buy custom-made pieces. It was also mentioned that they often end up having to mix clothes from different seasons of the year, because it is difficult to find clothes that suit them well and of quality, referring to just one time of the year.

The most mentioned brands during the Focus Grup were H&M, KIABI, SHEIN, ZARA, Pull and Bear, Mango, Bershka, Springfield, Primark, Lefties, C&A, Code, Quebramar, Modalfa, Bershka. Mango/Violeta, H&M, and SHEIN were the three (3) most mentioned brands, because according to the participants, these brands produce clothing items that best adapt to their bodies, following some fashion trends and having large sizes available. One of the complaints they make is that, for brands that have large sizes from 1XL to 5XL, prices tend to change on the size chart or simply on specific models.

Most of the participants avoid Inditex because it is expensive when comparing price-quality, and don't have larger sizes, so they prefer to buy something expensive from a premium brand, but in their point of view premium brands, unfortunately, have had a very slow evolution in plus-size clothing.

In general, the participants are willing to pay for a piece between 30 euros and 100 euros, but in some cases, if these pieces are of good quality and are stylish, they don't mind giving more. Usually, these women feel disillusioned with brands that have larger sizes, because their body physiognomy is not taken into consideration when a piece is scaled up into a larger size. All participants shared the same opinion about C&A, this brand has a wide variety of sizes and can easily be found in its stores, but the brand does not consider the physiognomy of its customers as well as the diversity of products when it comes to plus-size sizes. One of the things that bothers them the most are bikinis and swimsuits, where is visible the lack of consideration for the anatomy of bodies.

The participants agree that cheaper brands such as SHEIN, Lefties, and Primark often offer more sizes and a variety of designs, and when entering a premium store, they feel discriminated against because they do not meet their beauty standards. They often look for brands through recommendations or on social media but prefer to try clothing in person.

When the participants were asked if they felt any difference in plus-size fashion in the last five years, they all stated that these differences are quite visible. All of them were overweight as children and often had to resort to older sizes and early in life jump to adult sizes. They felt that over time the sizes had become larger or the models wider, which means that they sometimes come in smaller sizes. They remembered that it was difficult to find clothes in their sizes in physical stores. They also state that with increased security when purchasing online, it has become easier to purchase clothes in larger sizes, and in some cases, some brands only make these sizes available on the brand's websites, but sometimes the return process is tedious. Despite these significant differences in recent years, in their views, changes have been quite slow, as there is still a lack of variety in sizes that truly represent plus-size women. The recognition of celebrities who fit into the plus-size category has helped a lot in bringing awareness to plus-size fashion, and the way, society looks at a "fat" body. When it comes to online brands, the participants listed SHEIN and ASOS as the best options.

The participants shared their enthusiasm that Mango introduced Violeta, which is oriented towards large sizes, and just recently Zara introduced the XXL size, which is a size that, despite not representing a majority, is a step towards diversity. H&M already had large sizes, but the brand started to bet on greater diversity and much more fashionable clothes.

When questioned about representativeness, this topic left them angry, they feel that this market segment is not yet inclusive, and society does not want to encourage obesity but ends up neglecting people. They felt that there is still a stigma regarding the 'perfect bodies' and small sizes, and that may be a reason why they do not know any plus-size Portuguese brands and rarely see bodies like theirs in campaigns, advertisements, and television programs. Few advertisements on websites are seen, and even then, the plus-size models do not represent the reality of many plus-size women.

During the conversation with the participants, significant challenges emerged, including a lack of knowledge about plus-size brands, limited engagement with fashion trends, and a possible disconnection with the fashion world as a whole. These problems, far from being isolated, can be interconnected.

4.2 Survey

One of the prominent issues identified by participants in the Focus Grup was the notable absence of large sizes and the limited variety of pieces available. The fashion industry has often neglected this segment, relegating plus-size women to limited and, at times, outdated options. The perceived gap between the available supply and the diversity of sizes and styles desired by plus-size consumers highlights a significant mismatch between demand and supply. This gap not only impacts consumer satisfaction but also reflects a missed opportunity for brands to win and retain customers in this segment.

The disappointment reported by participants is not just an isolated emotional response, it has direct implications for the consumption experience of these women. The lack of suitable options not only affects self-esteem but also limits personal expression and participation in the world of fashion. Given these limitations, participants expressed the urgent need for changes in the fashion industry's approach to the plus-size segment and it is based on these data that the survey was developed.

Based on the responses obtained in the Focus Group, the proposed survey plays a crucial role in expanding and deepening the understanding of dissatisfaction within the plus-size segment. The survey represents a valuable tool to extend and enrich the analysis initiated during the Focus Group. By offering a broader scale, it allows for a more quantitative approach, making it easier to quantify patterns and trends identified in participants' responses.

With the information obtained through the focus group, it is possible to create a more structured and closed survey. To obtain quantitative data that complement the qualitative findings of the exploratory stage, the research survey was applied to a broader sample this time including not only plus-size women but all men and women of different ages.

The survey begins by exploring clothing-related consumer habits, including shopping frequency, style preferences, and favorite brands. It includes questions about factors that influence purchasing decisions, such as price, fashion trends, and representation on social media. Addresses general perceptions on the plus-size topic. Issues such as social acceptance and opinions on body diversity. There is a specific section for questions aimed at the plus-size audience, which includes specific shopping experiences, challenges faced when finding clothes, and suggestions for improvements in the product offering and segment representation. There are also questions about the challenges faced by this specific segment, which involve issues related to size availability, social stigma, and experiences in shopping environments. The survey ends with basic demographic information, such as age, geographic location, and occupation.

Questions aimed at non-plus-size participants may address topics such as their opinions on the inclusion of plus-size models in the media, the accessibility of plus-size clothing in the mainstream market, and the influence of body representation on the formation of beauty standards. These specific questions can help uncover external perceptions and stigmas associated with the plus-size segment. When addressing sensitive issues related to body image and personal experiences, it is vital to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants.

A pre-test was carried out with a representative sample of three (3) types of respondents: a man, a non-plus-size woman, and a plus-size woman. Issues were identified and corrected based on feedback received during pre-testing to ensure the effectiveness and reliability of the survey. Questions and answers were now asked in Portuguese and English. Participants' responses were also evaluated to understand how the questions are interpreted and whether the answers are consistent with their intentions, it was added an interpretation of what plus-size is and the question scheme was reorganized.

The survey was placed online in October and closed in January, during these four (4) months one hundred (100) responses were obtained. Of the one hundred (100) responses, (Figure 20 twenty (20) are respondents who identify as male, and eight (80) identify as female.

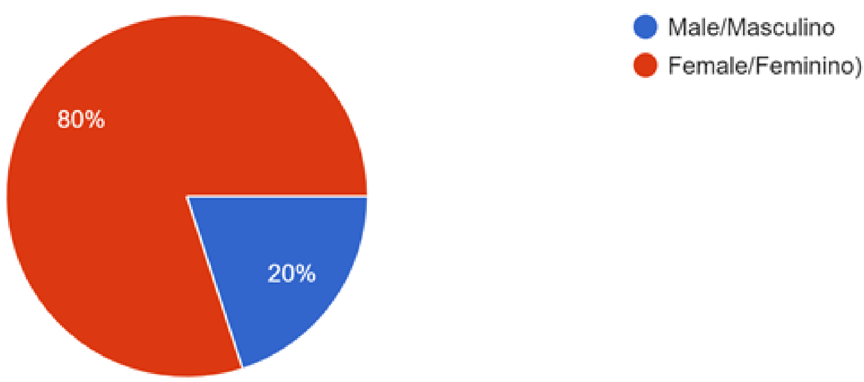

Figure 20: Gender of respondents.

Table 15 provides a comprehensive overview of key demographic information about the respondents, offering insights into their age, weight, height, household size, household income, occupation, education, and district of residence. This detailed data set plays a crucial role in enhancing the understanding of the survey respondents. Additionally, it serves as a valuable resource for identifying and characterizing the target audience in future dissertation research. The diverse range of information captured in Table 15 is essential for creating a nuanced profile of the participants, aiding in the formulation of more accurate and insightful conclusions about the surveyed population.

The 28 to 38 age group is the most common, with 50% of respondents in this range (Table 16- Respondents data. The 18 to 27 age group represents a significant portion, with 38% of respondents in this range. The age groups from 39 to 48 years old and 49 years old and over have a smaller participation, representing 9% and 3%, respectively. The age group of children under 18 years of age was added to filter answers, which cannot be used due to laws that protect minors. This helped to ensure that the responses collected were appropriate and complied with applicable regulations.

The sample covers a variety of weight ranges (Table 15), showing diversity in the physical characteristics of those questioned.

The weighted average height, based on the percentages (Table 15) data, is approximately 173.74cm. It was calculated based on equation (4.1), where Wm is the mass and h the height.

$$BMI = \frac{m}{h} \quad (4.1)$$

Therefore, the average Body Mass Index (BMI), based on the weighted averages of weight and height, is approximately 31.44. This places the group's average in the "Obesity" (Table 11) category according to the BMI categories established by the World Health Organization [44].

According to the responses collected (Table 15),31% of respondents reported that their households consist of a single person, for 35% of participants, their households consist of two people, in 21% of cases, households have three members, in 10% of responses, the Households include four people. Only 3% of respondents indicated that their households have more than five people.

Based on the survey responses (Table 15), 2% of the participants reported that their household income is up to 759 euros, representing the smallest percentage. The majority of respondents (35%) have households with 2 people, while the third largest percentage is for households with 3 people (21%). In terms of incomes, the highest percentage of respondents (35%) reported incomes in the range of 1000 euros to 1499 euros, followed by 27% in the range of 1500 to 1999 euros.

89% of respondents are employed, which suggests that the sample has a significant representation of salaried workers. 8% are self-employed, indicating a significant presence of entrepreneurs or self-employed professionals in the sample. 3% are unemployed, representing

Table 15: Respondents data.

Question	Sections	Percentage
Age	18 to 27	50%
	28 to 38	38%
	39 to 48	9%
	49 or more	3%
Weight	Less than 65kg	30%
	65kg to 75kg	15%
	76kg to 85kg	10%
	86kg to 95kg	17%
	96kg to 105kg	9%
	106kg to 115kg	15%
	116kg to 120kg	3%
	Over 120 Kg	1%
Height	Up to 149cm	1%
	150cm to 155cm	6%
	156cm to 165cm	34%
	166cm to 170cm	39%
	171cm to 175cm	15%
	176cm to 180cm	5%
Household	1	31%
	2	35%
	3	21%
	4	10%
	More than 5	3%
Monthly household income	Up to 759€	2%
	760 to 999€	13%
	1000 to 1499€	35%
	1500 to 1999€	27%
	2000 to 2499€	13%
	2500 to 3000€	7%
	More than 3000€	3%
Professional occupation	Self-employed	8%
	Employed on behalf of others	89%
	Unemployed	3%
Education	High school	25%
	Bachelor’s Degree	48%
	Master of Science	26%
	PhD	1%
District where you live	Aveiro	1%
	Beja	1%
	Braga	1%
	Castelo Branco	17%
	Coimbra	4%
	Évora	1%
	Guarda	11%
	Leiria	1%
	Lisboa	48%
	Porto	6%
	Santarem	2%
	Setubal	2%
	Viana do Castelo	1%
	Viseu	4%

a smaller portion of the sample (Table 15).

According to Table 15, 48% of the respondents hold a bachelor's degree, 25% have completed secondary education, 26% have a master's degree, and only 1% have attained a doctoral degree. It appears that none of the respondents chose the option for primary education according to the provided information, it can be concluded that 75% of the respondents possess higher education qualifications.

In the information provided (Table 15), respondents did not select the districts of Vila Real, Portalegre, Faro, and Bragança. The most chosen districts were Lisbon with 48%, Castelo Branco with 17%, Guarda with 11%, Porto with 6%, and Viseu and Coimbra with 4% each. Santarém had 2%, while the remaining districts each had 1%.

These data (Figure 18- Gender of respondents shows that 78.4% of the survey was answered by people who identify as female. The fact that 22 respondents identified as plus-size (Figure 21) and 24 wear size 42 or larger (Figure 22) highlights the diversity of bodies within the plus-size spectrum. These answers can be valuable in understanding purchasing preferences and specific challenges faced by different sizes within the plus-size category.

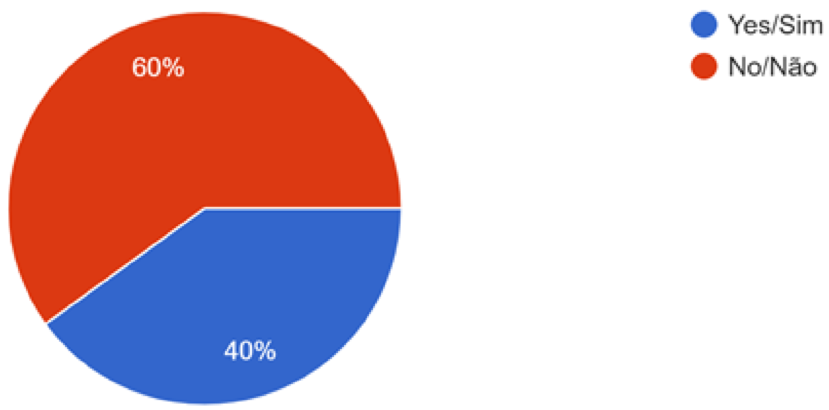

Figure 21: People who consider themselves plus-size.

Figure 21 reflects the responses of those who explicitly identify as plus-size. Meanwhile, (Figure 22), shows that 52,5% of respondents wear a size 42 or more, covering a wider range of participants, including those who may not label themselves as plus-size but still wear larger sizes due to their physical structure.

The discrepancy between (Figure 21)and (Figure 22) may be attributed to the fact that some people may not explicitly identify as plus-size, but may still wear larger sizes, especially on the upper or lower body, due to their body physiognomy.

The (Table 16) is a representation and summary of the transformation of data collected

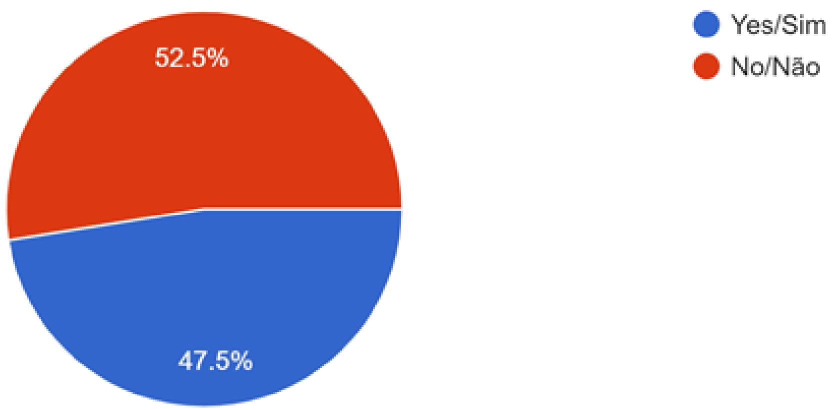

Figure 22: Women who wear size 42 or larger.

through the Google Forms survey into numerical or quantitative formats. This table serves to provide an overview of the main survey results, presenting important statistics or metrics derived from the survey responses.

Table 16: Relevant data from the survey.

Respondents	Questions	Responses	Significant percentage
80= all women	During the acquisition of clothing, I give importance to its composition	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	10% 5% 53.8% 20% 11.3%
80= all women	I think that fashion trends change my consumption pattern	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	11.3% 20% 36.3% 27.5% 5%
80= all women	I appreciate clothes that are in line with the fashion trends in the market (Fashion product)	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	6.3% 18.8% 35% 30% 10%

80= all women	I attach little importance to ecological materials	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	8.8% 20% 43.6% 18.8% 8.8%
80= all women	I recycle clothes	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	6.3% 17.5% 36.3% 28.7% 11.3%
80= all women	The price of the product does not interfere with my purchases	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	21.3% 31.3% 27.5% 17.5% 2.5%
80= all women	I appreciate the appealing format of Packaging	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	15% 31.3% 31.3% 16.3% 6.3%
80= all women	The clothing brand I buy from has excellent quality	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	2.5% 17.5% 58.8% 13.8% 7.5%
80= all women	I give more importance to prices than to quality	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	7.5% 20% 45% 21.3% 6.3%

80= all women	I give more importance to the brand than to the price	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	25% 35% 30% 6.3% 3.8%
80= all women	I attach little importance to the history of the brand	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	5% 17.5% 30% 20% 27.5%
80= all women	I buy second-hand clothes	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	32.5% 22.5% 27.5% 12.5% 5%
80= all women	I buy luxury brands	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	32.5% 26.3% 31.3% 7.5% 2.5%
80= all women	I usually go to tailors for clothing	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	56.8% 16% 21% 4.9% 1.2%
38=plus-size women	The brands available on the market satisfy my needs	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	28.9% 39.5% 26.3% 0% 5.3%

38=plus-size women	I find plus-size brand products easily	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	28.9% 39.5% 26.3% 0% 5.3%
38=plus-size women	Today's brands have products with weak characteristics	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	2.6% 5.3% 42.1% 18.4% 31.6%
38=plus-size women	The advertising media used by plus-size brands encourages me to purchase them	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	23.7% 31.6% 39.5% 5.3% 0%
38=plus-size women	I feel satisfied when purchasing products from Portuguese brands	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	10.5% 15.8% 34.2% 26.3% 13.2%
38=plus-size women	I consider Plus-size clothing too expensive	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	0% 5.3% 38.8% 42.1% 15.8%
38=plus-size women	Plus-sizes brands should invest more on advertisement	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	0% 7.9% 18.4% 10.4% 63.2%

100=All respondents	I associate plus-size brands with a Portuguese product	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	48% 21% 28% 3% 0%
100=All respondents	I don't like to see products advertised on plus-size models	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	38% 18% 30% 7% 7%
100=All respondents	I consider the brands in the market inclusive	1) I totally disagree 2)I disagree 3) Indifferent (or neutral) 4) I agree 5) I totally agree	18% 34% 32% 14% 2%

Figure 20 shows that the survey was answered by one hundred (100) people, of which twenty (20) identified themselves as men and the remaining eighty (80) identified themselves as women, and according to Figure 21 and Figure 22 47,5% are plus-size women. In general, a BMI of 31.44 indicates that the responding population is classified as obese. This data is relevant for the study as it underscores the importance of analyzing the participants' average weight and categorizing them into specific BMI ranges.

According to Figure 23 a significant group with 41.3% mentioned buying at least one item of clothing per month. This regular shopping frequency suggests a continued interest in updating your wardrobe over time. Another equally representative group 37,5% of women stated that they buy clothes during sales. This suggests that they are alert to discount opportunities and may prefer to purchase clothing items during promotional periods. A 16,2%, indicated that they buy clothes at the beginning of each season (Autumn/Winter, Spring/Summer). This may reflect a seasonal shopping pattern, where people are looking to update their wardrobes according to the specific trends and needs of each season.

The majority of respondents (Table 16), representing 53.8%, indicated indifference regarding the composition when purchasing clothing. This suggests that a considerable number of women may not prioritize material composition when choosing clothes. The total of 31.3% represents those who agreed or completely agreed with the importance of composition when purchasing clothes. This significant portion demonstrates an awareness of and preference for specific materials when choosing clothing. A smaller percentage, 15%, disagreed or strongly

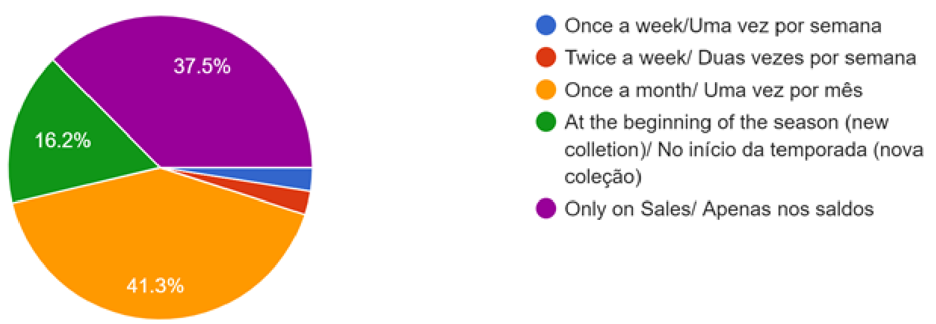

Figure 23: Frequency of clothing acquisition.

disagreed with the statement. This suggests that a minority of respondents do not consider composition as an important factor during the clothing purchasing process.

In general, there was a relatively even distribution in responses regarding the statement about whether fashion trends influence consumption patterns (Table 16. The ”Indifferent” option is the most frequent choice, representing 33.3% of responses. This suggests that a considerable number of respondents may not feel a strong influence of fashion trends on their consumption patterns. The relatively even distribution between ”Disagree” (20%), ”Agree” (27.5%), and ”Indifferent” (36.3%) indicates a diversity of opinions. This suggests that the influence of fashion trends on consumption patterns is perceived in different ways among respondents. The options ”Strongly disagree” (11.3%) and ”Strongly agree” (5%) received the lowest percentages. This indicates that extreme responses, where fashion trends have a significant or minimal impact on consumption patterns, are less common among respondents.

The analysis of Table 16 suggests a change in attitudes towards fashion trends and consumption patterns. The reduction in the percentages of ”Strongly Disagree” and ”Disagree” (from 31.3% to 25.1%) suggests a possible change in attitudes regarding the importance of fashion trends in consumption patterns. The increase in the percentages of ”Indifferent,” ”Agree,” and ”Strongly Agree” (from 68.8% to 75%) indicates that more respondents now express a more neutral or positive view regarding appreciation of pieces aligned with market fashion trends. The reduction in disagreement may suggest greater acceptance or even appreciation of pieces that follow market fashion trends. Changes in responses may indicate greater openness or willingness to incorporate elements of fashion trends into their consumption patterns.

It is worth noting the discrepancy (Table 16) that exists when the respondent is asked whether they attach little importance to ecological materials, 43.8% were indifferent. The fact that almost half of the respondents were indifferent may suggest a lack of prioritization or awareness regarding environmentally friendly materials when choosing products, possibly due to a variety of reasons such as lack of information, limited availability, or other purchasing priorities.

Table 16 reveals a variety of attitudes among respondents towards the practice of recycling clothes. The total of responses that agreed or strongly agreed (28.7% + 11.3% = 40%) indicates almost half of respondents have positive attitudes towards the practice of recycling clothes. The percentage of indifference (15.6%) is lower compared to the percentages of agreement, indicating that a significant portion of respondents have a clear position regarding clothing recycling. Total disagreement and disagreement (6.3% + 17.5% = 23.8%) represent a smaller percentage compared to positive responses. This suggests that the majority of respondents are at least open to the idea of recycling clothes.

When asked if the price of the item does not affect purchases (Table 16), 21.3% completely disagree, 31.3% disagree, 27.5% were indifferent, 17.5% agree and only 2.5% totally agree. The total sum of responses that totally or partially disagreed (21.3% + 31.3% = 52.6%) indicates that a significant majority of respondents are price-sensitive when making purchasing decisions. The percentage of indifference (27.5%) is lower compared to the percentages of disagreement. This suggests that a smaller portion of respondents are indifferent regarding the impact of price on their purchasing decisions. The percentage of total and partial agreement (17.5% + 2.5% = 20%) is relatively low, indicating that a smaller proportion of respondents believe that the price does not affect their purchases. These results may reflect the relative importance of price in respondents' purchasing decisions. It may indicate that many consumers consider price as a significant factor when buying clothes.

The largest percentage of respondents indicated indifference towards the attractive packaging format, this represents 33.3%. The percentages of total and partial disagreement (15% + 31.3% = 46.3%) indicate almost half of the participants. This suggests that a significant portion of respondents may not consider packaging format as a decisive factor in their choices. This indicates that a considerable proportion of respondents do not attach great importance to the attractive shape of the packaging when making purchases. The percentage of complete and partial agreement (16.3% + 6.3% = 22.6%) is lower compared to disagreement. This suggests that a smaller proportion of respondents consider the attractive packaging format as a relevant factor in their purchasing choices. Despite the higher percentages of disagreement and indifference, there is still a significant portion who fully or partially agree with the statement. This may indicate that although packaging format is not critical for everyone, it may still have some impact on some consumers' purchasing decisions.

The highest percentage indicates indifference towards the quality of the clothing brand (58.8%) that the respondents wear. This suggests that a significant portion of respondents may not have a strong or clear opinion about the quality of the brand. Despite the indifference, a considerable percentage of respondents agreed or completely agreed with the statement (13.8% + 7.5% = 21.3%). This indicates that some consumers have a positive perception of the quality of the clothing brand they choose. The percentages of total and partial disagreement (2.5% + 17.5% = 20%) are relatively lower, which suggests that a minority of respondents expressed negative opinions about the quality of the clothing brand.

Respondents who indicated indifference regarding the relative importance of price and quality (Table 16) represent (45%). Being the highest suggests that a significant portion of respondents do not express a clear preference for price or quality in their purchasing decisions. The total sum of responses that agreed or completely agreed (21.3% + 6.3% = 27.6%) is almost identical to the percentage of total and partial disagreement (20% + 7.5% = 27.5%). This indicates that, although a portion of respondents prefer price, the majority do not express a clear preference for price over quality. The percentages of total and partial disagreement are relatively high (27.5%), indicating that a significant part of respondents do not completely agree on giving more importance to price than quality.

When asked about the importance placed on the brand compared to the price, 25% of respondents strongly disagreed, while 35% simply disagreed. These respondents may perceive that product quality is more crucial than the brand itself. Another 30% expressed indifference towards this statement. Some respondents who showed indifference may have a more conscious approach to price and brand, choosing to consider other factors such as sustainability or business ethics. Only 6.3% agreed with the idea, and 3.7% fully agreed.

The percentage of indifference (30%) indicates that a significant portion of respondents do not express a clear opinion about the importance of the brand story. This may reflect a lack of significant impact or interest in this aspect. The total sum of responses that agreed or completely agreed (20% + 27.5% = 47.5%) is greater than the percentages of total and partial disagreement (5% + 17.5% = 22.5%). This suggests that a significant portion of respondents value the brand's story in their purchasing decisions. Although there is a considerable percentage who completely or partially disagree, this disagreement is minor compared to agreement. Among those who have an opinion on the matter, valuing the brand story is more common. The majority of responses expressed agreement or strong agreement, indicating that for many respondents, brand history plays an important role in their purchasing decisions.

The total percentage of responses that agreed or strongly agreed (12.5% + 5% = 17.5%) indicates that a portion of respondents are open to the idea of buying second-hand clothes. Both the percentage of indifference (27.5%) and disagreement (22.5%) are relatively high, suggesting that a significant portion of respondents may have neutral or unfavorable opinions regarding purchasing used clothing. The percentage of total disagreement (32.5%) is the highest among all options, indicating that a considerable portion of respondents are not willing to buy second-hand clothes.

The total percentage of responses that total or partially disagreed (32.5% + 26.3% = 58.8%) is high, indicating that half of the respondents are not willing to purchase luxury brands. The percentage of indifference (31.3%) is relatively high, suggesting that a portion of respondents do not express a clear opinion about purchasing luxury brands. The sum of the percentages of total or partial agreement (7.5% + 2.5% = 10%) is low, indicating that a smaller portion of respondents are willing to buy luxury brands. The prevailing disagreement may reflect considerations such as budget, personal preferences, or values that influence the decision not to purchase luxury brands.

The total percentage of responses that totally or partially disagreed (56.8% + 16% = 72.8%) is significant, indicating that the majority of respondents do not usually go to tailors to buy clothes. The percentage of indifference (19%) suggests that a significant portion of respondents do not express a clear opinion about the practice of going to tailors to buy clothes. The sum of the percentages of total or partial agreement (4.9% + 1.2% = 6.1%) is relatively low, indicating that a minority of respondents are willing to turn to tailors for their clothing purchases.

The total percentage of responses (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) that totally or partially disagreed (28.9% + 39.5% = 68.4%) is significant, where a considerable proportion of respondents are not satisfied with the brands available on the market. The percentage of indifference (26.3%) indicates that a significant portion of respondents do not express a clear opinion about satisfaction with existing brands. The sum of the percentages of total or partial agreement (5.3% + 0.0% = 5.3%) is relatively low, indicating that a minority of respondents are completely satisfied with the brands available on the market.

Almost a third (28.9%) of respondents (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) completely disagree with the statement that they easily find Plus-size products. 39.5% of respondents simply disagree with this statement. Making (28.9% + 39.5% = 68.4%) more than half of the participants are women who disagree, and total disagree. Around a quarter (26.3%) of respondents did not express a clear opinion, appearing indifferent. A small percentage (5.3%) of respondents completely agree with the statement. None of the respondents simply agree with the statement.

Only a small percentage (2.6%) of respondents (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) completely disagree that current brands have products with weak features. Another 5.3% disagree with this statement. A significant proportion (42.1%) of respondents were indifferent to the statement about the characteristics of current brands' products. A total of 18.4% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 31.6% strongly disagreed.

The total percentage of responses that totally or partially disagreed (23.7% + 31.6% = 55.3%) is significant, indicating that at least half of respondents (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) do not feel encouraged to buy Plus-size brands based on advertising. The percentage of indifference (39.5%) suggests that a significant portion of respondents do not express a clear opinion about the effectiveness of advertising for plus-size brands. This could indicate a lack of strong engagement or discontent. The sum of the percentages of total or partial agreement (5.3% + 0.0% = 5.3%) is relatively low, indicating that a minority of respondents feel that advertising for plus-size brands encourages them to buy.

The sum of the percentages of total or partial agreement (26.3% + 13.2% = 39.5%) indicates that a significant part of respondents (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) feel satisfied when purchasing products from Portuguese brands. The percentage of indifference (34.2%) suggests that a significant portion of respondents do not express a clear opinion about satisfaction when purchasing products from Portuguese brands. This could indicate a lack of strong engagement or discontent. The sum of the percentages of total or partial disagreement (10.5% + 15.8% = 26.3%) is relatively low, indicating that a minority of respondents do not feel satisfied when purchasing products from Portuguese brands.

The percentage of total or partial agreement (42.1% + 15,8% = 57.9%) is significant, indicating that a considerable number of respondents (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) consider plus-size clothing to be expensive. The percentage of indifference (36.8%) expresses that a significant portion of respondents do not have a clear opinion about the cost of plus-size clothing. This may reflect a lack of strong engagement or ambivalence about the issue. The sum of the percentages of total or partial disagreement (0.0% + 5.3% = 5.3%) is really low, indicating that a minority of respondents do not consider plus-size clothing to be expensive.

The total percentage of responses (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) that fully or partially agreed (63.2% + 10.5% = 73.7%) is high, indicating that the majority of respondents are in favor of an increase in advertising investment by brands in plus-size. The percentage of indifference (18.4%) is low, suggesting that a minority of respondents do not express a clear opinion on the need for more investment in advertising for plus-size brands. The sum of the percentages of total or partial disagreement (7.9% + 0.0% = 7.9%) is low, indicating that a minority of respondents disagree with the idea that plus-size brands should invest more in advertising.

To understand which colors respondents (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more), wear most in summer and spring (Figure 25), the primary and secondary colors were presented (Orange, Green, Blue, Red, Yellow, Purple). Blue and green emerge as the most popular colors for summer, with 84.2% and 55.3% of respondents choosing these colors, respectively. Purple and orange also have a significant presence, with 34.2% and 7.9% of respondents opting for these colors. Choosing colors like blue and green may indicate a preference for more neutral and refreshing tones during the hot season.

Concerning color trends(Figure 24), the most used last spring and summer, 21.1% responded (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) to none of those mentioned in Figure 24. The highest percentage was 39.5% for Perennial Blue. Nutritious Green and Red both had 31.6%. 28.9% also chose the exotic green color and 23.7% light pink. The high percentages indicate that there are a significant number of plus-size women who like to follow fashion trends, showing a connection with the popular colors of the season. Colors such as pink, luminescent yellow, orange, and red had lower percentages, indicating that although some colors are popular, others may not be as preferred by respondents. These values represent that there is a large number of plus-size women who like to be in line with fashion trends.

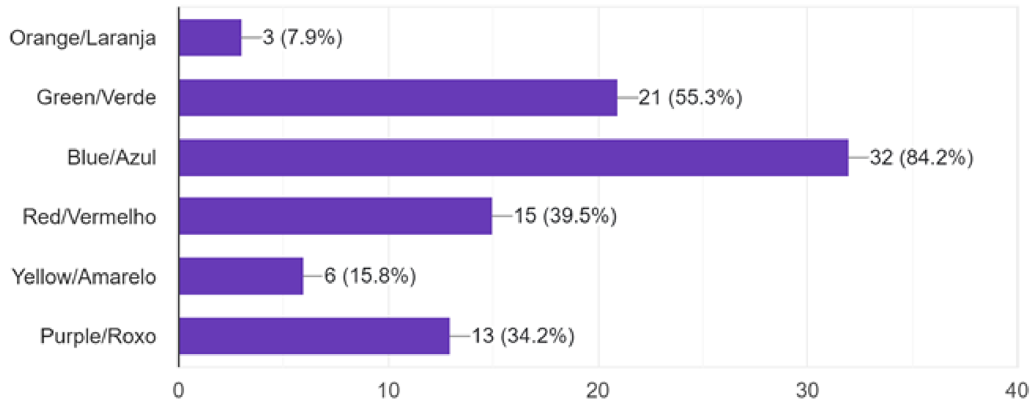

Figure 24: Most wear colors in spring and summer.

To understand which colors respondents (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more), wear most in summer and spring (Figure 25), the primary and secondary colors were presented (Orange, Green, Blue, Red, Yellow, Purple). Blue and green emerge as the most popular colors for summer, with 84.2% and 55.3% of respondents choosing these colors, respectively. Purple and orange also have a significant presence, with 34.2% and 7.9% of respondents opting for these colors. Choosing colors like blue and green may indicate a preference for more neutral and refreshing tones during the hot season.

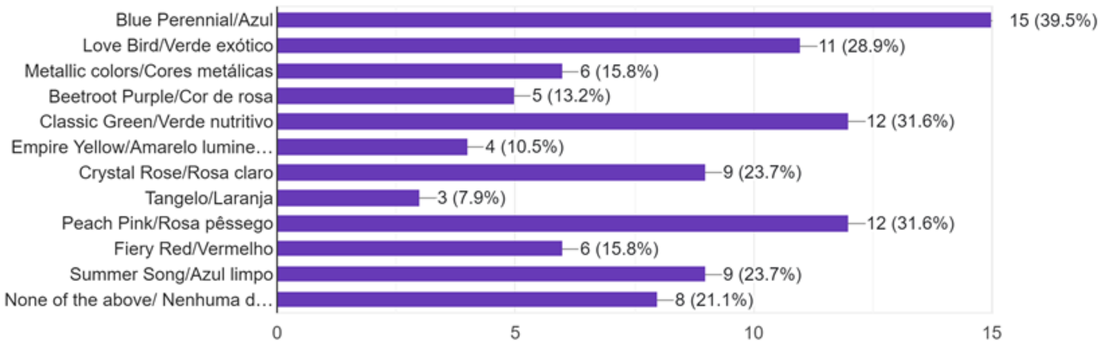

Figure 25: Color trends of Spring and Summer 2023

Based on data from Figure 26, most respondents (71.1%) choose both brand websites and mall stores as their most frequent purchasing options. This indicates a significant preference for these purchasing channels. Just over a quarter of respondents (26.3%) choose to buy in high street stores, suggesting that there is still a considerable portion of consumers who prefer this form of purchasing. 13.2% chose the option to buy on social platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. This suggests that there is a smaller segment of consumers who use these platforms to buy clothes and an equally small portion (13.2%) said they choose all available purchasing options, including buying clothes on online brand websites, high street stores, platforms online, and shopping malls. This demonstrates a variety of purchasing preferences among respondents. None of the answers were selected by 0.0% of respondents, indicating that all respondents chose at least one of the purchase options provided.

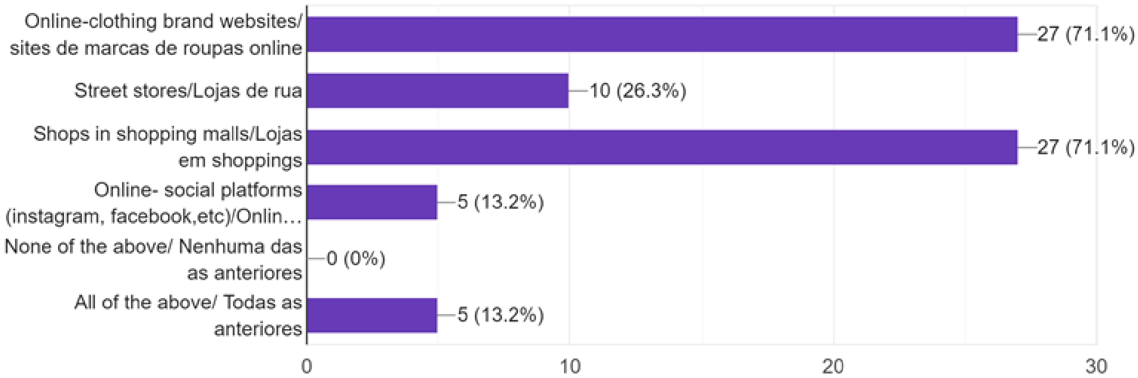

Figure 26: Color trends of Spring and Summer 2023.

In Figure 27, it's evident that a significant portion of respondents, 36.8%, associate (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) with the plus-size brand H&M. Following closely, 23.7% of respondents chose KIABI, while 13.2% opted for SHEIN. Mango and C&A were both selected by 7.9% of respondents. On the other hand, Pull and Bear, Springfield, and Primark were each chosen by 2.6% of respondents. Interestingly, the option "all of the above" also garnered 2.6% of responses. Notably, brands such as ZARA, Bershka, Lefties, Code, and Quebramar were not selected, similar to the option "none of the above".

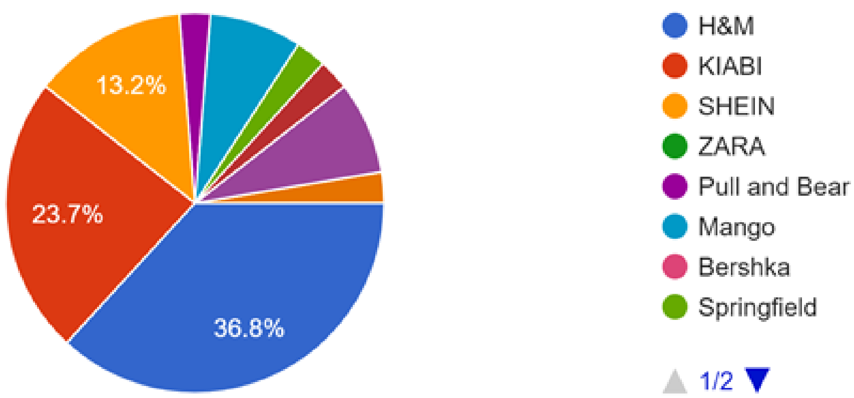

Figure 27: Brands associated with plus-size.

Based on the results of the focus group, where some brands were mentioned as more inclusive, the most frequent were included in the survey, and the brand considered the most inclusive was H&M, chosen by 31.6% of respondents (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more). Second, the brand SHEIN was indicated by 28.9% of respondents as being inclusive. KIABI was chosen by 21.1% of respondents as an inclusive brand. Primark was chosen by 7.9% of respondents. ZARA, Mango, and C&A were each chosen by 2.6% of respondents. The option ”none of the above” was chosen by 2.6% of respondents. Other brands mentioned in the focus group, such as Pull and Bear, Springfield, Modalfa, Code, Leflies, Quebramar, and Bershka, did not receive any significant choices. The statement ”all of the above” also did not receive any significant choices (Figure 28).

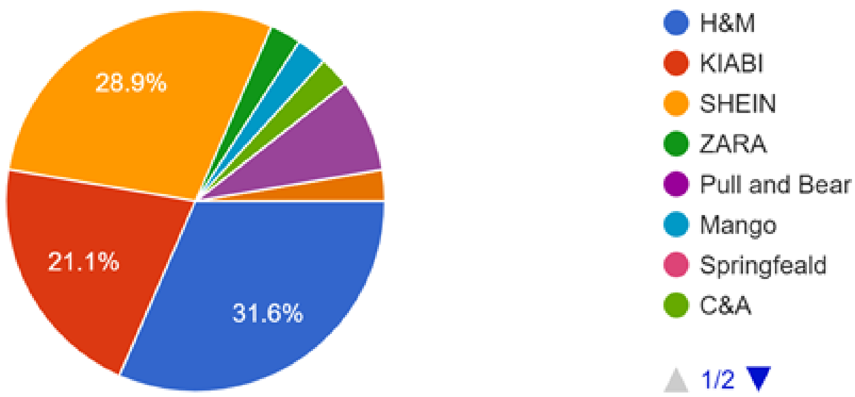

Figure 28: Brands considered the most inclusive.

When respondents were asked about the fashion segment they associated with plus-size fashion, examples of brands were provided in each option to guide their orientation (Figure 29). 60.4% of respondents (Plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) opted for the ”Fast fashion” segment. 22.8% opted for the ”Medium low” segment. 11.9% opted for the ”Medium” segment. The fashion segments with the lowest percentages were ”Medium-high” with 3%, while both the ”Luxury” and ”Couture” segments had 1% each. The ”Premium” segment did not receive any choices (0.0%). This data indicates that the majority of respondents associated plus-size fashion with the ”Fast fashion” segment, followed by the ”Medium low” and ”Medium” segments, while the other segments had lower representation among the respondents.

The statement ”I associate plus-size brands with a Portuguese product” generated several responses among participants. A significant portion represented (plus-size women or those who wear size 42 or XXL or more) 48% of respondents, completely disagreed with this association, indicating that they do not perceive an intrinsic link between plus-size brands and products of Portuguese origin. Another 21% disagreed, suggesting a lack of correlation, while 28% expressed indifference towards the statement. Only 3% of the participants agreed with the idea of associating plus-size brands with Portuguese products. This result indicates that a minority of respondents recognize or value the connection between plus-size brands and national production. Surprisingly, none of the participants strongly disagreed with the state-

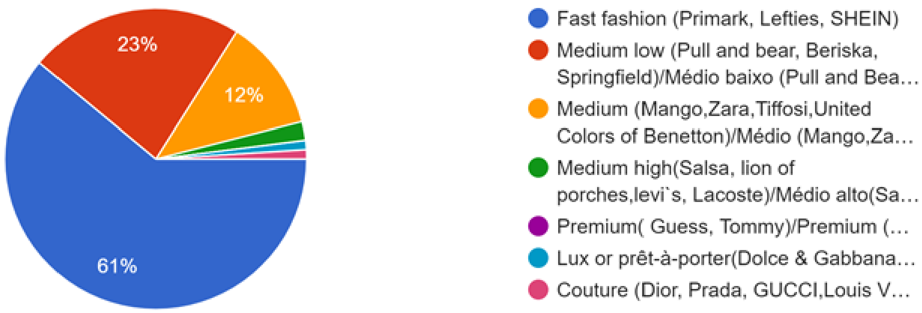

Figure 29: Fashion segments and plus-size.

ment, highlighting the diversity of perspectives regarding this specific association.

The question regarding knowledge of Portuguese plus-size brands was the only one with an open and non-obligatory answer (Annex 6.3), so that people who do not know Portuguese plus-size brands can move on to the next question. Only sixteen (16) women responded, from the eighty-four (84) women that responded to the survey, of which, the brands that were mentioned were not of Portuguese origin, and among the sixteen (16) answers, eight (8) did not know any or did not specify any the brand. Among the answers obtained, only two (2) different respondents indicated, Modalfa and Boutique da Tereza. There is a limited familiarity with Portuguese plus-size brands. This may indicate some possible interpretations, such as a lack of awareness about plus-size brands of Portuguese origin. Where there is limited availability of these brands on the market, due to a lack of effective advertising or an insufficient online presence. Perhaps the respondents are more familiar with international brands, whether due to greater availability, or global marketing, thus indicating challenges faced by plus-size brands in Portugal, such as a lack of diversity in fashion options, a scarcity of larger sizes in local stores, or even a stigma associated with plus-size fashion.

The majority of respondents strongly disagreed (38%) or partially disagreed (18%) with the statement, indicating an acceptance or at least a lack of significant aversion to promoting products on plus-size models. A part of the respondents does not express a clear opinion about the promotion of products in plus-size models (30%). The sum of the percentages of total or partial agreement (7% + 7% = 14%) is relatively low, indicating that a minority of respondents totally or partially agree with the statement.

The sum of the percentages of total or partial disagreement (18% + 34% = 52%) indicates that half of the respondents do not consider the brands on the market to be inclusive. The percentage of indifference (32%) about whether brands on the market are inclusive. The sum of the percentages of total or partial agreement (14% + 2% = 16%) is low, indicating that a minority of respondents completely or partially agree with the statement.

By analyzing the quantitative data from the survey, trends, and patterns that may indicate specific areas of concern can be identified. This will provide valuable insights for policymakers, fashion industry professionals, and others interested in driving positive change in the treatment and representation of plus-size women. This provided a roadmap for implementing corrective actions. These actions can range from adjustments in product offerings to initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion in the fashion sector.

This research survey helped in comprehending the current state of the plus-size fashion market, including its size, key players, and prevailing trends, and also helped to identify the target audiences, their buying behaviors, and factors influencing their purchasing decisions. During the analysis of the market research, I identified the competitors as well as understand their strategies, strengths, weaknesses, and market positioning.

The fashion industry faces an intricate dilemma, balancing between meeting the demands of the plus-size market and addressing issues related to health and wellness. The challenge lies in overcoming the stigmas associated with plus-size while promoting healthy practices. This highlights the need for a balanced approach that celebrates the diversity of bodies without neglecting the importance of health.

By challenging harmful norms and promoting a more positive view of body diversity, the media has the opportunity to positively influence public perception and contribute to the acceptance of all body types in society.

Innovative and inclusive industry strategies, which include expanding sizes, diverse representation in advertising campaigns, and engaging with plus-size influencers, can help overcome these obstacles, building a more inclusive industry aligned with consumer expectations.

The third point of view addresses those who, although they do not consume plus-size fashion, have the power to shape society. The media plays a crucial role in this regard, often choosing not to applaud health habits considered harmful. This highlights the need for a broader discussion about beauty and health, avoiding stigmatizing bodies of different sizes.

Strategies that include expanding the sizes offered, diversifying styles, and promoting more inclusive representation in advertising are crucial steps to regaining the trust and loyalty of plus-size consumers.

Hypotheses raised suggest that the existence of unknown plus-size brands may be a barrier to the diversification of consumer choices. Furthermore, poor engagement with fashion and trends may be a consequence of a lack of representation and adequate supply for the plus-size segment, leading to a perceived disconnect.

Understanding this type of consumer, their behavior, preferences, and needs is fundamental for success in the fashion industry. This crucial knowledge and insight helped the development of a competitive brand.

The disillusionment revealed in this study was not seen just as an obstacle but as a call to action. The fashion industry, by facing these challenges head-on, has the opportunity to reinvent itself, embrace diversity, and respond to the real needs of an audience eager for inclusion. It was with this thought that we moved on to the theme, Brand Project and Capsule Collection.

Chapter 5

Brand Project and Capsule Collection

According to Teixeira et al. [77], a brand is a symbol that identifies, not directly selling. It rarely describes a business and gains meaning from the quality it represents. Its effectiveness depends on being unique, visible, easy to use and remember, universal, durable, and relevant over time. The identify a flaw in the fashion market, taking into account the focus group and the survey, it is possible to verify the need for a brand focused on sizes 42 and above, with style clothes that also follow trends and adjust to different Plus-size body types, while guaranteeing quality and at a good price.Following that, we have the process of creating the capsule collection, which comprises fifteen clothing pieces.

5.1 Brand Project

Based on the research carried out, and the answers acquired in the focus group and the survey, the brand follows a simple and creative process to satisfy the needs of the target audience. The method also allows for a more detailed and simple explanation of the creative process of the “baubo” brand. Taking all these responses into account, the brand ”baubo” is a carefully crafted brand designed to offer style and comfort without compromising quality or fit. Developed specifically for plus-size women, this brand blends contemporary fashion with practical functionality, providing versatile pieces that can be worn for a variety of occasions. The design ethos revolves around embracing and celebrating the natural curves of the body, providing a comfortable and flattering fit. Attention to detail is evident in every aspect, from strategic cuts to the selection of quality fabrics, ensuring durability and long-lasting style. With a variety of color options and modern patterns, ”baubo” offers a collection that allows plus-size women to express their individuality and confidence in great style.

Inspired by the happiness of body acceptance, the brand aims to dress bodies size 42 and above, focusing on quality and diversity that are often not found in brands on the market (Figure 30). Close to the creator’s heart, the brand offers clothing items that follow fashion trends and value the plus-size body.

Figure 30: Moodboard of inspirations for baubo.

5.1.1 Naming (baubo)

The name baubo is inspired by the baubo a Greek mythology figure. The goddess is portrayed as fun, obscene, and playful. The visual representations of baubo typically showcase a voluminous body, in this way it represents a plus-size figure, symbolizing a body size that is out of the norm.

The brand is dedicated to creating stylish pieces of clothes size 42 and above, these clothes favor and enhance the beauty in all bodies. In Figure 31, the brand name is displayed and was created using the "MyriadPro" font in regular style.

baubo

Figure 31: Name and element of the brand.

5.1.2 Visual Identity

A brand can have various identifying elements, including visual ones (such as a logo, color scheme, or typography), audiovisual elements (like a logo animation), and auditory elements (such as a jingle) [78].

The graphic mark or logo (Figure 32) is a key component of a brand, serving as part of its visual identity.

The logo shown in Figure 32 is the immersion of the two consonants with more weight when pronouncing the brand. By mirroring the letter "b," which appears twice in the brand name, the two "b" letters together form a capital "B". The image is manually crafted and the "baubo" below uses the MyriadPro font. The logo is colored entirely in Anthracite, a shade of black. uses the MyriadPro font. The logo is colored entirely in Anthracite, a shade of black. Additionally, the brand also features a graphic mark in negative (Figure 33), using the color Quiet Gray. These colors are illustrated in Figure 34.

The fundamental elements of a graphic mark include colors, both primary and complementary, as well as typography. Figure 35 shows the brand's color palette and Figure 36 displays the typography used by the baubo brand. Colors are crucial to a brand's identity as they evoke specific emotions and associations in consumers. They help differentiate the brand from competitors and increase recognition. The primary colors set the brand's tone, while complementary colors provide flexibility and variety in visual communication. Typography is also essential as it influences the readability and perception of the brand. The chosen font

Figure 32: Logo of baubo, also used for hardware.

Figure 33: Logo in negative.

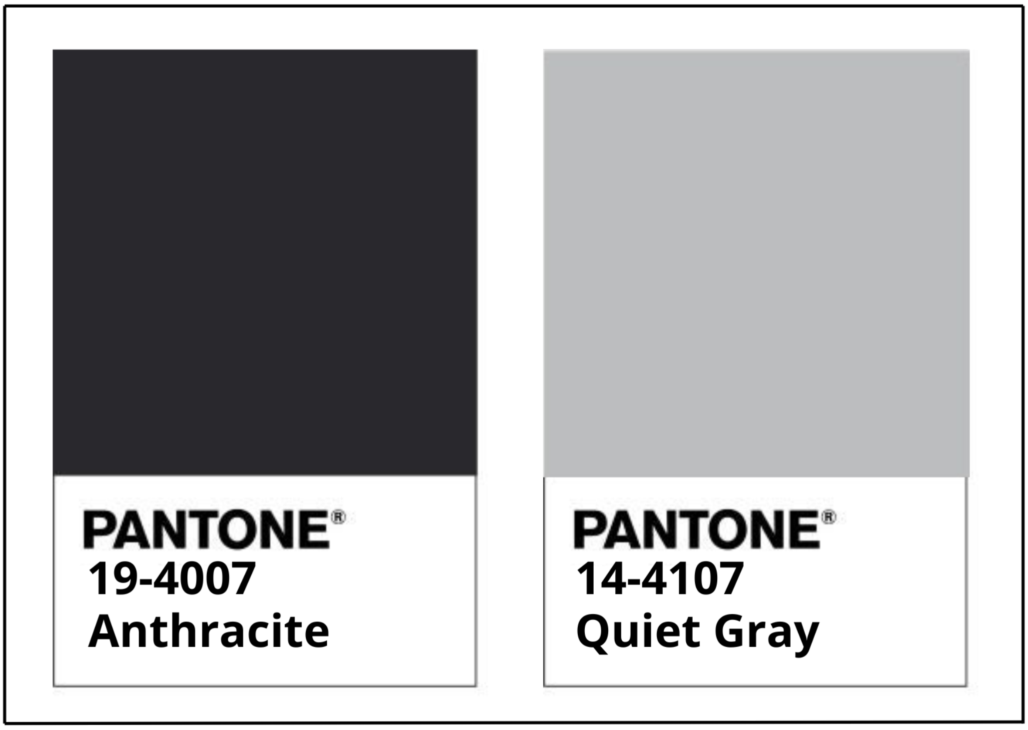

Figure 34: Colors applied to the graphic mark.

style can convey the brand's personality and values, from modern and innovative to classic and trustworthy. Together, colors and typography create a cohesive and memorable visual identity, facilitating a connection with the target audience.

Myriad was designed to be a neutral, general-purpose typeface that could serve a variety of uses. The design is chosen because it is easily expandable using computer-aided design tools, allowing for a wide range of weights and widths. The Myriad Pro (Figure 36), includes more variants of Myriad, ranging from Light to Black, Condensed to Extended, and also characters from the Greek, Cyrillic, and Central European alphabets. Edwardian Script (Figure 36) is a handwritten font that draws inspiration from the calligraphic style of the early 20th century, characterized by elegant and flowing strokes that lend it a classic and sophisticated feel. Its timeless quality makes it ideal for various applications.

Baubo graphic mark (Figure 32) then consists of typography and a manually crafted design. Figures 37, 38 and 39 depict examples of the application of the graphic brand.

The brand's voice is warm, and supportive, focusing on body positivity and self-love. Encourages customers to embrace their individuality and feel confident in their skin. The language used is accessible, engaging, and resonates with the diverse experiences of plus-size individuals. In the Table 17 are examples of language and messaging that the brand transmits.

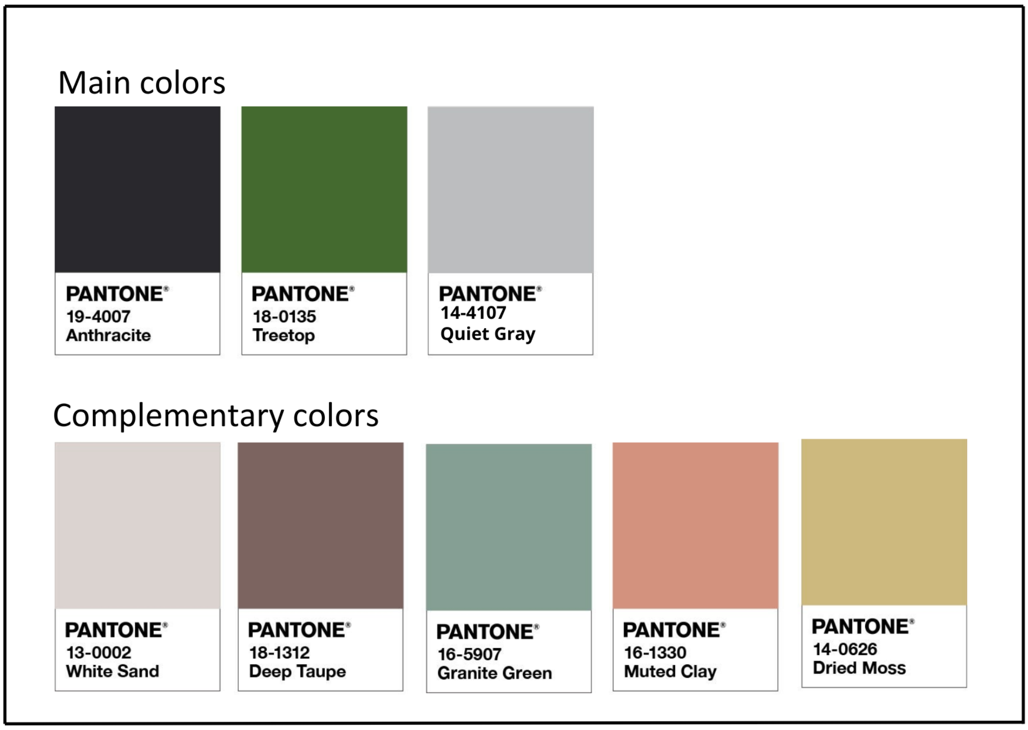

Figure 35: Color palette.

Figure 36: Type setting used by baubo brand.

Table 17: Baubo ton and voice.

Empowering	”Celebrate your curves and let your confidence shine.” ”Fashion that fits your body and your spirit.”
Inclusive	”Designed for everybody, because beauty comes in all shapes and sizes.” ”Our collection is made to flatter and celebrate you, no matter your size.”
Confident	”Own your style with our bold and beautiful pieces.” ”Step out with confidence and make a statement.”
Friendly	”We’re here to help you find the perfect fit for any occasion.” ”Join our community and share your unique fashion journey with us.”

Figure 37: Application of the graphic mark (Example 1).

The practical implementation of visual identity is crucial for a clear understanding of the created elements. To achieve this, image manipulation techniques were utilized to showcase baubo's graphic mark on the following figures (Figures 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45).

Figure 38: Application of the graphic mark (Example 2).

Figure 39: Application of the graphic mark (Example 3).

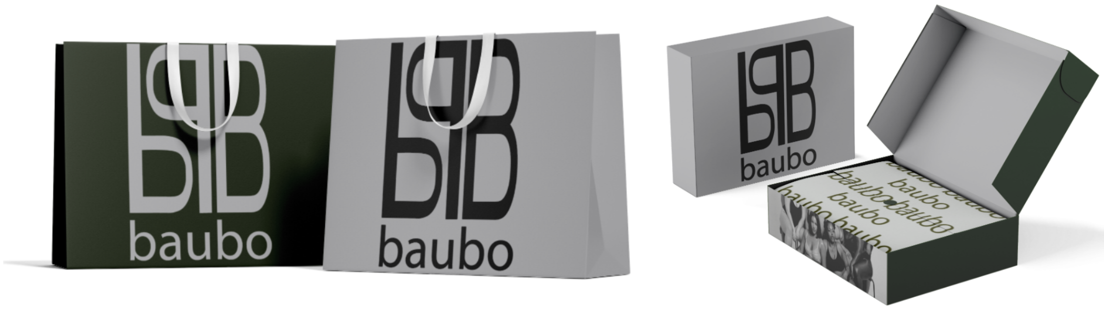

Figure 40: Packaging and bags.

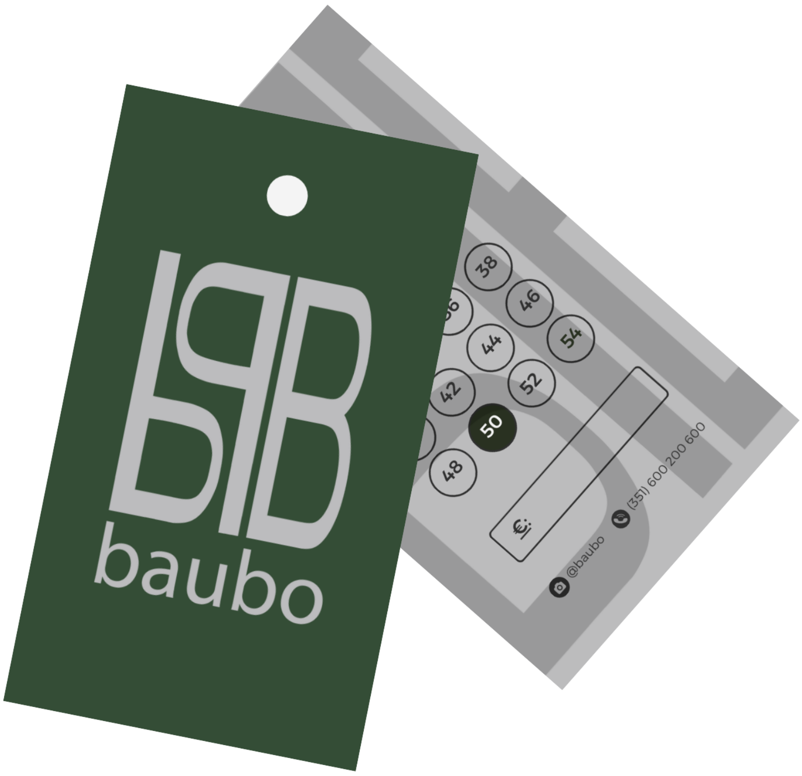

Figure 41: Clothing labels.

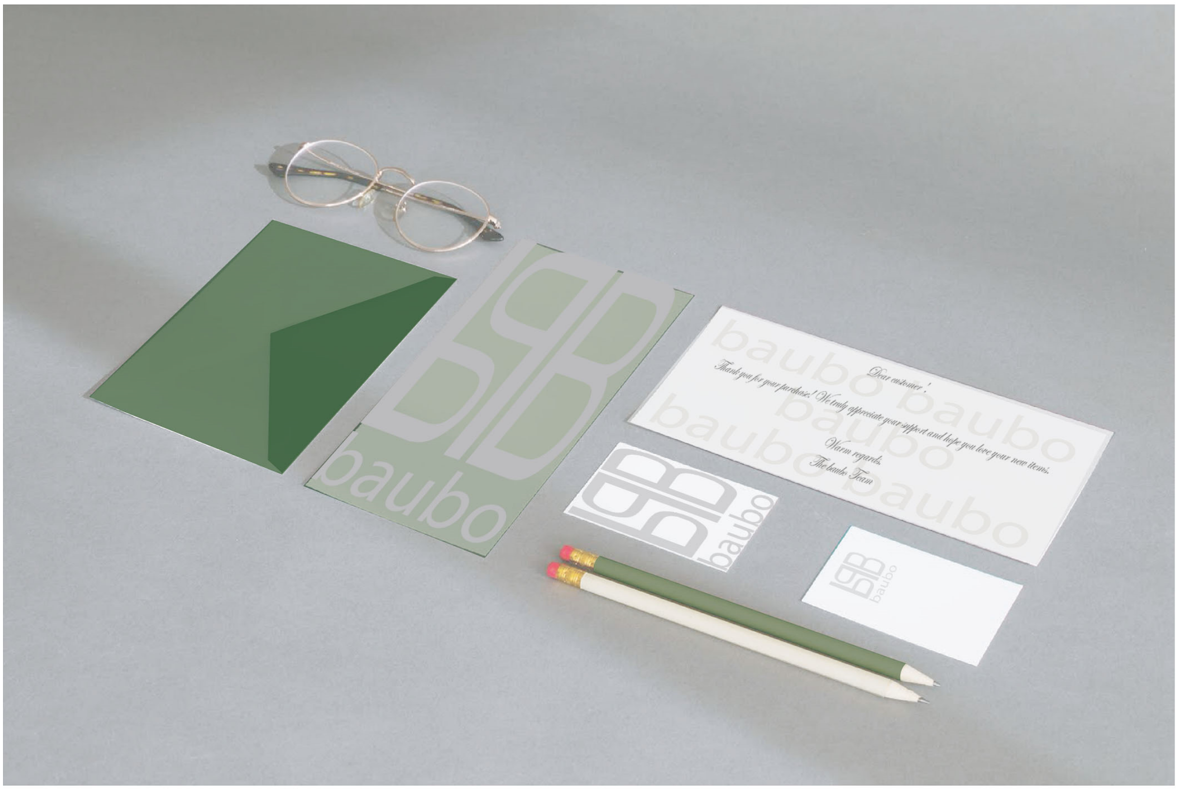

Figure 42: Stationery.

Figure 43: Lookbook.

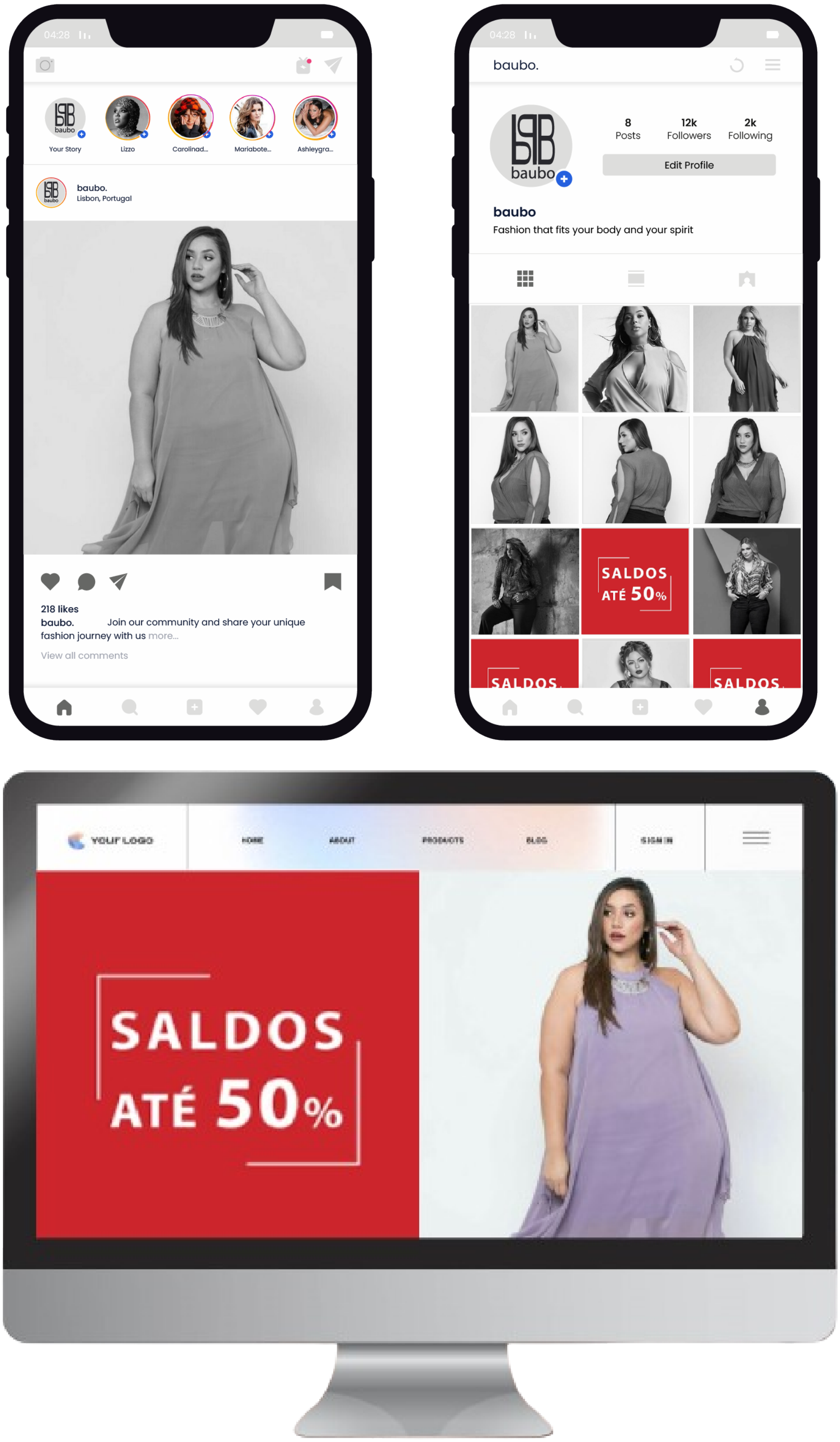

Figure 44: Website and instagram.

Figure 45: Outdoors.

5.1.3 Mission, Vision, Values, Slogan

The mission, vision, and values constitute one of the most crucial management tools that is used to outline the business strategy [79]. Based on MVV, organizations align their purpose and encourage in-depth reflection on the company's present and future. Therefore, the mission, vision, and values are represented in Table 18.

Table 18: Mission, Vision, Values, Slogan.

Mission	High quality Plus size clothing and accessories for different occasions and biotypes, with diversity present in itch products.
Vision	Recognized as a brand of excellence in meeting the needs of customers.
Values	Honesty, Transparency, Quality, Authenticity.
Slogan	Fashion that fits your body and your spirit.

Each value represents an adjective that the brand wants to convey and be recognized for in the market through its actions and image.

- **Honesty:** Guarantee that all the information and positioning that the brand will have according to the truth, to create a sincere and loyal connection with the consumer.

- **Transparency:** Clear demonstration of how all the production procedures of our products are carried out, from labor to the creation of the product itself.

- **Quality:** Ensuring that all our products and services have the benefit of price quality. Use of the latest materials and qualified labor.

- **Authenticity:** Create exclusive pieces, made in our studio, with the brand's labels and designer.

5.1.4 Target Audience

The brand "baubo" is aimed at people between 25 and 35 years old (1988-1998), in an active phase in life, and looking for stylish, good-quality, affordable clothing. Women looking for garments for different everyday occasions. From a day at work to a walk or night out, a festival, or a trip. These are women who accept their bodies or are getting to know themselves better. People born at this time present many image problems due to their childhood in a time of so many beauty stigmas. Eating disorders, anxiety.

The target demographic consists of women who identify as female and wear European sizes ranging from forty-two (42) to fifty-four (54). These consumers prioritize a balance between quality and affordability when shopping for clothing, seeking versatile pieces suitable for both daily wear and occasional special events. While the collection includes smaller sizes, its primary emphasis is on catering to the needs of plus-size women, offering garments designed to complement various body shapes, including oval, rectangle, and triangle silhouettes.

Figure 46: Consumers target moodboard.

5.1.5 Persona

The focus group consisted of women within the target age range of 25 to 35 years old, the persona is based on one of these women. The woman in question is Respondent "E," whose personal data and preferences are detailed in Table 19.

Table 19: Persona.

Personal data	- 25 years old - Resident in Lisbon - Size 44 or more in some clothing items - Daughter of a single mother and has a younger brother
Education and Profession	- Completed secondary school - Salary of 900 € plus commissions - Commercial assistant: Primark, H&M and MultiOpticas
Preferences	- Likes clothes that flatter her body, preferably those that align with fashion trends. - Clothing brands purchased: SHEIN, H&M, MANGO (Violeta) - Hobbies: go out at night, meet new people and new places to have fun. Loves traveling and getting to know different cultures. traveled to 12 countries, France, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Greece, Italy, England, Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Cape Verde. - Brands she identifies with: Apple, Michael Kors, Adidas, Netflix, MINI, Bimba y Lola

5.1.6 Market Position

Brand positioning refers to how a brand is perceived by consumers, and how a company wishes to be seen and recognized, highlighting its unique and distinguishing attributes, about competitors in the market. It encompasses the image, promise, and value that a brand conveys to its target customers.

Based on the data collected through the focus group and survey, the three (3) brands most mentioned that offer plus-size clothing were identified: H&M, SHEIN, and KIABI. Therefore, they are presented in Figure 47, illustrating the potential competition for the "baubo" brand.

The Price-Quality Matrix is a tool that visualizes the relationship between a product's price and its perceived quality or value.The goal of the baubo brand, regarding the position in the first quadrant, shows that the priority of the brand is to offer products and services that are perceived as high quality while also being affordable in terms of price. This strategy aims to meet the needs and expectations of customers by providing good value for the money spent. In Figure 47, it is easier to pinpoint the quadrant of the quality-price ratio where the brand is situated. Consequently, the target market segment for the brand can be clearly identified, and for Portuguese consumers, the brand is positioned within the mid-range segment. However, when considering the international market, the brand is positioned within the lower-middle segment. This positioning takes into account the study conducted through the survey, as these consumers seek out these brands. The differentiation allows the brand to tailor its strategies and offers to better meet the specific expectations and purchasing power of consumers in these distinct markets.

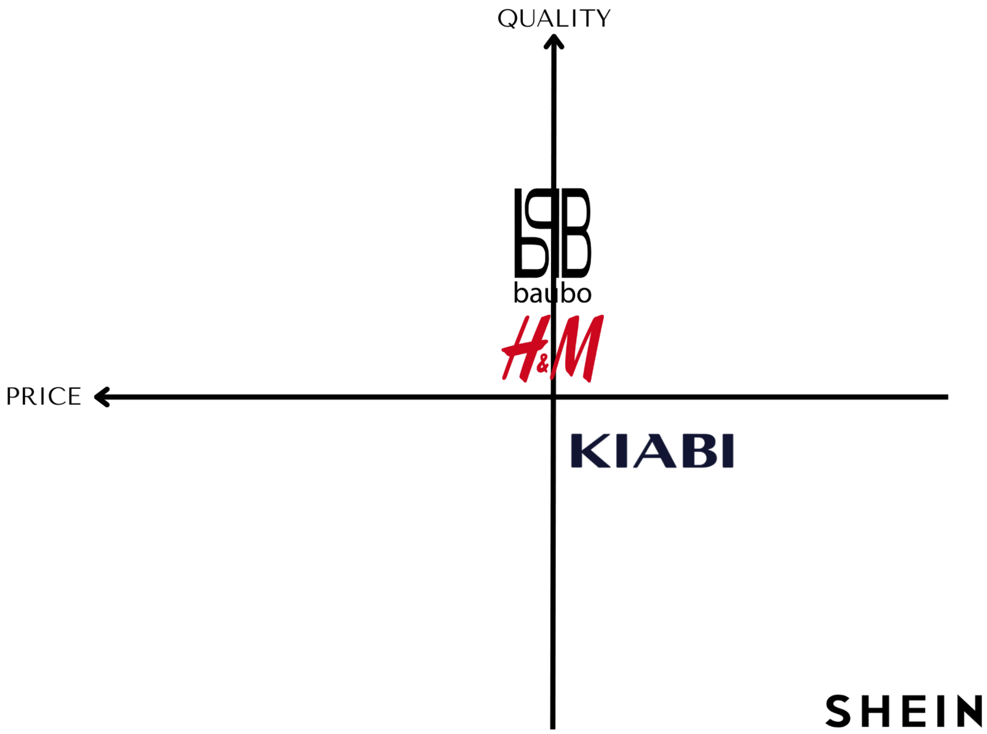

Figure 47: Brand positioning of baubo and competition.

The quadrant that represents the baubo brand is categorized as "Average," as depicted in Figure 48. Products within this quadrant are designed to embody the strategy concept of "fair price." This means that baubo's pricing strategy is aimed at balancing affordability with quality, ensuring that consumers feel they are getting good value for their money. The concept of "fair price" is crucial because it builds trust and loyalty among consumers who can perceive the value of their purchase in relation to its cost. By aligning the price range with the perceived value, baubo aims to attract a broad audience who appreciates quality without overpaying. The approach is to enhance customer satisfaction but also position baubo competitively within the mid-range market.

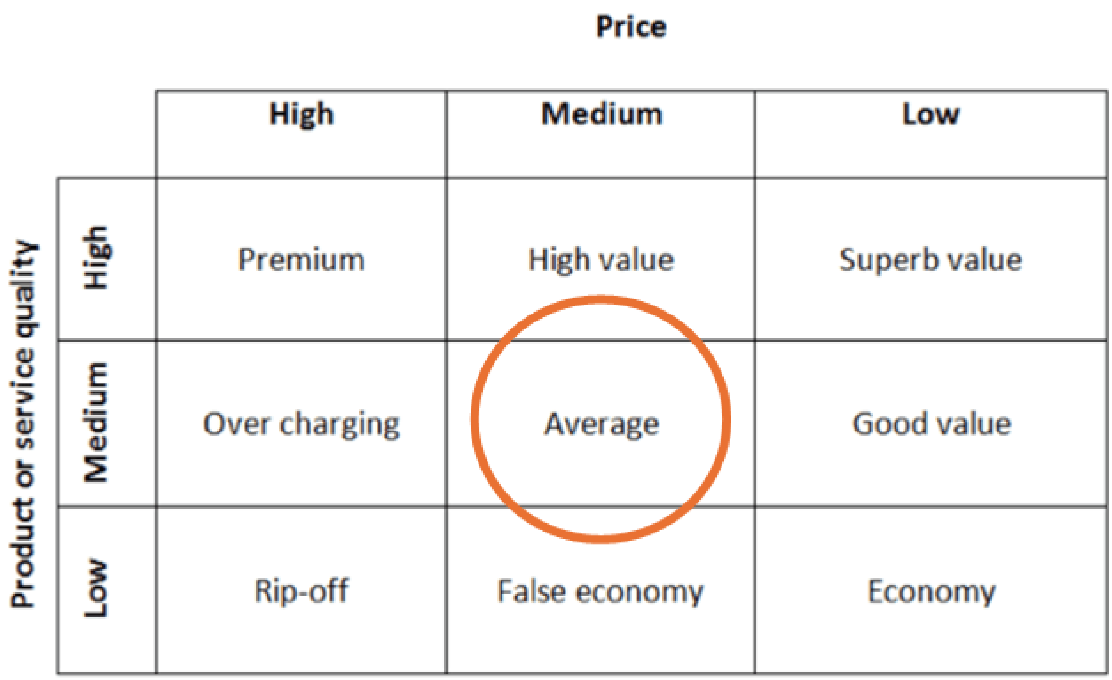

Figure 48: Price-Quality Matrix [80].

5.1.7 The Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is a framework used to manage and incorporate marketing within a business context, it involves considering and effectively blending several strategic elements to achieve the marketing and strategic goals of a company [77].

Posner's explained the significance of a marketing strategy within a business's comprehensive plan, highlighting its pivotal role in shaping how a brand, its products, and services are presented and promoted to consumers. Crafting a marketing strategy usually commences with defining clear objectives, setting strategic targets, and establishing a timeline for achieving those goals. Irrespective of a company's size, this process typically involves several key steps. Identifying business opportunities is the initial phase, where companies analyze market trends, consumer needs, and competitive landscapes to pinpoint potential areas for growth or innovation. Subsequently, the focus shifts towards developing products and services that cater to these identified opportunities, aligning with consumer demands and preferences. Posner underscores the importance of executing these steps effectively, and this is where the concept of the marketing mix comes into play. The marketing mix refers to the blend of elements, product, price, place, and promotion [72].

- **Product:** clothing is carefully developed to meet the needs and preferences of the plus-size audience, offering a variety of styles, from casual to formal wear, ensuring comfort and proper fit. The materials used are of good quality and durable, and the brand includes options that enhance the customers' self-esteem and confidence. The product varies between different types of clothing and is better explained in the development of the capsule collection.

- **Price:** Given the brands highlighted in the survey and the brand's position in the market (Figure 48) prices cannot differ significantly from the competition. The goal is to differentiate through the quality of materials and product features. Table 20 provides a range of possible prices to consider, based on those applied by brands such as H&M, KIABI, and SHEIN.

- **Place:** Given the significant growth in online sales of plus-size clothing, in firsthand the objective is to invest in e-commerce platforms such as websites and Instagram.

- **Promotion:** The creation of inclusive campaigns that use plus-size models and collaborations with influencers can increase brand visibility and recognition.

Table 20: Products and prices.

Products	Price range
Shirt and blouses	10.99 - 39,99 €
Skirts	19.99 - 39,99 €
Pants	19.99 - 39,99 €
Shorts	19.99 - 39,99 €
Coats	19.99 - 39,99 €
Dresses	19.99 - 39,99 €

Figure 49 provides a collection of images that exemplify the elements of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. These images encompass a variety of platforms such as billboards, website pages, Instagram profiles, and packaging, offering a comprehensive visual representation of the brand's marketing strategy across different channels.

Figure 49: Compilation.

5.2 Capsule Collection

To develop this capsule collection, trend information from WGSN was analyzed, even if it was not directly related. The main criterion was that these texts contained detailed descriptions of the clothing worn by the characters. These descriptions were essential as a starting point for a comprehensive interpretation and focused on the design of the clothing pieces. A capsule collection is a collection with fewer pieces than a traditional collection, and it is common to have between 8 and 15 pieces, that vary depending on the designer's objectives and the brand. This approach facilitated the creation process. To facilitate and guide the creative process, some moodboards were created (Figure 50, 52, 53 and 54).

5.2.1 Descriptive Memory

The concept behind the "Womb" collection is to celebrate the essence of femininity, drawing inspiration from the nurturing and protective qualities associated with the womb. The collection aims to create clothing that promotes comfort and softness while embracing the curves of the female body.

The target consumer consists of women who identify as female and wear European sizes ranging from 42 to 54. They are between the ages of 25 and 35 and prioritize a balance between quality and affordability when shopping for clothing. These consumers seek versatile pieces that are suitable for both daily wear and special occasions (Figure 51). While the collection

Figure 50: Environment moodboard.

includes smaller sizes, its primary focus is on addressing the needs of plus-size women. The clothing is designed to complement various body shapes, including oval, rectangle, and triangle silhouettes, ensuring a flattering fit for a diverse range of figures.

Figure 51: Target consumer moodboard.

This palette includes a mix of warm and cool tones chosen for their enduring appeal. The colors Terracotta, Oat Milk, Sepia, Midnight Blue, Optic White, cranberry juice, and Black have been carried over from seasons before A/W 23/24 [3]. The survey includes a question about primary colors (Figure 24), followed by another question featuring all the colors suggested by WGSN as trends for S/S 2024 (Figure 25). Blue and green were the preferred primary colors. Regarding trends, shades of blue, green, and red received the most acceptance, although the overall values were low. Based on the results obtained from these two questions and considering the collection's objectives to create clothes that go beyond a single season. The colors shown in Figure 52 were selected not only because of current fashion trends but also due to respondents' interest in acquiring clothing pieces in shades that complement the palette, bringing a sense of freshness and vitality to the collection. Additionally, black has been chosen as the main color, symbolizing confidence and versatility, and always being a safe and elegant option. This thoughtful selection ensures that the collection resonates with the target audience while maintaining a contemporary and sophisticated aesthetic.

The materials selected for the "Womb" collection prioritize comfort and softness, reflecting the feedback gathered from the survey responses. Fabrics such as organic cotton, bamboo jersey, viscose, and denim all mixed with elastane are carefully chosen to create clothes that

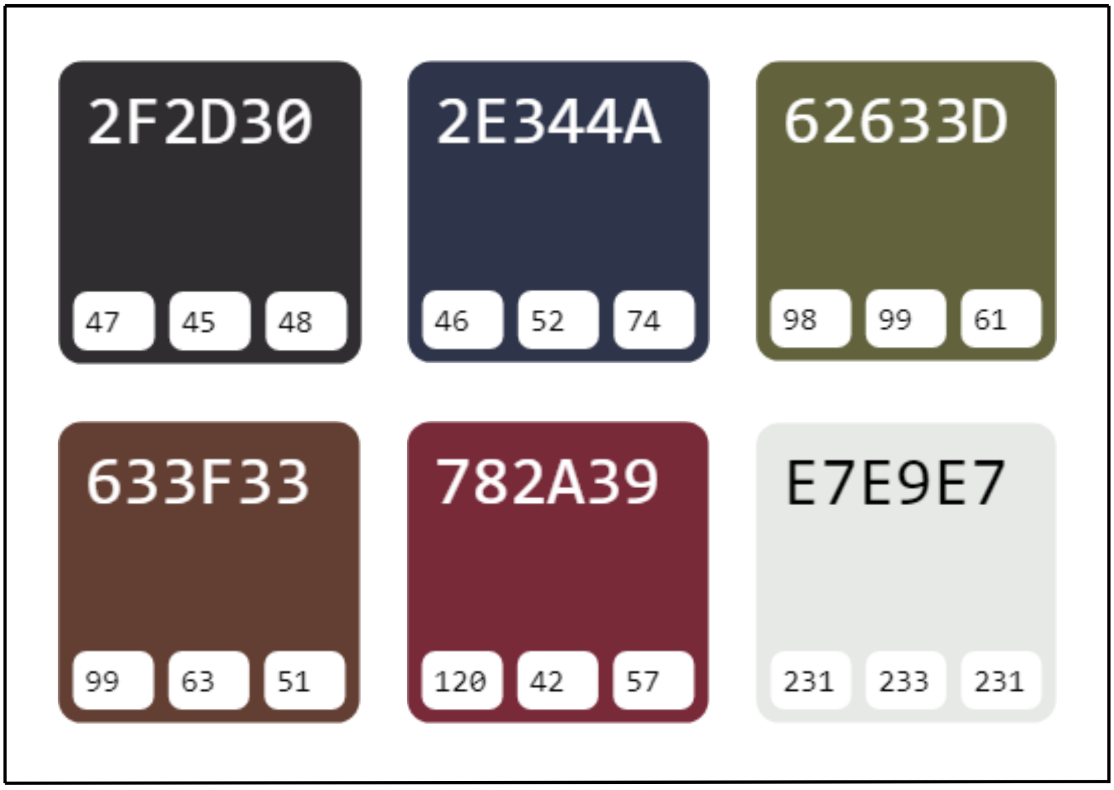

Figure 52: Color moodboard.

provide a gentle, comforting embrace against the skin. These materials are not only soft and flexible but also breathable, ensuring maximum comfort for the wearer. In addition to the main fabrics, attention is also given to the trimmings, which are designed to complement the pieces without adding unnecessary bulk. Essential accessories like buttons, zippers, buckles, and elastics are thoughtfully integrated to enhance the functionality and aesthetic of the clothing (Figure 53). By focusing on these elements, the ”Womb” collection aims to deliver a harmonious blend of comfort, style, and practicality.

The silhouettes in the ”Womb” collection are fluid and relaxed, with an emphasis on effortless elegance. Flowy maxi dresses, draped tops, cozy cardigans, and relaxed trousers would dominate the collection. Waist-defining details like gentle gathers or tie belts would add a touch of femininity without sacrificing comfort. Soft, oversized pants and loose-fitting silhouettes would be key elements, allowing for ease of movement and a sense of freedom. The Capsule collection includes a variety of pieces such as jackets, dresses, sweaters, ponchos, pants, and shorts. These items were developed based on an in-depth analysis of trend information from WGSN. Each piece in the collection has been thoughtfully designed to be interchangeable with other pieces, ensuring that the overall aesthetic remains cohesive no matter how the pieces are combined. To provide a clear understanding of the collection, Figures 55 to 62 not only showcase the sketches of the total looks but also include detailed information about each piece. This information encompasses the name of the piece, the inspiration behind its design, and the specific colors and patterns used, if applicable. By presenting this compre-

Figure 53: Materials and fittings moodboard.

hensive information, the figures offer a holistic view of the design process and the creative vision that drives the collection.

Figure 54: Clothing inspirations moodboard.

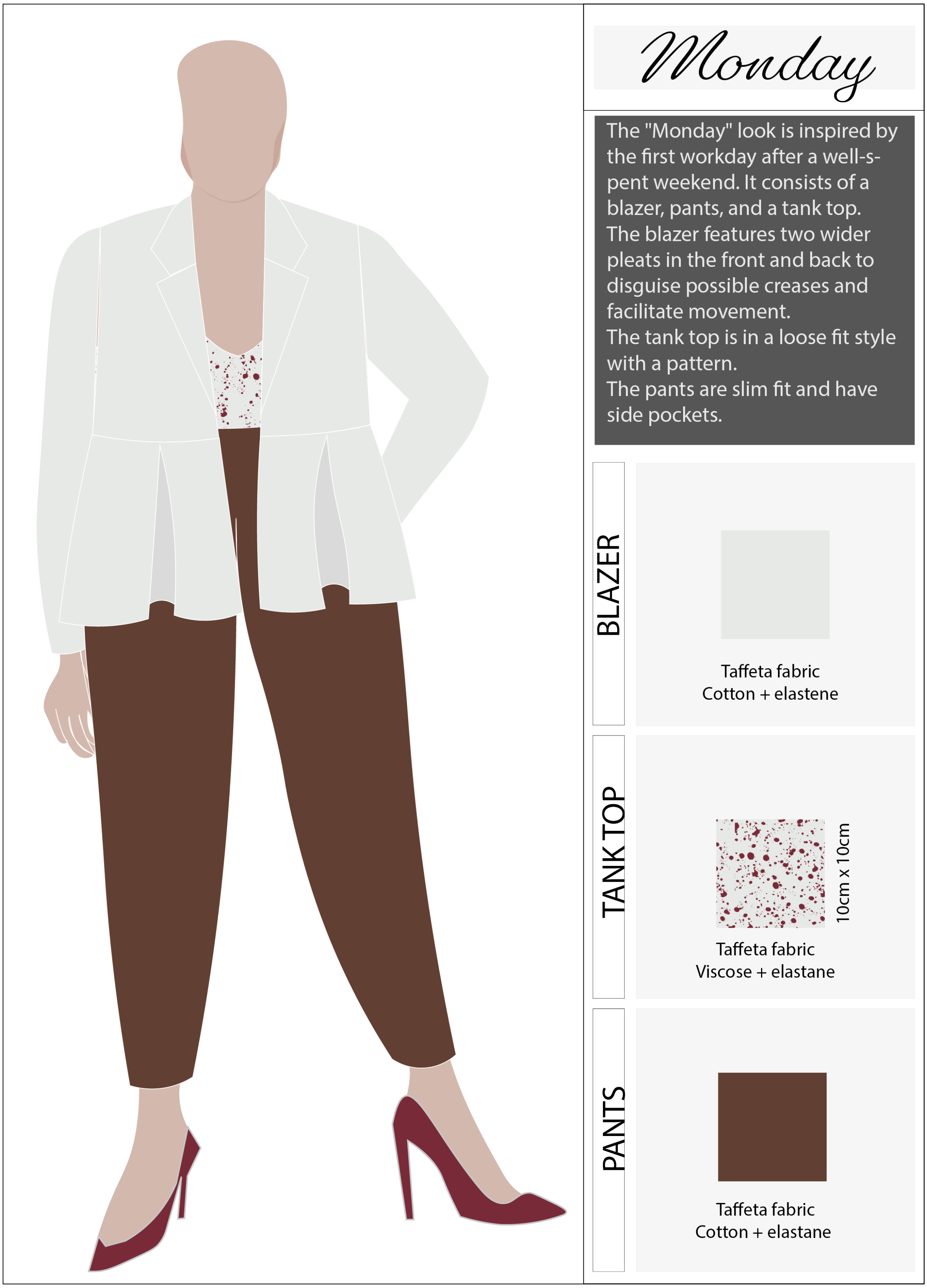

Figure 55: Total look 1.

Figure 56: Total look 2.

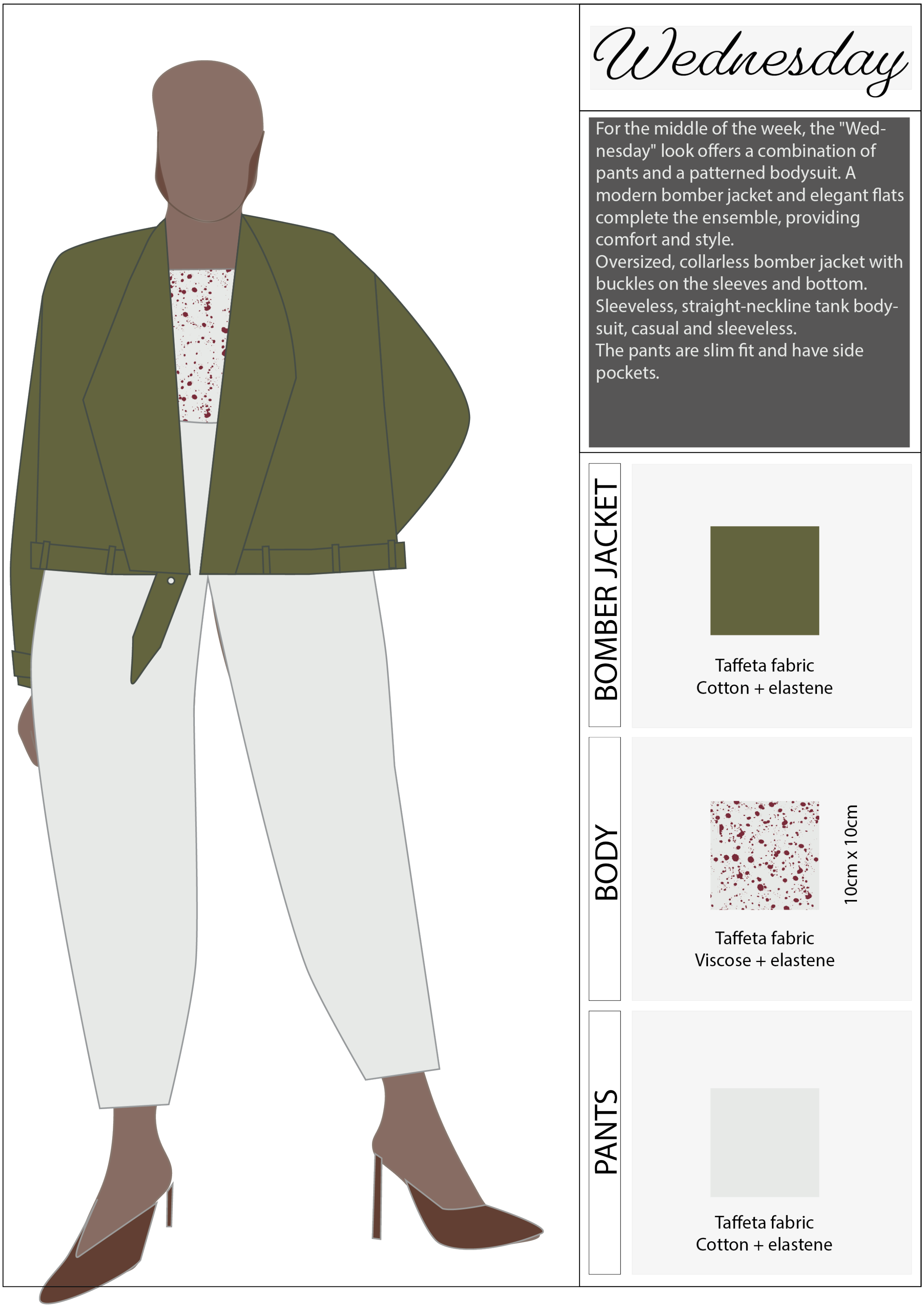

Figure 57: Total look 3.

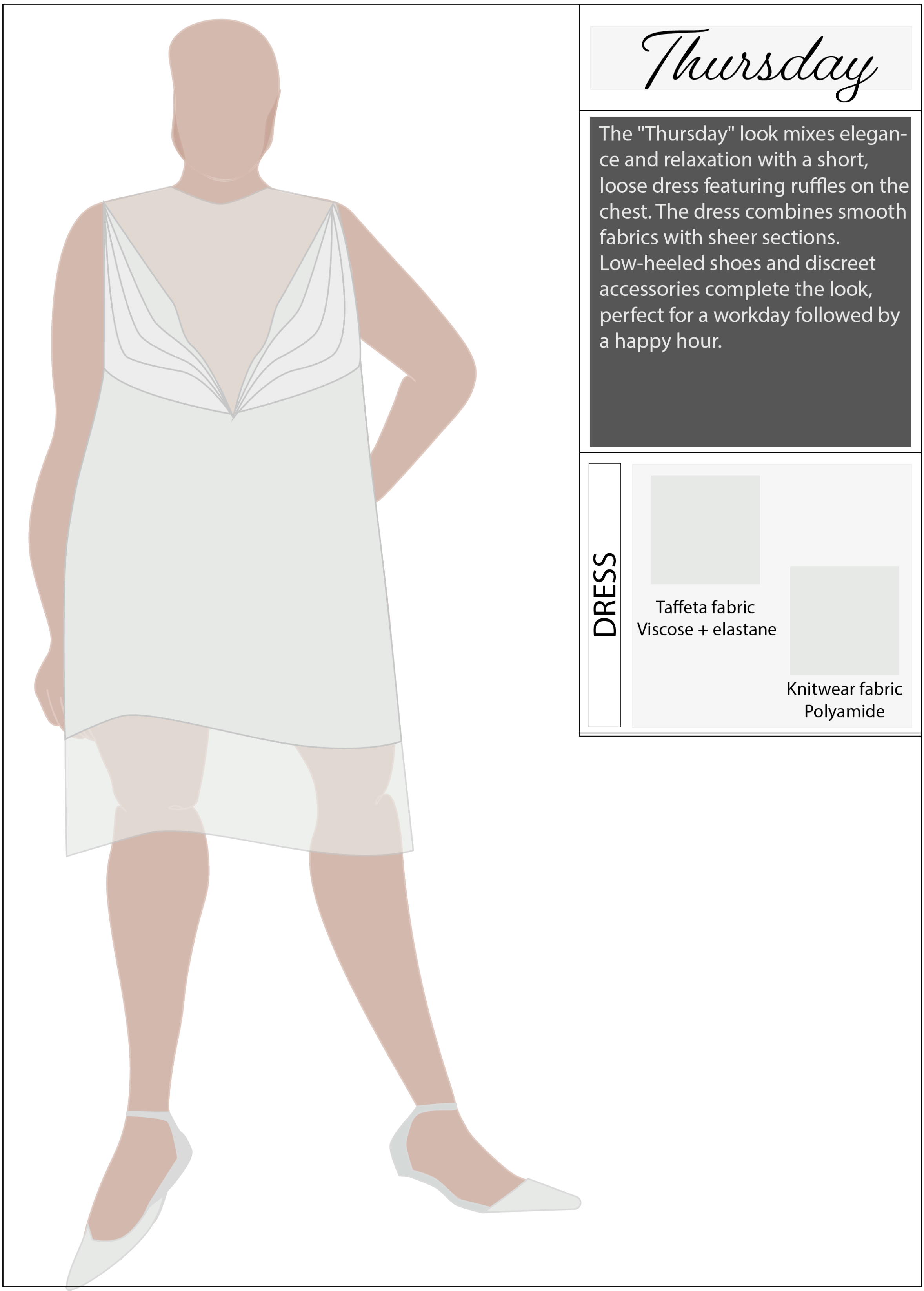

Figure 58: Total look 4.

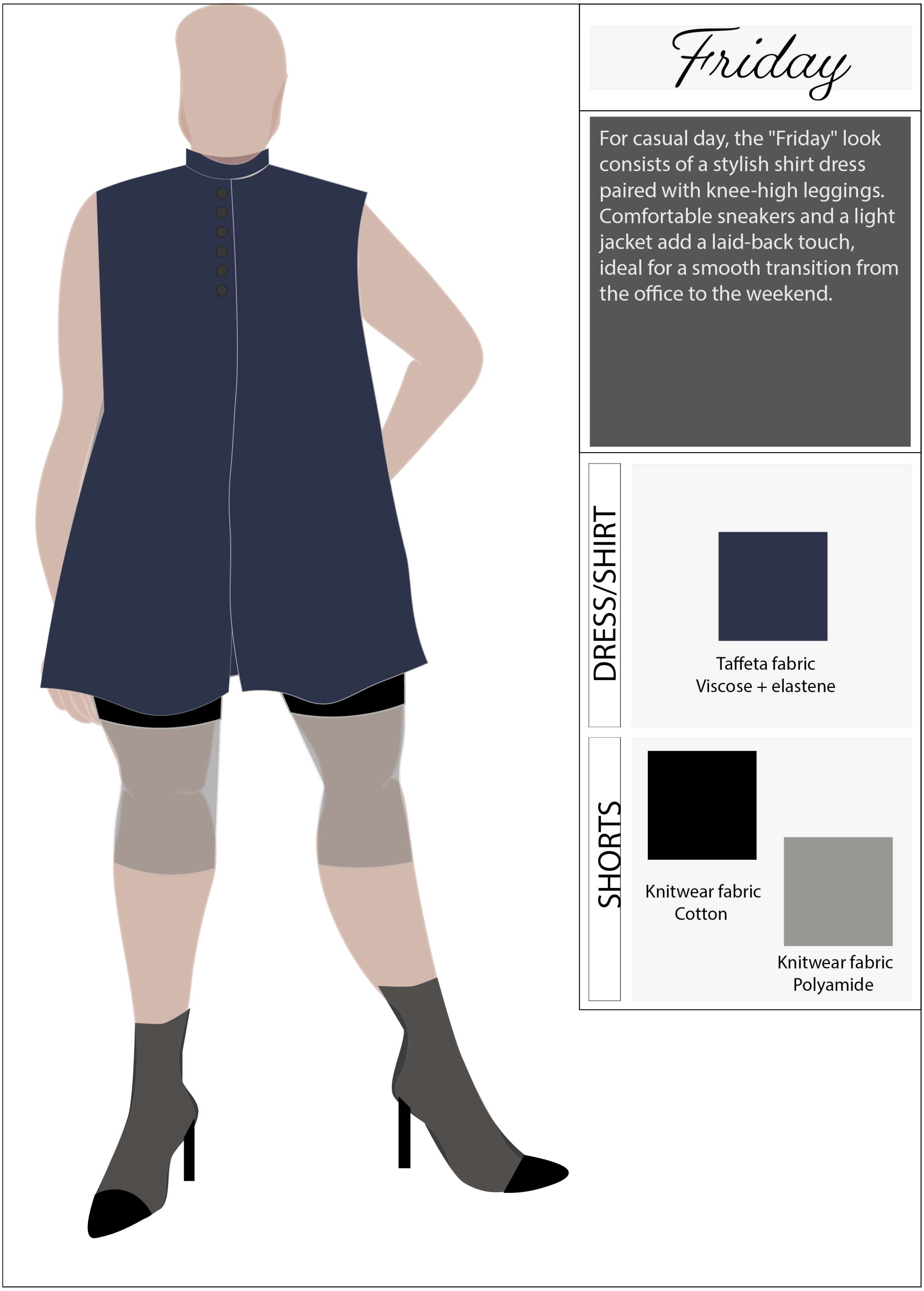

Figure 59: Total look 5.

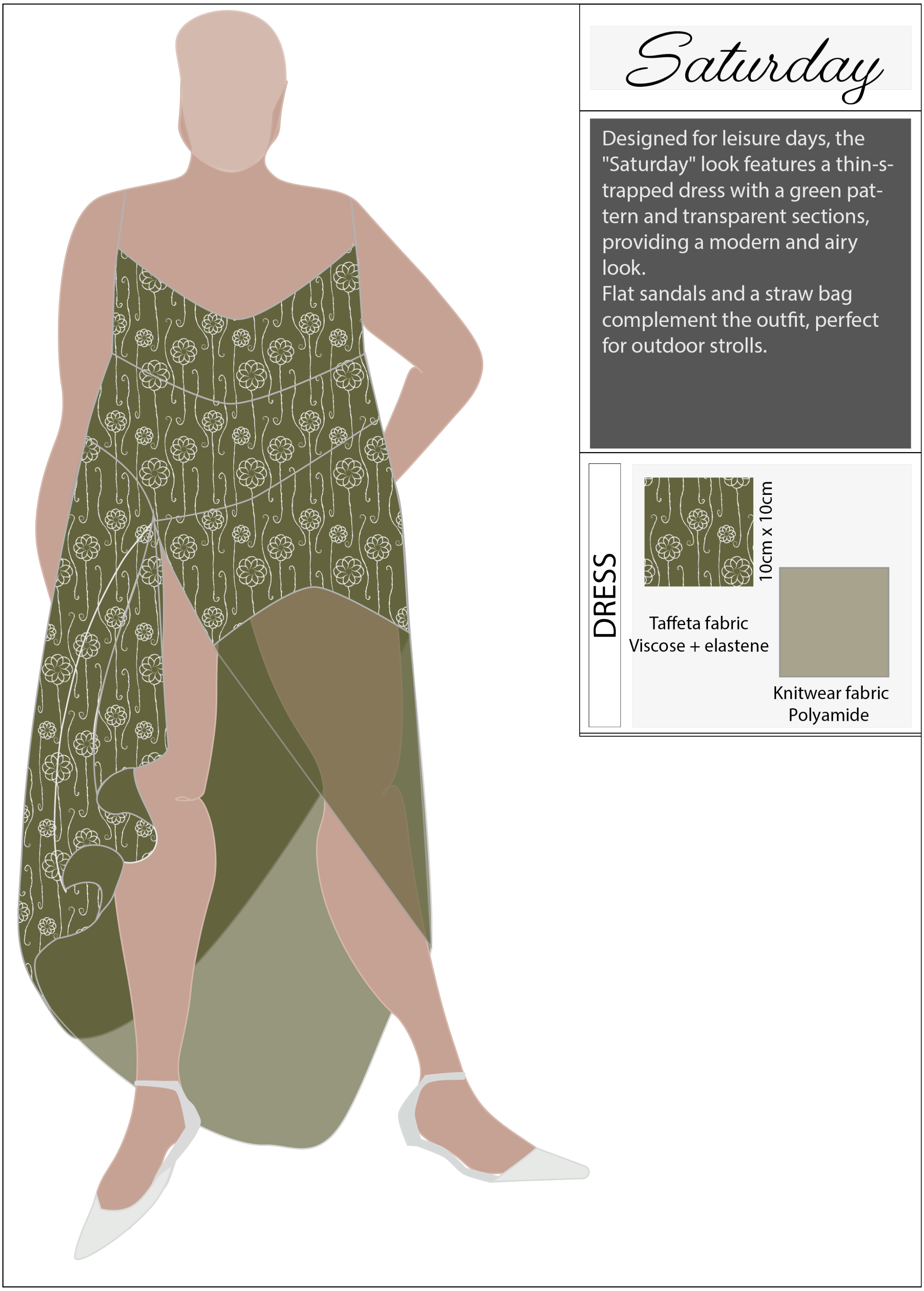

Figure 60: Total look 6.

Figure 61: Total look 7.

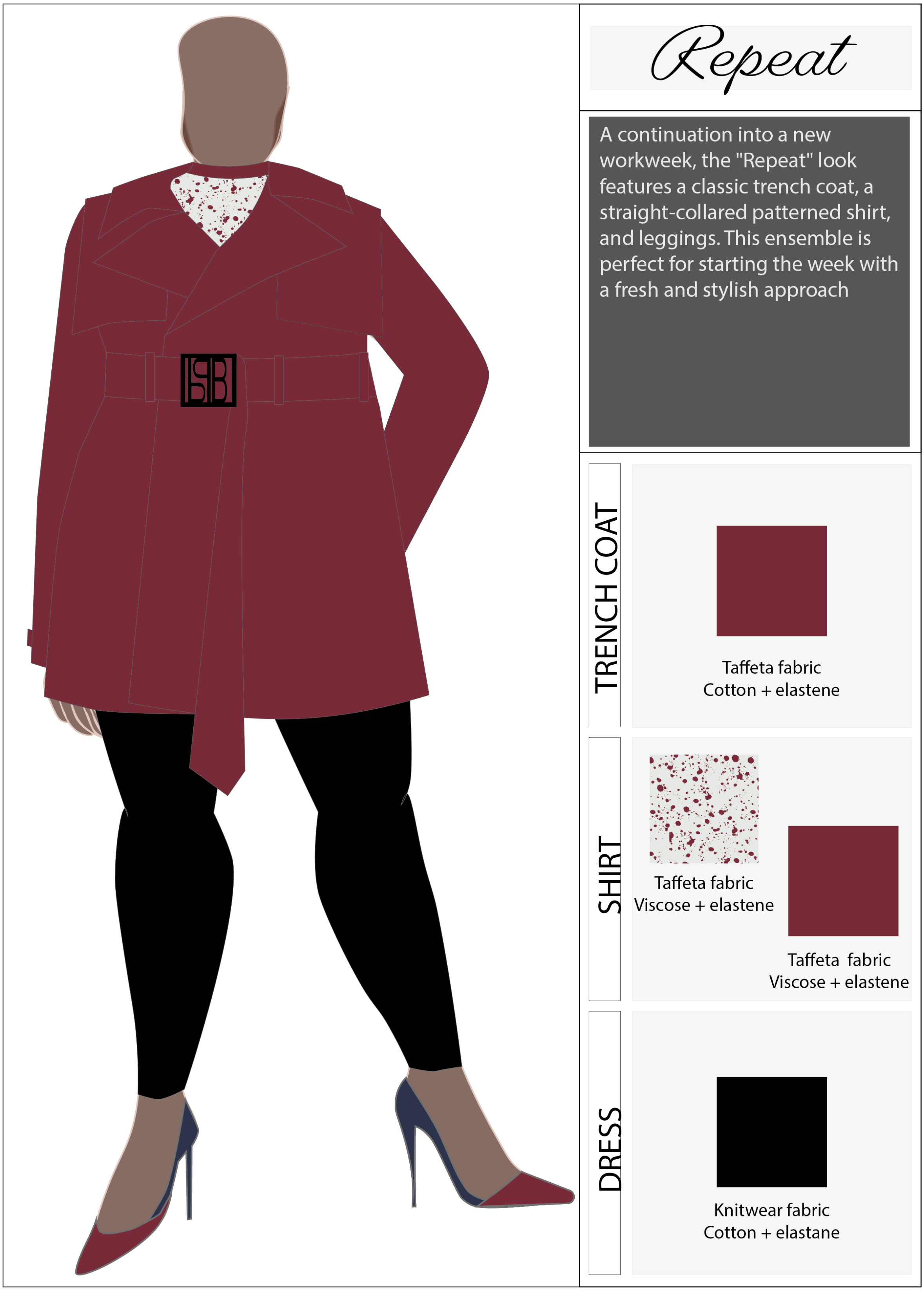

Figure 62: Total look 8.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Future Work

6.1 Conclusions

The market has shown significant progress in adapting to meet the needs of plus-size consumers. Historically, the moniker plus-size emerged to describe clothing and individuals that do not fit conventional size standards. Over time, this term has evolved, and the fashion industry has recognized the importance of including larger sizes. The characteristics of individuals classified as plus-size vary widely but generally involve bodies with more curves and different proportions than traditional fashion standards.

The fashion industry has experienced significant evolution over the past few decades, increasingly embracing inclusivity and diversity. The emergence of plus-size fashion is not merely about catering to larger body sizes, it represents a broader movement towards body acceptance and the promotion of self-esteem for individuals of all shapes and sizes. This dissertation has explored the universe of Portuguese plus-size women, shedding light on the transformations within the industry and the sociocultural impacts of this phenomenon.

The plus-size market has moved from the shadows into the spotlight, demanding equal fashion options and respect as any straight-size consumer. This cultural shift has created a vibrant market that brands must acknowledge and serve. The market for plus-size clothing is no longer a trend, it is a permanent and impactful change in the fashion industry that calls for the world to embrace it. This movement is not about glorifying obesity but about promoting inclusivity, empowering women, and contributing to their overall well-being. By offering diverse and fashionable clothing choices, the plus-size segment plays a crucial role in promoting body positivity, self-acceptance, and confidence. The study underscores the importance of achieving true inclusivity in fashion, beyond simply increasing the availability of plus-size clothing. It involves ensuring that these options are fashionable, diverse, and reflective of the actual needs and desires of consumers of all sizes.

The financial challenges brought on by the pandemic have prompted a reevaluation of priorities within the industry, leading to changes in business strategies and values. Companies that embrace this opportunity for introspection and innovation are better positioned to thrive in a post-pandemic world. While significant progress has been made, the impact of the pandemic and the closure of some major plus-size retailers have raised concerns. Independent brands committed to serving the plus-size community are stepping up to meet the demand, ensuring that the progress achieved is maintained. The future will likely involve collaboration between mainstream retailers and smaller, more responsive brands, working together to meet the diverse needs of plus-size consumers.

Developing fashion collections for plus-size bodies requires an in-depth understanding of the needs and preferences of these consumers. Brands that focus on meeting the needs of plus-size consumers typically excel by offering clothing that flatters the body shape, using high-quality materials, and inclusive designs. Creating a brand and developing a capsule collection that meets these needs involves a detailed analysis of consumer preferences and the current market gaps. The Focus Group and Questionnaire showed that the dissatisfaction expressed by participants is not merely a report of dissatisfaction but a call for transformation in the Portuguese plus-size market. Addressing these concerns will improve the image of the fashion industry and create a more inclusive environment where all women can fully enjoy the fashion consumption experience. This study highlights the importance of listening to underrepresented voices and recognizing that true innovation in fashion will occur when all sizes and shapes are celebrated. This study led to the creation of the brand ”baubo” and subsequently inspired a capsule collection named ”Womb.” This collection emphasizes comfort and celebrates the curves of plus-size bodies. One of the core findings of this research is the persistent preference for neutral and pastel tones among plus-size consumers, as evidenced by the survey and focus group responses. This insight was foundational in selecting the colors for the collection, ensuring they align with fashion trends and consumer preferences. The brand ensures comfort and style by using a palette of neutral and pastel colors and incorporating high-quality materials leading to a perfect fit. The offering includes versatile pieces that flatter various body shapes and can transition seamlessly from daily wear to special occasions.

6.2 Limitations

One of the main limitations of the study relates to the challenges encountered in reaching the intended audience, namely women who are overweight and belong to various social strata within the Portuguese community. Since the survey was conducted in a digital and academic environment, access to a larger sample size regarding the consumption experiences of plus-size products was limited. However, this fact did not hinder the process, as it was still possible to gather extremely important and relevant data for achieving the goals set forth by the study. It’s important to note that the study cannot be generalized, and in the future, a significant sample from the target population will be necessary.

6.3 Future Work

Understanding the historical context of societal attitudes towards body weight was crucial. What is considered attractive or desirable has shifted over time, and the fashion industry must continue to evolve accordingly. The practical implications of this study should be approached with sensitivity, considering individual and cultural differences related to body image and self-esteem. Future research could explore the differences in color preferences among plus-size consumers compared to the colors they purchase, providing deeper insights into consumer behavior. Developing a more standardized sizing system could further ease the shopping experience for consumers across different brands. Additionally, there is potential to delve deeper into the socio-market aspects of the plus-size fashion segment.

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Appendix A: Focus Group

Participant A

1. Q — Fale um pouco sobre as roupas que usa.
Quais as principais características que procura quando compra roupas?
Como se sente ao vesti-las?
Onde encontra?
O preço conta na sua escolha?

> A — No trabalho costuma-se utilizar um estilo casual, formal. Camisetes, camisas largas, não gosta do tecido muito colado ao corpo. Utiliza calças de pano. Não uma roupas com muitas cores, gosta de tons neutros. Compra mais roupa na primavera, mistura muita roupa de estações diferentes. Lisboa não faz muito frio.Hoje opta por roupa com melhor qualidade e versatilidade. Calças até 50 euros, camisas 30 e casacos até 100 euros.

2. Q — Que critérios utiliza para a escolha das suas roupas?
Tem alguma preferência por determinada marca?
Porquê?
Conhece marcas “plus-size”?

> A — Opta sempre por roupas confortáveis, mas nem sempre o confortável lhe traz melhor autoestima. Em outras ocasiões gosta de roupa mais desportiva. Utiliza, H&M, mango e C&A, mas acha que a C&A em tamanhos grandes a marca presume que as pessoas gordas não saibam vestir ou não consomem moda. Site=ASOS. Mango, C&A, H&M,Primark, Kiabi.Não conhece marcas específicas ou especializadas para plus-size.

3. Q — Como encontra as roupas que usa?
Tem facilidade para encontrar produtos nesse segmento?
O que sente a respeito do mercado?

A — A mãe costumava comprar roupa nestas marcas, e mais tarde foi por si procurando essas roupas. Costuma ver lojas em shoppings mas muitas vezes os seus números não estão nas lojas, apenas então nos sites das marcas. Acha que o mercado falha muito, e interpreta que as pessoas gostam não tem gosto pela moda ou que tem de tapar o seu corpo. A maior parte das vezes compra online, por falta de lojas com o seu tamanho, ou porque apenas disponibilizam o seu tamanho online.

4. Q — Vê mudanças na produção de produtos para tamanhos grandes (plus-size) nesses últimos cinco anos?
Quais?
Pode exemplificar algumas mudanças?

A — Sentiu uma grande mudança nos últimos anos, conta que quando era mais nova tinha de comprar roupa de pessoas mais velhas para poder caber. Só a pouco tempo é que a mango tempo é que a mango introduziu Violeta. A Zara só há pouco tempo introduziu o XXL que é um tamanho que apesar de ser um tamanho grande ainda não engloba muita gente. No caso a C&A acha que as coleções para tamanhos normais é muito diferente da plus-size, parece um mudo a parte, e sem glamour. No caso da H&M eles já tinham tamanhos grandes, mas começou a ver maior diversidade e roupa muito mais na moda.

5. Q — Como avalia esse segmento focado em tamanhos maiores?
É possível detalhar?

A — Não inclusivo Acha que não querem incentivar a obesidade e acaba por não existir inclusividade. A roupa esgota com muita facilidade para a quantidade de procura, muitas vezes tem de ativar notificação em certos produtos para poder comprar logo que haja renovação de estoque, e em muitos casos isto não acontece.

6. Q — Atualmente vê produtos "plus-size" sendo divulgados?
O que você acha dessa divulgação?
Apresentar exemplos de campanhas e editoriais para saber a opinião.

A — Não. Apenas em sites de roupa é muito pouco. Quando aparecem mulheres ou modelos plus-size não demonstram a realidade ou a maioria e em casos de homem é que acha que não existem. Em Portugal não se vê em lugar algum o corpo plus-size.

7. Q — Idade, peso, tamanho,profissão e salário.

A — 27 anos, 127 kg ,baixo:50 ou 2xl, cima: 52 ou 2xl, paravegal**????** ,2250 euros de salário

Participant B

8. Q — Fale um pouco sobre as roupas que usa.
Quais as principais características que procura quando compra roupas?
Como se sente ao vesti-las?
Onde encontra?
O preço conta na sua escolha?

A — Utiliza muito calças de ganga e acompanha com camisolas, e camisas de meia manga. No verão opta por camisas de alça, mas muita frequentemente usa vestidos. Não gosta muito de vestuario formal. Uma vez que utiliza bata no trabalho, gosta sempre de estar confortável e não precisa de se incomodar de adquirir vestuário profissional/formal.Stradivarius, tiffosi, H&M com muita frequentemente gosta de lojas de rua e casas chinesas.

9. Q — Que critérios utiliza para a escolha das suas roupas?
Tem alguma preferência por determinada marca?
Porquê?
Conhece marcas “plus-size”?

A — Preço bastante acessível, não liga muito às marcas,têm de ser cores neutras, num estilo monocromático, simples com apenas alguns detalhes.

10. Q — Como encontra as roupas que usa?
Tem facilidade para encontrar produtos nesse segmento?
O que sente a respeito do mercado?

A — Procura sempre se as marcas que encontra no centro comercial possuem tamanhos grandes. As roupas têm cada vez ficado com um estilo mais confortável e oversize, por isso que tem tido mais facilidade em encontrar.

11. Q — Vê mudanças na produção de produtos para tamanhos grandes (plus-size) nesses últimos cinco anos?
Quais?
Pode exemplificar algumas mudanças?

A — Pode exemplificar algumas mudanças? Desde os 13 anos teve problemas a encontrar calças, na altura era complicado encontrar em lojas de centros comerciais. Repara-se que os tamanhos foram ficando grandes, mais confortáveis.

12. Q — Como avalia esse segmento focado em tamanhos maiores?
É possível detalhar?

A — O vestuário não se adequa muito bem ao corpo, os tamanhos apesar de apresentar o mesmo número emas medidas são diferentes, dificulta bastante na aquisição de vestuário. Seja presencial ou mesmo na internet. Ainda muitas marcas não possuem tamanhos grandes ou mesmo retos.

13. Q — Atualmente vê produtos “plus-size” sendo divulgados?
O que você acha dessa divulgação?

Apresentar exemplos de campanhas e editoriais para saber a opinião.

A — Apenas vê publicidades online, e vê mais publicidades plus-size da marca SHEIN apesar de não comprar.

14. Q — Idade, peso, tamanho,profissão e salário.

A — 26 anos, 78,5 Kg, cima L, XL, baixo 42 ou 44 ,1200 euros, Optometrista

Participant C

15. Q — Fale um pouco sobre as roupas que usa.
Quais as principais características que procura quando compra roupas?
Como se sente ao vesti-las?
Onde encontra?
O preço conta na sua escolha?

A — Calças de ganga, mas na parte de cima tenta estar sempre formal. Gosta de combinar sempre com um blazer.Em algumas ocasiões esta desportiva, principalmente em dias que vai ao ginásio. Quando utiliza o blazer sente-se mais elegante, e também gosta porque tapa os braços. É uma parte do corpo que esta mais desconfortável em mostrar e gosta de utilizar calças de ganga porque sente-se mais confortável.
Tiffossi, Lefties, Springfield, Primark, C&A.
Evita inditex porque está caro, mas quando compra algo caro prefere uma marca premium. Não se importa pagar caro desde que realmente o preço-qualidade esteja bom. Quando adquire tem em conta um preço barato mas sabe valorizar uma marca premium, não se importa de pagar mais caro por peças que realmente gosta. Karl Lagerfeld, Guess.
Não gosta de roupas que a deixam mais gorda. Vestidos justos, saias e quispos. Acha que ha roupas que realmente não são feitas para pessoas gordas, as marcas não tem atenção ao passar de tamanhos pequenos para o plus-size.

16. Q — Que critérios utiliza para a escolha das suas roupas?
Tem alguma preferência por determinada marca?
Porquê?
Conhece marcas "plus-size"?

A — Ultimamente as marcas mais baratas oferecem mais tamanhos, por isso tem virado mais para estas. Sempre a incomodava que a Guess, Tommy e Karl Lagerfeld não tinham tamanhos que a servissem, uma vez que ela muitas vezes comprava acessórios nessas lojas. Sente-se discriminada quando entra nestas lojas. Uma das coisa que mais lhe chateia são os biquínis e fatos de banho, não existe consideração pela anatomia dos corpos.
Associa marcas plus-size a marcas de lingerie, damas de copas la senza. O que encontra algumas marcas que tem uma secção plus-size, como a C&A, H&M ou SHEIN, onde não são focadas neste tamanho.

17. Q — Como encontra as roupas que usa?
Tem facilidade para encontrar produtos nesse segmento?
O que sente a respeito do mercado?

A — As vezes tem dificuldade em comprar vestuário, muitas vezes encontra o seu número mas quando vai experimentar fica muito mal. Em termos de tamanho sente-se confusa pois quando entra em algumas marcas que tem o tamanho XL como a desigual o tamanho não corresponde ao tamanho real. Muitas vezes procura marcas por indicação ou instagram, prefere ir a uma loja para experimentar. Gosta de ver fazer compras online, mas não se sente muito segura porque às vezes os processos de devolução são chatos.

18. Q — Vê mudanças na produção de produtos para tamanhos grandes (plus-size) nesses últimos cinco anos?
Quais?
Pode exemplificar algumas mudanças?

A — Sente que cada vez mais as marcas têm apostado em tamanhos grandes. Mas tem esquecido adaptar as peças para pessoas gordas. Faltam designer adequados para diferentes tipos de corpos gordos. Vê mudanças nos tamanhos, pois antigamente tinha a impressão que um M lhe servia e hoje um XL lhe aperta, isto acontece em marcas da Inditex.

19. Q — Como avalia esse segmento focado em tamanhos maiores?
É possível detalhar?

A — Tentam ser mais inclusivos . No nort shopping tinha modelos mais gordinhas nos cartazes, mas acha que é uma falsa inclusão.

20. Q — Atualmente vê produtos “plus-size” sendo divulgados?
O que você acha dessa divulgação?
Apresentar exemplos de campanhas e editoriais para saber a opinião.

A — Victoria secret, dama de copas, Primark. Começa a ser inclusivo principalmente na área de cosmética e roupa interior.

21. Q — Idade, peso, tamanho,profissão e salário.

A — 29 idade, 84kg,cima XL ou XXL, baixo 44 ou 42, 1054 salário, 167 altura.

Participant D

22. Q — Fale um pouco sobre as roupas que usa.
Quais as principais características que procura quando compra roupas?
Como se sente ao vesti-las?
Onde encontra?
O preço conta na sua escolha?

A — Em geral gosto mais de roupas largas, especialmente na parte de cima, como no caso de camisas. Costumo comprar roupa normalmente na Zara, tiffosi , H&M e em algumas lojas próprias que há nas cidades. A maioria das roupas não ultrapassa os 30-40 euros mas tenho umas 2 ou 3 peças com preços mais elevados que foram compradas em atelier.

23. Q — Que critérios utiliza para a escolha das suas roupas?
Tem alguma preferência por determinada marca?
Porquê?
Conhece marcas “plus-size”?

A — A nível de critérios tento usar roupa com cores mais neutras, como azul, bege, branco e preto. A marca que mais gosto é a Zara pq acho que tem peças muito bonitas com uma grande qualidade. A nível de plus-size só conheço a SHEIN mas não custamos comprar pela qualidade da roupa e acho os tamanhos da parte plus muito grandes pra mim

24. Q — Como encontra as roupas que usa?
Tem facilidade para encontrar produtos nesse segmento?
O que sente a respeito do mercado?

A — A uns anos atrás sentia mais dificuldade do que agora a encontrar roupa de tamanhos maiores, mas cada vez mais acho que as marcas têm atenção aos tamanhos que colocam. Em geral não tenho muita dificuldade em encontrar tamanhos para mim. Normalmente vou ao site ver se há e vou experimentar a loja ou encomenda e em geral corre bem, tirando um ou outro que acaba por ficar mais pequeno e não gosto tanto de ver. Em geral o balanço é bastante positivo.

25. Q — Vê mudanças na produção de produtos para tamanhos grandes (plus-size) nesses últimos cinco anos?
Quais?
Pode exemplificar algumas mudanças?

A — Então eu noto que cada vez mais as marcas aumentam o número de tamanhos disponíveis. À uns anos atrás íamos às lojas e encontrávamos os tamanhos Xs S M e L, sendo que o L era bastante reduzido. Atualmente entramos numa Zara e temos desde o Xxs até ao 2XL, sendo que não considero os tamanhos tão pequenos como eram antigamente.

26. Q — Como avalia esse segmento focado em tamanhos maiores?
É possível detalhar?

A — Antigamente a mulher era vista como um manequim,quanto mais magra melhor... atualmente (e ainda bem) as pessoas aceitam mais facilmente que a mulher tem gordura, tem irregularidades, não é feita só de pele e osso. Então sinto que as marcas perceberam que não existe só 1 tipo de mulher mas sim vários tipos e com isso teriam de inovar e desenvolver outros tamanhos para poder chegar a todas nós lá.

27. Q — Atualmente vê produtos "plus-size" sendo divulgados?
O que você acha dessa divulgação?
Apresentar exemplos de campanhas e editoriais para saber a opinião.

A — sinceramente a única coisa que me aparece assim de plus-size em geral é mesmo a SHEIN e a Ásos. Mas como disse anteriormente acho que as marcas em geral estão a focar se bastante nos tamanhos maiores, apesar de não serem apenas uma loja focada em tamanhos grandes.

28. Q — Idade, peso, tamanho,profissão e salário.

A — 25 anos, 77kg, 1.56cm altura, 40 calça e L/XL parte de cima optometrista, 950€

Participant E

29. Q — Fale um pouco sobre as roupas que usa.
Quais as principais características que procura quando compra roupas?
Como se sente ao vesti-las?
Onde encontra?
O preço conta na sua escolha?

A — Gosto de usar maioritariamente calças de ganga e um top, acho super prático e de fazer várias combinações e é algo que fica sempre bem no dia a dia .
Em termos de calças uma das características que gosto é que tenham um tecido mais elástico porque se forem a ganga pura sinto que muitas vezes ficam mais apertadas e rasgam mais facilmente. As camisolas gosto tanto de mais largas como croppeds que uso bastante, sinto-me melhor com este tipo de roupa, mas não descarto os vestidos, apesar que prefiro usar por pouco tempo pelo facto de sentir que as pernas ficam assadas muito facilmente.

30. Q — Que critérios utiliza para a escolha das suas roupas?
Tem alguma preferência por determinada marca?
Porquê?
Conhece marcas “plus-size”?

A — H&M, Zara, Shein.

31. Q — Como encontra as roupas que usa?
Tem facilidade para encontrar produtos nesse segmento?
O que sente a respeito do mercado?

A — Costumo comprar maioritariamente em sites online como a Shein,onde é mais fácil encontrar o que procuro a preços mais acessíveis em artigos mais tendência, e em lojas físicas para a parte de baixo apenas na H&M e Zara, sinto que em termos de preço, qualidade e duração, e modelos mais modernos que vão seguindo as modas, são as lojas que mais me identifico. Para partes de cima não é tão difícil arranjar tamanhos maiores, sinto até que cada vez mais as lojas têm implementado uma maior numeração nas suas roupas.

32. Q — Vê mudanças na produção de produtos para tamanhos grandes (plus-size) nesses últimos cinco anos?
Quais?
Pode exemplificar algumas mudanças?

A — Vejo mais mudanças nos produtos principalmente online existem se calhar mais opções de tamanhos maiores porque a procura e o falar de produtos plus-size acaba por se estar a desenvolver mais, acho que famosos como ”as Kim Kardashians” fazerem marcas mais viradas para este tema acaba por ajudar a sociedade e a procura é maior e as marcas têm uma maior tendência a desenvolver mais produtos roupas plus-size

33. Q — Como avalia esse segmento focado em tamanhos maiores?
É possível detalhar?

A — Sinto que fazem muitos tamanhos mais pequenos como o S e M e quando vamos pelo menos a lojas físicas acabamos por encontrar muitos mais esses tamanhos, porque os que acabam por ser mais utilizados são os L e XL, e acho que ainda existe pouca noção e talvez ainda a ideia e estigma em relação a ‘corpos perfeitos’ e tamanhos pequenos, quando na realidade notasse por falta de stock dos tamanhos mais usados.

34. Q — Atualmente vê produtos “plus-size” sendo divulgados?
O que você acha dessa divulgação?
Apresentar exemplos de campanhas e editoriais para saber a opinião.

A — Não conheço marcas apenas que façam roupas plus-size e tenham lojas físicas, acho que é algo que ainda não é feito com frequência.

35. Q — Idade, peso, tamanho,profissão e salário.

A — Optometrista, 25 anos, 101kg, 1XL cima e 2XL ou 48 baixo.

Appendix B: Survey

Survey

I am a student at the University of Beira Interior and I am colecting data for a scienti c investigation, with the aim of understanding the behavior of the Plus-size fashion consumer. This study aims at consumers residents in Portugal.

All responses are anonymous and will only serve the purpose of my study. This form has a maximum duration of 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your cooperation,your response will make a difference for the study in question.

I identify myself as: *

Eu identifico-me como:

- ○ Male/Masculino
- ◉ Female/Feminino)

Generalized study of clothing consumption

Estudo generalizado do consumo de roupas

I usually purchase clothes: *

Eu costumo comprar roupas:

At the beginning of the season (new colletion)/ No início da temporada (nova coleção)

During the acquisition of clothing, I give importance to its composition. *

Durante a aquisição das roupas dou importância à sua composição.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	○	◉	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I think that fashion trends change my consumption pattern.

Acho que as tendências da moda mudam o meu padrão de consumo.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	◉	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I appreciate clothes that are in line with the fashion trends in the market. (Fashion product) *

Aprecio peças que estejam em linha com as tendências de moda do mercado. (Peça de moda)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	○	◉	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I attach little importance to ecological materials. *

Atribuo pouca importância aos materiais ecológicos.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	○	○	◉	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I recycle clothes.

Eu reciclo roupas.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	○	○	○	◉	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

The price of the product does not interfere with my purchases. *

O preço da peça não interfere nas minhas compras.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	◉	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I appreciate the appealing format of Packaging. *

Aprecio o formato atrátivo da embalagem.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	◉	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

The clothing brand I buy from has excellent quality. *

A marca de roupas da qual compro é de excelente qualidade.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	○	◉	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I give more importance to prices than to quality. *

Dou mais importância aos preços do que à qualidade.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	◉	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I give more importance to the brand than to the price. *

Dou mais importância à marca do que ao preço.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	◉	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I attach little importance to the history of the brand.

Atribuo pouca importância à história da marca.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	○	○	○	◉	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I buy second-hand clothes. *

Eu compro roupas em segunda mão.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	◉	○	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I buy luxury brands. *

Eu compro marcas de luxo.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	◉	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I usually go to tailors for clothing. *

Eu costumo ir a alfaiates para comprar roupas.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	◉	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

Plus size market and brands (Plus-size=Big sizes)

Marcas e o mercado Plus size (Plus size=Tamanhos grandes)

I consider myself a plus-size. *

Eu considero-me plus-size.

Yes/Sim

I am a size 42 or more in most of my clothing. *

sou tamanho 42 ou mais na maioria das minhas roupas.

- (●) Yes/Sim
- ( ) No/Não

The brands available on the market satisfy my needs. *

As marcas disponíveis no mercado satisfazem as minhas necessidades.

Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	1	2	3	4	5	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente
	○	●	○	○	○	

I find Plus-size brand products easily. *

Encontro facilmente produtos Plus-size.

Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	1	2	3	4	5	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente
	○	●	○	○	○	

Todays brands have products with weak characteristics. *

As marcas atuais possuem produtos com características fracas.

Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	1	2	3	4	5	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente
	○	○	○	●	○	

The advertising media used by Plus-size brands encourages me to purchase them. *

Os meios de publicidade utilizados pelas marcas Plus-size incentivam-me a comprá-las.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	◉	○	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I feel satisfied when purchasing products from Portuguese brands. *

Eu sinto-me satisfeito quando compro produtos de marcas portuguesas.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	○	◉	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I consider Plus-size clothing too expensive. *

Eu considero as roupas plus-size muito caras.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	○	◉	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

Plus-sizes brands should invest more on advertisement. *

Marcas plus-size deveriam investir mais em publicidade.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	○	○	○	○	◉	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

What colors do you wear most often during spring and summer? *

Quais cores usa mais frequentemente durante a primavera e o verão?

- [ ] Orange/Laranja
- [ ] Green/Verde
- [ ] Blue/Azul
- [ ] Red/Vermelho
- [ ] Yellow/Amarelo
- [x] Purple/Roxo

The color trends I used the most last spring and summer: *

As tendências de cores que utilizei mais na última primavera e verão

- [ ] Blue Perennial/Azul
- [ ] Love Bird/Verde exótico
- [ ] Metallic colors/Cores metálicas
- [ ] Beetroot Purple/Cor de rosa
- [ ] Classic Green/Verde nutritivo
- [ ] Empire Yellow/Amarelo luminescente
- [ ] Crystal Rose/Rosa claro
- [ ] Tangelo/Laranja
- [ ] Peach Pink/Rosa pêssego
- [ ] Fiery Red/Vermelho
- [x] Summer Song/Azul limpo
- [ ] None of the above/ Nenhuma das as anteriores

Estudo de marcas de moda (Plus-size=Tamanhos grandes)

I usually buy clothes: *

Eu costumo comprar roupas:

- [x] Online-clothing brand websites/sites de marcas de roupas online
- [ ] Street stores/Lojas de rua
- [ ] Shops in shopping malls/Lojas em shoppings
- [ ] Online- social platforms (instagram, facebook,etc)/Online- plataformas sociais (instagram, facebook, etc)
- [ ] None of the above/ Nenhuma das as anteriores
- [ ] All of the above/ Todas as anteriores

What brand do I associat with plus-size clothes *

Que marca associo com roupas plus-size

H&M

The brand I consider the most inclusive is: *

A marca que eu considero mais inclusiva é:

H&M

Plus size image (Plus-size=Big sizes)

Imagem Plus size (Plus-size=Tamanhos grandes)

What fashion segment do I associate with plus-size fashion? *

Qual segmento de moda eu associo com moda plus-size?

- ○ Fast fashion (Primark, Lefties, SHEIN)
- ◉ Medium low (Pull and bear, Beriska, Spring eld)/Médio baixo (Pull and Bear, Bershka, Spring eld)
- ○ Medium (Mango,Zara,Tiffosi,United Colors of Benetton)/Médio (Mango,Zara,Tiffosi, United Colors of Benetton)
- ○ Medium high(Salsa, lion of porches,levi`s, Lacoste)/Médio alto(Salsa, lion of porches, levi`s, Lacoste)
- ○ Premium(Guess, Tommy)/Premium (Guess, Tommy)
- ○ Lux or prêt-à-porter(Dolce & Gabbana, MIU MIU, Burberry...)/Luxo ou prêt-à-porter(Dolce Gabbana, MIU MIU, Burberry...)
- ○ Couture (Dior, Prada, GUCCI,Louis Vuitton...)/Alta costura (Dior, Prada, GUCCI, Louis Vuitton...)

I associate plus-size brands with a Portuguese product. *

Eu associo marcas Plus-size com um produto português.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	◉	○	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

What portugues brands do I associate with plus-size products.

Que marcas portuguesas associo a produtos plus-size.

none

I don't like to see products advertised on plus-size models. *

Eu não gosto de ver produtos promovidos em modelos plus-size.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	◉	○	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

I consider the brands in the market inclusive. *

Eu considero as marcas do mercado inclusivas.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly desagree/Discordo totalmente	◉	○	○	○	○	Totally agree/Concordo totalmente

Respondent data

Dados dos entrevistados

Age/*Idade* *

18 to 27 / 18 a 27

Weight/ Peso *

Over 120kg / Acima de 120kg

Height/ Altura *

166cm to 170cm / 166cm a 170cm

Household/Agregado familiar *

1

Monthly household income. *

Rendimento familiar mensal.

Between €1500 and €1999 / Entre 1500€ e 1999€

Professional occupation. *

Ocupação profissional.

Education/ Educação *

Master's of science/ Mestrado

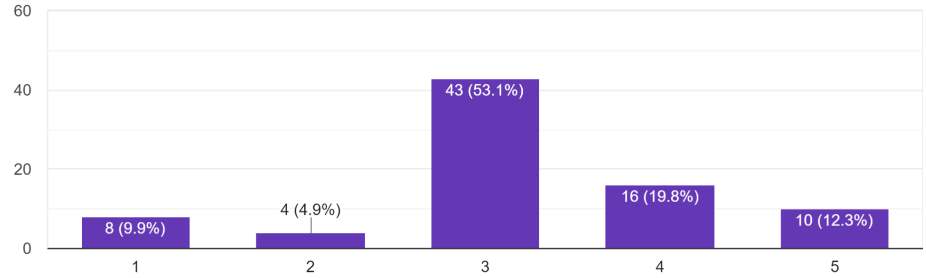
District where you live/Distrito onde resido *

Distrito de Lisboa

Google Forms

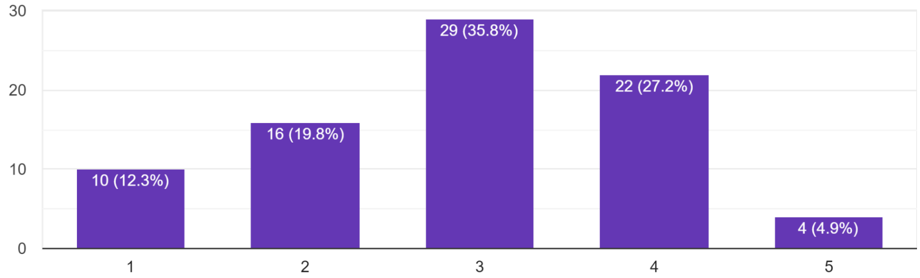
Appendix C: Summary of Survey Answers

During the acquisition of clothing, I give importance to its composition. Durante a aquisição das roupas dou importância à sua composição.
81 responses



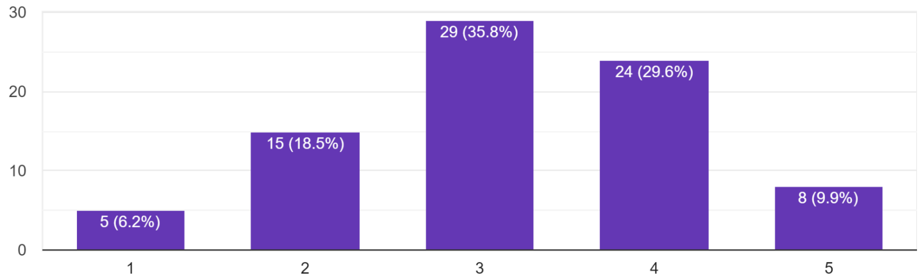
I think that fashion trends change my consumption pattern. Acho que as tendências da moda mudam o meu padrão de consumo.

81 responses



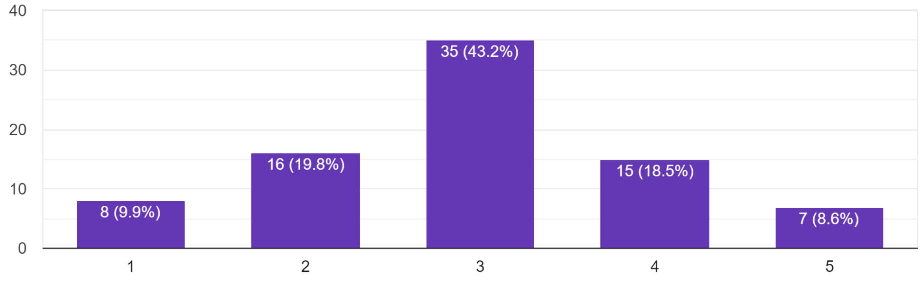
I appreciate clothes that are in line with the fashion trends in the market. (Fashion product) Aprecio peças que estejam em linha com as tendências de moda do mercado. (Peça de moda)

81 responses



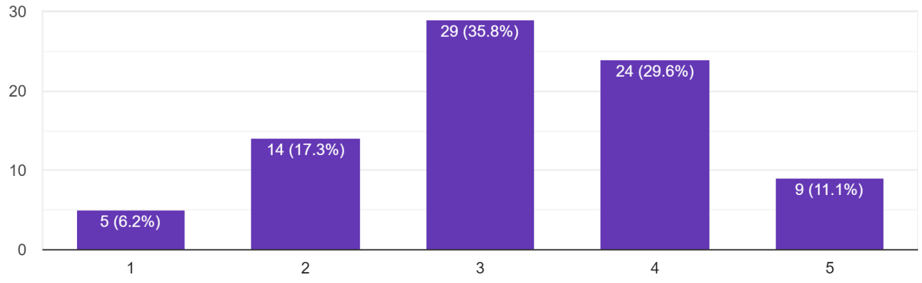
I attach little importance to ecological materials. Atribuo pouca importância aos materiais ecológicos.

81 responses

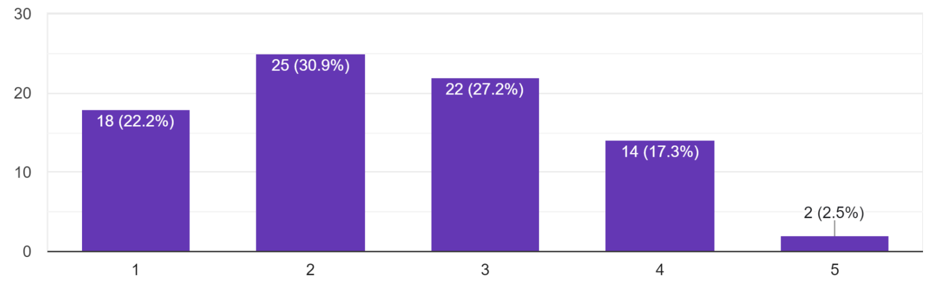


I recycle clothes. Eu reciclo roupas.

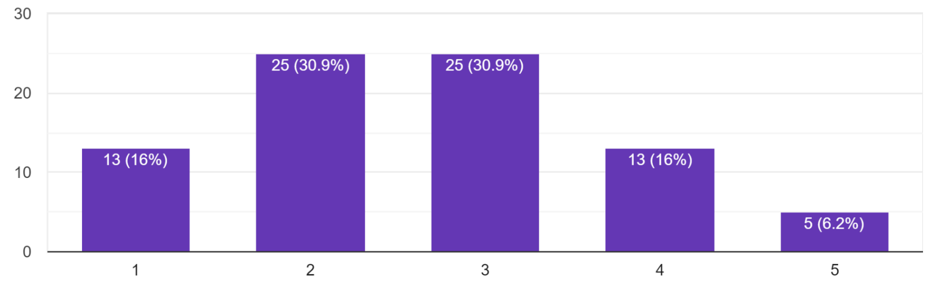
81 responses



The price of the product does not interfere with my purchases. O preço da peça não interfere nas minhas compras.
81 responses

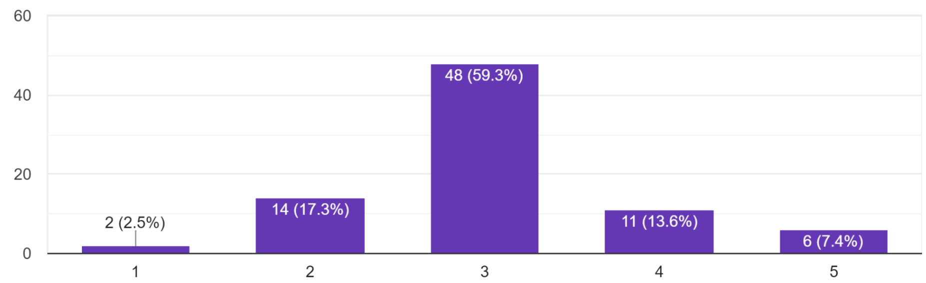


I appreciate the appealing format of Packaging. Aprecio o formato atrátivo da embalagem.
81 responses



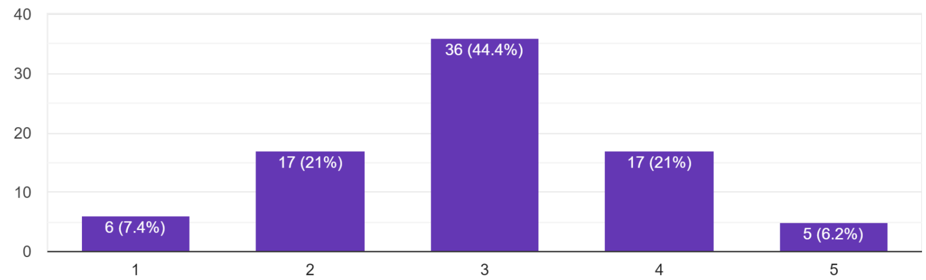
The clothing brand I buy from has excellent quality. A marca de roupas da qual compro é de excelente qualidade.

81 responses

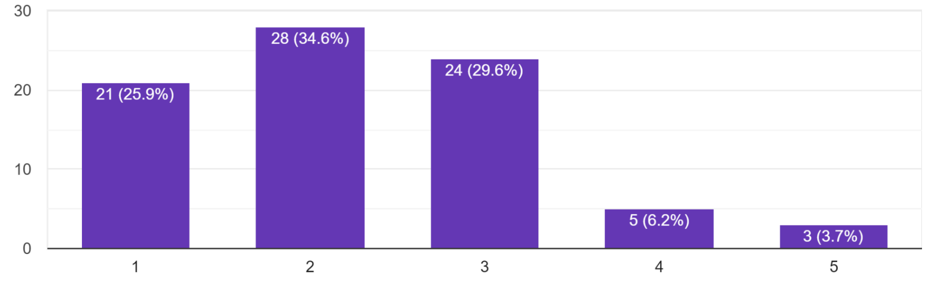


I give more importance to prices than to quality. Dou mais importância aos preços do que à qualidade.

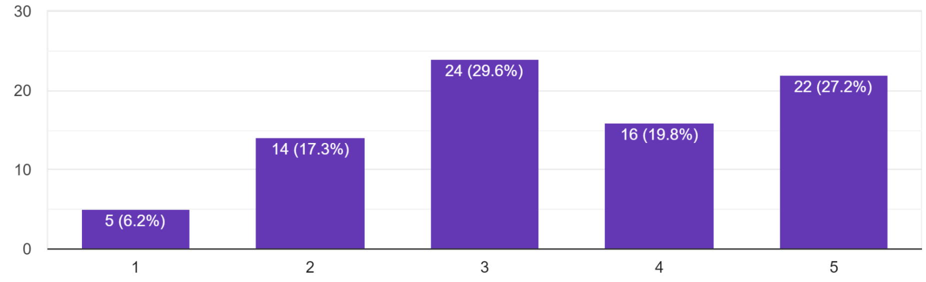
81 responses



I give more importance to the brand than to the price. Dou mais importância à marca do que ao preço.
81 responses

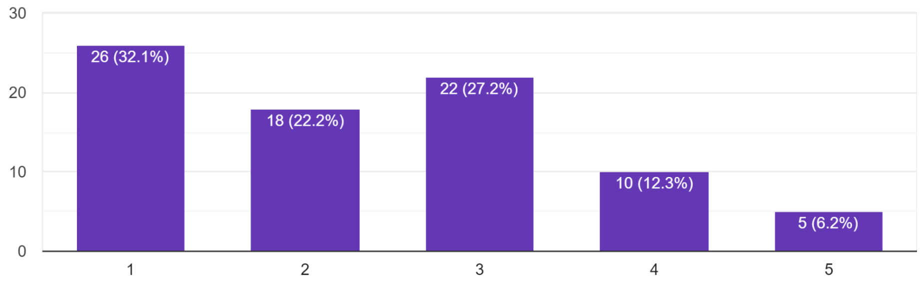


I attach little importance to the history of the brand. Atribuo pouca importância à história da marca.
81 responses



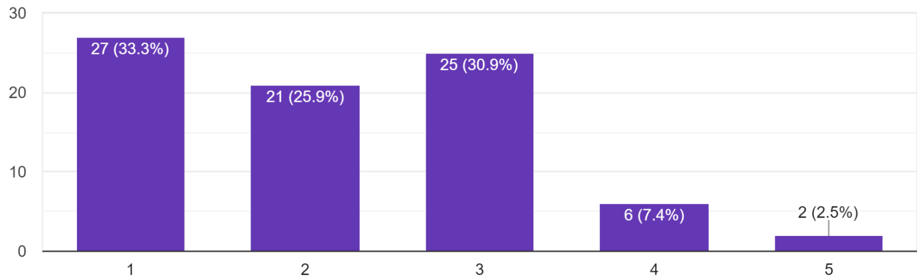
I buy second-hand clothes. Eu compro roupas em segunda mão.

81 responses



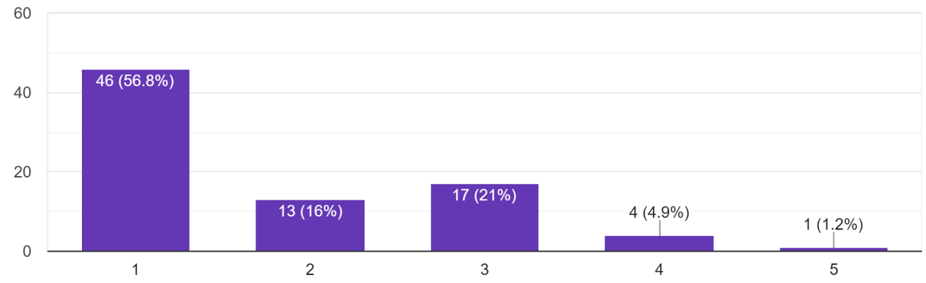
I buy luxury brands. Eu compro marcas de luxo.

81 responses



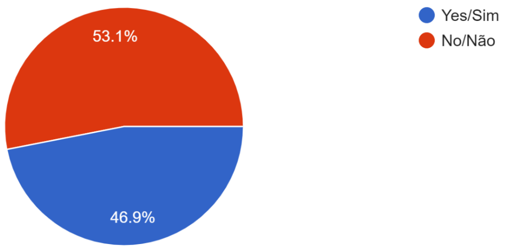
I usually go to tailors for clothing. Eu costumo ir a alfaiates para comprar roupas.

81 responses



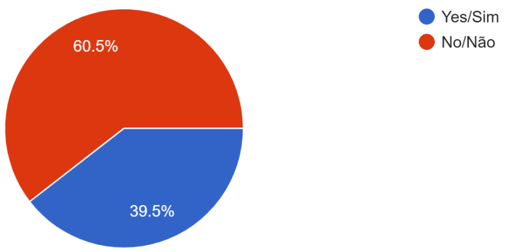
I am a size 42 or more in most of my clothing.   sou tamanho 42 ou mais na maioria das minhas roupas.

81 responses



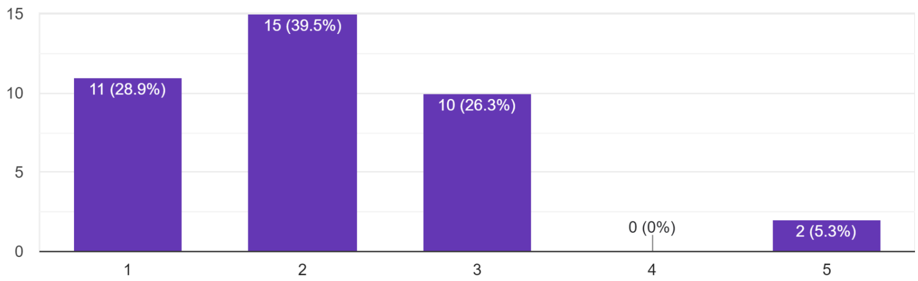
I consider myself a plus-size. Eu considero-me plus-size.

81 responses



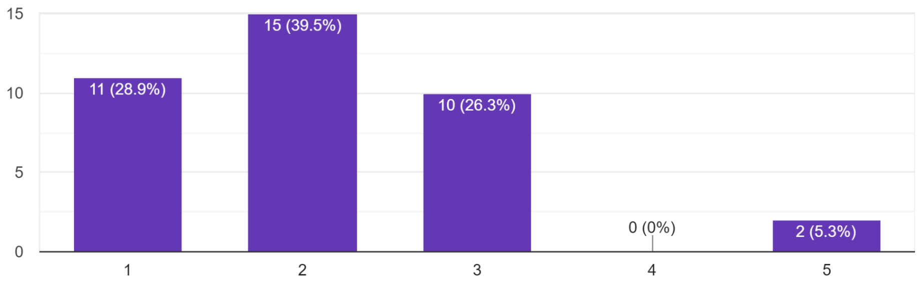
The brands available on the market satisfy my needs. As marcas disponíveis no mercado satisfazem as minhas necessidades.

38 responses

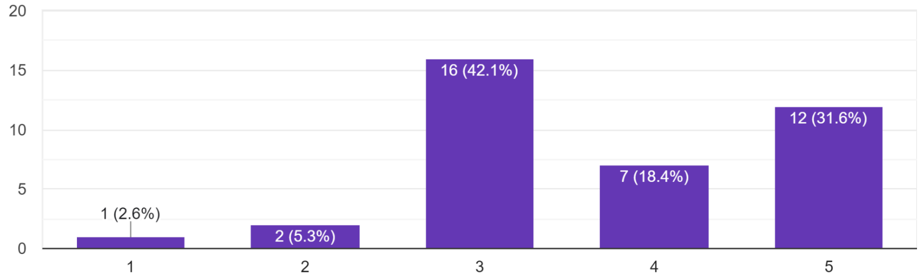


I find Plus-size brand products easily. Encontro facilmente produtos Plus-size.

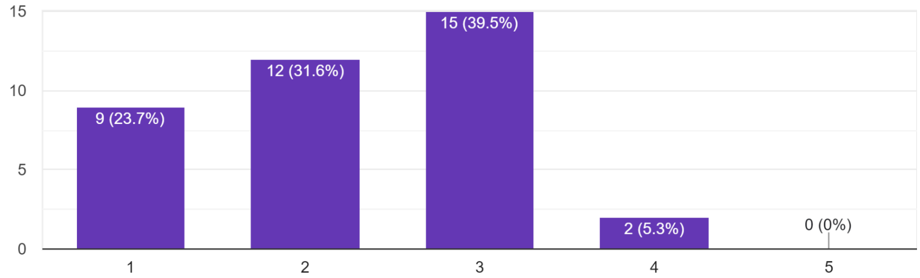
38 responses



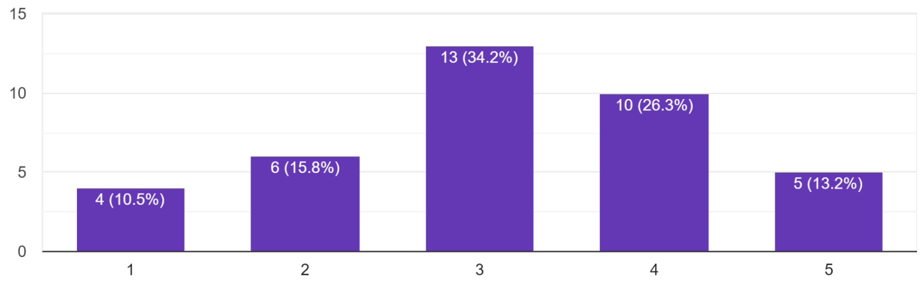
Todays brands have products with weak characteristics. As marcas atuais possuem produtos com características fracas.
38 responses



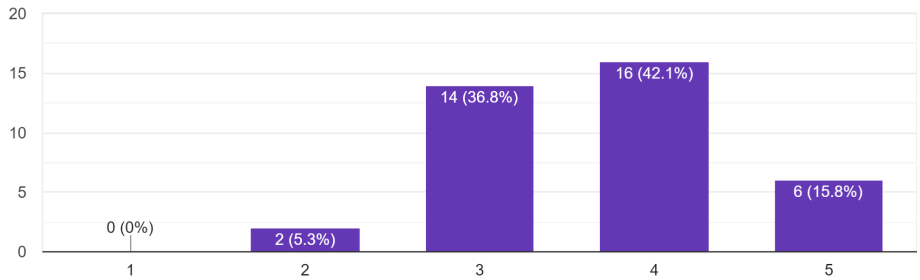
The advertising media used by Plus-size brands encourages me to purchase them. Os meios de publicidade utilizados pelas marcas Plus-size incentivam-me a comprá-las.
38 responses



I feel satisfied when purchasing products from Portuguese brands. Eu sinto-me satisfeito quando compro produtos de marcas portuguesas.
38 responses

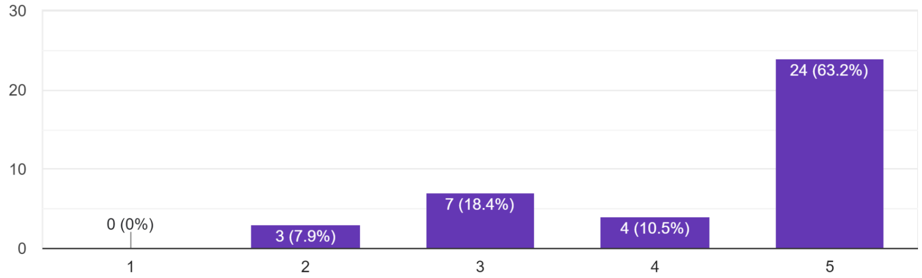


I consider Plus-size clothing too expensive. Eu considero as roupas plus-size muito caras.
38 responses



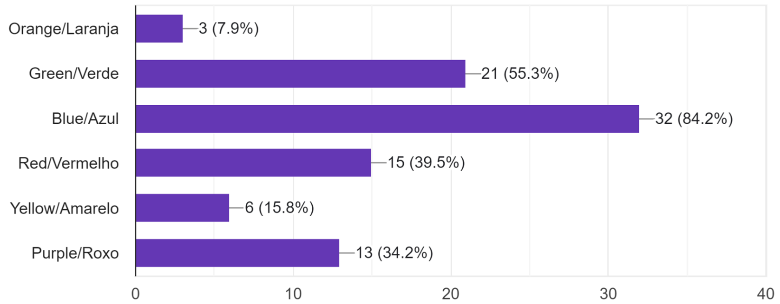
Plus-sizes brands should invest more on advertisement. Marcas plus-size deveriam investir mais em publicidade.

38 responses



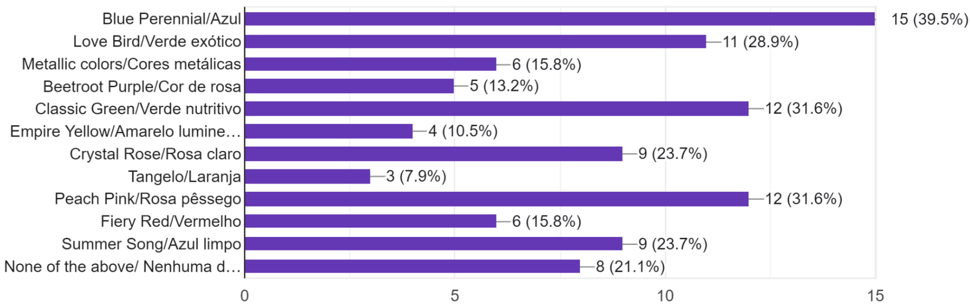
What colors do you wear most often during spring and summer?   Quais cores usa mais frequentemente durante a primavera e o verão?

38 responses



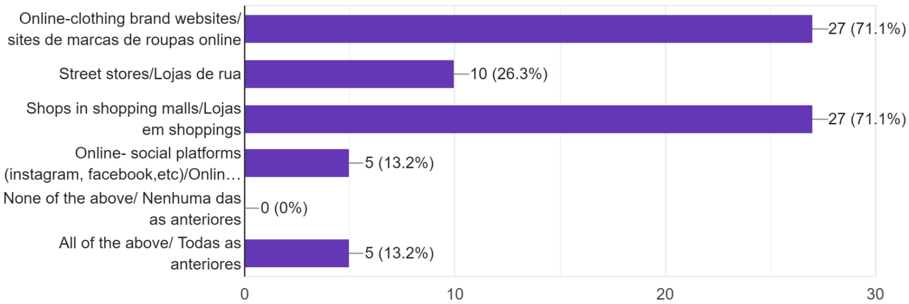
The color trends I used the most last spring and summer: As tendências de cores que utilizei mais na última primavera e verão

38 responses

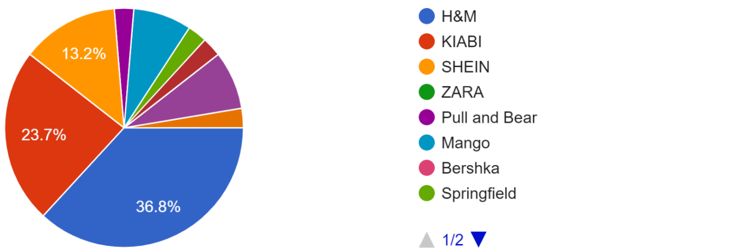


I usually buy clothes: Eu costumo comprar roupas:

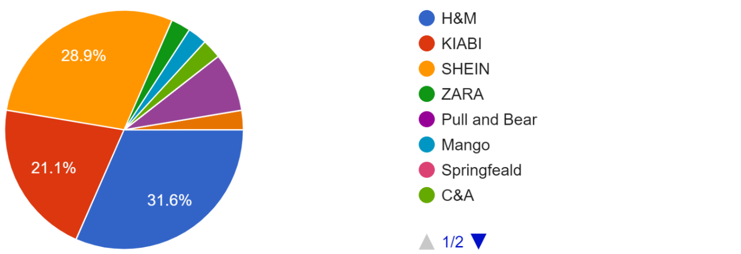
38 responses



What brand do I associat with plus-size clothes   Que marca associo com roupas plus-size
38 responses



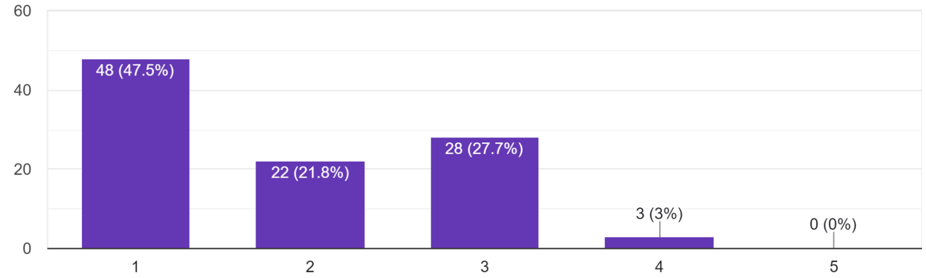
The brand I consider the most inclusive is: A marca que eu considero mais inclusiva é:
38 responses



What fashion segment do I associate with plus-size fashion?   Qual segmento de moda eu associo com moda plus-size?
101 responses

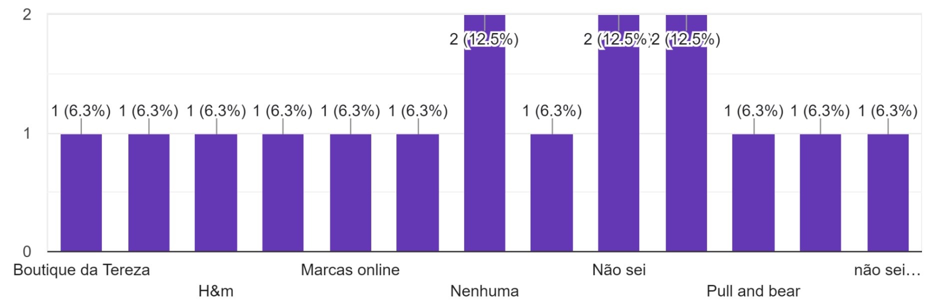
I associate plus-size brands with a Portuguese product. Eu associo marcas Plus-size com um produto português.

101 responses



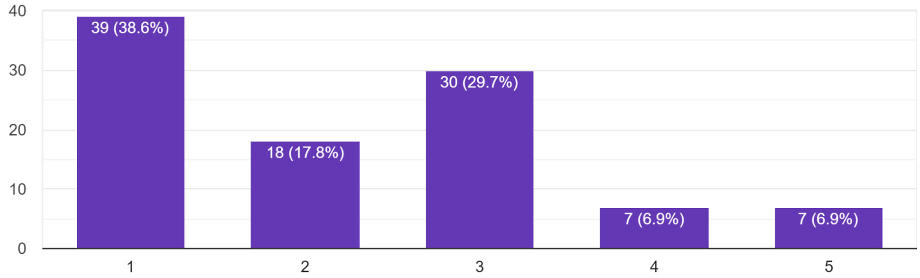
What portugues brands do I associate with plus-size products.   Que marcas portuguesas associo a produtos plus-size.

16 responses



I don't like to see products advertised on plus-size models. Eu não gosto de ver produtos promovidos em modelos plus-size.

101 responses



I consider the brands in the market inclusive. Eu considero as marcas do mercado inclusivas.

101 responses