

Hospitality in women's wear retail in São Paulo City

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This article investigates the relationship between seller and customer in retail women's wear business in São Paulo, considering hospitality driven strategies adopted by it. It is assumed that in this segment people tend to play different roles according to common patterns of behavior, and that hospitality issues add a lot to what is already established as standard sales procedures. As relationships are increased, significant links are created, revealing different motives involving hospitality. A qualitative approach to in-depth semi-structured interviews was used. Owners, managers, sellers and customers were interviewed. Content analysis was used for data evaluation, adding hospitality elements to business such as consideration, concern, compassion and desire to please, which were identified as a significant asset among the sources.

Keywords: Hospitality, fashion retail, seller, customer, acting

Introduction

The relationship between seller and customer in women's fashion retail market in São Paulo city is the subject of this paper. Hospitality-based behaviour adopted in this segment is analysed. Fashion retail sales involve a series of operations that narrow the distance between manufacturer and consumer. Most buying decisions are made at the store. The store is a scenario where performances take place under a multitude of influences such as: seller; friends; colleagues and even other consumers present at the time of purchase; time available for purchase; mood and reason for purchase (Levy & Weitz 2000). The seller is the one who proposes a personal sale to the consumer. Personal selling is an interactive communication process, conducted in a personal and direct way between the company and its customers. In this sense, the seller plays an essential role in building this relationship (Levy & Weitz 2000).

Hospitality

Welcoming the guest is the central point in hospitality. This was a sacred, moral and social obligation in pre-industrial societies. It consisted of the duty to receive both neighbours and strangers with demonstrations of sincerity, genuine concern and generosity (Camargo 2004, Bueno 2008, Lashley 2004).

In its basic meaning, hospitality is the provision of food and drink, and, occasionally, accommodation, for people who are not regular members of the house. Those who give hospitality, the hosts, usually make such offers in their own homes, sharing their livelihood with guests and taking responsibility for their well-being, ensuring their safety and creating a bond of trust, closeness and warmth (Lashley 2004, Camargo 2004). The hospitality etymology has different origins: *hospes* and *host*, conveying the meaning of hosting, hospice, guest, host and, at the same time, of hostility. This

contradiction actually reveals continuity, for hospitality and hostility have in common the fact that they are expressions of the existence of a relationship, not its denial (Selwyn 2004).

The relationship aspect is a fundamental point for the understanding of hospitality, which can be segmented into public, commercial and domestic, with domestic hospitality being the basis for the others. Although commercial hospitality implies monetary exchanges (mediated by money), it also involves people and places, not just companies and payment for service (Camargo 2004). A competitive ratio between service and its price is the prerogative of a customer, not a guest. The relationship is ruled by a consumer protection code, not by the 'unwritten law' of the gift. The contract ends not with a sacrifice, but, instead, with an exchange. The correct practice of commercial hospitality is like the staging of a visiting host, concerned with all the details which will lead to the guest's satisfaction (Darke & Gurney 2004). The term 'staging' refers to any activity of an individual when he is in the presence of a number of observers (Goffman 2011).

Hospitality is a ritual in which there are at least two actors and some given space in which a situation unfolds, in its theatrical sense. This acting is the determining factor for continuity. The guest in the first scene is converted into a host, in the second one, and this role reversal continues without end. In a sense, this is the basic ritual of human relationships (Camargo 2004). Therefore, theatre represents an appropriate metaphor for the service industry as the delivery of both service and hospitality consists of a series of processes that customers experience as 'staging'. Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman (2011) considers social life as a representation in which people act out roles to establish interactions and know themselves and others through the various scenic elements at their disposal – the so-called *façade*. The *façade* is made up of the physical setting and

the personal front. The actor receives guidelines to perform his role. These must be followed, whether motivated by the desire to perform the task, or by maintaining the corresponding *façade*, which has already been established (Goffman 2011). Impressions are conveyed by appearance (clothing, gender, age, racial characteristics, height, etc.) and behaviour (attitude, language patterns, facial expressions, body gestures etc.), defined by Goffman (2011) as a personal *façade*. Marketing authors link the sales professional's *façade* to empathy, interest, attention, sincerity, reliability and willingness to listen (Parente 2000, Levy & Weitz 2000, Penna, Leão & Miranda 2008).

Hospitality, however, transcends this list of characteristics of sales professionals, which are not able to describe the essence of a hospitable seller. There is a distinction between the good host (seller) and the hospitable one. The good host is one who performs the prescribed role and strives to leave the guest satisfied (Telfer 2004). In order to be hospitable, not only is it necessary to act with generosity and see the guest as an individual, but also that these attitudes must be perceived as genuine by the guest (Lashley 2004). Telfer (2004) lists three possible groups of motives for offering hospitality. The first involves consideration for others, including the desire to please them. The second group is based upon reciprocal grounds, characterised by the desire to have company and make friends, or the desire for the pleasures of entertaining. The third involves self-interested motives that cannot be considered as hospitable, like vanity. Darke and Gurney (2004) differentiate the owners of houses in their hospitality manners and expectations featuring reasons as pleasure in the company of people, esteem, creative display, pride, personal or business interests, or retribution for feeling obligation.

Hospitality in fashion retail

The acting approach to hospitality permits a correlation between acting itself and fashion retail – for the situation is designed to communicate the brand identity through the physical environment (store) and social environment (seller). The physical environment is the backdrop for the development of the acting: furniture, decoration, lighting, physical layout, etc. The social environment concerns the actor himself (appearance and manners). The *façade* is the part of the individual's fixed form of performance in order to define the situation for those who observe the representation. Appearance and manners reveal the social status of the actor (Goffman 2011).

Table 1: Theatrical components and correspondence in the fashion retail

Actor	Seller
Audience	Consumer
<i>Façade</i> – physical scenario	Shop window, layout, product display, lighting, signs, symbols, objects
Personal <i>façade</i> – appearance	Seller's height, weight, hair
Performance – behavior	Seller's way of acting

Source: Adapted by the authors from Lima (2010)

The focus of this article is on the seller and how he performs his role. Is he being driven by consideration and genuine concern for the other? There must be a commitment to actions that exceed the preset role. The motives allow for an adjustment much needed in clothing store relationships. The interactions between consumers and sellers are called meeting services. The meeting services, as shown in Figure 1, occur between the third and fourth stages of the purchase decision process, after the customer has identified a need, sought for information on how to meet it and evaluated the different possibilities.

Most consumer decisions taken at the store are planned or made on impulse. The purchase is the time of value exchange, when two parties negotiate to satisfy their expectations (Giglio 1996). The consumer of this new century is experienced, has limited time, feels the need for attention and trust, and seeks for authenticity. For many consumers, engaging even in a routine shopping is seen as a way to preserve values, ethical principles and money. Authenticity is defined as genuine interest, reliability, trustworthy and true, real, unique and established reputation – hence the relationship with hospitality (Lewis & Bridges 2004).

In some cases, the service experience can be reduced to a single meeting, with the request, payment and service delivery taking place in the same place. In other cases, the customer experience passes through a succession of encounters over a given period of time, involving several staff in different locations (Lovelock & Wright 2001). This interaction depends, in most cases, on the type of buying decision the consumer is involved with. Such decisions are labeled as routine, limited and extended. Limited and extended decisions account for 40% of purchases and suffer from the greatest impact of situational influences, such as the physical environment (store location, layout, product display, decoration, lighting, etc.) and the social environment (interaction of sellers and customers) (Pinheiro, Castro, Silva & Nunes 2006).

In *fast fashion* stores, which sell clothes at affordable prices, consumers feel no need for help, because of the frequency with which these products are purchased. They are not afraid of making a bad decision. Consumers themselves take the clothes on the racks and head to the dressing room. A section attendant, whose help is requested only for very specific questions, replaces the seller in these stores. A number of consumers have already exhausted their buying needs and

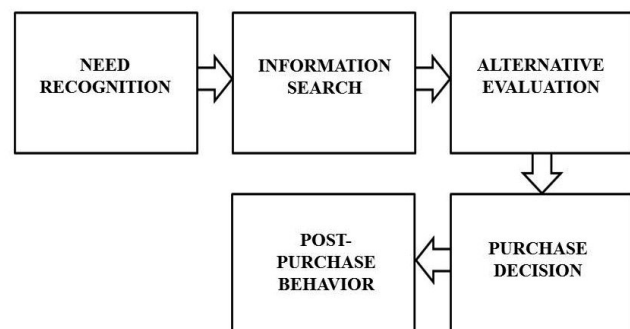


Figure 1: The buying decision process (Source: Adapted from Schiffman and Kanuk (2009).)

reached a stage in which they think of buying as opportunities and experiences for a happier, richer and more satisfying life. Purchases are not motivated merely by material needs, but by the need for consistency and completeness, i.e., filling a void inside. The relationship inside the store can fill part of this void. If authenticity is present in the relationship between consumer and seller, and between manager and seller, it is very likely that some people would like to visit and even work in this store (Lewis & Bridges 2004).

In limited purchasing decisions, consumers seek for information in the media and evaluate the alternatives along with friends and sellers in stores. Clothes evaluation criteria involve consumer value perceptions, whether financial or emotional. Sellers in specialty stores help the decision process by providing personal attention to the buyer. The seller acts as a problem solver. He knows how to combine different elements to create a unique experience when it comes to improving a visual presentation for a specific client. In extended purchasing decisions each of the five stages of the decision-making process receives specific attention. Generally, this is the case of luxury brands or clothing that will be purchased for very special occasions, in which every detail is considered. The consumer in this situation is well informed about fashion and requires a vendor that acts as a consultant, conveying timely information that adds value to clothing. This professional should be aware of fashion trends. It is worth emphasising that this is a client for whom the post-sale relationship is fundamental. In purchase decisions, any approach that reminds one of artificial sales talk will probably arouse suspicion and will not be trusted. Seller and consumer need a specific length of time for the relationship to seem credible (Lewis & Bridges 2004). The consumer asserts independence, challenging established thinking and demanding that the monologue must be replaced by dialogue. Being tolerant with ambiguities, the shopper is suspicious of absolute messages and is continually looking for the meaning of the hues in between the extremes (Lewis & Bridges 2004).

Research approach

Exploratory qualitative research was conducted using in-depth, partially structured, interviews. Lasting 20 to 50 minutes, the interviews were transcribed and analysed into units of meaning, which made it possible to identify keywords for the different hospitality motives exposed by Telfer (2004). A convenience sampling method was used where both consumer and stores were selected based on availability at the specific time of the study (Malhotra, Rocha, Laudisio, Altheman & Borges 2005). Specialised fashion stores were studied because they give greater emphasis to the physical and social environment than the average store. Three luxury (Prada, Miu Miu and Paty Pace) and seven premium (Farm, Guangzhou, Animale, Fashion Space, Tess, GI Fashions, Cantão) stores in São Paulo city were studied during the month of April 2014. A luxury store would work with rare raw materials, the origin of which brings recognition, and has limited or exclusive production. Premium category brings products that seek for improvements in price and quality, with a certain exclusivity (Strehlau 2008). The sample consisted of 14 women customers, aged between 18 and 60 years, from

the top economic classes A and B. Thirteen fashion professionals were also interviewed, including eight sellers, three managers and two owners.

Findings

The sales staff reported that working as a fashion store seller is the easiest and most enjoyable way to earn a living. The turnover of sellers is considered high by the managers and the owners, and is attributed to the fact that most of the sellers only sought for a first job experience. Most of the sellers interviewed, who remain in the career for 10 years on average, dream of becoming a manager or opening their own store in search of personal realisation and financial gain. Working at weekends is a reason of dissatisfaction for sellers, managers and even business owners, although all of them show enthusiasm when talking about fashion. In the interviews, four reasons for choosing the profession were identified: *professional development*, *professional status*, *idle-time occupation* and *helping people*. In two of them – helping people and professional development – we found motives associated by Telfer (2004) with hospitality.

Professional development

Sellers see their job as the first step for a career in the fashion market. Their motivations relate to a taste for fashion. They recognise the sales activity as an opportunity for growth and appreciate the contact with people.

Whoever wants to work in the fashion world has to work for some time in retail. It gives very good experience in store management and contact with people. I began in Espaço because it is exactly the public I want to deal with in future, when I have my own brand (Interview 3, seller, 21, premium, mall).

Professional status

Sellers consider luxury brands as a symbol of their professional success. They aim at their career objectives, living and sharing values with people who belong to this universe. The client role is to recognise the importance and ability of the seller in the fashion area.

For you to work with a luxury brand, you have to follow their standards, which are rigid, because the luxury market requires this. You must have a certain way to communicate, perform, demonstrate the product; you must have expertise of the products. It means you must be aware of everything that happens in the whole world. You have to know the world in which these people live. You do not live in this world, but you have to know it. This is very important (Interview 8, manager, 33, luxury, mall).

Fill the time

Some sellers are university students who work to have some financial independence from their parents and to cover their leisure activity expenses. These sellers have many conflicts with management established rules, with working on weekends and with 'boring' customers. Such conflicts hinder their careers.

They are students who want financial independence. Most do not need to work; they want to have money

to spend, to go out with their boyfriend, to be able to travel. It is a profile that does not last much time because when they discover that they will frequently have to give up going out with their boyfriend over the weekend ... they give up (Interview 3, manager, 30, premium, mall).

Helping people

Some sellers get satisfaction from working with fashion and relating to people. They see the customers as human beings and they value relationships. Customers are welcomed and they recognise the sellers' dedication. This profile characterises the first group of motives proposed by Telfer (2004) as hospitable behaviour. Figure 3 shows some often quoted views in interviews about sellers' motives for choice of occupation.

I like to help people feel good. I like to see others happy. This brings me happiness too. It's my way of being. I like to help others (Interview 2, seller, 28, premium, mall).

Physical scenario

The theatrical components in fashion retail are evident in interviewees' comments. The store is recognised as a scenario, which comprises the physical environment (layout) and the social environment (seller) (Goffman 2011). In order to communicate the essence of the brand, stores create environments that enable sales, consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Armchairs give room for customer and seller dialogue. Clothes displayed on racks facilitate visualisation and choice. Music, lighting and fragrance are also part of this scenario.

It works as a performance. Everything in the store is very beautiful. Everything is very neat. As you enter it you'll see a rack of white clothes with lots of things that you will certainly love. Laces ... and this and that ... You enter the store and get in the store mood ... it's the smell, the sellers' look, the music ... It is an environment where you come in and get involved (Interview 1, consumer, 22, class A).

According to the theatrical metaphor developed by Goffman (2011), performance means acting different roles and is understood as the interaction between seller and customer, where both have a role to play. Thus, the performance of services happens in the evaluation made by the customer at the time of contact with the service. These roles are characterised by empathy, interest, attention, product knowledge, fashion knowledge, listening, personality, adaptability, appropriateness of language, perception of customer needs and relationship building (Parente 2000, Levy & Weitz 2000, Penna et al. 2008).

Goffman (2011) says that the look reveals the actor's social status (clothing, gender, age, racial characteristics, height) and the ways (attitude, language patterns, facial expressions, body gestures and the like) his performance. The look is a 'power' able not only to attract consumers to the store, but also to increase the seller's self-esteem, providing greater confidence for his activities. Managers and owners follow some rules about look, both in the employee's hiring and in everyday life. Look is considered by several authors as an important characteristic for the performance of the seller: hygiene (nails/hair/

scent); clothing (clean/discrete); trendiness; clothes of the store; physical characteristics; aesthetic standards (Parente 2000, Levy & Weitz 2000, Penna et al. 2008, Goffman 2011).

The girls at Mixed, which is another place where I like to buy, are all dressed with Mixed clothes only. It has to be from the store collection ... they have to buy ... must be using ... have to be of the new collection ... you end up buying because they have your style ... the way you want to have (Interview 12, customer, 45, class A).

Knowledge of fashion and products being sold are the initial requirements cited by the professionals interviewed to describe the sellers' profile. The sales vocation is underreported. The 'fashion consultant' designation best describes the sellers' role. Based on the customer style and body, she proposes outfits and identifies trends.

In the luxury segment, fashion, product and brand knowledge are even more valued:

You have to sell, not as a seller. You sell as a consultant. As a person who is helping a friend. You help that person. You do not just sell. You are not there to tell them the price. You have to give the product characteristics. You have to talk about the benefits, advantages ... justify the price based on the product's features and on a number of other reasons as well. You have to know a lot (Interview 8, manager, 33, luxury, mall).

This consultancy work involves a sequence of steps, from showing clothes that match the consumer's style to leading her to the dressing room. Some see the word seller as pejorative. In the luxury segment, consultancy involves recommendations regarding makeup, hair, jewelry and accessories.

We are kind of consultants. We give assurance to them ... We give plenty of opinions ... They like us to stay in the dressing room with them, seeing the clothes (Interview 10, seller, 18, premium, mall).

The seller, before being professional, is a consumer and prizes fashion brands. Working with a brand that they like is a motive for satisfaction. Managers know this fact and use it in the hiring process.

I applied for a job at Farm because I've always liked the brand. I've always identified myself with the brand. I wanted Farm. I didn't apply for a job at any other store (Interview 10, seller, 18, premium, mall).

As a rule, the sales staff should receive the consumer with a smile to show interest. Once you get their sympathy, the commitment is to keep it throughout the exchange – this is the next challenge. The consumer in turn observes and records the presence or not of this interest. In relationships within the team, interest is also required.

The following statements illustrate motivations related to hospitality: desire to please, happiness with the customer presence, warmth. In the sales team, we find reasons for reciprocal hospitality cited by Telfer (2004).

Receive with a smile... a warm smile... Show that you are really happy because the customer has entered the store. (Interview 5, saleswoman, 22, luxury, mall). We are very united and we help each other... If you need R\$ 1 000 to hit the sales target, I will help you... If the store needs R\$ 10 000 to hit the sales target we

can arrive earlier, leave later ... if that helps (Interview 6, seller, 32, premium, street).

Attention is identified in the speech of consumers for consideration, kindness, and courtesy. Telfer (2004) says that attention is one of the characteristics of hospitable people. Attention is perceived as a characteristic of the seller role and evaluated by all respondents as very important. The attentive seller is remembered by the customer.

In the luxury shops, courtesy outperforms other adjectives.

The customer is usually loyal to the seller that shows availability (Interview 7, manager, 30, premium, mall).

You have a list of rules that you have to follow ... a standard procedure ... It begins with smiling at the customer, showing her the entire store, offering coffee and water ... Wear gloves to show the clothes.

These are the 'Golden Rules' that we should follow (Interview 5, saleswoman, 22, luxury, mall).

Attitudes of discrimination, such as when the seller evaluates the consumer through their clothes and accessories and, as such, considers it inappropriate to use the brand, communicating hostility through indifference and contempt, are behaviours to be avoided, especially in the luxury shops (Penna et al. 2010).

I try to pass this on to the team. We cannot underestimate anyone. People sometimes have a habit of judging by appearance, by the clothes the customer is wearing (Interview 4, manager, 30 years, luxury, mall).

There is consensus among all interviewees that listening is important. Listening can lead to empathy and identification. Understanding customer needs is a complex task considering the differences between the parties and the complexity in the communication process. For Simmel (1904), a stranger, somehow, predisposes us to confidences. We trust someone we don't know closely with secrets that only their distance allows us formulate. This is particularly true in confidences of customers about their romantic relationships.

If the customer tells me about a problem with her husband, I think that all she says in the dressing room and the store is to stay there ... You hear it but you're not telling anybody about her problems ... She came in and trusted in you (Interview 6, seller, 32, premium, street).

The relationship within the team is related to the tone in communication between managers and sellers. Sometimes, managers exceed the limit, generating hostility.

What bothers me is the tone. You can be called to attention, but in a more polite way ... (Interview 9, manager, 30, premium, street).

For those involved in the buying and selling process, there is no unanimity when it comes to empathy. Motivations for hospitality permeate the speech of vendors, managers and owners, although they are not always perceived by customers.

Respondents mentioned two moments in which empathy may be present: when leaving the client to examine the product; when prompted, bring the suitable product to the personal style, taste and body without showing exclusive interest in the sale, but in the customer as a human being as well.

I talk very much with the customers ... The girls here say that, in the dressing room, I start talking about odd things ... I'm not focused only on selling. I look

at the customer as a person and this creates more affinity between us (Interview 6, seller, 32, premium, street).

Some customers corroborate this attitude towards the sales team and say that this creates a relationship of trust and closeness that shows the presence of hospitality.

She calls you by name ... knows who you are ... remembers your history ... It gives a sensation of closeness ... You take the brand identity, you are there and the seller calls you by name ... You feel included in the place (Interview 13, customer, 23, Class A).

When this does not occur, customers get bored or impatient. They develop hard feelings such as hatred, anger, despair. This situation brings inconvenience and unpleasantness for some, as reflected in the speech of the respondents. This characterises hostility.

It is usually a time of enjoyment ... I'm looking for something to match another, I want to have time to think and look for what I want. Often in smaller stores you do not have this time, because the seller doesn't leave you alone. It is disturbing ... I walk in, sometimes, ask for something and quickly get out, because you cannot buy anything, it's horrible (Interview 11, customer, 60, Class A).

Customers try to solve this type of conflict in three ways: going to a store where they know the seller; searching beforehand on the internet or even buying through this channel; going to fast fashion stores (department stores) where there is no seller, and, consequently, no constraint, allowing greater freedom of choice. Satisfaction with fast fashion is limited, though. On one hand is price, quality and trendy clothes, on the other, there is no exclusivity in the products and the attendant, most of the time, does not satisfy customers.

At Zara it is easy to look for clothes, see the price, dress and see if the fit is good ... I do not have that person behind me pushing the product (Interview 6, customer, 30, class B).

At Zara I feel powerless ... If I want a size that is not there, what can I do? People who work there are always busy ... I will have to think of something else. (Interview 2, customer, 21, class B).

Within the sales team, empathy often involves aggregation, cooperation and fellowship, which reflects hospitality for reciprocal reasons, as cited by Telfer (2004). For Selwyn (2004), hospitality comes from the act of giving and receiving – what needs to be considered is what is exchanged and where these exchanges occur.

We helped each other ... the oldest vendors would 'adopt' you ... As I was very young, all the other sellers, that were a little older, would help me. If I had a problem, I would talk to them, not with the manager (Interview 3, seller, 21, premium, mall).

Strategies are also used to enhance the duty to help:

I make some motivational competitions ... I give awards. ... [I use] all the tools and tricks that I have to make all employees pursue a single goal: promoting positive interaction (Interview 7, manager, 30, premium, mall).

Hostility, nevertheless, occurs when a manager favours one seller instead of another.

Sometimes everyone is busy ... then, as a client comes in, and, instead of the manager directing her to the next seller in turn, she directs to the one she likes more ... then, the girls get angry ... (Interview 3, saleswoman, 21, premium, mall).

The concern in speaking the truth is discussed by some sellers about their relationship with the customers.

In hospitality, sincerity is a desirable attribute (Lashley 2004).

I tell the truth ... If it doesn't fit well ... As they are faithful, I think that if we tell the truth they end up coming back more often and looking for you. (Interview 10, seller, 18, premium, mall).

The customer is very critical, however.

They want to hit a goal and want you to buy. Then, everything that you try is beautiful (Interview 3, customer, 18, class B).

When the words 'hit the target' come into play, no matter how hard you try to minimise their strength, obstacles occur in the performance of roles according to the desired pattern that are not consistent with the motivations for hospitality. The risks of not meeting expectations can bring, in some cases, material or moral sanctions (Darke & Gurney 2004).

The manager just wants results; somehow she is right, because, I think, in our work, this is what matters, she wants to beat the store's target (Interview 10, seller, 18, premium, mall).

Another issue that causes problems is weekend work. Some managers try to be sympathetic to employees' needs, but this is not always possible, considering that Saturday is the day when the highest sales occur.

I used to accumulate clearances ... Sometimes I would take four days off in a row and would travel ... But not all the stores allow this ... Not having weekends is one of the reasons I want to quit retail. If it was Monday through Friday I would not leave, because I like what I do and make good money, compared to an internship in fashion (Interview 7, manager, 30, premium, mall).

The development of relationships occurs when the seller takes the focus off from the sale and tries to listen to the customer's problems. In these cases, in the words of the interviewees themselves, bonds of friendship are created and closeness that confirms the motivations of hospitality cited by Telfer (2004). It is what Camargo (2004) defines as the commercial dimension of hospitality, when it goes beyond the established in a contract.

The other day I was having coffee with a client who was telling me about her problems with her husband ... Sometimes you end up being a bit of a psychologist ... People need attention, need to feel pampered (Interview 4, manager, 30 years, luxury, mall).

Hospitality is also about the frequency with which meetings occur. In this sense, contacts through digital media, either by sale or personal reasons, as well as having a coffee, features the motivation of hospitality by the desire to please by friendship/kindness/affection, cited by Telfer (2004).

I have clients who send me WhatsApp messages: I'm coming over for a coffee ... I'm coming over to say Hi to you! You end up having a bond of friendship with

these customers ... (Interview 4, manager, 30 years, luxury, mall).

The owner has a piece of jewelry that she loves and that matched the customer's dress, so she lent it to her ... There are some people she loves ... (Interview 11, manager, 22, premium, street).

It is also clear that for some sale team members there are dividing lines between actors and audience, especially in the luxury market, in which rules are stricter.

You cannot live at the same standard as these people, because they go to restaurants, travel and attend places, that you don't. But you know these people ... It is a circle that you can attend, but you are not a habitu e (Interview 8, manager, 33, luxury, mall).

This dividing line also occurs to some sellers in relationships with peers. Often they prefer to separate the professional from the private world to avoid conflict.

When I enter a company it is to make money. Friends, I make out there, no one has to be my friend ... just have to respect me. If there is an affinity with someone and we become friends, it is a plus (Interview 2, saleswoman, 28, premium, mall).

For some, however, that dividing line is crossed from the moment the relationship leaves the store and reaches a more personal level, entering the grounds of reciprocal hospitality, making friends/having company (Telfer 2004).

You can extend the friendship over time ... There are customers who are now my friends. I think I have 3 or 4 friends who do not buy here in Cant o, but they were my customers before. You cannot generalize ... It is rare! (Interview 7, manager, 30, premium, mall).

The motives proposed by Telfer (2004), or the lack of them, were observed in the interviews. A few keywords reinforce the presence of hospitality. When referring to the motive 'duty of hospitality', there is the presence of the verbs 'have' and 'need', and the words 'rules' and 'procedure'. But when people talk about reciprocal motives, the verb mentioned by respondents is 'like' and words are 'enjoyment', 'bonding', 'relationship', 'friendship', 'affinity', 'human side' and 'psychology'. This second group demonstrates commitment to actions that exceed the pre-established role for the seller, which, for different authors, characterises the presence of hospitality (Telfer 2004, Camargo 2004, Bueno 2008, Gotman 2009).

Considering all the motives, we found that most comments are related to the duty to help or welcome someone in need; after that come the reciprocal motives, as the desire to have company or to make friends. The third most cited motive is consideration for others, as the desire to please others. Hospitality can also be seen in the profile of vendors who have chosen their occupation because they like to make people happy, welcome them and do more than their job requires. Sales personnel tend to mention a greater number of comments referring to the hospitality concept, rather than customers

Conclusion

Addressing hospitality as a way of understanding human relationships, fashion retail stores become an area of interaction between seller and customer, in which communication

is accomplished in a personal and direct way, involving, on the one hand, the customer – who chooses, buys and uses products, services, ideas and experiences in order to satisfy needs and wants. On the other hand is the seller – offering these products, services, ideas and experiences. Stores include a physical environment and a social environment (Solomon 2002, Levy & Weitz 2000).

Goffman (2011) believes that there must be compatibility between appearance, performance and scenario. This occurs in some of the surveyed stores while at others there is a lack of harmony. Sellers' performance corresponds to roles assigned by their managers. Some genuine elements of interaction, something extra, can be added to this duty, which are called motives of hospitality by Telfer (2004). But what are those motives? How to classify them beyond duty? In this sense, Telfer (2004) divided the relationship between the motives of hospitality into three groups in order to understand the point that goes beyond the usual duty to help or welcome someone in need. The clarity of this approach allows us to identify the motives present in the relationship between managers of the brand (vendor/manager and owner) and customers. The duty is still the biggest motive, even though motives such as reciprocal reasons are also significant, as they are characterised by the desire to have company or make friends; consideration for the other; desire to please others, due to the friendship and goodwill for all or affection for certain persons; and compassion and concern, that is, the desire to meet the needs of others, wellness. Hospitality can also be seen in the profile of vendors who chose the profession because they like to make people happy, welcoming them and doing more than their job requires.

Women's fashion retail uses strategies motivated by hospitality. People act out roles as the various patterns of established behaviour. Hospitality in the agreed actions goes beyond the buying and selling relationship. During the meetings, important links are created, which indicate the presence of different motives involving the activity of hospitality, as pointed out by Telfer (2004). In order to understand these motives among individuals, it can be observed that the perspective of hospitality was relevant. Thinking about relationships from a strictly commercial point of view does not reflect the complexity of the decision-making process, in which hospitable motives cannot be ignored as a key factor for enriching these interactions. Hospitality is primarily responsible for the establishment and maintenance of relationships; and companies have been looking for ways to bring this concept to stores. Putting this into practice may be challenging because it may conflict with sales targets. Even the sellers recognise that hospitable behaviour is affected when they are under pressure to meet their sale targets. The research shows that it is possible to be hospitable in the commercial area by reviewing strategies and adapting hospitable motives to meet customers' expectations.

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