

ARTICLE

IDENTITY SEMIOSIS: PORTRAITS OF FASHION IN SCHOOL SPACE**LAISE ZIGER BORTOLETTI¹**ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6730-6096>**IRENO ANTÔNIO BERTICELLI²**ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3498-9999>

ABSTRACT: Clothing, accessories and behavior are part of the fashion universe and are manifested as a significant aspect of the language of personal communication, reflecting in the social-historical path of each subject. Present in all spaces, fashion is characterized as an inseparable element of the school space, an environment composed of subjects who are building their identity(s). In view of this, the present research had as a general objective to understand how fashion contributes to the construction of identities in the school space. To achieve the proposed objective, a qualitative, descriptive and documentary research was carried out. In the data collection, six photographs of students in school spaces were selected, in which the fashion signs present in these records were analyzed, based on Semiotics by Charles Sanders Peirce. From the results, it was noticed that, most of the students, spontaneously become uniformed, through the use of t-shirts, jeans, leggings, sweatshirt and sneakers. An individualization was also noticeable through the washing of jeans, accessories and prints. In addition, it was understood that groups are formed through the signs they carry, and that these can expose the subject's tastes. That is, fashion presents itself as fundamental for these phenomena to occur and be presented to other individuals. These phenomena, evidenced through the desire for imitation and differentiation, or through relationships of status and power. It is concluded that it is through the display of clothes and accessories carried that young people expose their identity(s), tastes and ideas.

Keywords: fashion and education, identity, school uniform, school space.

SEMIOSSES IDENTITÁRIAS: RETRATOS DA MODA NO ESPAÇO ESCOLAR

RESUMO: O vestuário, os acessórios e o próprio comportamento fazem parte do universo da moda e se manifestam como um significativo aspecto da linguagem de comunicação pessoal, refletindo no percurso histórico-social de cada sujeito. Presente em todos os espaços, a moda caracteriza-se como um elemento indissociável do espaço escolar, ambiente este composto por sujeitos que estão construindo sua(s) identidade(s). Em vista disso, a presente pesquisa teve como objetivo geral compreender como a moda contribui para a construção das identidades no espaço escolar. Para atingir o objetivo proposto,

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realizou-se uma pesquisa qualitativa, descritiva e documental. Na coleta de dados foram selecionadas seis fotografias de estudantes em espaços escolares, nas quais foram analisados os signos da moda presentes nesses registros, com base na Semiótica de Charles Sanders Peirce. Pelos resultados, percebeu-se que grande parte dos estudantes se uniformiza espontaneamente, por meio do uso de camisetas, calças jeans, *legging*, agasalhos de moletom e tênis. Também foi perceptível uma individualização por meio das lavagens dos jeans, acessórios e estampas. Além disso, subentendeu-se que os grupos se formam por meio dos signos que portam, e que estes podem expor os gostos do sujeito. Nessa perspectiva, a moda apresenta-se como fundamental para que esses fenômenos ocorram e sejam apresentados para os demais indivíduos – fenômenos esses evidenciados por meio do desejo de imitação e diferenciação, ou por meio de relações de status e poder. Conclui-se que é por meio da exibição das vestimentas e acessórios portados que os jovens expõem sua(s) identidade(s), gostos e ideias.

Palavras-chave: moda e educação, identidade, uniforme escolar, espaço escolar.

SEMIOSIS DE IDENTIDAD: RETRATOS DE MODA EN EL ESPACIO ESCOLAR

RESÚMEN: La ropa, los accesorios y el comportamiento son parte del universo de la moda y se manifiestan como un aspecto significativo del lenguaje de la comunicación personal, reflejándose en el camino social-histórico de cada sujeto. Presente en todos los espacios, la moda se caracteriza por ser un elemento inseparable del espacio escolar, un entorno compuesto por sujetos que construyen su (s) identidad(s). En vista de esto, la presente investigación tuvo como objetivo general comprender cómo la moda contribuye a la construcción de identidades en el espacio escolar. Para lograr el objetivo propuesto, se realizó una investigación cualitativa, descriptiva y documental. En la recopilación de datos, se seleccionaron seis fotografías de estudiantes en espacios escolares, en las que se analizaron los signos de moda presentes en estos registros, basados en semiótica por Charles Sanders Peirce. A partir de los resultados, se observó que, la mayoría de los estudiantes, se uniformaron espontáneamente, mediante el uso de camisetas, jeans, polainas, sudaderas y zapatillas de deporte. También se notó una individualización a través del lavado de jeans, accesorios y estampados. Además, se entendió que los grupos se forman a través de los signos que llevan, y que estos pueden exponer los gustos del sujeto. Es decir, la moda se presenta como fundamental para que estos fenómenos ocurran y se presenten a otros individuos. Estos fenómenos, evidenciados a través del deseo de imitación y diferenciación, o mediante relaciones de estatus y poder. Concluimos que es a través de la exhibición de ropa y accesorios que llevan los jóvenes que exponen su identidad(s), gustos e ideas.

Palabras clave: moda y educación, identidad, uniforme escolar, espacio escolar.

INTRODUCTION

Covering the social, cultural, and political spheres, fashion is an effective form of communication, in which, through languages, signs are emitted in all spaces. The school is one of these spaces in which fashion is present, whose environment is for the formation and construction of individuals.

Perceiving the school environment and interactions is of great relevance since the students' knowledge and the development of their capacities are from an environment that is healthy and favors learning, in which the exchange of knowledge must occur fully, reflecting on the quality of teaching.

To rethink the school space, we need to reflect on the students since they are the fundamental characters to give life to the school environment. They are the ones who bring humanization to the school, in addition to taking their knowledge, ideas, and cultures that are reflected in the construction of their identities. Once entering this space, these identities transform.

Therefore, we assume that the school experience can be influenced by the behavior, expression, and identity of the individuals. In this context, fashion appears in the school space, since, through it, ideas, values, and thoughts are exposed, whether through clothing, accessories, or behaviors.

Despite the importance that fashion/clothing has for the understanding of individuals and the world, it is often characterized in a pejorative way, juxtaposed to futility and ephemerality, not being understood as an important element in the construction of individuals and their relationship with others. This is also noticeable in the field of education, in which little has been thought about fashion and its relationship with the school experience. Therefore, if fashion is in this space, it is necessary to understand it through the way it presents and what phenomena it produces.

In this sense, this article, from a Master's thesis in Education, sought to answer the following question: in what way does fashion contribute to the construction of identities in the school space? In this process, adjacent questions arise surrounding the object and challenge, even more, the search for answers.

Based on this research problem, the general objective of the study was to understand how fashion contributes to the construction of identities in the school space. In the construction process, this research is being stitched, cut, and sewn, seeking to be nourished by references from both the Education and Fashion areas. The idea of fashion used in this study is based on its understanding as a social device, capable of communicating and establishing the individual in a given time and space.

Everyone goes through school and has the experience of being part of certain groups that encompass a series of non-verbal information, which is present in the language of fashion. Therefore, it is necessary to understand these students since they are a fundamental part of the existence of the school environment, enabling the understanding of social phenomena that occur there, through signs and their communications. In this way, it is about understanding and contributing to the formation of individuals as social, cultural, and historical beings, in addition to collaborating with both epistemological fields, seeking to dialogue with these two great areas, inaugurating an instigating fusion and, for many, perhaps, intriguing and being innovative.

The paper follows Charles Sanders Peirce's theory and method of Semiotics, which establishes unity in the research. It is characterized, in terms of the method used, as descriptive with a qualitative approach. After the process of understanding the existing productions and the construction of theoretical foundations necessary for all research, data collection was carried out through records, specifically photographs of students in the school space. With the analysis of these images, the research is a documentary by the proposition of using these records as sources of information so that, through Peircean Semiotics, they receive an analytical treatment as elements of fashion in the school environment.

With a sampling of six photos of students in the school environment, the data were collected and interpreted through the fashion signs present in the places (clothing, accessories, and others). This information was reported and analyzed through Peircean Semiotics, bringing the universal categories of firstness, secondness, and thirdness, so that all the elements examined passed through the three categories, which are conceptualized and exemplified further on. In this way, the data were analyzed and compared, getting the research result and its possible conclusions.

After the initial considerations of the research, we show the organization of this article.

In the introduction, we presented the problem, the research objectives, and its justification. Then, the methodological paths taken will be presented, as well as an explanation of Peircean Semiotics.

Finally, we will enter into bibliographic questions, presenting the relationship between fashion, school, and society, understanding this triad as essential in the process of this research. Then, we will address the concepts of identity and its construction process, reflected in the school space, Finally, we will show the analyzes and discussions as well as final considerations and references.

METHODOLOGICAL PATHWAYS AND RESEARCH SEMIOSIS

The research was carried out and classified as exploratory for its approach to the phenomenon, and characterized as qualitative since it did not aim to quantify, “[...] but, rather, to understand and explain the dynamics of social relations that, in turn, are depositories of beliefs, values, attitudes, and habits.” (MINAYO, 2001, p. 24).

The method used in the research was the documentary due to the use of photographs obtained from the digital records of schools. We obtained the photographs in two schools, one public and one private, located in the urban area of the city of Chapecó, SC (western region of the state). With a sampling of six records, three from each institution, the research was undertaken based on Charles Sanders Peirce's triads, since it used the resource of Semiotics to analyze these images. For the selection, we preferred photographs of high school students who were in the school space. In these records, the elements present were observed, identifying the signs carried by individuals who attend this level of education, in public and private schools. The criterion for choosing the schools occurred because both have a considerable number of students in the level of education, coming not only from the central part of the city but also from the neighborhoods.

This research needed adjustments, especially in the methodology used, since, with the emergence of Covid-19, considered by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic, schools were closed, according to Decree nº 38.679 of March 17, 2020, which “Provides for the temporary suspension of the activities of the Municipal Education Network of Chapecó, of the programs and projects developed by the Secretariats of Youth, Sport and Leisure, Culture and Social Assistance and other measures” (CHAPECÓ, 2020). Thus, it was impossible to carry out field research, or even to obtain data from the physical files of the schools.

Therefore, through technological resources, we located the homepages of the two schools, which allowed the use of publicized images on their social networks. At first, twelve photos were selected, six from the public school and six from the private school. Then, six were selected, three for each institution, based on the following criteria: a) those that best allowed the visibility of the signs in the school space; and, b) the dates in which the photographs were recorded, making it possible to perceive similarities and differences, in the same period between public and private schools, comprising young people from the same historical moment.

For ethical reasons, the faces of the students were not revealed, as well as their names and the name of the institutions. This did not interfere with the research result so that, finally, the analysis of what was collected could be reached, through the interpretation of fashion signs observed in clothes, accessories, and others. This information was reported and analyzed based on Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics, based on the universal categories of firstness, secondness, and thirdness. In addition, a project design tool was used, the mood board, proving to be significant for a better understanding of the signs.

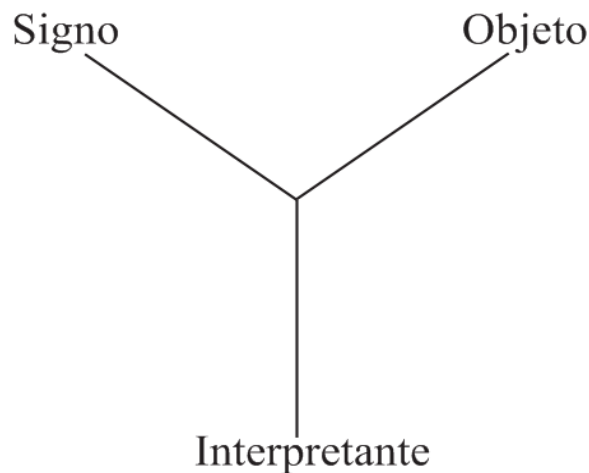
According to Gardner and McDonagh-Philip (2001), the mood board, also known as a semantic panel, is a basic visual design tool, which uses collages and compositions that can include images, drawings, and objects to foster communication and inspiration in creative processes. It is an instrument that optimizes the power of graphic communication and the conception of meanings in a faster way, helping in design reasoning (SANTOS; JACQUES, 2009). In the case of this paper, this tool was fundamental in the synthesis of the signs present in the school environment, promoting numerous semiosis, and contributing to the research results.

Understanding Semiotics

Through the study of Semiotics, we have the sign (from the Greek *shmei=on*, which is pronounced “*semêion*”). Without it, nothing is said about reality, since man is a symbolic being, a being of language. “In phenomena, whatever they may be – a sliver of light or a mathematical theorem, a lament of pain or an abstract idea of science, Semiotics seeks to discern and unravel its being of language, that is, its action as a sign.” (SANTAELLA, 1983, p. 3).

In this perspective, Santaella (1983) conceptualizes Semiotics as the general science of all languages. As a scientific theory, Peirce's Semiotics created concepts and inquiry devices that allow describing, analyzing, and interpretation of languages. According to Peirce's definition, the sign has a triadic nature:

Figure 1 – Peirce's Triad



Sign – Object - Interpretant

Source: Santaella (2002), (adapted by the author, 2019).

The three items used in the previous image show the triad formulated by Peirce. The object has inherent quality – here, quality is understood as a property, which defines a thing, and its essence –. However, the language derived from the relationship with the individual results in the representation of reality. Thus, signs are presented as a stimulus provided with meanings.

Santaella (2001, p. 189) explains one of the concepts conceived by Peirce:

A sign intends to represent, in part (at least), an object which is, therefore, in a sense, the cause or determinant of the sign, even if the sign falsely represents the object. But to say that it represents its object implies that it affects a mind, in such a way that it determines in that mind something which is mediately due to the object. That determination of which the immediate or determining cause is the sign and of which the mediate cause is the object may be called the interpretant.

In this way, the sign would be the representative that would disseminate the idea of the object, representing to the interpretant, not the being itself but a group of assumptions and conceptions of the receiver. Santaella (2002) states that the evocative, indicative, and significant power of the sign does not depend on the interpretant. This only updates levels of power already contained in the sign. Therefore, semiotically analyzing suggests the undertaking of a dialogue of signs, in which all are signs that correspond to signs.

According to Castilho and Martins (2005, p. 46), “[...] for Semiotics, which falls within the framework of communication and language theories, all signs, verbal, non-verbal and natural, are of

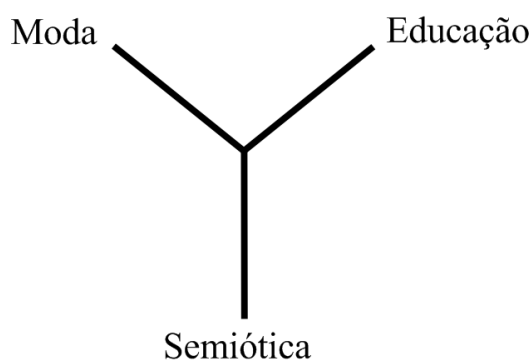
interest; its modes of meaning, denotation, connotation, and information; and all its behavior and properties.” In the case of Fashion, the individual uses his body, chooses the adornments to communicate, and, through this communication, determines the dialogue with the other people in society, in the school space. The communication presented here concerns non-verbal language since it is not possible to establish a conversation through fashion, but it is possible to discern professions and express preferences through colors and prints among others.

In this context, fashion as a form of non-verbal language is a combination of signs, shapes, and colors, for example. In this sense, the authors Castilho and Martins (2005, p. 44) state that

The valuation, insistence, and permanence of visual language as an essential source of communication in the contemporary world are undeniable. From this perspective, fashion must be recognized as structured by a whole visual system of meanings and, therefore, we must have subsidies to understand it as a means of communication, as a language and, from that, build it as an expression of meanings arising from the co-presence of signifying languages.

This non-verbal language is present in the field of education, in schools. In the above sense, we can think of a triad for this research.

Figure 2 – Triad of knowledge areas used in research



Fashion, Education, Semiotics

Source: Created by the author (2019).

The exposed triad reveals the three major areas of knowledge contained in the study: Fashion, Education, and Semiotics. During the text, they go through a process of semiosis, conceptualized by Fernandes (2011) as the continued reproduction of a sign, which is a sign of another, and so on, since, for Peircean Semiotics, the sign is dynamic, as it is in constant motion, and semiosis enters the process of signification in which one sign generates another.

In this case, considering that signs that lead to other signs are used in the writing process, this study goes through constant semiosis, both for the researcher who writes and for the reader.

In this relationship between thought and objects, Peirce states that a phenomenon is “[...] anything that appears to the mind, be it merely dreamed, imagined, conceived, glimpsed, hallucinated [...] A daydream, a smell, a general idea and abstract of science [...] Anyway, anything.” (SANTAELLA, 1995, p. 16). He organized all phenomena into three general and universal classes and called them firstness, secondness, and thirdness. Firstness, according to Peirce, means that “Everything that is immediately present to someone's consciousness is everything that is in his mind in the present moment that comes immediately, that has a presentation character.” (SANTAELLA, 1983, p. 9). This category is that of feeling without reflection, of the immediate, of just one possibility. Everything that is instantly present in one's consciousness, is in the mind at the present moment. It is the immediate reaction when signals reach the senses to develop relationships between the past and the present since the past is reflected in the present (PEIRCE, 2005).

In the universe of secondness, Peirce explains that all knowledge of the world, the facts, and the most practical aspects of human life, such as opening a door, or launching a balloon, requires a few seconds. Goriée (1992) indicates that secondness occurs whenever an effort is made, a decision is made,

something is discovered, oriented in space or time, or when something is taken by surprise. It is what gives experience its character, without the use of the mediating layer of intentionality, of reason.

Finally, thirdness, which brings together a first and a second in an intellectual synthesis, corresponds to the layer of intelligibility or thinking in signs, through which we represent and interpret the world. For example, blue, simple, and positive blue is the first. The sky, as a place and time, here and now, where blue is incarnated, is the second. Intellectual synthesis, and cognitive elaboration – the blue in the sky, or the blue of the sky, is a third (SANTAELLA, 1983, p. 11).

Just as the use of a printed t-shirt can be a first – which comes instantly to consciousness –, in the second world, there is an effort to understand that the print represents a team, for example. Finally, in thirdness, transporting itself to condensation between the first and second universe, using the interpretation, it can be inferred that the person who wears the shirt maybe likes football, is part of the crowd, and/or appreciates it for the comfort of their clothing.

As stated by Peirce (2005, p. 218), “Thirdness rushes over us in our perceptive judgments [...]”. From this perspective, it is understood that it is in the third category that the idea of the authentic or triadic sign is found. In Fashion, “[...] in addition to explaining the processes of meaning, Semiotics contributes to the exploration of possibilities of studies of the bases of all forms of communication, always inserted in a context in which the dialogue in a way explicit or not.” (CASTILHO; MARTINS, 2005, p. 53). In short, among the existing semiotic paradigms, Peirce's Semiotics is a logical science, through which, following its triad and its universal categories firstness, secondness, and thirdness, it is possible to analyze anything or situation, including Fashion, since this is a system of signs and has a function as a language in culture, in society and, without a doubt, in the school space.

In the next section, we will discuss conceptualizations about Fashion, its relationship with society, and its relationship with the school, thus building a triad. Other debates about the uniform and the body will also be presented, which are necessary for understanding the whole.

INITIAL TRIADS: FASHION, SCHOOL, AND SOCIETY

The term fashion originates from the Latin *modus* and designates “mode”, and “way of doing”. On this path, the English word fashion refers to the French *façon*, which means shape. From the above, Godart (2010, p. 10) conceptualizes: “Fashion is, therefore, the way or form of doing something, and in particular of dressing, eating, talking, etc.” Thus, it does not just understand clothing. Dorfles (1979) states that fashion is one of the most important social and economic phenomena of our time, in addition, to one of the safest standards for measuring the psychological and socioeconomic motivations of humanity. It is so important that it reveals how people behave and the way they present themselves in society.

In this sense, another fundamental author in the process of understanding fashion is Lipovetsky (2009), who portrays the breadth of fashion, emphasizing it as a relevant factor for society and conceptualizing it as a social device characterized by a temporality that can affect spheres very different from collective life.

Corroborating the conceptualization process, Pereira (2012, p. 4) asserts that “[...] the phenomenon of fashion is expressed through progressive changes that influence social forms, tastes, and manners, aesthetic judgments at different levels and the style as a whole [...]”. In this sense, we understand that through fashion, the manifestation of styles, tastes, and ideas occurs, forming identities and differentiating beings. Fashion and clothing fulfill significant roles in culture. Therefore, through its sign and the numerous ported signs, it is possible to read different cultures, in all their dimension.

Fashion is not innocent. It can bring up political, economic, and social issues. Referring to societal issues, Godart (2010) presents fashion as a total social fact, deeply involving individuals and their groups, considering the human being in its entirety. This highlights the fashion path through the most diverse areas, revealing that this multifaceted field surrounds the existence of society.

Clothing, accessories, and fashion present a material construction of existence, with aesthetic particularities, nourished by the most varied symbolic layers and meanings. Fashion is a total social fact that takes place between the individual and social group and between the fact of imitating something/someone, or wanting to differentiate. If, on the one hand, there is a need to integrate into a certain social group, in which ways of imitation are sought, there is also, however, to have this acceptance, a need to feel one's individuality, to stand out.

From this angle, Lipovetsky (2009, p. 27) explains that “[...] fashion as a system is inseparable from 'individualism' – in other words, from a relative freedom left to people to reject, modulate or accept the news of the day – from the principle that allows adhering or not to the canons of the moment.” This reinforces and highlights the importance of the individual's need for the existence of fashion, as stated by Simmel (1971).

In this sense, Svendsen (2010, p. 166) cooperates with the reflection, translating Foucault's philosophy by exposing that “The task is not to find ourselves but to invent ourselves. Foucault sees the individual as a social construction. Under the prism of Godart (2010), Foucault's thinking is complemented, bringing fashion, together with other sectors, as a mechanism that enables the formation of this social individual: “[...] cultural fields, provides individuals and groups with signs for them to build their identity [...]” (GODART, 2010, p. 34).

Therefore, in the process of building the identity of the social individual, he/she frequents various environments that directly or indirectly interfere with this process. From this perspective, one of these spaces that can be considered one of the most relevant is the school, which is configured as a circle of relationships. According to Silva (2012), in addition to being an environment for learning different types of knowledge, it is also a space for building norms and values. In this environment of knowledge transmission, in which students have to respect norms, the creation of a routine begins.

In addition to its attributions as an instrument in the generation of knowledge, the school aims at the production of socialization, constituting, according to Silva (2012), an institutional space, stage of the various interactions, especially between the actors, teachers, and students, and in the relationship between them. It is important to understand these relationships, since, according to Costa and Pires (2006, p. 63), “[...] young people have in the school space/time, in addition to the classroom, an important moment: it is the moment of construction of social relationships with multiple mediations and interests, focused on personal needs and affective social bonds.”

Thus, understanding this space, as well as the social phenomena that occur there, is of extreme relevance. In this environment, social relations are built, and fashion can be fundamental in the constitution of communication processes between young people.

In this logic, the school cannot ignore this communication, because, in this way, students can contribute to the collective structuring and not just comply with established rules. The space must allow the construction of sociability, and identities, and provide a feeling of belonging, respect for others, and freedom of expression, in which fashion can be characterized as an important element in the processes that are inherent to the constitution of individuals.

It should also be taken into account that students usually spend a good part of their adolescence in the school environment, since most of them stay at school for at least one shift, five days a week.

We cannot talk about the school's relationship with fashion/clothing without remembering a very important sign: the school uniform. Within the school context, the uniform is the subject of many debates. According to Araújo, Silva, and Schemes (2013), through the uniform, there was the standardization and identification of students. In this regard, some questions arise: would this standardization be imposed to minimize inequalities? Would these inequalities be minimized? Or would students use other ways to differentiate themselves? Or, even, would the different uniforms between a public school and a private school bring about inequalities in the same way? Would the identification of students through the uniform be something positive, concerning safety, or does it only refer to the imposition of how they should be or act, inhibiting students in the search for their identity?

These are questions that need to be reflected. The aim is not to perceive the uniform as something positive or negative, but to understand, above all, how this sign is presented and reflected in

the school. Corroborating this, Beck (2014) explains that the uniform is to identify, control and standardize students in schools, throughout history, in institutions that used it and still use it today.

However, Ribeiro and Silva (2012, p. 579) emphasize that “[...] the practice of standardization has become a fundamental element for the construction of an educational system based on the idea of equal opportunities for all, although many times this equality is more practical than effective.” This fact was based on the idea that the uniform would be a positive instrument to control discrimination or any embarrassing situations involving students, due to the way they are dressed. However, this reality did not exempt them from these possible occurrences.

The use of the uniform was aimed at the safety of the student, because, in uniform, he would be easily recognized anywhere; it was also sought to give, with its use, a character of discipline, “[...] a *sine que non* condition for the student to begin to engage in the social context through the acceptance of regulatory impositions so that he could get used immediately to the obey the rules of living in society.” (LONZA, 2005, p. 22).

This uniform can perform several functions. Lonza (2005) brings the idea of uniforms as special clothes with different functions. In addition to involving factors related to user safety and protection, it also brings up issues of personalization and identification, being a visual identity resource or advertising resource, which can become a means of publicizing the brand (of the institution of teaching).

In this sense, Lonza (2005) draws attention to the vastness of the discussion to be made by the simple element of standardization. If on the one hand, these artifacts bring a demarcation of bodies, in a way they determine expected behaviors from students. As Foucault argues, in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1987, p. 118), “[...] it is certainly not the first time that the body has been the object of such imperious and urgent investments; In any society, the body is trapped within very narrow interests, which impose limitations, prohibitions or obligations on it.”

After all, a body is not just a body: it goes beyond its muscles and bones. According to Goellner (2003), it is also the clothes and accessories that adorn it. It is not the biological similarities that determine it, but the cultural and social meanings attributed to it. Therefore, the body is the first basis for establishing relationships with others.

It is responsible for connecting the human being with the world it inhabits. Media of itself seeks to disclose aspects and characteristics of who we are, of what we can become, according to what is valued by a particular social group. The first objective is to capture the Other's gaze, through the dissemination of messages constructed by infinite possible discourses to the body, as the primary means of communication. (RAMOS, 2006, p. 2).

From this perspective, the body is the form of communication and expression with people, groups, and the world. In certain situations, the body is not only a receptacle of fashion but, at certain times, it was also dictated by fashion. It is worth remembering that many bodies have already been tortured because of standardization, in which the body considered right was the body shown on the catwalks, in magazines, and on television. Currently, it is perceived that there are greater possibilities of choice. “Contemporary beauty is more democratic, when it comes to weight, ideal breast size, haircut.” (RÖHRIG, 2001, p. 106). Although there are still cases of prejudice regarding certain body types, with the entry of plus-size models into the fashion world, a new moment is perceived, in which the market opens up to new bodies. In this way, the process of valuing the differences begins slowly. The body is respected and provokes certain reflections.

Fashion can be understood as a way of giving the individual a sense of his existence in the world, through the conception of an idea of belonging, almost always using the body as a means of resistance or in the conception of bodies that are moldable and resilient. Also, walking, posture, movements, and the way of dressing can be captured as body communication, a way of expressing oneself.

In this way, both the body and fashion/clothing are extremely important in the construction of the individual's identity, directly reflecting on the social construction. Fabrics, colors, and shapes are a language in society. Concerning Peircean Semiotics, as mentioned earlier, fashion is a process of

signification. As part of an area full of symbolism and signs, Godart (2010, p. 14) argues, “In addition to fashion being an economic activity because it produces objects, it is also an artistic activity because it generates symbols”.

For the Fashion area, the creation of meanings is of notable relevance, both in terms of styles and the identities of the subjects and groups to which they belong. Thus, in the act of covering and uncovering the body with clothing, with adornments, a system of meaning can be produced in which there is a symbolic character. “Second or first skin, fashion means, discursive and manifests the subject's identity traits, as well as his subjectivity.” (CASTILHO; MARTINS, 2005, p. 55). Fashion is, therefore, present in the establishment of the individual's social identity.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

It is currently very complex to establish a conclusive concept of identity. This conceptualization is carried out by Silva (2014, p. 74) when he claims that identity is simply what one is – “I am Brazilian”, “I am young”. He conceives it as a positivity, in which there is only reference to himself, it is self-contained and self-sufficient.

According to Reis, Santos, and Souza (2015 p. 5), the identity “[...] starts to be constructed by the individuals during their life trajectories”, that is, the identity transforms according to the social or cultural events in which the individual is inserted. Hall (2006) emphasizes it by asserting that the postmodern subject does not have a fixed identity, as it is continuously transformed by the cultural systems by which it is surrounded. In this logic, identity is formed by the junction between individual and society, changing, most of the time, unconsciously, in a way that includes identification recognized by others and self-identification.

The dissemination of information through technological advances has provided easy access to different realities. This interferes with the constitution of identities, as stated by Pontes (2013, p. 2): “In this contemporary world of rapid changes and dominance of the image as a language through the internet and the media, fashion moves consumers and the economy, directly interfering with the daily life of the individual and in the constitution of his identity”. Undeniably, in a world context in which images, news, and communication assume an increasing proportion, the individual's identity suffers permanent interference, directly affecting the relationships between the individual and the group.

Thus, “The individual identifies himself through the desire to be in counterpoint with the feeling of belonging to a certain group. All this guides the person towards consumption and a multiplicity of his identity.” (PONTES, 2013, p. 2). This argument reinforces the idea that identity changes according to the information that the individual consumes and the places he frequents.

Silva (2014) reflected on identity. He conceptualizes it as an affirmation, so it can be seen that it derives from an extensive chain of denials, of differences – when he says “I am Brazilian”, therefore, “I am not Peruvian”, “I am not Chinese” and so on. The confirmation of identity and the exposure of difference can translate and enunciate power relations.

The postmodern individual is no longer someone with a single and fixed identity, but with several identities, provisional and variable. The individual assumes different identities throughout life, which are modified according to what he lives, the cultures that surround him, and the relationships he maintains throughout life.

Lipovetsky (2009) exposes the historical issue of identity when he states that, in past times of human history, the individual had his identity pre-established by his birth environment and the class to which he belonged. In this sense, Hall (2006) and Lipovetsky (2009) share the same perception: in the contemporary world, some significant changes can be observed as the multiplicity of identities that the individual can assume, since, according to Hall (2021), the subject Postmodern can be conceptualized as an individual who does not have a fixed, essential or permanent identity.

Thus, in the construction movement, the individual can bring characteristics that make him/her belong to certain groups and distance him/her from others. In this process, taking into account

the power relations, the movement to include or exclude oneself emerges. This occurs in the most varied spaces, including the school space.

In this perspective, Lopes (2009) states that inclusion and exclusion are compositions of the same game, because, while educational institutions guarantee access and service to all, showing themselves to be inclusive, in their course of comparison and classification processes end up as they remain an excluding environment. In this way, it is understood that the same space that includes can be what excludes. This process is intrinsically linked to the affirmation of identity and the explanation of the difference: now, “[...] saying 'what we are' also means saying 'what we are not.’” (SILVA, 2014, p. 82).

Contemporary individuals are in a continuous process of affirmations and denials. In the search for this construction, there is representation. Hall (1997) explains that representation is constructed through the meaning given to things that are used, spoken, thought, and felt.

The emergence of its meaning results not from the things themselves, but from the languages that are expressed from them, that is, “[...] language is at the center of the expression of representation, when we communicate we expose our meanings to the world” (REIS; SANTOS; SOUZA, 2015, p. 5). Languages are present in everyday life, whether verbal or non-verbal. According to Santaella (1983, p. 2), “[...] there is simultaneously an enormous variety of other languages that also constitute social and historical systems of representation of the world.” When languages are used, they bring a series of meanings with them.

One of these languages is visual, which is characterized as an indispensable source of communication in today's world. Fashion is one of the structuring areas for the existence of a visual system of meanings. It is important to understand it as a means of communication and language. The subject dresses thinking about the way he will be seen by the other. In this sense, fashion works as a space of possibilities, which allows one to find, invent and reinvent oneself.

The act of decorating the body implies the creation of several narratives that generate new valid processes for a certain group. Castilho and Martins (2005, p. 35) state that “We can say that each body is a cultural construction that is contextualized with the nature around it, with the meanings attributed and legitimized by the choices of its social group”, and the formation of these social groups occurs through language, communication. The human being, when constituting himself socially and culturally, ends up producing languages.

Languages are in the world, and human beings are in language. In these languages, the identities of individuals and social groups are revealed. The insertion of an individual in a certain group takes place through communication, through the expression of their identity.

Fashion is a language for identity to be revealed. What a guy wears says a lot about him, clothes, shoes, or the symbols contained in a piercing, a crucifix. An example of the power that a garment exerts is given when watching a movie or a soap opera: the characters have their costumes, in which every detail is thought out, because, in this case, everything generates communication so that, in this way, the actors transform and assume identities, sometimes extremely different from the ones they carry, and pass on to the viewer a certain reality or fantasy.

Thus, fashion generates, as a producer of meanings, through its clothes, “communicative codes”, according to Costa and Pires (2006, p. 58). Currently, a strong image culture is perceived, through which, through these codes, the person manifests himself, shows himself to the world, and reveals himself. “By getting dressed, you will say who you are”. In this process, we seek to establish the identity taking into account what surrounds the individual, what one has access to, mainly through signs; and, through these, which identities are constructed when, then, the person reveals who he is.

The meaning of fashion translates to concrete objects, bringing a cultural and social dimension. “Symbols are central to every identity formation, whether it's a crucifix, a piercing or a national costume. These symbols have to mean and help say something about the person who wears them.” (SVENDSEN, 2010, p. 70). Thus, fashion is part of this context, according to Godart (2010, p. 14): “[...] it not only transforms fabrics into clothes, but fashion also generates objects that carry meaning”. In addition, “Like other social discourses, fashion materializes the desires and needs of an era, circumscribing the subjects in a certain space of meaning.” (CASTILHO; MARTINS, 2005, p. 28). In this sense, fashion expresses these meanings and highlights the identity of the individual.

Aware of this, through a set of characteristics, the individual feels that he belongs to a group, in addition to bringing his individuality. According to Godart (2010, p. 33), “Fashion is, [...], an essential element in the identity construction of individuals and social groups”. Ramos (2006, p. 5) adds:

Fashion establishes the social identity of the individual. The way of dressing is a form of expression, a particular manifestation, and identifies the person as a member of a certain time, of a certain social group, or a certain profession. Clothing composes, along with other personal attributes, the profile of people, including reflecting states of mind [...].

Fashion is linked to the process of searching for a body identity since clothes are a sequence of the body. Fashion is nourished by all identity signs and, according to Godart (2010, p. 24), it is from them that phenomena, such as differentiation and imitation, occur. However, he explains that “[...] the social identity is not immediately perceptible, except in some specific cases, such as the moment when signs are carried in the body and are visible to everyone who observes.” Furthermore, Pereira (2012) adds that identifications are constantly being built from the interaction with other people and groups, and it is through these identifications between people that communication is established and groups are formed.

The school space is an important environment in the formation of the identity of these subjects, as well as this “provisional” identity(ies), which can define their groups of friends and explain their tastes and what they consume. Costa and Pires (2006) claim that one of the circumstances that can be verified regarding the constitution of groups in schools is the use of fashion/clothing as a symbol of communication, distinguished by the colors, models, and accessories.

To understand the identities present in the school environment, it is essential to understand the young people who make up this space. In this sense, it is necessary to understand how individuals experience youth to establish a relationship between culture and youth, the plurality of cultural expressions that arise from the experience of youth groups. This will be explained below.

The youth in the school space

Identity, as it is inherent to the individuals, is present in all places, in their homes, in leisure spaces, in churches; and at school, it is no different. Identity accompanies the individual and may change in certain locations.

The youth of today are very different from the youth of the past. Before, most were induced to follow the choices their parents made; today there is much greater freedom, in all areas of life, for young people to make their choices, decide on their projects and experiment with new possibilities.

This period of greater freedom for young people, according to Camacho (2004), has historically and socially been understood as a phase of life. However, certain instability is perceived, because sometimes positive attributes are given to this youth, such as responsibility for social changes, sometimes a negative seal falls on young people, for considering them “problems”, labeling them as irresponsible (due to problems of violence, involvement with drugs, early pregnancy, among other characteristics of society in this age group).

Today, being young is, in a way, an attribute of prestige, which was not the case before. Before, the period of youth was just a waiting time to reach adulthood, so that, then, the moment to experience the good things in life could begin. Currently, this adult phase is full of obligations, unlike the period of youth, which enables us to live different experiences. In this sense, a process of juvenilization of culture is perceptible. This is noticed when the media argue that wearing a certain piece of clothing makes the subject younger; or when the cosmetics area, with its formulas, advocates the end of expression lines, extolling rejuvenation, which would contemplate a large part of the population that constantly seeks to look younger.

The multiplicity of identities, as well as a difficult definition of youth and how it operates today, brings with it difficulties in understanding the individual. Given this, many times, the young student ends up being understood as a being devoid of identity.

At the same time that they cannot even express who this subject called student is, education professionals also cannot recognize him as a subject who has the right to a school that teaches, that is democratic and respectful of his identity as a student, as a person and young. (CAMACHO, 2004, p. 337).

In this way, young people who would try other ways of being, feeling, and acting would become incomprehensible to parents and teachers. In this perspective, Reis, Santos, and Souza (2015) demonstrate that “it is necessary to reflect on the changes that have occurred in society and to understand what the school must do so that it responds more effectively to the demands of young people, who transit in two worlds” as young people and as students, but who often seem separate: the school and outside it” (REIS; SANTOS; SOUZA, 2015, p. 15). In this context, Green and Bigun (1995) already stated the urgency of understanding new students, with their new needs and abilities, theorizing about contemporary youth as a phenomenon of complexity.

Young people need to be recognized for their identities, their youth cultures, and their modes of expression, so that, in this way, the dialogue between teachers and students is favored, as well as the students' self-esteem is strengthened, and, then, the relationships as an all benefit. What is often seen in the school space is an imposed system that forces individuals to adapt, generated by political, social, or cultural issues that sustain and feed a love-hate relationship between young people and school.

Silva (2014, p. 99) states that “[...] the strategy, perhaps most commonly adopted in the pedagogical and curricular routine of schools, [...] consists of presenting students with a superficial and distant view of the different cultures.” In this way, an individual with different characteristics is observed with curiosity, as an exotic being. Indeed, the power relations that are involved in the production of identity and cultural difference are not questioned, and the multiple identities of youth for communication in school spaces are not recognized as legitimate.

As a result, Camacho (2004, p. 338) asserts that the school ends up ignoring the student as a social subject, disregarding the young person who is a subject of rights. Thus, it is acceptable to think that the school, sometimes, cannot build relationships consistent with the characteristics and languages of its young students, which triggers ruptures, sometimes irreversible, between the youth world of the student and the school world. Still in this sense, Green and Bigun (1995) argue that students often see educators as aliens, in the same way, that educators do about students. The school must learn more about the daily lives of young people, their realities, their identities, and how they communicate through it.

Some important contexts must be observed, paying attention to the school's participation in the construction of the identity of young students. When entering the school space, the student is already the result of a set of social experiences and,

At school and in the classroom, a young person does not leave behind [sic] their ways of expressing themselves as young people, apprehended in other social spaces, in the same way, these bring with them the challenges of unraveling the specific logics of the school space and need to learn, at school, the requirements specifically built on their ways of relating to others and of learning to value themselves in that space. (REIS; SANTOS; SOUZA, 2015, p. 14).

However, when young people do not feel recognized for their potential when they are not allowed to express themselves, they do not feel valued, and the school experience can then be seen as something negative about their identity construction process.

In this sense, according to Costa and Pires (2006, p. 64), the school must be “[...] a space for meeting, stimulating sociability, which allows experiencing the collective construction of norms, creating access strategies, belonging, permanence and quality, based on respect for the other and the inclusion of all”, so that it fulfills not only its role in the production of knowledge but also in the human construction, of a personal and social history based on different cultures, values, and identities.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following mood board brings the signs of fashion in the school space, according to the photographs analyzed. This way, it allows us to understand, in a more practical way, the signs that are present in the six images.

Such signs were divided as follows: on the upper left side, there are accessories such as a backpack, watch, necklace, earring, cell phone, cap, headphones, earrings, ring, and a glass. Next to it, there are the tops³, listed from those that appeared most frequently in the images to those that appeared the least. Thus, the t-shirts are visualized: from the uniform, the black t-shirts, with a print with the writing “*Terceirão*”, from teams, sweatshirt, cardigan, black blouse, shirt with a jacket, blouse with vest and denim shirt.

In the lower corner, on the left side, the buttons are presented: jeans, leggings, sweatpants, and shorts. Alongside, there are other aesthetic manifestations on the body, such as tattoos, nail polish, and bleached hair. In the lower corner, on the right, there are the shoes: casual and sports sneakers, Crocs, and flip-flops (with socks). Finally, on the right side, there is the most used color chart, in this case, black, white, and dark blue; and, below, the fabrics: sweatshirt, jeans, and mesh.

Through the six photographs, three from the public school and three from the private school, the clothes of ninety students were analyzed (seven other students were also in the photographs, but the position they were in did not allow the analysis of any element, since only small fragments of their bodies could be seen). A total of 81 tops, 60 buttons, 32 shoes, and 33 items were analyzed, including backpacks and accessories.

Figure 3 – Moodboard with the analyzed signs



FASHION SIGNS PRESENT IN SCHOOL SPACE

Source: Created by the author (2020).

From the analysis of these signs, we noticed, in public schools, the little use of school uniforms – of the 46 students observed, only two used this attire, revealing greater freedom of expression among students. In the case of the private school, of the 51 students observed, only 26 wore the uniform, and one wore the class t-shirt, which also referred to the educational institution. It was not possible to visualize, in the photographs of 15 students, whether or not they wore the school uniform; and nine wore a coat or sweatshirt, which did not refer to the school uniform.

In this sense, we assumed that public school students do not like the uniform, either for aesthetic reasons, for the lack of diversification of the uniform, or for being able to express, without the uniform, their identities through the signs of fashion. This can also be explained by the fact that the uniform is not provided free of charge, but requires purchase, which, in the reality of some students,

³ *Top*: term used to refer to garments worn on the upper part of the body, such as shirts or t-shirts. The bottom corresponds to the pieces used in the lower part of the body, such as pants and shorts.

implies the impossibility of acquiring it. In private schools, on the other hand, most students wear school uniforms.

The uniform can be characterized as an element of status, representing, perhaps, the pride of wearing a costume linked to a particular private educational institution, usually attended by students of a higher socioeconomic level. On the other hand, this can bring a feeling of inferiority to some who are unable to study at the same institution, such as students from a public school.

One of the reasons for implementing the use of the school uniform was the idea that it could reduce the feeling of any inequality. This is exposed by Ribeiro e Silva (2012, p. 582): “By constituting themselves as symbols of standardization, uniforms were considered a fundamental element for the construction of an educational system that postulated an equal education for all.” In this way, students would embody the idea that everyone would have the same opportunities.

Despite this idea of standardization brought by the uniform, making it possible to reduce possible inequalities found in the school space, the same authors explain that “The desire to give visibility to a governmental action or a private enterprise may overlap, in many moments, to offer equal opportunities and minimize differences that would be more exposed without the use of such uniforms.”(RIBEIRO; SILVA, 2012, p. 587). Therefore, there is an ambiguity: if, on the one hand, the uniform can minimize differences, on the other hand, it can provide a possible social status by emphasizing inequalities.

The uniform brings a form of the visual identity of the school and ends up reflecting its philosophy and pedagogical line. It is as if the students were billboards that move around, because, in a way, there is an advertisement for the institution. Would uniforms be a way of generating docile bodies, as Foucault claimed? In the sense of demarcating bodies and suggesting which positions students should submit to, would the uniform then be a way for the school to discipline and demonstrate what is expected of students' behavior? Some traits are evident from the analysis of the colors used for the institutions' uniforms: white in public schools, blue and white in private schools - both colors referring to tranquility, concentration, cleanliness, and intelligence. The use of uniforms can also help with student safety, as it makes it difficult for intruders to enter the school space, in addition to being able to preserve students in any case of danger experienced by students inside and outside the school.

The motivation for the use of outerwear and jackets, among the nine students of the private school, may be related to the climatic factor, but it may also indicate the intention to hide the uniform; the use of colored cardigans, such as green and pink, colors that are not part of the uniformity, nor are they neutral, also indicates this intentionality. Perhaps these students cannot express the way they would like to; in this way, they use these clothes over the uniform, and in more striking colors, to be able to expose their ideas and tastes, their identity, in a more effective way.

Given the analyzed images, and taking into account that, in public schools, students can use – or not – use the uniform, the fact that they often do not do so suggests that this happens either by mere choice or lack of financial conditions for its acquisition. From this perspective, assuming that non-use was only by choice, each individual would seek to express their individuality and their characteristics, in the construction of their own “I”. In the end,

All societies, from the simplest to the most complex, have different forms and channels of communication: from speech to writing; from the body to the gestures; from clothes, props, and artifacts to images. Language arises from the human need to communicate (COSTA; PIRES, 2012, p. 57).

During this communication, students are in the construction of their identity. We live in a world in which being different, for young people, is a good thing, and for them, there is this need for differentiation.

In this process of differentiation, there is individualization. Each student, dressing differently, demonstrates that they want to have their style, different from the others. According to Castilho and Martins (2005, p. 32), “[...] we are born naked and live dressed. It is precisely the way we cover and discover our body that makes ‘the’ difference.” That is why young people are concerned with

the image they want to convey, which signs they will express, whether based on cultural or religious references, etc., sometimes expressing their rebellion.

The use of clothes and accessories expresses the identities of the subjects: “Even those who are opposed to fashion, wearing, for example, only one outfit for every day, are also at the mercy of a role constructed by fashion because clothes in themselves create behavior that expresses identity.” (OLIVEIRA, 2013, p. 30). From this perspective, students, whether wearing uniforms or not, are generating a behavior based on their clothing and, consequently, expressing identities.

Thus, the role of fashion in the formation of identities is reiterated, since it provides the individualization of the individual, enabling them to externalize their essence through the accessories carried and the clothes it wears.

Therefore, the school has the role of providing a meeting between the most diverse styles and individualities. In this sense, Costa and Pires (2006) state that the school needs to recognize unity in diversity, stimulate sociability, allowing to experience the collective construction of norms based on respect for others and the inclusion of all. In this way, students can express themselves, respecting the individuality of each subject, since this environment is one of the first with which the individual has contact with other people, without family ties.

It was possible to notice that, although most public school students do not wear the school uniform, they end up uniforming through other elements, such as the massive use of t-shirts. Although the school uniform also has the same piece, students prefer to use other shirts, as these convey other information. While the uniform t-shirts communicate to which educational institution the individual belongs, the printed t-shirts explain the tastes and consumption references of the students.

From this perspective, although they try to differentiate through different prints and/or colors, there may also be an attempt for young people to fit into groups, because, especially at this stage in which the individuals are building their first experiences in society, without being any family ties, they want to feel part of something, of some group. And clothing can be a good strategy to achieve that goal.

Not only the use of t-shirts, but even fabrics such as jeans, knits, and sweatshirts, also show spontaneous uniformity; the same happens with the use of shoes, mostly sneakers or Crocs sandals, and the use of jeans, leggings, pants, or sweatshirts. Thus, students move between the individual and the collective. About this, Godart (2010, p. 36) asserted:

First, there are numerous levels of action between the individual and society. It is in this intermediate space that fashion manifests itself. When choosing clothes and accessories, individuals constantly reaffirm their inclusion or non-inclusion in certain social, cultural, religious, political, or even professional groups.

Through these choices that signs are emitted, such as the use of a piercing or a tattoo. These elements will bring the individual closer to a certain group, as well as distance him from others. Amid this spontaneous uniformity, they manage to differentiate, with the different washes and cuts of the jeans, with backpacks with different colors and prints, as well as accessories such as necklaces, rings, and earrings, perceived in both institutions.

As a result, a possible relationship of consumerism can be seen, since most public school students do not wear uniforms, using other clothes to attend this environment. Likewise, in the private school, despite the mandatory use of the uniform, there are the frequent use of warm clothes and/or accessories. This brings up issues related to consumption, to the social status of a person who wants to show the other that he has a better condition, with more expensive pieces, such as accessories, earrings, rings, and golden necklaces - which can be or represent objects in gold -, or clothes, shoes, and backpacks from some brands such as Nike, Adidas, Vans, Crocs, and Company. On the other hand, this may just be a way for the subject to express their tastes, ideas, in short, their identities.

It is also possible that the use of hair cuts or dyes, the use of tattoos, and nail painting are ways of demonstrating what you feel, what you are, or what you want to be. It is the image you want to project, for yourself and others. In this sense, these signs represent the possibility of building one's identity. Costa and Pires (2006) and Godart (2010) state that there is no doubt that fashion/clothing is

nourished by identity signs, and this is reflected in the construction of groups, embodied in the phenomena of imitation and differentiation, according to the signs they carry. However, it is important to reflect on this because fashion is nourished by signs, but signs are also nourished by fashion. Fashion and trends arise based on signs that generate other signs.

Regarding the fabrics used, most of them are comfortable, considering the time that students spend sitting, as well as the comfort for the practice of Physical Education. They are fabrics that have elasticity: knits in their t-shirts, ample modeling in sweatshirts, and tight modeling, especially in the female audience, in jeans and leggings.

Only one photograph, of the six analyzed, shows slightly different signs. In this image, which concerns the public school, there is a greater formality of the students when using items such as shirts, which did not occur in any of the other photographs. This may be related to the routine of students who work and study. It is assumed that these students can work the opposite shift to what they study, with no possibility of changing their clothes, and therefore they go to school wearing the same clothes for both spaces; or, it is something that can occur in times with a little lower temperature since most are wearing clothes suitable for colder days.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research was faced with the following problem: in what way does fashion contribute to the construction of identities in the school space? This question was answered during the investigation.

Initially, it was possible to understand the relationship between the fashion, school, and society triad. It became visible that fashion culminates in a system of signs, in which subjects seek to communicate with society, expressing their identities through their clothing and accessories. Therefore, fashion is an intrinsic phenomenon in society. In this context, within this society, there is the school, a space of relationships composed of individuals of different identities, who are in a constant process of formation/transformation. In this sense, fashion appears in the school space, and both, fashion and school, are influenced by time and space, according to the political, social, and cultural context experienced.

From this perspective, the identity of individuals who are in the school space is in the process of formation and transformation, and fashion is of great importance in this process of expression of identity(ies). The study allowed us to understand how the formation of identities took place and understand these individuals.

Then, the signs in the research were presented, which underwent analysis using the universal categories brought by Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics - firstness, secondness, and thirdness -, and which were portrayed on the mood board, to facilitate understanding.

Clothing and accessories contain symbols that reveal, in addition to physical appearance, a state of mind and the possibility of playing different roles in society. The individuals end up being forced to choose a style for themselves, even with socioeconomic limitations, since this is linked to the aesthetic appearance and the essential way of exposing identity.

Since the birth of these people, their parents were responsible for dressing them and, therefore, together with their cultures, they began the process of building their identities. With the arrival of adolescence/youth, the choice of clothing is made by the subjects, who, in turn, take their experiences and family experiences with them. When they enter a new space, the school, they experience contact with other people, ideas, and cultures. This new condition of life enables them to generate transformations in their identity(ies), through fashion signs, whether imposed by the school or by the students since their acceptance, in front of the public of their age group and their social circle, is important for the constitution of their identity.

Thus, responding to the general objective of the research, it was understood that fashion triggers phenomena in the school space evidenced by the desire for imitation and differentiation. The signs allowed the perception of a spontaneous uniformity, because, whether or not they were free to wear an institutional uniform, the students, for the most part, did not use them, but used the same types

of pieces, such as t-shirts, jeans, leggings, shorts, and sneakers. In the private institution, where the uniform is mandatory, we noticed the use of some pieces that hid the uniform; these pieces, mostly sweatshirts, passed, despite a possible intention to the contrary, an idea of uniformity. This evidenced that, in this way, the individuals feel that they belong to that space, assuming that there is a need to be accepted, generating the desire for imitation.

However, individualization was also noticeable through the washing of used jeans, accessories, rings, earrings, necklaces, watches, caps, tattoos, and the colors and prints of the backpacks. This individualization reveals the desire for differentiation while revealing the need to belong to a certain group. From this perspective, we assumed that it is through this game of imitation and differentiation that young people expose their identity(ies), tastes, and ideas, corroborating the statements made by Hall (2006) and Pontes (2013) about identity being constituted through differentiation and imitation. In this case, fashion is fundamental for these phenomena to occur and be presented to other individuals since through it clothes and accessories full of meanings and values are displayed.

Groups are formed through these signs, which can expose the tastes of the individuals who carry them. An example is the soccer team shirt; its use infers that the product consumed by the student indicates their taste for watching or playing soccer. This allows the student to expose their tastes, signaling the team they support, in addition to fitting them or placing them in a group that also has the same taste for the sport. This example reinforces the idea of differentiation and imitation: differentiating between students who do not like football, and feeling belonging to a group because they have the same preferences, through imitation within that group.

In addition to the phenomena mentioned above, fashion can generate others, such as the relationship of status and power, when it is presented through “branded” clothes, accessories, backpacks, cell phones, and more expensive shoes, evidencing an economic power that perhaps another student does not have. Even the use of the uniform, in the comparison between public and private schools, can bring greater satisfaction to the students of the private school (which was not possible to prove, since its use is mandatory). What could be evidenced is that public school students do not usually wear uniforms.

Clothing and accessories revealed the taste, mainly by the students, of wearing tight clothes in their leggings and jeans, as well as the comfort of wearing t-shirts and sneakers. Although the information was obtained through a group of students, from analyzed images, not allowing generalization to all school spaces and students, it must be taken into account that the results obtained were extremely relevant.

It is necessary to consider all the spaces experienced by young people at school - the classroom, the corridors, the patio -, as they are environments in which there are moments of the construction of social relationships, through their groups, using fashion as a way of communication, forming/transforming their identities. Therefore, the school must seek to interact with the socio-cultural aspects that constitute identities, understanding and valuing them.

Also, this research contributed, especially, to the areas of Fashion and Education, evidencing the multidisciplinary of these fields. It is important to emphasize the importance of understanding Fashion so that it helps in the learning process and the constitution of individuals' identities, without the possibility of taking it out of the school environment. Therefore, it is necessary to understand it to react to the phenomena it produces.

In this perspective, because this field of study between Fashion and Education is being constituted, there are still many concepts and relationships that must be thought about, like other phenomena produced by fashion, not only in school spaces but in all spaces. Although fashion is often perceived as futility, or even as an invisible category, when it comes to thinking about society and cultures, a slightly more specialized look is enough to understand how every human cultural aspect can be influenced by it.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with this article.