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# Turning a New Page: Co-creation in Practice through the Study of C-G Lookbook

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## **Abstract**

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<b>Keywords:</b>	co-creation, C-G lookbook, Web 2.0, customer, participation, co-create value, consumers, crowdsourcing, fashion.
<b>Thesis purpose:</b>	The aim of this study is to increase the knowledge in practice of value co-creation by providing information on how co-creation is manifested in C-G lookbook.
<b>Methodology:</b>	This thesis employs a qualitative strategy with an inductive approach, and data were collected through virtual observation.
<b>Theoretical framework:</b>	Theoretical framework is divided into three different parts, in which various theories within spatial construction, motivation, and control have been used.
<b>Empirical data:</b>	The empirical data were collected by observing two C-G lookbooks: Zara People! and Uniqlooks.
<b>Conclusion:</b>	In our conclusion, we have answered our research question on how co-creation is manifested in C-G lookbook. In particular, we illustrate the C-G lookbook platform is constructed, with a highlight of certain features, such as membership system; "Like", comment and share functions; and linkage to social networking sites. Then we identify the motivations for consumers to engage in the co-creation process, in which social, financial and psychological motivations are found to be keys. Lastly, we indicate 6 major means of controlling the co-creation process, including censorship and governmentality.

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*“Social networking and fashion work so well together because fashion is about expressing who you are. Lookbook makes it easy for people to share their style and connect with fellow fashion lovers from around the world.”*

*– Yuri Lee (The Block, 2010)*

## 1. INTRODUCTION



*Think you are reading a fashion catalogue? True. Think they are some top models? Not true then. They are just some ordinary people sharing their looks in street fashion in a new online fashion platform called “lookbook”. (Photos source: <http://uniqlooks.uniqlo.com/>)*

### 1.1 Background

“A few months ago, I stumbled across the website Lookbook.nu. Instantly, I was hooked. The site is a fashionistas dream. It allows people from all over the world to upload pictures of their style, creating the Web’s largest source of fashion inspiration

by real people. [...]Lookbook is changing the world of fashion. It's a way for anyone to feel as if they're contributing to the inspiration others feel when they open the pages of any major fashion magazine. Each picture on Lookbook is filled with pure and unique beauty, [...]they're the scenes one would find in a high end fashion advertisement, only here they're real and not a staged scene. I could spend hours browsing through the site. It's given me so much fashion inspiration. [...] After finding the site, I truly felt like a new person when it comes to my fashion sense.", Gina, a writer of an online fashion magazine wrote. (Therese, 2010) Gina has well demonstrated the hype for the latest fashion favourite, Lookbook.nu; and apparently, she is not the only one who is hyped up about it. The site is recording an overwhelming traffic of "over 3.5 million unique visitors per month[;] over 70 million page views per month[; and] over 200,000 total registered members". (Lookbook.nu, 2011) In fact, it has become a major source of fashion inspiration for many to seek resolution of "what to wear today".

The rise and popularity of Lookbook.nu can be partly credited to its competence to accommodate people's needs of practical fashion. As pointed out by several fashion scholars, there is a general impression of fashion as glamorous and detached from "ordinary and practical nature of everyday life" (Thompson and Haytko, 1997: 17), and further expressed "a populist ethos" (Thompson and Haytko, 1997: 17) stressing practicality (i.e. fashion that populace can wear in everyday life instead of that can only be showed off on the runway). (e.g. Ewen and Ewen, 1982; Thompson and Haytko, 1997; Wilson, 1985) Hence, when fashion is showcased in street fashion by ordinary people, it becomes more approachable and well received.

## **1.2 What is Lookbook?**

If you are a fashion follower, you should be familiar with the term lookbook. However, when asked "what is lookbook?", you may not be able to come up with a precise definition. Indeed, there is not any authoritative definition of lookbook at all to date. The term was added to Concise Oxford English Dictionary in 2008, and is

defined as “a set of photographs displaying a fashion designer's new collection, assembled for marketing purposes”. (The Telegraph, 2008) Wiktionary (2010) elaborates lookbook as “a printed showcase of still images of a fashion designer or fashion brand’s collection with pages bound along one side.” While Wikipedia (2011) describes lookbook as “a collection of photographs compiled to show off a model, a photographer, a style, or a clothing line. It is an especially popular term with ‘fashion bloggers’ and is even the name of a website: (Lookbook.nu). Lookbooks in their online form can be described as ‘fashion diaries’ because bloggers are constantly updating them on a daily or weekly basis. However, sometimes they are made to compile the looks of other people such as a celebrity, politician or socialite. They can also be used as an artist's portfolio.” However, none of these definitions alone appears to be complete. To give an adequate definition, we refer lookbook as a collection of photographs that showcases a look / style, whilst it can be categorized into three different types in terms of site operator and author of photos: firm generated, user-generated, and firm-user co-generated. The firm generated lookbook is solely run and compiled by firms and served as a catalogue to display their products; the user-generated lookbook is solely run and compiled by users and served as a platform to share their looks in, mainly, street fashion; the firm-user co-generated one is either solely run by firms or co-run by firms and users, whilst users take photos according to particular criteria listed by firms. This type of lookbook is primarily employed by firms to display their products from the users’ perspective, while users can showcase their style in street fashion.

### **1.3 Firm-user Co-generated Lookbook**

Fashion and technology always walk hand in hand. Having the “fashion” label sewed on implies that a fashion company has to be vogueish not only in its products, but also all other areas that it has a hand in, including its marketing strategies as well as the vehicles used. The flame of Lookbook.nu has certainly caught the eye of the fashion world. While a considerable number of firms have been running a firm-generated catalogue-like lookbook on their websites, several brands have gotten their hands on

firm-user co-generated lookbook, attempting to co-create value with their customers. They either make use of the existing online fashion community, such as Lookbook.nu to co-create lookbooks with the users, or run their own version of Lookbook.nu (i.e. user-generated lookbook).

Different brands name and describe their co-created lookbook in various ways, for instance, the Japanese brand Uniqlo names its co-created lookbook as UNIQLOOKS and regards it as an online fashion communication service; whilst the Spanish brand Zara names its as PEOPLE! and describes it as a Web content. In this paper, we will use the term C-G (co-generated) lookbook as an umbrella term of the firm-user co-generated lookbook. Nightingale (2007: 293) has a good description for the mechanism of C-G lookbook: “industry players maintain the ongoing operational environment and offer ‘patronage’ to site users ... [molding] both the conditions under which the creative work is produced and the environment of reception in which the image is displayed”. “User-generated photographic content is now increasingly incorporated into the portfolios of traditional professional domains seeking to exploit the potential of ‘crowdsourcing’”, Potts *et al* (2008: 468) added.

Marketer sees such vehicle as a new resource to show his products in the way consumers see it, hoping “people take it and get inspired or interested in pieces they wouldn’t have considered before” (quote of American Apparel Pres Team: Fawkes, 2010); whilst consumer sees it as a means to engage in the brand by “taking the brand, mixing it up, messing with it and making it their own”, as indicated by Yuri Lee, founder of Lookbook.nu (Fawkes, 2010). C-G lookbook has put consumer engagement into full practice and brought marketing via Web 2.0 to a new level. In fact, high reach marketing does not necessarily lead to consumer engagement. It is beyond doubt that marketing through Web 2.0 applications such as Facebook, Twitter and blog has significantly maximized the number of audience that fashion firms can reach, and increased interaction between firms and consumers. However, such interaction features a majority of activities, such as: consumers commenting on promotional materials released by firms; firms and customers communicating on customer service related issues; and customers chit-chatting about the brands



among each other. Most of these marketing solutions pose a relatively superficial level of interaction and consumer involvement, and hence consumers are barely engaged. Indeed, as indicated by a recent study on fan engagement on Facebook Pages, the number of fans on Pages and engagement levels are inversely proportional for brands. (Visibi, 2011)

“The next practices of innovation must shift the focus away from products and services and onto experience environments - supported by a network of companies and consumer communities - to co-create unique value for individual customers.” (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2003) Apparently, the fashion industry is aware of such a shift, and brands have started to enhance their customers’ experience through co-creation, setting to turn a new page of the fashion world. As pinpointed by Tadashi Yanai, founder of Uniqlo, it is now the age of social networking, which is hard to survive by relying on the media only.

## **1.4 Literature Review**

### **1.4.1 Value Co-creation and S-D Logic**

The history of co-creation can be traced back to 2004, when Stephen Vargo and Robert Lusch (2004) suggested that today’s economy is “service-dominant” (S-D) as opposed to being “goods-dominant” (G-D). In accordance with goods-dominant (G-D) logic, efficient production and distribution of goods support standardized goods production “away from the market” that are then inventoried until demanded. In this case, goods do not really represent the end-products that companies exchange with consumers, they are only “intermediate products” that consumers use as “appliances in value-creation processes” (Vargo and Lusch, 2004: 7). Service-dominant (S-D) logic (Gummesson et al.2010) states that in a process of value co-creation the consumer has an active role as a co-creator and companies are offering their applied resources for value creation. Firms in collaboration with consumers create value following the acceptance of value propositions, but it is difficult for them to create or deliver value independently. Interaction is a process through

which they develop a joint process of value creation. By implicating this logic, marketing is perceived as a means by which organizations and societies are able to create value by the voluntary exchange of knowledge and skills. And as long as consumer participation in the successful production and commodification of all goods and services is recognized to gain a more active role, it is important to reframe commodities as service components. If everything (even goods) becomes a service as suggested by the S-D logic (Lusch *et al*, 2008), in this case, consumers become recruited as a permanent member of the company's production and marketing project, and as such they need to be governed in the ways that make sense for the corporation. In this situation, companies manage consumers' potentially threatening unruliness in the ways that make them more open to further rationalization, rapid innovation and operational certainty at every level of the production process. (Gronroos, 2008).

Academics Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) have continued to describe the concept of S-D logic and value co-creation after Vargo and Lusch (2004). Those authors have developed the term "value co-creation" and critiqued the customer-centricity that was a core of the "Kotlerite" dogma of marketing thought (Kotler, 1972; Kotler and Levy, 1969). In the abovementioned article, the authors state that value will be increasingly co-created by the company and the consumer, and not created entirely inside the firm. This concept also describes "movement away from customers only buying products and services as transactions, to those buying as a part of an experience" (Wikipedia, 2011). Now consumers are looking for a freedom of choice to cooperate with the company through a series of experiences. (Payne *et al*, 2008) Consumers are willing to make choices in a way that reflects their view of value, and they wish to communicate and transact in their preferred language "[...]consumers are getting used to the idea of an active dialogue with providers of products and services. The emerging dialogue is not restricted to help-desk communication. Increasingly, the dialogue involves an active role in product design and testing." (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004)

For Prahalad and Ramaswamy and others (e.g. Tapscott and Williams, 2006), consumers have specific competencies and skills that companies are unable to match or even understand, and this implies certain tasks for managers: “to attract and maintain these consumers; and to provide a creative communications environment where such consumers qua workers can effectively use and develop their knowledge for the benefit of everyone” (Tapscott, 1995: 35; Thrift, 2005). These authors view market not as a site of exchange, but a buzzing “communication hive” (Tapscott and Williams, 2006), and a channel through which “human intelligence” renews its capacity to produce (Terranova, 2000: 37), where consumers and producers in cooperation create innovative products and experiences. In this case, the market becomes a base for participation in a culture of exchange, where companies provide consumers with resources to create, and consumers offer companies “a contact with the fast-moving world of knowledge in general” (Terranova, 2000: 37).

By summarizing the ideas of abovementioned authors, “value co-creation” can be defined as a form of business or market strategy that underlines the production and continuing realization of mutual firm-customer value. Markets are viewed as an opportunity for companies and customers to share, mix, and renew resources and capabilities in order to create value via new forms of co-operation, service, and learning mechanisms. It is different from the traditional view on active role of firms and passive role of customers. Customers might experience co-created value in the form of personalized and exclusive experiences (value-in-use); and for companies it appears in the form of increased loyalty, important relationships, and customer word of mouth. (Rampen, 2009)

#### **1.4.2 Management Perspective and Crowdsourcing**

Currently, companies are beginning to understand the importance of giving customers space for “playful production” of their own consumption experiences, which is proved by the enlarged popularity of open-source, various multiplayer online role-playing games (MMOGs) and fan communities (e.g. Jenkins, 1992; Kozinets, 2001; Thomas, 2002; Kline et al., 2003; Hellekson and Busse, 2006). In this

case, a term “productive fervor of the common” (Hardt and Negri, 2000) can be used, in which it creates commodities, meanings and experiences that companies are unable to produce using their own rationalized systems of production. The new dominant logic of marketing and the co-creation program can be seen from the perspective of the corporation as an effort to create and maintain relationship between marketers and consumers. According to the concept, use value should not be produced by the firm only, but relies, partly, on the labour power of the consumer to continuously co-create and co-innovate – value (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000). And common thoughts have been expressed by Arvidsson (2005, 2006), who states that the contemporary mode of valorization of brands is now depending on the immaterial labour of consumers to create trust, affect, and shared meanings (Lury, 2004). Nevertheless, these studies have not given an explanation of how those companies’ perspective can be implied within the Web 2.0 platform. In this case, the term “crowdsourcing” can be used, while only several authors explained this term in their publications.

Jeff Howe was the first to use the term “crowdsourcing” (a combination of “crowd” and “outsourcing”) in his article “The Rise of Crowdsourcing” (2006). He states that this is an open call to an undefined group of people, which is mostly suitable to solve complicated problems, and contribute with the most appropriate and bright ideas. Companies are now able to use advantage of the talent of the public, and Howe remarks that “it’s not outsourcing; it’s crowdsourcing” (Howe, 2006). According to Brabham (2008), “[...]crowdsourcing stands for a specific mechanism, which is used by businesses to engage with consumers”. Various tasks, quality control or problem-solving, for example, which were previously performed internally or contracted to external employee, are now “outsourced” to the specific target groups or general public (“the crowd”) through the Web. Numerous sites allow users to comment and rate products, services, hotels, etc. Sometimes users might be asked to offer a solution to problems or suggest ideas for a new product. Acquired data is used for quality improvement, policy reform and product development (Scoble and Israel, 2006). Dawkins (1986) defined crowdsourcing as a process of managing a great number of online users, and using their knowledge to cope with assigned tasks with

a help of sharp visual perception and aesthetic view. Some of the participants could be rewarded for their work, but sometimes they work for free, motivated either out of genuine enjoyment (von Ahn, 2006), or some forms of social bonus (Nov *et al*, 2008). Kleeman *et al* (2008) describe crowdsourcing as a process, in which sizeable jobs are divided into many small tasks that are then outsourced straight to individual workers through public solicitation.

There are several advantages of letting consumers to be part of the creative process. Firstly, the increased loyalty. As stated by McKenzie (2009), consumers who are invested are more likely to “purchase” the product, including engaging in the desired behavior. Also, they will tell their friends about the product, and that could be cost-effective promotional tactics for a company, and finally, a promotional strategy developed by the customer has the potential to fit with the priority audience needs. Of course, the foundation of social marketing decisions should be a formative research (e.g. primary data gathered from customer segments), customer-generated promotion might be more successful as it is in essence “created for the people by the people” or “by the users for the users”.

### **1.4.3 Customer Participation**

“Customer participation” was defined as “the degree of consumer’s effort and involvement, both mental and physical that relate to the production and delivery of a service” by Cermak and File (1994). Rodie and Kleine (2000) mentioned that, customer participation is a set of activities and resources (including physical, psychological and emotional payout) given by customer during the process of service production and delivery. Customer participation can be explained as a behavior model that deals with customer’s physical and mental behaviors related to a service production and delivery (Graf, 2007). Thus, the reason for consumers to participate in co-creation is to obtain higher perceived control, and to gain desired results with its help (Langer, 1975).

As a phenomenon, customer participation is not new, as supermarkets, that are prototypes of customer co-production with selecting, carting and transporting

groceries existing since 1930s. But academic researches started in late 1970s, and it originates from the development of service marketing theories. Researchers like Lovelock and Young (1979) suggested that customer participation might increase the productivity of a company. Mills, Chase and Margulies (1983) noted that customers should be treated as part-employees, and companies need to evaluate their devotion like their own employees in order to increase their productivities.

However, the abovementioned authors were talking only about the companies' perspective, while rarely taking into account the impact on customers. So some scholars have started to study the impact of customer participation on customers themselves, mainly the influence on customer satisfaction. Hallowell (1996) stated that satisfied customers could represent more loyalty and commitments to companies. Czepiel (1990), Kelley *et al* (1990), van Raaij and Pruyn, (1998) and Wikstrom believe that customer's participation in production can influence customer satisfaction. Some other researchers mentioned that customer participation might increase systemic productivities (Harris *et al*, 2001) and the productivity of a company (Bitner *et al*, 1997), influence service quality (Lengnick-Hall, 1997). So it is obvious that, customer participation is important for marketing success as customers "are contributing to the process of consumption, marketing and delivery of services" (Dong *et al*, 2008).

#### **1.4.4 What Can a Company Do to Foster Co-creative Practices?**

As long as value co-creation process is about creating value with customers, it is important that the proposed co-creative strategies are grounded in consumers' perspectives. So there are four strategic factors, the four Cs of choice, complement, cause, and connectivity, used to encourage respectively the consumers' co-creative practices of participation-for-self, creation-for-self, participation-for-others, and creation-for-others. Those strategies vary from well-developed techniques used in the early stage of consumer involvement to current developments that intensify relationships between a company and consumers, and also among consumers. (Nuttavuthisit, 2010)

C-G lookbook can also be perceived as a type of creation for others practices, as consumers take initiatives in creating value for collective advancement, particularly with a support of accessible and low-cost technology (e.g. Web 2.0, freeware). This might occur, when consumers start to have a sense of community and realize that collective effort of each user might result in a greater good for all. So in order to encourage the group contribution, a company should encourage consumer interaction and peer recognition (Jeppesen and Molin, 2003), that will inspire consumers to find further social links and ease opportunities for consumers to do things for others, and not for self only.

First of all, it is important to find areas of common interests and set up a stage to gather consumers with similar passions, like Harley Davidson did, who invited customers to participate in rider parades in order to promote the development of brand community. Then, a company should incite a sense of purpose so the group aims to achieve something together. Further, a company should allow consumers to be well informed and networked via a dialogue that is accessible and transparent to all. Major tools for facilitating interactive and continual conversation among consumers are blogs, chats, and message boards have become major tools. They are helping to promote a community of trust and are engaging consumers to interact with and learn from each other. And according to Meuter (2000), the more consumers identify themselves with the group, the more involved they become in the co-creation process, and they will put more effort into the collaborative contribution. Wikipedia can be a good example of how each user is partly contributing by writing or correcting articles, and those become the collective property, created with a help of group's effort.

Moreover, consumers need a shared culture. That is why a company should try to develop compatibility of patterns of behaviors, values, norms among consumers and between a company and the community. And a culture of mutuality (e.g. give and take) must be developed in order to promote consumers' creation-for-others practices. Companies should inspire group members to be an active contributors, rather than passive readers or free-loaders. Moreover, to maintain the community,

guidelines are needed, and they should not be governed by the company, but better by the community itself. Companies can not only profit from this type of collaborative platform, as Markus *et al* (2000) suggested different open-source business models in which each participant gains a fair chance to make use of the common effort, but also the culture of openness among consumers who are willing to create for others will help shorten the distance and deepen the relationships between a company and its consumers.

#### **1.4.5 Consumer Perspective**

##### ***Why do consumers take part in co-creation?***

There are several factors that are motivating customers to take part in the value-creation process: 1. status, as people tend to show off their creative skills and thinking, and be noticed by others; 2. personalized lifestyle, which means that goods, services and experiences consumers are involved in should be tailored to their needs; 3. cold hard cash, meaning that a wish to get a reward or a profit cut for co-working with a company is irresistible. Moreover, the possibility of employment could be a motivation tool, because companies can recruit their next in-house designer, revolutionary marketer or talented strategist. And the last reason can be pleasure and satisfaction from making and creating, especially if co-creating with brands one is loyal to. (Zappa, 2006)

Nuttavuthisit (2010) suggested categorizing value creation by customers in two types: creation for self and for others. Obviously, consumers might expand their involvement with the company to obtain value for themselves in different forms: convenience, lower costs, better-fit, faster time, and bigger differentiation. One example of how to achieve an economic bonus is a self-service (e.g. online purchase). Additionally, it is possible for consumers to get psychological benefits of confidence and enjoyment from the capability to co-create value for themselves.

Rampen (2009) has mentioned the existing importance of both collective development of community and increasing number of consumer-to-consumer interactions, and there are a lot of illustrations of the perceived value from doing for others rather than for oneself. With the development of the Internet Web 2.0,



consumers are enabled to produce their own contents and interact with others. In this case, consumers co-create value to be shared with various stakeholders in the extensive network of many-to-many relationships. Wikipedia is a good illustration of greater consumer involvement in creating, verifying and updating information in order to let others benefit from this open and joint community. In this case, perceived value of sharing might be in the forms of revival of traditions of social bonds, a sense of moral responsibility and economic return from the shared developments.

#### **1.4.6 Value Created by Customers**

Obviously, customer is a collaborative partner who “creates value with the firm” (Lusch *et al*, 2007: 6), and value is not created until an offer is used (“value in use”). And Gummesson (2007: 137) points out, “a supplier has a value proposition but value actualization takes place during the consumer’s usage and consumption process. Suppliers and customers are co-creators of value”. And there are two crucial factors in a process of value co-creation – processes and actors’ roles.

##### ***The Processes Perspective***

Payne *et al* (2008) support a processes perspective, where customers are engaged in value creation, that features three sections: customer value-creating processes (the processes, resources and practices that customers use to handle their activities); supplier value-creating processes (processes, resources and practices used by suppliers to manage relationships with customers and other stakeholders); encounter processes (processes and practices of interaction and exchange). Planning these processes helps firms to recognize micro-specialized competences and identify new opportunities for co-creation that will produce beneficial results for both customers and suppliers.

##### ***The Actors’ Perspective***

According to Gummesson (2007: 137), “re-casting customer and supplier roles in value co-creation” is needed. While analyzing value co-creation, Gronroos (2008) identifies two aspects of service logic: one for consumption (customer service logic)

and for service provision (provider service logic). Taking into account the notion of value-in-use, he points out that customer is always the creator of value: during value-generating processes (consumption) where, they can provide other necessary resources and skills; and through value-supporting interactions with suppliers where they act as service providers during the value-generating processes, in the context of value fulfillment.

The supplier can assume two roles: “value facilitator and value co-creator” (Gronroos, 2008). Acting as a value facilitator, the supplier creates a value foundation by providing customers with the essential resources for their own value-generating processes. As a value co-creator, the service provider is interacting with the customers and learning from them, then mediating in the consumption process, sharing skills and practices. Even in a case if the customer creates value via individual value-creation process, a supplier can be a co-creator when playing the second role: “by applying a service logic the firm creates opportunities to develop interactions with its customers during their value-generating processes and directly engages itself in value fulfillment for the customers and thus becomes a co-creator of value” (Gronroos, 2008: 307).

Interaction between customer and producer is a real driver for co-creation as it is a “generator of service experience and value-in-use” (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006: 336) for the customer and a great opportunity for the supplier to gain knowledge about customer preferences and behaviours. Ballantyne and Varey (2006) point out the role of interaction with customers in terms of mutual learning, that helps suppliers to understand customer satisfaction measures and also customers’ points of view, needs and experiences. This dialogue also helps firms to create value propositions that “exist in order to facilitate the co-creation of experiences” (Payne *et al*, 2008: 86). Managing customer knowledge gives an opportunity for companies to generate value-creating lock-ins and channel knowledge for strengthening relationships (Tiwana, 2000). Nevertheless, as Moeller (2008) mentioned, firms should not just encourage customer participation in a way that focuses on activities that customers could perform; moreover, they need to integrate customers into the implementation

phase of service provision (Baron and Harris, 2008). Customer integration means using resources from a customer into the processes of a company, and those resources could be customers themselves, physical possessions, normal goods or personal data. This integration process is a step towards customer knowledge, strengthening the role of a company as a resource integrator, as suggested by Vargo and Lusch (2008a).

According to Arvidsson (2008), the most important motivation stated by people for taking part in social production is a socially recognized self-realization, and we assume same motivation could be applied for a customer co-creation. So partly, the capability to engage in what Marx (1973) called non-alienated labour (i.e. doing what one does best according to his/her own perceptions and to express oneself in one's most productive activity) is enough motivation. But we should note that this type of self-realization is a social activity, and it is important that peers recognize outcomes of one's activity. So the real motivation consists in developing certain results that "are in the open source setting can be shared with others" (Dibbel, 2007). To put it simple, open source is letting a person to show the world just how creative one really is. It is almost the same as "putting your best work on display at the national gallery of art as opposed to locking it in your basement" (Weber 2004, 137).

In other words, a desire to have social ties with people is a factor that is motivating enough for one to take part in a process of value co-creation. That is why people are "taking leadership in online communities, creating blogs, developing fashion and taking part in practices of creative consumption" (Tapscott and Williams, 2006; von Hippel, 2006).

#### **1.4.7 Critique of Prior Studies**

As discussed earlier, the concept of shifting company's internal efficiency to external customer competence has long been receiving much attention. (e.g. Lovelock and Young, 1979; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b). In 2004, Vargo and Lusch (2004) introduced the service-dominant (S-D) logic which has brought the study of consumer co-creation to

a new level. A significant work had been done later on by Penaloza and Venkatesh (2006) to further refine Vargo and Lusch (2004)'s hypotheses. There are also a considerable number of researches on interaction between firms and customers during the process of value co-creation (e.g. Fujioka, 2009; Venkatesh, 2010; Andreu, 2010; Potts & Montgomery, 2008); the way the roles of a firms and consumers have changed in this process (Grayson, 2008; Nuttavuthisit, 2010); and several studies providing firms with a recommendation to enhance customer cooperation (Zwick *et al*, 2008). Moreover, some recent studies have suggested the way to measure the effectiveness of competitive advantage that companies are gaining while involving their customers into the process of co-creation (Zhang *et al*, 2007). Co-creation, which takes place in customer communities, has also been thoroughly studied by a significant number of researches (e.g. Stauss *et al*, 2001; Butscher, 2002; Gustafsson *et al*, 2004; Rowley *et al*, 2007). Potts *et al* (2008) examined the effectiveness of value co-creation while using Web-based technologies.

However, most of the existing researches on value co-creation are built upon the theoretical level (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Penaloza and Venkatesh, 2006; Grayson, 2008; Nuttavuthisit, 2010), while knowledge in practice on how value co-creation works in practice (i.e. how it is performed in reality) is limited. And despite a few studies that have slightly touched upon value co-creation within Web 2.0 (e.g. McLoughlin *et al*, 2007; Rollett *et al*, 2007), the issue is barely explored, while no study has yet to examine how co-creation via C-G lookbook or any other platform of the kind works in practice so far. There is also a lack of study on how firms motivate customers to participate in this kind of co-creation; as well as, how firms try to manipulate or take control of the co-creation process.

## **1.5 Problem Discussion**

The concept of shifting company's internal efficiency to external customer competence has long been receiving much attention. (e.g. Lovelock and Young, 1979; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a; Prahalad and

Ramaswamy, 2004b) In 2004, Vargo and Lusch (2004) introduced the service-dominant (S-D) logic, which has brought the study of consumer co-creation to a new level. In the new dimension, consumers no longer consume goods only, but they produce value at the same time. According to this logic, marketing is viewed as a means to create value by the voluntary exchange of knowledge and skills. Lusch *et al* (2008) further maintain that these consumers are recruited as part of a firm's production and marketing project, and they have to be governed in order for firm to achieve the desired outcomes. Such process of transferring online users' ability to value has been further developed and termed as "crowdsourcing" (Howe, 2006; Dawkins, 1986), which addresses consumers' engagement in value creation in the online world.

Despite our increasing knowledge of co-creation, we still know very little about how it works in practice; and how it is performed on the Web 2.0 platform (i.e. Internet). The emphasis has been on understanding co-creation on a theoretical level; and the real-world platform. However, as a fast growing; and indeed one of the most widely used tools for marketing nowadays, Internet is a virtual platform that should not be overlooked. It is now the age of social networking, it is hard to survive by relying solely on the media. With more and more co-creation happening on the Web, it is necessary for marketers to understand how co-creation is performed with the use of Web-based applications. In fact, having a high transfer speed of information; broad range of audience; and high frequency of usage, co-creation via Web 2.0 can be even more productive and influential than that via other platforms. "The next practices of innovation must shift the focus away from products and services and onto experience environments – supported by a network of companies and consumer communities – to co-create unique value for individual customers." (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2003) C-G lookbook as a social networking platform not only enrich consumers' shopping experience; allow them to co-create value for the companies; but also enhance their engagement towards the brands.

### ***The Motivations***

A main focus of the existing literature is the motivation that drives consumers to participate in co-creation. In other words, that is how consumers are rewarded for their work. Studies on this are found to be scattered. In fact, there is an unsolved contention about the sources of motivation. Some suggest that consumers work for free (e.g. von Ahn, 2006); some claim that consumers are motivated by monetary reward (e.g. Hippel and von Krogh, 2006; Füller, 2008); while some maintain that consumers are driven by social and psychological motivation (e.g. Füller, 2008; Nov *et al*, 2008). We are interested in finding out how consumers are driven to participate in the C-G lookbook; and if these motivations fit in the case of C-G lookbook.

### ***Control by the Company***

As mentioned earlier, we are now living in the age of social networking, it is almost impossible for companies to rely on media only. Consumers now play an active role in marketing activities, which has turned marketing from a traditionally one-way to a two-way communication. Companies can no longer have full control of what information to be conveyed to the consumers; and consumers no longer perceive a brand simply by receiving messages from companies. Through sharing brand experiences on the social network, consumers now also have the power to influence the brand image. Therefore, as indicated by Vargo and Lusch (2004a), companies have to include consumers in the business process to create value and regain control of the market. Co-creation is one of the strategies widely adopted by companies nowadays, which exploits consumers' creativity to generate value. Because of the empowered consumers, companies have to be discreet when interacting with them. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) maintain that companies should give an impression of a balanced power between themselves and the consumers, so that consumers would think they are given the power and freedom while co-creating value. However, having control over the workforce remains key for capitalist organizations (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982; Beniger, 1986; Baudrillard, 1998; Cohen, 2003), because the insertion of disciplined and orderly individuals can ensure wanted output; and lead to empowered companies. (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982;

Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a) Companies can steer consumers' creativity by providing them with adequate tools and guidelines. (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a; Gummesson *et al*, 2010) Although the balance of power between companies and consumers appears to be a causal factor to the success of co-creation, this topic has nevertheless attracted rather scant attention. Therefore, how companies manipulate and take control of the co-creation process has been investigated in this study.

Apparently, to keep abreast of the consumer empowerment, co-creation has gradually become a wide spread marketing and branding tactic. Although co-creation has been increasingly implemented on the Web 2.0 platform, co-creation via Web 2.0 is nonetheless rather unexplored. And in view of the abovementioned, current studies leave room for further investigation on how consumers are motivated to participate in the co-creation process; and how companies take control over the process, while maintain a perception that consumers have a balanced power with the companies. Therefore, by conducting an in-depth study on these issues, we would like to contribute some useful findings to the existing literature; and increase knowledge in practice of co-creation. We have deliberately chosen C-G lookbook as the subject of study. It is a novel and unique marketing tool, which has put co-creation into full practice. The rise of C-G lookbook only began in recent years, but with more brands joining the party, it has already become one of the most noticeable and significant marketing tools. Since consumers are highly involved in the co-creation process (Fawkes, 2010), C-G lookbook is a means to raise consumer's engagement, which is a valuable asset to enhance brand equity. And perhaps, with a high transferability, C-G lookbook can be transferred and employed by other industries, and should become the new generation of catalogue marketing in the near future.

## 1.6 Research Purpose

This study aims to increase the knowledge in practice of virtual co-creation, by examining how consumers are motivated to participate in the co-creation process; and how companies take control over the process, while maintain a perception that they have a balanced-power relation with the consumers. Based on the research purpose, a research question can be formulated as: *How does virtual co-creation work in practice?* And specific issues can be addressed by the following sub-research questions:

- 1) How do companies manipulate the workforce in virtual co-creation?
- 2) What are the motivations for consumers to take part in virtual co-creation?

## 1.7 Delimitation

This study is positioned in the broad field of service-dominant logic of marketing, and is narrowed down to value co-creation. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) has illustrated the importance of value co-creation: “Informed, networked, empowered, and active consumers are increasingly co-creating value with the firm. The interaction between the firm and the consumer is becoming the locus of value creation and value extraction.” (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004: 5) In order to differentiate themselves, it is crucially important for firms to focus on value creation. And regarding the rapid shift of value creation from “product-and-firm-centric view to personalized consumer experiences” (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004: 5), firms should have their eye on value co-creation with the consumers. We limit our focus to value co-creation through C-G lookbook in fashion marketing in view of the rise of C-G lookbook. Since such issue has received limited attention, we regard it as discreet to focus on this marketing vehicle and the knowledge in practice of value co-creation it has brought along. Empirically, we are limiting our observation to two C-G lookbook platforms operated by two different fashion brands.



## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

*In this chapter, we present the theoretical framework of this study. This part begins with Shaping Consumers' Behaviour, which is followed by Managing the Workforce. These theories are employed to discuss how firms manipulate the consumers throughout the co-creation process. We then go on presenting the theory of Motivations that Drives Participation, which is employed to illustrate how consumers are motivated to take part in the co-creation. In the end, we provide readers with an understanding on the theories we have used and why we have used them. In short, this theoretical part is providing both theoretical summary of the thesis and a framework for data collection.*

### **2.1 Shaping Consumers' Behaviour**

A major aim of this study is to examine how firms manage the free workforce. To achieve the above, we employ Lefebvre (1991), de Certeau (1984) and Cassinger (2010)'s theories on spatial construction. The three scholars have similar thoughts on the topic, they indicate that in everyday life, place is a delimited physical environment. Owners of a place carefully plan the layout within the place, attempting to shape visitors' behaviour and restrict certain activities. When a place is being used by the visitors, it becomes a space. In the sense of co-creation, a place can be referred to the co-creation platform. Firms try to shape and restrict consumers' behaviour and activities through a unique platform design; and when a platform is being used by the consumers, value (i.e. space) is created.

#### **2.1.1 Spatial Production**

Research on the production of space, as indicated by Cassinger (2010), should aim at examining lived spaces from the everyday life perspective, rather than debating on structuralism and representation. In fact, those who are the influence of the spatial theory, such as Henri Lefebvre (1991), have been attempting to understand space from the viewpoint of "who lead there their lives within it" (Cassinger, 2010: 49). As for Lefebvre (1991), everyday life is seen as the composer of a substantial realm where people seek for an alternative form of life. He had a long discussion on the

construction of social life. He summarized his thoughts as a triad which comprises *spatial practice*, *representations of space*, and *representational spaces (or spaces of representation* as described by Cassinger (2010)). Cassinger (2010: 50-52) simplified the concepts and further capsuled them as follows:

[Spatial practice] refers to a commonsensical understanding of space as taken for granted in everyday life and dialectically produced during its course. It sees space as defined visually via perception. The space of modernity, Lefebvre argues, is mapped in a highly visual way. The urban milieu is defined by its linear boulevards, its high rises, and its commercial shopping malls, where a visitor is conditioned to behave in a certain way[...]

[Representations of space] refers to the way that space is planned using scientific expertise such as cartography, geography, or by mall designers and urban planners. This constitutes the abstract dimension of lived space. The knowledge whereby this space is created is, in capitalist societies, linked to the governing mode of calculation and rationalisation[...]

[Representational spaces] refers to space as lived through the social imaginary space. This space is produced through reflexive thinking and constitutes a way for us to realise ourselves as persons. As examples, Lefebvre provides slums, *barrios*, and *favelas* that lie outside the dominant conception of space, and appropriates it by the insertion of alternative practices. These alternative practices and protests produce a differential space, which challenge the order set up by relations of capital. [...]space is simultaneously a thing and a process, as well as a cultural creation and an ongoing practice. [...] The traditional distinctions between the material and the symbolic, matter and mind, are less defined in what Lefebvre takes social space to be. The three dimensions consisting of the geometric, the lived, and the represented, then, constitute social conceptual. It is both non-discursive and discursive; abstract, conceptual, and lived. [...]

### **2.1.2 Production of Space**

De Certeau (1984) also contributed to spatial construction (or production of space) from an everyday practice point of view. He brought out the main ideas of strategy and tactic; and place and space in his work – *Practice of Everyday Life* (de Certeau,

1984). Since de Certeau presented his work in a narrative approach, we often refer to Cassinger's (2010) interpretation of it for a more intelligible concept.

### ***Strategy and Tactic***

De Certeau "describes [two different logics, implied by the practice of everyday life,] as analogous to the techniques of warfare: strategy and tactics." (Cassinger, 2010: 52) From the managerial viewpoint, strategy is seen as a means to "explicitly [shape] the long-term goals and objectives of an organisation" (Cassinger, 2010: 53); define the major activities required to accomplish those objectives; and dispose resources needed for grasping those objectives. (Cassinger, 2010)

De Certeau "call[s] a strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationship that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated." (1984: 35-36ff) It means that organizations, such as companies and governments, use strategy as a technique "to create and delimit a place that can be circumscribed as proper, and tactics as the response of the weak and those who cannot count on having a proper place." (Cassinger, 2010: 53) According to de Certeau, a place is a fixed location where "elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence" (1984: 117ff). It is constituted by a number of elements distributed in a particular pattern according to the law of the "proper" rules. Things should be situated in their own "proper" and distinct position, and thus it rules out the possibility of two things coexist in the same place. Place, as indicated by de Certeau, implies an indication of stability. (de Certeau, 1984) Because of their size and superiority in power, organizations or other powerful actors are able to use strategies as calculations to establish their own territory, and distinguish it from the surroundings (or external forces). (Cassinger, 2010)

On the contrary, "tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus." (de Certeau, 1984: 36-37ff) It is used by the powerless who do not have the authority to delimit their own place. Since tactic users (here we refer to the consumers) do not have a base to count on, tactic is played within a terrain imposed

on it, and is bound by the law of the foreign power. (de Certeau, 1984) In other words, tactic “is the use of an object by those that are not its makers” (Cassinger, 2010: 53-54). Due to the lack of own places, consumers’ tactic depends on time but not calculations of space. A major tactic used in everyday life is consumption. De Certeau defines consumption as an invisible practice that is related to time, experience and stories, because consumers have little say in the making of products, and they can hardly make any material impact on the physical world, as it is predominated by economic interests. Everyday consumption practices are tactical in nature. They can be perceived in a sense of “ways of operating” and “modes of action”, featuring a series of tricks, know-how to get away with things, “hunter’s cunning”, sleights, diverse simulations, discoveries and poetics manipulated by the powerless so as to outsmart the strategically planned physical environments. De Certeau maintains that “practice involves regularised ways of acting that follow a specific logic rather than emanating from subjective intentions” (Cassinger, 2010: 54) Hence, consumers are seen as a vehicle rather than an initiator of this logic. (de Certeau, 1984; Cassinger, 2010)

### ***Place and Space***

Place is the delimited physical environment, while space is a practiced place. To further elaborate this, space is the use of place, which involves movement and direction, and the elapse of time. (de Certeau, 1984) For example, a street becomes a space when pedestrians walk on it; and a piece of text turns into a space when it is being read. Space, therefore, depends on place for its existence. Moving around in a terrain that does not belong to them, consumers exist like an exile. Their activities are restricted by the rules set by the place owner, and they are provided with commodities that are not produced by them. Therefore, consumers create space through the use of time. “The time frame of a consumer intervenes in the established order of events and creates a disruption, a delay.” (Cassinger, 2010: 55) This is the viewed as an invisible form of production by de Certeau, since the practice of tactic are scattered. Consumers can only make an impact by moving about without being seen. The planned environments (i.e. places of organizations) are structured or encoded by the tactical practices of everyday life. De Carteau suggests

that we can capture the tension between place and space through story. One can compare the relationship between place and space to that between a word being spoken and a word being found in a dictionary. Place and space are constantly transforming into each other by time. (Cassinger, 2010) “Consumers inscribe a spatial pattern, a spatial story, into a place, something that was not anticipated by its designers. [...]past events form wandering lines that resemble spatial stories through an inert place. They circulate without being seen, discernible only through the objects that they move or wear away.” (Cassinger, 2010: 55)

## **2.2 Managing the Workforce**

Nowadays, entrepreneurial and free customers rule the marketplace, searching for open-ended value propositions. And marketers are now concerned with providing these customers with a platform to enable production and sharing technical, social, and cultural knowledge. The challenge for companies is to lead such freedom granted to the consumers into the “right” way. Therefore, here we provide a theoretical base on control, in order to demonstrate how companies are controlling the process of co-creation in C-G lookbook.

As mentioned by Ritzer (2004), the need for firms to control labour and consumption processes, has remained core for capitalist organizations and then the social technology of marketing appeared (Beniger, 1986; Baudrillard, 1998; Cohen, 2003).

Firms’ control over workforce is really important, because “without the insertion of disciplined, orderly individuals into the machinery of production the new demands of capitalism would have been stymied” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 135).

Product and process innovations are generated by the “consumer proletariat” (Arvidsson, 2006: 73), whose “natural state of alienation and defiance” creates a continuous wish to produce oppositional to standardized consumer culture forms of consumption. Therefore, there are two main tasks for companies: inspire creative

customer behavior and manage this activity in a structured way. In this sense, “customer management is about providing a dynamic platform for practice” (Lury, 2004: 6) that initiates the creativity of the social intellectuality and directs it “to evolve in particular directions” (Arvidsson, 2006: 74). As Arvidsson (2006) mentioned, now modern corporate power is no longer focused at disciplining consumers and at giving directions, but rather working with and through the consumers’ freedom to guarantee that the subject’s experience of freedom follows a formulated program (Lury, 2004; Arvidsson, 2006).

Upon the control of individuals, the sociologist Nicholas Rose (1999) brought up the concept of governmentality in his book *Powers of Freedom*, in which he describes as “attempts to shape, guide and direct the conduct of others” (Bertilsson and Cassinger, 2010: 2). Rose’s idea is about governing individuals through freedom, by means of presupposing the freedom of them, as he writes, “to govern is to act upon acting. This entails trying to understand what mobilizes the domains or entities to be governed; to govern one must act upon these forces, instrumentalise them in order to shape actions, processes and outcomes in desired directions. To govern is to presuppose the freedom of the governed” (Rose, 1999: 4). To Rose (1999), governmentality is the conduct of conduct. The mechanism of governing consumers through freedom can be illustrated as this: firms pre-structure a platform that is perceived to be free by consumers, whilst consumers are indeed made to control each other through the exercise of their rights.

### **2.3 Motivations that Drive Participation**

Previously we have discussed the terms “value co-creation” and “service-dominant logic of marketing”. Both of these terms pose an idea that, in order to achieve control over consumers and markets, it is necessary to provide dynamic and managed platforms for consumer practice (Lury, 2004). On one hand, this free consumers’ know how and creativity; on the other hand, it directs these activities in the ways preferred by the marketers. So there is a challenge for marketers to lead

consumer freedom in the ways that permit to employ consumers' newly liberated, valuable capabilities. By providing theories about symbolic capital, sense of community, status and factors of motivation we have prepared theoretical explanation on how companies can motivate their customers to engage in co-creation activities.

Even if a firm has million customers, relatively few of them will have an interest and ability to participate in value co-creation process (O'Hern and Rindfleisch, 2009). That is why researchers in recent years have been working on identifying motivators of participation in co-creation, but still these issues are little understood (van Doorn *et al*, 2010). In order to take part in this process, consumers are supposed to spend their time, physical and psychological effort and resources, and that is why, consumers compare advantages of engaging in co-creation in relation to spent resources (Etgar, 2008). Consequently, there are several factors (psychological, financial, technical, social) (Füller, 2008) that are inspiring customers to engage productively in the co-creation activities.

### **2.3.1 Financial Factor**

Financial rewards could be in a form of profit sharing or prizes, or via the intellectual property that they might gain, or in a form of the visibility that they might obtain from taking part in co-creation competitions (especially winning). But majority is not simply motivated by money, they prefer to "free reveal" ideas (von Hippel and von Krogh, 2006).

### **2.3.2 Social Motivation**

Status, titles, sense of belonging to a group and other forms of recognition, given by a firm to valuable participants, can be a powerful form of social stimulus. Social benefits of co-creation include social esteem, enlarged status, "good citizenship", and intensification of ties with relevant others (Nambisan and Baron, 2009). For example, the title of "Top 100 Reviewer" by Amazon.com can be a source of pride to many users, because they are a visible symbol of their exclusivity in comparison to other consumers.

### **Status**

There are also two other important motives, when involving customers in the process of co-creation: affiliation and social status. Status motive means consumers' interest to gain social position among others in the group. This status is grounded on other members' approval and acceptance of an individual's contributions to the community (Baumeister, 1998). Here term "symbolic capital" can be used as well, which is the resources available to an individual on the basis of recognition, honor or prestige, and functions as an authoritative epithet of cultural value. The concept was first explained by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) in his book *La Distinction*, that was an extension of Max Weber's analysis of status (Weber, 1978).

Some studies have demonstrated, that in order to receive a recognition from other users, many participants are joining online communities and providing information to others (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006). And actually members are enjoying their social status such as expert status (Muniz and Schau, 2005), guru (Leigh *et al*, 2006), and opinion leader (Füller *et al*, 2007), which could be seen as a part of the social reward, motivating consumers to participate in virtual community activities. Therefore, social status might be one of the motivations for consumers to become a member of virtual community.

### **Sense of Community**

The affiliation motive, as mentioned above, states for consumers' desire to have relationships with others within the community, which is a basic human need (Ainsworth *et al*, 1978), expressed in friendship and kinship (Trinke and Bartholomew, 1997). McMillan and Chavis (1986: 9) have defined the sense of community as "a feeling that members [of a group] have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith the members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together." Unfortunately, there was not a particular focus on sense of community of virtual communities in previous publications. Nevertheless, some researchers described the behaviors that appear upon the present of a sense of virtual community. For instance, empirical research



on virtual communities has found out existence of exchange of support between members (Greer, 2000; Preece, 1999), shared emotional connections among members (Rheingold, 1993), sense of belonging, membership and group symbols (Baym, 1995, 1997; Greer, 2000; Herring, 1996; Markus *et al*, 2000), influence, in terms of challenging norms and enforcing (Markus, 1994a, 1994b; Pliskin and Romm, 1997).

McMillan and Chavis suggested a theoretical model that explains the origin of each dimension. Feelings of membership are arising from community boundaries (deviants help establish boundaries), perceptions of emotional safety, members' sense of belonging to, and identification with, the group, personal investment of time into group, and a common symbol system. Feelings of influence are appearing while the process of maintaining norms within the group. The rewards of being a member of a group, such as common values, status and competence in functioning in the group are helping to integrate and fulfill the needs. Shared emotional connection is developed from "frequent interaction, high quality interaction, discrete events, shared history and crisis, investment of time and resources, the effect of honor and humiliation for members, and spiritual bonds among members" (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

Obviously, that objective behaviors corresponding to the lived experience of sense of community happen in at least some virtual settlements. But there is still a question, whether participants of at least some virtual settlements actually experience a clear sense of virtual community same to the sense of community noticeable in some non-virtual human groups, and further researchers needed on that topic.

### **2.3.3 Product/Service Knowledge**

The desire to obtain technology or product knowledge by taking part in forums and development groups may be another motivation. Participants can acquire significant advantages of information gaining and learning (Nambisan and Baron, 2009). Some well-known brands have created forums where consumers may take part in all stages of the co-creation, by gaining technology and product knowledge through

exchanging ideas and contributions between community members.

#### **2.3.4 Psychological Motivation**

At last, psychological factors might attract customers, though this factor remains poorly understood. Self-expression and pride might be enhanced by creative pursuits of co-creation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Etgar, 2008). Creativity may cause enjoyment of contributing (Evans and Wolf, 2005; Nambisan and Baron, 2009) and positive affect (Burroughs and Mick, 2004). High involvement or dissatisfaction with a product might be an inspiration as well (Ernst *et al*, 2010).

#### **2.3.5 Stimulators of Consumer Co-creation**

Stimulators can be described as company-level mediators of the connection between motivators of co-creation and the level of co-creation. Sometimes consumers who are inclined to actively participate in co-creation activities may not be involved in such activities with a certain company, if the remunerations involved are low or the costs of involvement are too high. Therefore, to gain a desired level of consumer motivation for co-creation, companies have two basic ways to inspire co-creation.

The first way is to increase the benefits, received by consumers from taking part in the co-creation process. Hence, creative ways for improving advantages or motivators, mentioned above, can be developed. The combination of several factors (financial, social, technological, and psychological) is a good way to stimulate co-creative activities.

Another way might be a cost reduction of participating in consumer co-creation, taking into account time and effort. Companies can provide their customers with “a user toolkits, which would improve the process of creating new ideas and products” (von Hippel and Katz, 2002).

## 2.4 Choice of Theoretical Approach

Our theoretical framework is composed of three main parts, which consists theories regarding spatial construction, motivation, and control. Spatial construction is not only crucial for understanding the construction of C-G lookbook, but by examining the layout and settings of the platform, it also provide grounds for further analysis on the motivations that drive consumers to participate in C-G lookbook; and the ways to control the co-creation process in C-G lookbook. Theories of motivation and control are particular employed for analyzing the driving forces for consumers to take part in C-G lookbook; and the measures implemented by companies in controlling the co-creation process respectively.

In spatial construction, we mainly adopt Lefebvre's (1991) theory on the production of space, and de Certeau's (1984) theory on place and space, whilst Cassinger's (2010) study is primarily employed to help better illustrate the ideas and concepts of Lefebvre (1991) and de Certeau (1984). The main concept of Lefebvre's (1991) study is about conditioning consumers' behaviour through scientifically planned environments. Whilst de Certeau (1984) distinguishes the two terms "place" and "space", and argues that "space is a practiced place". These theories are particularly useful for the analysis of the construction of the C-G lookbook platform. They help illustrate that those platforms are not randomly designed, but through careful planning instead. They also facilitate the reasoning of the motives and purposes for different layouts and settings to be constructed in certain ways. Meanwhile, de Certeau (1984) also brings up the idea of strategy, in which it is seen as a technique used by companies "to create and delimit a place", and consumers within are bound by a set of rules set by the companies. Such concept together with Lefebvre's (1991) theory on behaviour-shaping contribute to the examination of the control of the co-creation process by companies in the C-G lookbook platform.

As for motivation, we accentuate on three main parts: financial, social and psychological motivations (Füller, 2008). For financial motivation, we employ von Hippel and von Krogh's (2006) theory to illustrate the fact that consumers can be

motivated by monetary reward to take part in the co-creation. As for the theory of social motivation, it is actually composed of a number of subcategories, for instance, status, titles, sense of belonging to a group, social esteem, “good citizenship”, and intensification of ties with relevant others (Nambisan and Baron, 2009). These elements are useful in giving a precise explanation on how one can be motivated to participate in C-G lookbook. Baumeister’s (1998) theory on status is used to explain how companies can engage users, by making use of their desire of others’ approval and acceptance of one’s contributions to the community. By employ the theory on affiliation motive, we explained how companies can take advantage of consumers’ wish to establish relationships with others within the community, in which it is maintained as a basic human need by Ainsworth *et al* (1978), and expressed in friendship and kinship (Trinke and Bartholomew, 1997). In addition, there are several theories that explain the psychological motives. Theories on self-expression (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), pride (Etgar, 2008), and a desire for self-recognition contribute to the analysis of how company might appeal to this feelings to inspire consumers (Nambisan and Baron, 2009) to post their looks and take part in a competition (Zara People!) and community building (Uniqlooks). Lastly, von Hippel and Katz (2002)’s idea on the combination and implementation of all these theories help us draw a constructive conclusion.

Regarding the theories of control, Ritzer (2004) stresses the importance of controlling labour and the consumption processes. Whilst Dreyfus and Rabinow’s (1982) concept on inserting disciplined and orderly individuals into the production process is used for the analysis of the prescriptions and restrictions implemented to control the activities of the consumers. On the other hand, we employ Lury (2004) and Arvidsson’s (2006) ideas on directing creativity of the social intellectuality in particular directions, to analyze how firms try to shape consumers’ behaviour in a preferred way. As for Rose’s (1999) theory on governmentality, it is specifically applicable to the analysis of governing consumers through freedom. It is noteworthy that these theories are combined with the theories in spatial construction in order for a complete examination of the control of the co-creation process within the C-G lookbook.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

*In this part of our thesis, we discuss the methodological choice of the data collection, and it starts with discussing the choice of research design and explanation on a chosen research approach for our study. Then we describe qualitative method for our empirical study and why we have chosen netnography, and a virtual observation as its type for our research. Then we give a description of data collection and a method of analysis, and at the end we are discussing trustworthiness and authenticity of our research.*

#### **3.1 Approach**

First of all, it is important to find out the relationship between theory and research, and there are two main approaches, called inductive and deductive approach. While using a deductive approach, the researcher is gathering knowledge from previous theories and then creating hypothesis based on previous theoretical considerations, related to a certain topic (Bryman and Bell, 2007). In this case, useful data is collected and then being applied to prove those formulated hypothesis. An inductive approach is seen as the opposite to deductive approach, as it is built on empirical data and having new theories as an outcome (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

The combination of those two approaches called an abductive approach, when researcher “is going back and forth to review the theoretical framework and the empirical material” (Bryman and Bell, 2007) and information is gathered from various sources such as literature reviews, observations and interviews (Shuttleworth, 2008). For our research, we have used a combination of the inductive and deductive approach, as our aim was to come up with new findings as a result of using empiric observations as well as current knowledge about co-creation (Bryman and Bell, 2003). As we have used theories about spatial construction, motivation and control as a frame for our analysis of how virtual co-creation works in practice, we have demonstrated, that we are enabling both theory and the empirical data support each other during our research with the aim to come out with new findings in this sphere.

### **3.2 Epistemology**

The term “epistemology” means “the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge, which seeks to inform us how we can know the world” (Jary and Jary, 1991). According to the epistemological and theoretical aims the researcher wishes to adopt, various types of approach are chosen. In our study we have used interpretive approach, as we were trying to explain social phenomenon of virtual co-creation via investigating the connection between humans and companies involved in this process instead of external forces (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Questions in research set of interpretivist research paradigm are usually about how and why things are happening; they enable the understanding of a situation, instead of just giving an explanation of a situation, so in our research we were trying to explain, how the resources provided by the firms help guide consumers’ activities; how consumers are motivated to participate in the co-creation process; and how companies take control over the process.

Moreover, interpretive approach can also address questions about what might happen in the future – but it can rarely be done with statistical assurance, as the “truth” is not based on mathematical logic (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Since we have limited theories to base on, a detailed description provides us with rich data to gain a thorough understanding on the behavior of and interaction between the firms and the users, and further develop a hypothesis and findings of our own, as co-creation via Web 2.0 is a considerably new topic.

### **3.3 Ontology**

In our research we have used a constructive approach, which is an ontological position, stating that social phenomena or objects are continually developed by social actors. It means that social phenomena are not only produced by interactions, but they are always in a constant state of revision (Bryman and Bell, 2007). And as in our research we are trying to explain that both consumers and firms are constantly developing the phenomena of virtual co-creation, we thought a constructive approach is the most suitable one.

A major aim of social constructionism is to reveal the ways in which individuals and groups are participating in the construction of the perceived reality by looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalized and made into tradition by humans. By means of the constructionism approach, we were able to examine the customers' and firms' perception of the C-G lookbook. As a result, we found out how customers are motivated to take part in such value co-creating process, and here constructive approach is applicable, as it is widely used to understand and clarify the different constructions people are feeling (Thorpe *et al.*, 2008). The social phenomena within the co-creation process in C-G lookbook is considered to be continually developing (Bryman and Bell, 2003); and customers constantly revise their perception of this value co-creation platform continually.

### **3.4 Research Strategy: Qualitative/Quantitative**

Due to the different methods used in business research, they are divided into qualitative and quantitative types. They represent different research strategies with variations in the role of theory and ontological and epistemological issues (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Bryman and Bell (2007) stated, that quantitative approach is more applicable when dealing with large selection and statistical results as a ground for the analysis, while the qualitative approach is used when deeper investigation and answers to questions needed. Speaking of qualitative data, a qualitative approach (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 12) is found to be an appropriate research strategy for this study in particular. As previously mentioned, the topic of co-creation, that is performed on the Web 2.0 platform remains unexplored to date. There are limited researches, which implies that there is barely any existing literature to refer to or hypothesis to deduct from, so quantitative method would be inappropriate. The fundamental goal of this study is to examine how co-creation via C-G lookbook marketing works in practice, so a new theory should be generated.

Qualitative research mostly emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. It enables the understanding of “social reality in its own terms”; provides rich descriptions of interpersonal activities; and allows the examination of the construction of social order in particular contexts and social settings. (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 281) According to Carson (2001), the aim of the qualitative research is based on “researcher interest in the phenomenon to be discovered, gathering data that is providing a detailed description of situation and interaction between people and things, provided in depth and detail.” If we are focusing on deeper and more detailed understanding of the situation we would be able to find out the factors which are creating impact on the customer involvement in a process of C-G lookbook creation, we will find out how and what sort of value is created through C-G lookbook marketing and how the outcomes could be controlled by companies.

Moreover, we discussed earlier, that we have used abductive approach, by combining existing knowledge and empirical data, then we went for an interpretivism, as we were viewing a social reality as a constantly changing property of individuals creation (Bryman and Bell, 2007), and those features are predominantly used in qualitative research strategy.

### **3.5 Netnography**

On the field of marketing research, researchers have long been using qualitative methods, including focus groups (Calder, 1977), in-depth interviews (Thompson, 1997) and ‘market-oriented ethnography’ (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994).

When we were considering which method to use, we took into account our research question, and of course what kind of data might we need to answer it, and we have decided to use netnography, and the reasons will be explained further.

Starting from late 1990s, marketing researchers began to adapt and expand market-oriented ethnographic methods specifically to online formats, specifically through



what Kozinets (2002a) termed “netnography”. According to Kozinets (2002: 62), netnography (combination of words “internet” and “ethnography”) is “a new qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications”. And online gathering of consumers that are interested in similar brands, products and lifestyles are viewed as “virtual communities”, and this method is used to understand them the same ways that anthropologists trying to understand the norms, rules and practices of real (face-to-face) communities. According to Nelson and Otnes (2005: 90), netnography is enabling researchers to get access to consumer discussions while observing communications in publicly available online sites.

As a type of netnographic research method, we have used virtual observation. Though it is difficult to find the definition of observation in the literature, it can be defined as those that “involve the systematic recording of observable phenomena or behavior in a natural setting” (Gorman and Clayton, 2005: 40). In our case, we mean internet, when speaking about “natural settings”, and that is why it is called virtual observation. We have conducted direct observation, meaning that we are not trying to become a participant, which suggests a more detached perspective, so we are rather watching than taking part. We have chosen those approach over participant–as–observer, in order not to have a risk of over-identifying and hence of “going native” (Gold, 1958) and over observer–as–participant in order to prevent a risk of not understanding social settings and making incorrect conclusions as a result (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Our chosen method shares several advantages of employing netnography as a research method, as this method considered to be faster and less expensive than its off-line equivalent (Kozinets, 2006b). So the data we collected is unobtrusive, in comparison to other market research methods (interviews, surveys and focus groups), as it “provides a window into the cultural realities of consumer groups as they live their activities” (Kozinets, 2006: 282) and we have not any influence on the

research context. And as a traditional research is extremely time consuming, and involving months of fieldwork and in-depth interviews and observations (Wolcott, 1994), netnography is “far less elaborate and time consuming” (Kozinets, 2002: 62).

For our work we had only two months, so this method was really suitable. Netnography is naturalistic examination (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), because it helps observe individuals in their natural settings while their everyday life practices, which is contrasting to market-produced and unnatural situations (interviews and focus groups), providing researchers “with a window into naturally occurring behavior” (Kozinets, 2002: 62). Nevertheless, there are several disadvantages of this method. First of all, it requires good interpretive skills, and the lack of informant identifiers in the online context that might lead to too general results. Researchers who wish to apply the findings of a particular online group to other groups should use careful evaluations of similarity and think about other methods for research triangulation (Clark *et al*, 2006).

### **3.6 Data Collection**

When collecting our data, we aimed to gather as trustworthy and reliable data as possible. Considering this, we used both primary and secondary data, because as we have already mentioned, we were using abductive approach, that implies using both current knowledge on virtual co-creation and empirical data in order to come up with new findings. We have gathered our primary data (information that has not yet been collected) (Bryman and Bell, 2007) while conducting virtual observations at the sites of Zara People! and Uniqlook.

Secondary data (data collected by someone other than the user from surveys, organizational records, data collected etc.) have been gathered from existing literature on value co-creation, motivation and control theories.

By doing so, we believed we would gain useful information and at the same time be able to answer our research question in a credible way. As mentioned previously, the

object of our study is C-G lookbook, and in our study we are considering the two examples: 1. Uniqlooks; 2. Zara People!. They will be further introduced in the followings. They are deployed to examine how marketing managers are using C-G lookbook in their marketing activities. They give a holistic overview of how firms construct their C-G lookbook; how they inspire their customers to participate; and how they try to manage the platform and activities. These two samples were not randomly chosen, but rather on the basis of their representativeness; suitability for the goal of our study; and popularity of the firms that run them. In January, 2011, Zara recorded a USD 17.8 billions sales, which ranked on top of the list of worldwide apparel specialty stores; whilst Uniqlo achieved a total sales of USD 9.8 billions in August, 2011, which ranked forth in the same list. (Fast Retailing Co., Ltd., 2011) Both Uniqlook and Zara People! are considered to be the first two C-G lookbooks that are co-run by firms and consumers on the virtual platform, with all the looks solely created by the consumers. Zara lookbook is constructed more like a competition for users, and of course platform construction, motivation and control tools differ from Uniqlo lookbook, which is created to serve as a fan community of this fashion brand. The two samples bear both similarities and difference in terms of design, motivation and management control, which encompasses a wide spectrum of circumstances. We intended to maximize the representativeness of our findings through the two samples selected, and to demonstrate, how the same marketing tool can serve different needs and aims.

As we have already mentioned, we used virtual observation as a qualitative method of gathering data. We have studied the structure of a platform of a web page, the content and tools, we have been downloading pictures in order to understand, how the companies inspire and motivate co-creation process. Also we have downloaded looks, posted by users, in order to understand why are they involved in this process.

We have observed the 2 selected sites for 2 hours per day, 5 times per week in 2 months. Altogether we have studied 400 photos of look in the Uniqlooks site, and 110 photos of look in the Zara People! site.

For our research we used hermeneutic circle (including qualitative content analysis).

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), hermeneutics is a method of analysis, that interprets and understands texts and social events by analyzing their meanings within the social and historical conditions they were produced. And it is connected to a qualitative content analysis – “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1278), in a case it “is sensitive to the context within this text was produced” (Bryman and Bell, 2007). So we were interpreting user’s comments and companies guidelines for participant according to the conditions they were produced. We were trying to understand, which aims have company stated by writing certain rules, and we were trying to understand motivation of users, by studying their comments and “likes”, we have tried to understand each side, as it is crucial that a text should be understood from the point of view of author and the context it was produced (Philipps and Brown, 1993).

### **3.7 Validity**

When conducting any research, it is important to examine the trustworthiness of the theories, methods and sources used. In order to evaluate the credibility of a research, terms internal and external validity can be used (Bryman and Bell, 2007). According to these authors, internal validity means that the findings of the study must be verified and proven by others. While writing our thesis, we have used different sources in order to confirm our results, as we have used not only netnography, but also we have studied secondary data, that enriched our research with important knowledge, that helped us interpret our empirical findings.

According to Patton (1990), it is essential to look for different perspectives on certain problem, so while conducting our research, we were trying to use different sources, perceiving research problems from different sides, and we believe our research to be more trustworthy due to various sources stating the same things. Moreover, same author suggests using several observers while collecting data, and since it was two of

us, who conducted virtual observation, we were able to diminish possible misunderstandings with an aim to enhance the credibility of the research. There is another way of proving credibility of a research, called external validity, that shows if the results of a study may be generalized. (Bryman and Bell, 2007) When deciding which lookbook 2.0 platform to use for our study, we carefully investigated different fashion companies that are using them, and have decided two of them (explanation of our choice can be found above). By doing that, we expect that our suggestions might be representative and appropriate for other companies within the same field. Moreover, it is important to examine, if we as researchers have not affected results. We do know that our previous knowledge and opinion may influence our research, but due to the fact of our awareness of it, we hope that our possible preconceived ideas have been diminished.

### **3.8 Reliability**

Bryman and Bell (2007) have mentioned, that reliability shows whether the study may be replicated in order to show the same result several times, and that it is possible to increase reliability by using a profound methodology, when the process behind the study is carefully described. In order to enhance the reliability of our study, we tried to give a detailed depiction of the procedure following our research process. Moreover, we gave in-depth description of our methodological reasoning: how we collected necessary information, how we analyzed data, etc., attempting to increase the credibility of our research. Furthermore, we believe that a fact that we were two researchers, who conducted the study, has helped us to increase reliability as well and gave us a chance to analyze same data from selected lookbooks from different angle but in same direction.

## 4. UNIQLOOKS AND ZARA PEOPLE!

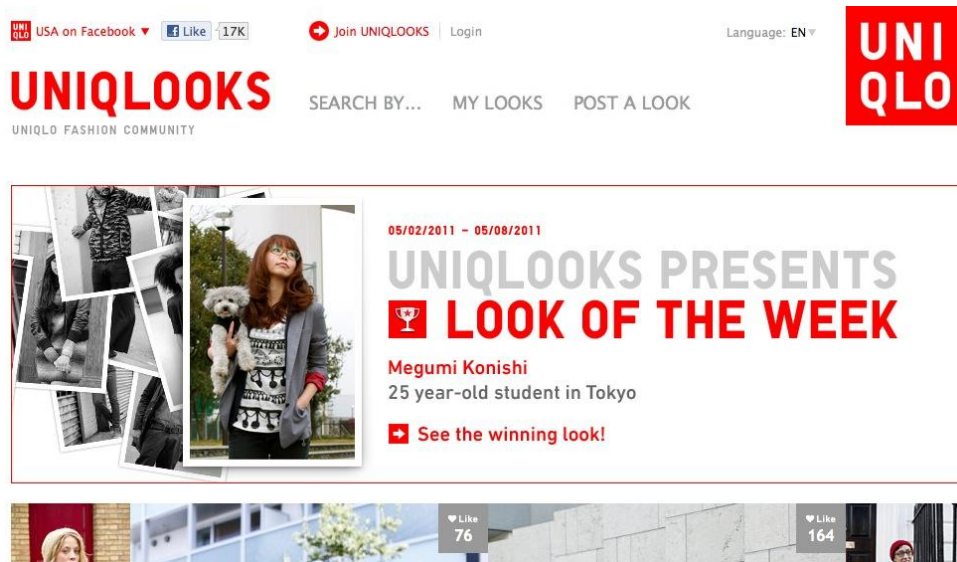
*In this chapter, we will present the empirical data collected for our study, which are in accordance with the empirical research questions posed: How is the C-G lookbook platform constructed?; how are consumers motivated to take part in the co-creation process?; and how the co-creation process is controlled?*

### 4.1 Uniqlooks: C-G Lookbook of Japanese Fashion Brand Uniqlo

Uniqlo launched its own U-G lookbook, *Uniqlooks* in Feb 2011, and describes it as a lookbook, online fashion community, and global communication platform/service. To make it global and coherent with the company's slogan – “made for all”, Uniqlooks provides users with 7 different languages for 11 countries/cities, including English, Japanese, French, Russian, Korean, simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese. (Uniqlo, 2011a, 2011b) In the press conference for the launch of Uniqlooks, Tadashi Yanai, founder of Uniqlo stressed the importance of virtual community; and expressed the idea of making Uniqlooks a communication platform to link up individuals, and give everyone a chance to be a star. (Beauty Club, 2011)

The platform is built on a stand-alone site, which means that it has its own Web domain name (<http://uniqlooks.uniqlo.com>), and is separate from the official website of the company (<http://www.uniqlo.com>). On top on the page are the logo of Uniqlooks, Uniqlo's brand logo, and some other buttons like «Join UNIQLOOKS», «Login» and «Language», followed by the «LOOK OF THE WEEK». The company presents the most highly ranked picture of each week as the «LOOK OF THE WEEK» on top of the page. The showcase of other looks begins right underneath the «LOOK OF THE WEEK» with a pattern as this: 2 large photos in the middle along with the name, occupation and age of the authors, a link to the author's Uniqlooks profile page; and links to the authors' Facebook, Twitter and/or renren.com page tagged at the bottom of the photos; while 6 small photos, 3 on each side, are displayed along side the 2 large photos with the authors' name tagged underneath the photos. The main page of the site has an infinite scrolling feature, which means that viewers can see all photos by continuously scrolling down without clicking to the next page.

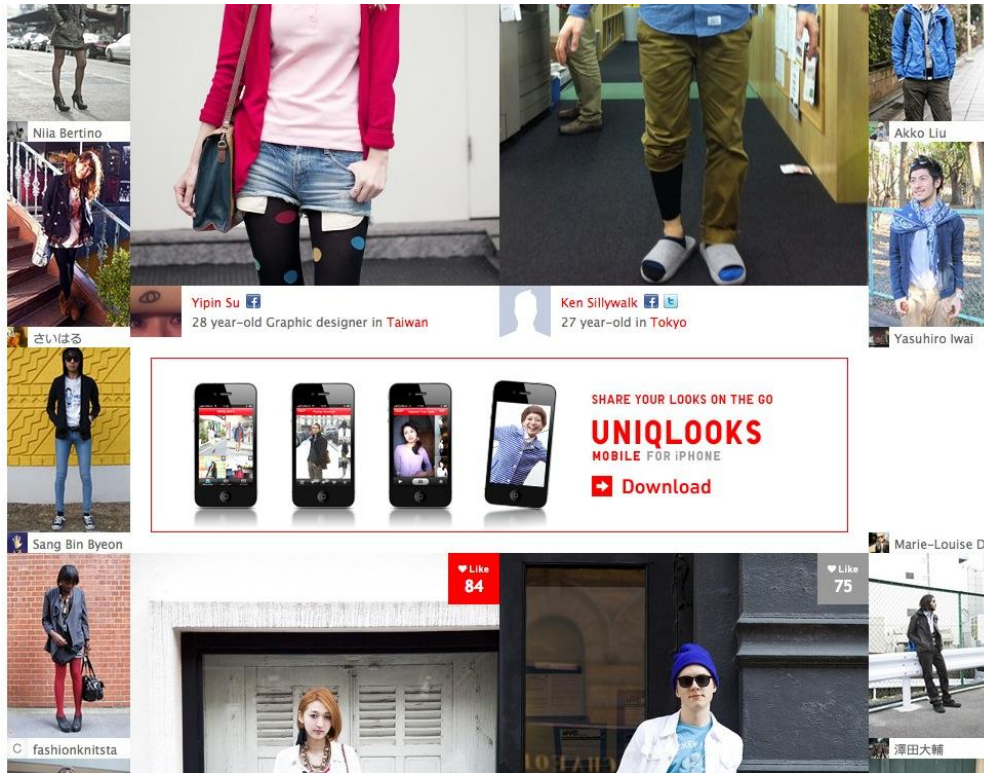
Hence, the display pattern of photos forms the structure the rest of the page, only that banner ads of Uniqlooks' iPhone app and Uniqlo's lookbook would appear in between the large photos on random occasions.



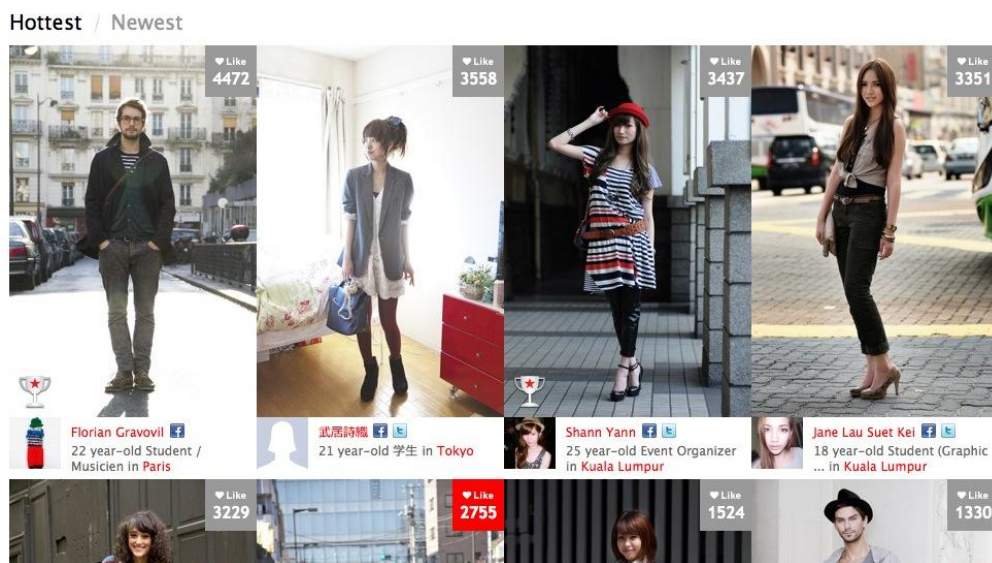
IMG 1. «LOOK OF THE WEEK» presented on top of the main page



IMG 2 Display pattern of photos: 2 large photos along side with 6 small photos



IMG 3. Banner ads appear in between the large photos



IMG 4. Looks presented in the «SEARCH BY...» page

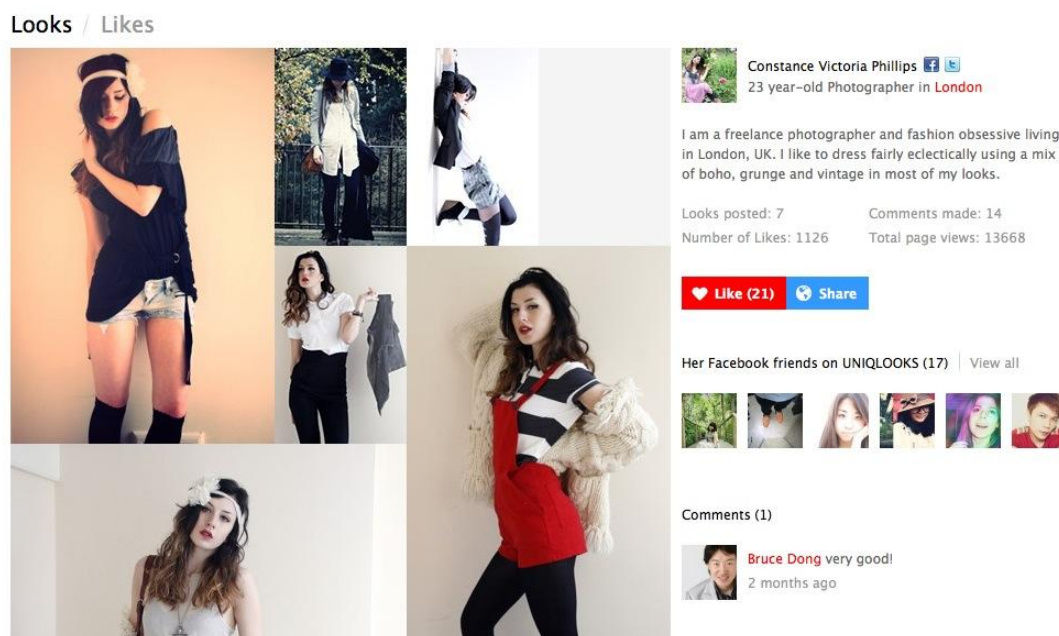
Viewers can also browse the photos according to their preference by using the «SEARCH BY...» function. They can specify the gender, age group and location of the authors; select particular type(s) of product; or choose to look at winning looks only. Viewers can choose to view the photos in descending order of either ranks or upload date. Photos in the «SEARCH BY...» page are displayed in the same size with 4 on



each row, also with the name, occupation and age of the authors, and links to the authors' Facebook, Twitter or renren.com page tagged at the bottom of the photos. This is also an endless scrolling page, whilst it is banner ads free.

By clicking on each look, visitors will be redirected to the page of that look, where they can see other photos (if any) of it, and read details about it like author's profile; description of that look; tagged clothing items; number and voters of "Like"; 7 other looks that best compliment that look; other looks posted by the author; comments on the look; and 6 suggested looks that you may like.

On the author's Uniqlooks profile page, one can find the looks that have been posted by the author; looks that have been liked by the him/her; name, age, occupation and location and a self description of him/her; number of looks posted by him/her; number of comments and "Like" made by him/her; number of pages viewed by him/her; a list of his/her Facebook friends that are also participating in Uniqlooks; number of "Like" on his/her profile; and comment(s) made on his/her profile.



IMG 5. Author's Uniqlooks profile page

**Florian Gravovil**   
 22 year-old Student /   
 Musicien in Paris

French/ Vintage / Folk

Like (4472) Share

UNIQLLO items  
UNIQLLO online: USA

Clicking on the links below will take you to the equivalent clothing category in the UNIQLLO website for the country you have selected.

Outerwear

Top 3 Complementary UNILOOKS  
Which look best complements Florian Gravovil's look?

★ 56	★ 39	★ 30
Points	Points	Points

Added 2 months ago

More UNILOOKS by Florian Gravovil (1)

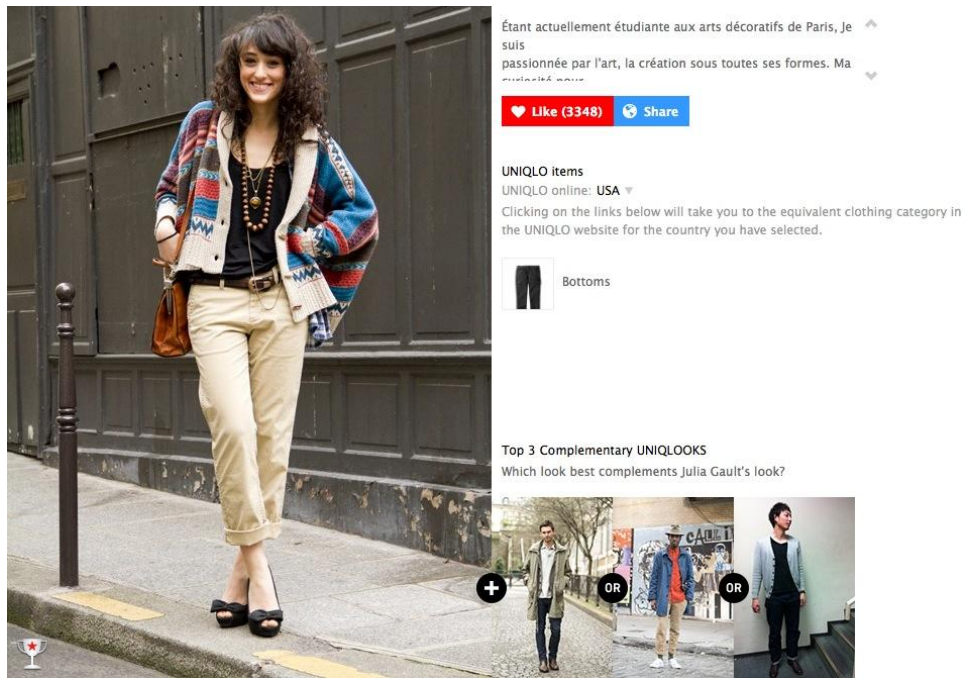
UNILOOKS you may like

IMG 6. Page of a look with details

Uniqlooks is linked to Facebook, Twitter and renren.com (a Chinese social networking site), in which all accounts are synchronized with account information on either of the abovementioned sites. One has to create an account for Uniqlooks with a Facebook, Twitter or renren.com account in order to post a look or comment on

others' photos. Actually, by registering, it means one has to login to his Facebook, Twitter or renren.com account, then authorize the UNIQLOOKS application to use his account. Whilst anyone, even those without a Facebook, Twitter or renren.com account can browse and «Like» (i.e. vote) the user photos, and share them to a spectrum of 335 online platforms, namely Facebook, Twitter, Gmail, Tumblr and Posterous. Users have to fill in their profiles, in which it is not necessary to fill in all fields, but everything filled in will be shown. Users can delete their account whenever they want, and they have full right to delete any comment made on their photos.

A maximum of 3 photos per look can be posted at a time. Once a photo is uploaded, it can only be deleted but not edited. Any photo uploaded should contain at least one piece of Uniqlo item. Users are supposed to tag the Uniqlo items they wear in terms of product category (e.g. tops, bottoms, dresses, t-shirts), and they can also include a comment about their look or share their current location. All pictures are checked if they are suitable and actually include Uniqlo's products before going public. (Andrew, 2011) Whether a look is displayed on the top page of the site depends on a number of factors, which are not revealed at all. It is claimed that "the most 'Liked' photos will be ranked higher on the site" (Uniqlo, 2011a), it is not necessarily true though as found out from the site. Meanwhile, top ranked looks would be selected and used in-store in Uniqlo stores worldwide. As for the look that gets most votes each week, Uniqlooks would pick it as the «LOOK OF THE WEEK» and present it on top of the site, with a trophy icon printed on the bottom-left of the photos. Also, the winning looks would be used as the profile picture of Uniqlo's Facebook page; uploaded to the photo album in Uniqlo's renren.com page; and shown in Uniqlo's official website together with a hyperlink to the Uniqlooks site. There is no restriction on the number of looks to be posted, as well as the number of looks to be selected as « LOOK OF THE WEEK» for each user.



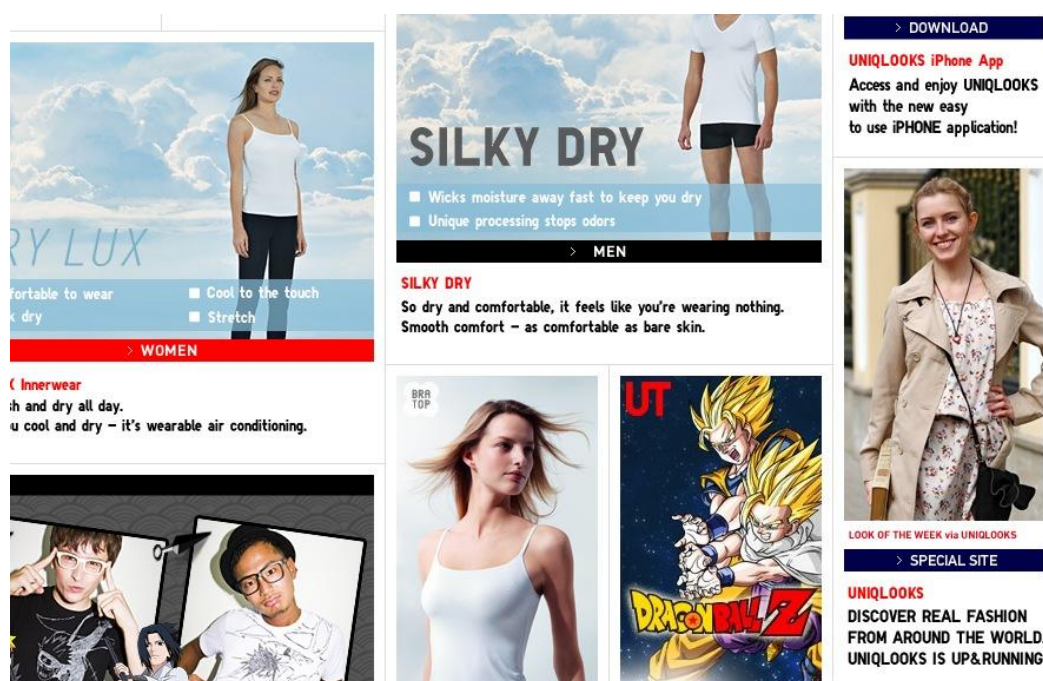
IMG 7. A trophy icon is printed on the bottom-left of the photos of a «LOOK OF THE WEEK»



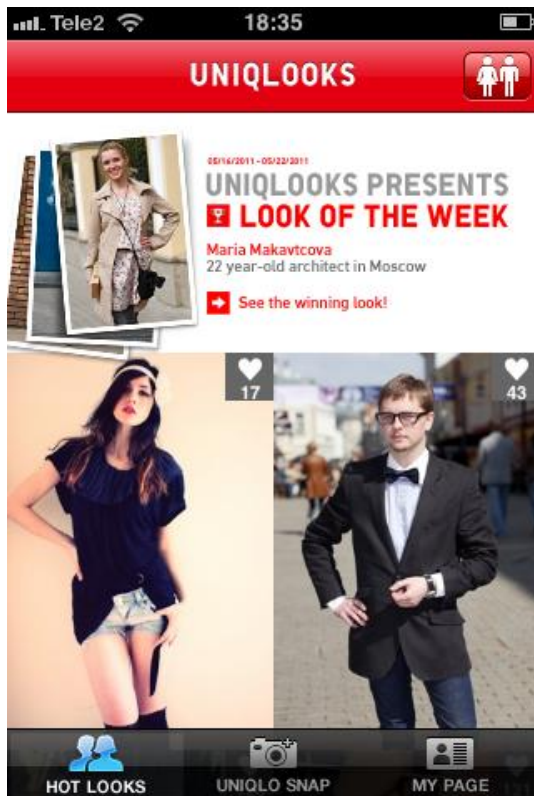
IMG 8. «LOOK OF THE WEEK» is used as the profile picture of Uniqlo's Facebook page

Uniqlooks is embedded with a shopping function. Visitors can click on tagged items that pique them, then they will be redirected to the specified category in Uniqlo's online store where they can order items they like. The brand has also launched an iPhone application for Uniqlooks in March, allowing users to upload looks whenever and wherever they want through their smart phones.

In the Uniqlooks iPhone application, one can browse, “Like” and comment on looks. Registered users can access to their profile, and post a look either by taking a picture with their iPhone or using photos from their iPhone photo album. The Uniqlooks iPhone application shares some of the features of the Web version. The looks page begin with «THE LOOK OF THE WEEK» on top, followed by other looks which are displayed in a 2 photos per row pattern. The looks are presented in the same sequence as that of the large photos displayed in the middle in the Web version, whilst there is no advertisement appear in between the photos. The Uniqlooks iPhone version also bears the infinite scrolling feature, in which viewers can browse all photos on one page by continuously scrolling. By clicking on a look, one can view the name and profile of the author; other photos of that look (if any); tag of the Uniqlo item(s); number of “Like”; comments on the look; description of the look written by the author; and other looks posted by the author. Not equipped with the «SEARCH BY...» function though, viewers can still browse the photos according to their preference by in terms of gender. There is a button on the top right hand side of the main page, which viewers can choose to view looks for female or male only, or those for both genders.



IMG 9. «LOOK OF THE WEEK» shown on the right of Uniqlo’s website with a link to the Uniqlooks site



IMG 10. Main page of Uniqlooks iPhone version



IMG 11. Looks displayed in 2-per-row pattern



IMG 12. Page of a look



IMG 13. Author's profile and other looks posted



IMG 14. Comments on the look



IMG.15 Description of the look

## 4.2 Zara people!: C-G lookbook of Spanish Fashion Brand Zara

Zara launched its own C-G lookbook, *Zara People!* in March 2011. Zara describes *Zara People!* as a new Web content offering people interested in fashion to collaborate and demonstrate astute sense of fashion.

The platform is embedded in Zara's official website. Sharing the feature of the official website, *Zara People!* offers 15 languages for 82 countries/cities, for instance, English, French, Spanish, Russian, traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese, Japanese, Korean, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish and Austrian. Whilst the login page of *Zara People!* is built on a separate site (<https://people.zara.com/login>), in which only English and Spanish are provided.

*Zara People!* can be accessed through the fixed menu bar on the left of Zara's website, in which it is named as *PEOPLE!* there. Through the menu bar, customers can always link to the other parts of the website, such as the catalogues for women,

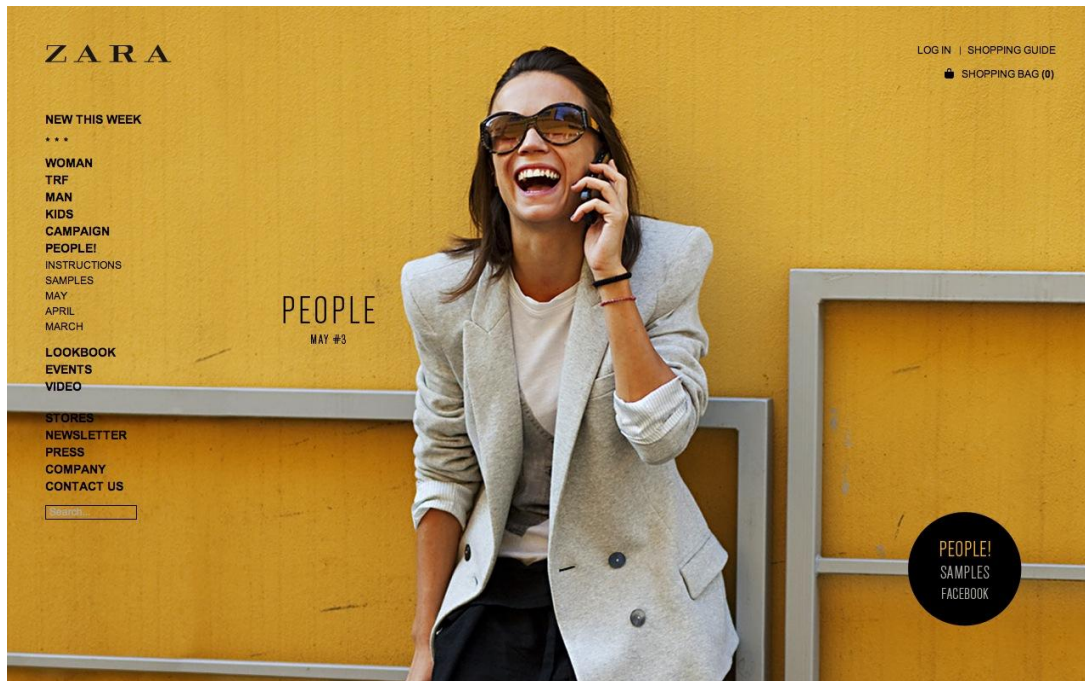
IMG 16. Login page of Zara People!

men and kids. Underneath «PEOPLE!» in the menu bar are «INSTRUCTIONS», «SAMPLES», «MAY», «APRIL» and «MARCH». The main page of «PEOPLE!» consists of a «PEOPLE» button which takes visitors to the page with looks of the latest week; and there are 3 buttons: «PEOPLE!», «SAMPLES» and «FACEBOOK» which are links to the instructions page, samples page, and Zara's official Facebook page. In «INSTRUCTIONS», user can find the description of Zara People!; guidelines on how to participate; requirements of photo properties; and the link to the login page of Zara People! where they can send their photos. 10 sample photos are shown as references for users in the «SAMPLES» page. While «MAY», «APRIL» and «MARCH» are further extended into «Week #1», «Week #2», «Week #3» and «Week #4» where selected looks are showcased on a weekly basis.

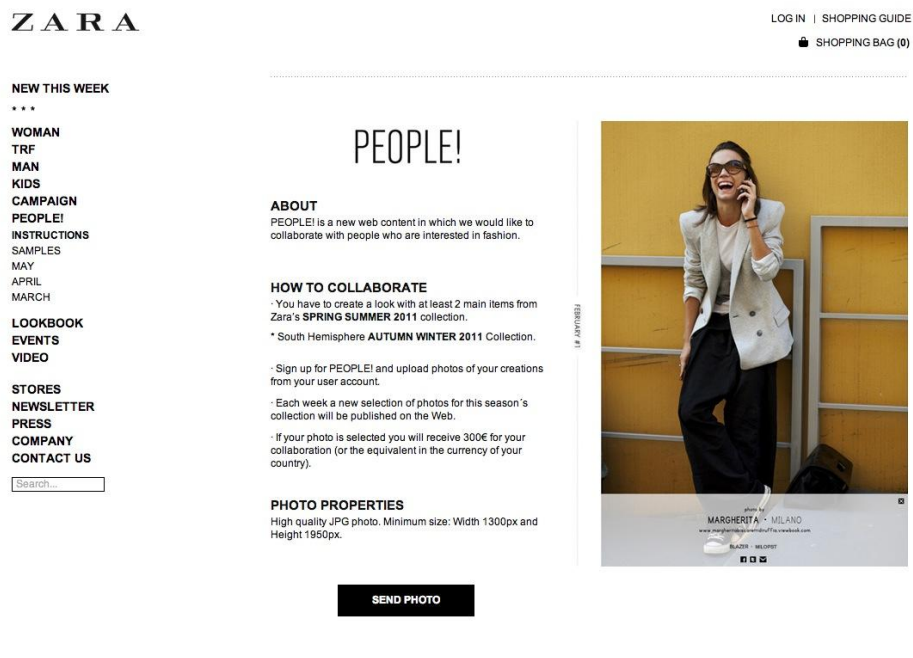
As mentioned, looks are selected and presented on a weekly basis. Each week, the company's representatives select and publish 10 best looks to Zara People!, and they would use them for commercial promotional purposes as well. Besides, every week when a set of new looks is uploaded, Zara would post the first photo in its Facebook as a notification of the release of the new looks, and users can "Like" and comment



on it. Users with their photos selected are contacted by the company and awarded for an amount of 300 euro to spend on Zara's latest collection for their collaboration. (Zara, 2011a)



IMG 17. Main page of Zara People!



IMG 18. The INSTRUCTION page

ZARA

NEW THIS WEEK

\*\*\*

WOMAN

TRF

MAN

KIDS

CAMPAIGN

PEOPLE!

INSTRUCTIONS

SAMPLES

MAY

APRIL

MARCH

LOOKBOOK

EVENTS

VIDEO

STORES

NEWSLETTER

PRESS

COMPANY

CONTACT US

Search...



IMG 19. The SAMPLE page

Zara presents ten looks every week, and the looks are displayed in a pattern as follows: 10 large photos in the middle of the page, and all photos are shown on the same page. On the bottom of each photo are the name, address of fashion blog and location of the author. By clicking on the photo, viewers can enlarge it, and view it in a larger size and higher resolution. Although it is not allowed to leave a comment or vote on the photo, visitors can share the photos via Facebook, Twitter or e-mail. Moreover, items from the Zara collection are tagged in the photos, and customers can browse the tagged items in a pop-up window simply by clicking on the tags. Zara People! is embedded with a shopping function. In countries where online shopping service is offered, customers can add the tagged items to their shopping cart and place an order.

Moreover, Zara People! is included in Zara's iPhone application. Users can view the looks on their iPhone, but they can only browse the pictures, without any information like the name of the author and tagged items from the Zara collection.

ZARA

NEW THIS WEEK

\*\*\*

WOMAN

TRF

MAN

KIDS

CAMPAIGN

PEOPLE!

INSTRUCTIONS

SAMPLES

MAY

Week #3

Week #2

Week #1

APRIL

MARCH

LOOKBOOK

EVENTS

VIDEO

STORES

NEWSLETTER

PRESS

COMPANY

CONTACT US

Search...

MAY 3

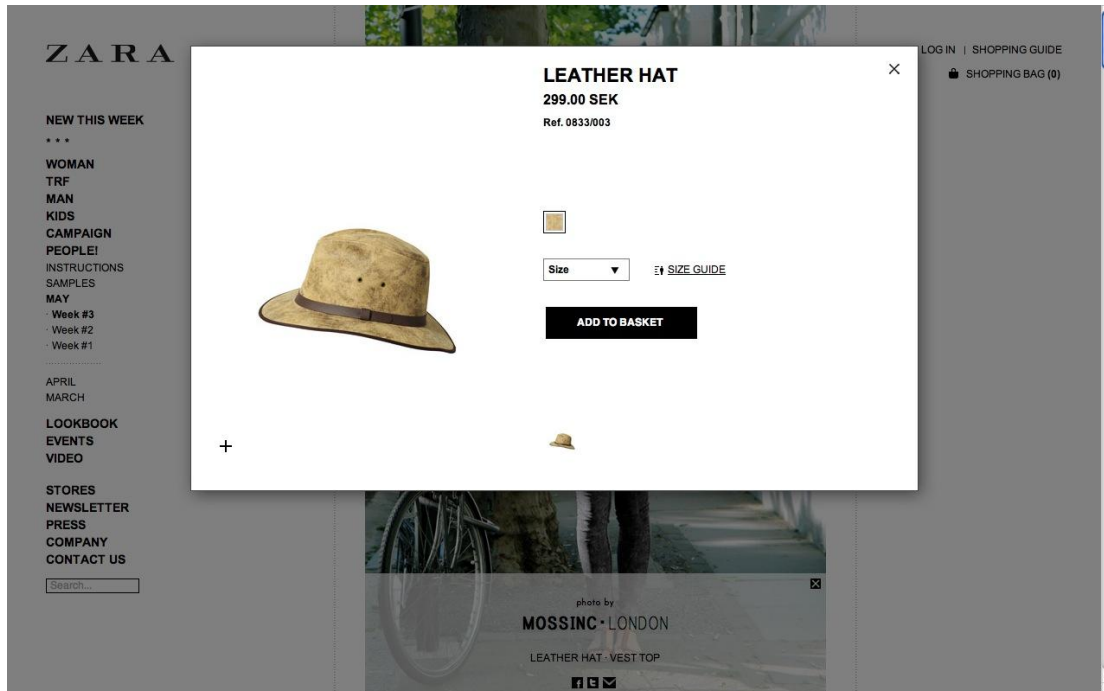


LOG IN | SHOPPING GUIDE

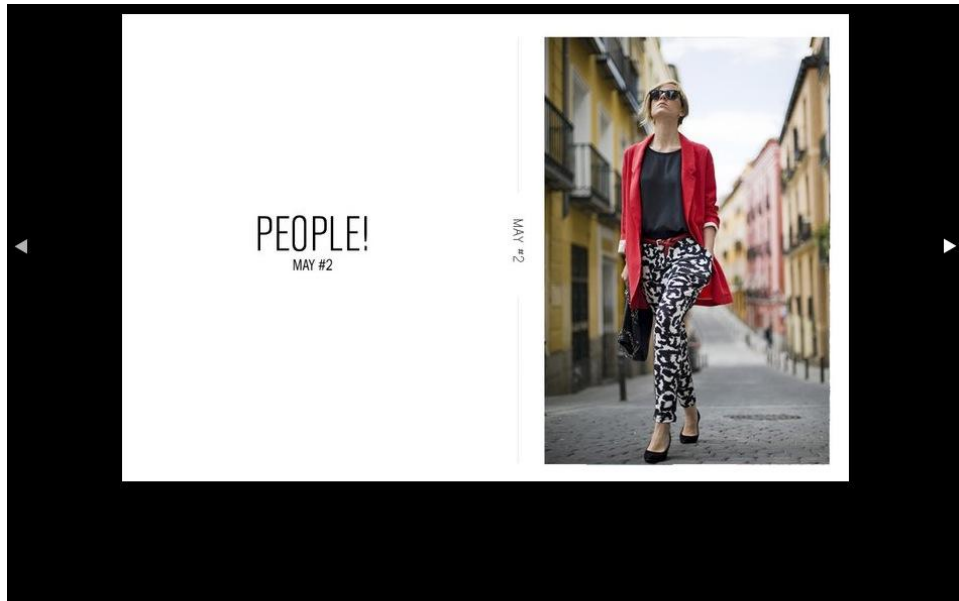
SHOPPING BAG (0)

MAY 3

IMG 20. A look displayed in Week #3, May



IMG 21. Embedded shopping function in Zara People!

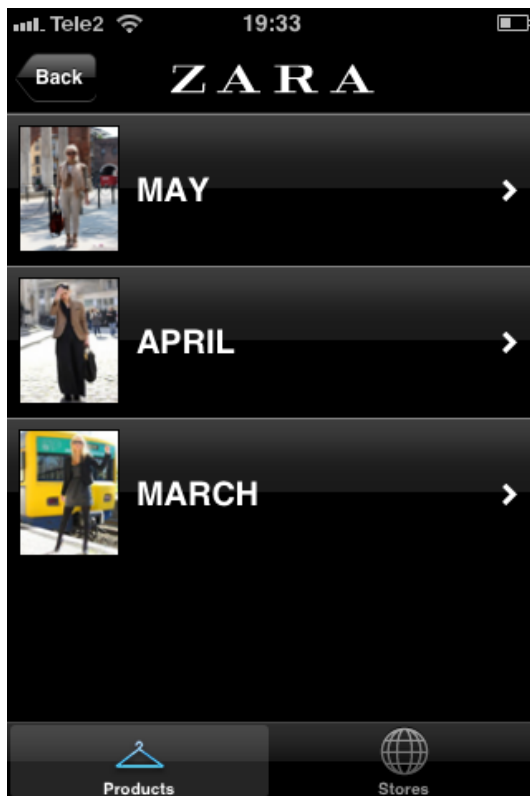


PEOPLE!  
By ZARA · 7 of 7

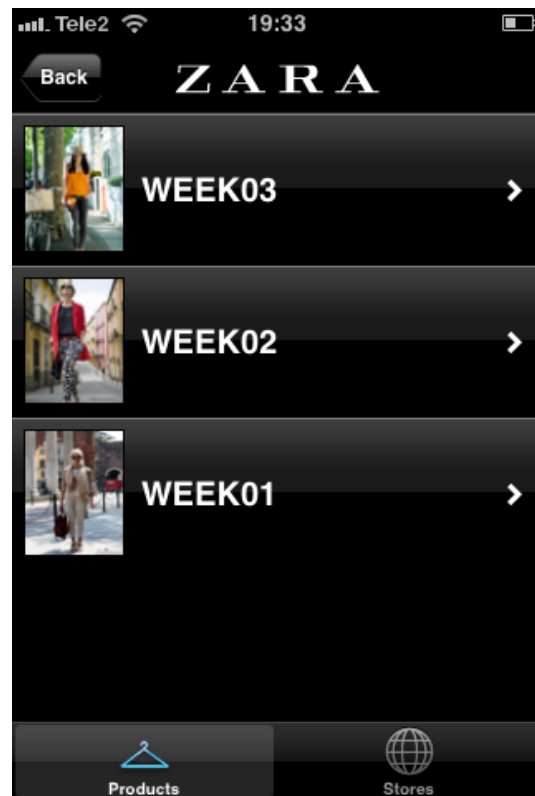
Share  
Download  
Report this Photo

PEOPLE!  
MAY Week#2  
<http://www.zara.com/share/category/zara-52011/89001>  
05 May  
6,202 people like this.  
View previous comments 50 of 250

IMG 22. First photo of a new set of looks is uploaded to Zara's Facebook page

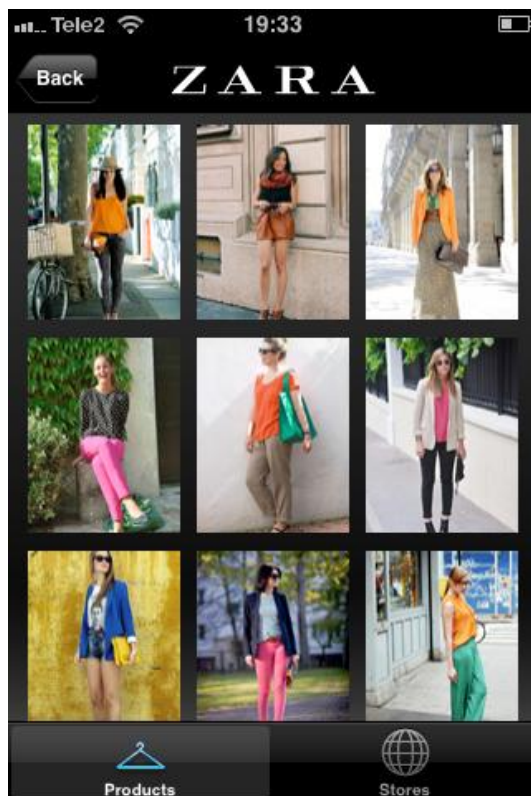


IMG 23. Looks grouped by months



IMG 24. Looks further grouped by weeks

The platform is opened to public, which means anyone can browse the looks. However, to send a photo, one must register as a member with an e-mail address. After registering, one gets access to his profile, where pictures can be sent. The number of photos to be sent is unlimited, and once a photo is sent, it is under consideration for publishing. In order to participate, customers are supposed to create a look by combining at least 2 main items from the designated Zara collection. Each picture should contain one person only, and it is possible to be a model or to present your look as a photographer working with a model. In order for a look to be published, it should contain at least two items from the latest collection (Zara People, 2011). There is no evidence how the looks are selected, but as observed, several users were chosen more than two or even three times. For example, looks of users Riccardo, Reyes, Marie and Tonics were selected three times; and those of Lucia, Xabit, Matilda, Celita, Ana Pintos, Florence and Paula were presented twice. So there are eleven people who have been chosen more than once. (Zara, 2011a)



IMG 25. Looks displayed in one of the weeks



IMG 26. Viewers can only browse the picture in the iPhone version of Zara Peoples

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

*In this chapter, we are going to analyze our empirical findings in relation to our theoretical framework. The analysis is divided, as in accordance with the theoretical framework, into two parts. First, we analyze how firms manage consumers' activities in C-G lookbook. Then, we analyze how to get consumers to participate in C-G lookbook. This part also includes the discussion of the results, in which we would give our own interpretation on the data collected, attempting to give further elaboration on the findings.*

### 5.1 How Firms Manage Consumers' Activities in C-G Lookbook

As mentioned by Lury (2004), nowadays, companies have two main tasks – to provide a dynamic platform for practice in order to encourage customers' creativity; and to direct the subject's experience of freedom within a formulated program (Arvidsson, 2006). Apparently, firms understand the importance of labour (i.e. consumer as free labour) management as indicated by Ritzer (2004). In C-G lookbook, both Uniqlo and Zara have been conditioning users' activities by certain rules (Lefebvre, 1991; de Certeau, 1984), attempting to make the users disciplined and orderly (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). As manifested in the platform construction of C-G lookbook, in Uniqlooks and Zara People!, users are conditioned to behave in a certain way regarding the planned environments (Lefebvre, 1991), and their activities are restricted by the rules set by the companies (de Certeau, 1984). In this section, we examine the plans, strategies and rules employed by firms in manipulating the workforce throughout the co-creation process.

#### 5.1.1 Control via Membership

In both Uniqlooks and Zara People!, a membership system is set up using de Certeau's (1984) idea of restricting consumer's behaviour through the "law of the proper" rules, and Dreyfus and Rabinow's (1982) concept on the insertion of disciplined and orderly individuals into the machinery of production. In order to post looks, consumers need to register as a member; whilst one also need to be a member so as to drop comments on looks in Uniqlooks. By adopting a membership

system, the firms are able to restrict any non-recognized person from participating in the C-G lookbook, and make sure that the identity of all participants is known, so as to avoid any improper use. In other words, companies are intended to insert disciplined and orderly members (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982) into their C-G lookbook platform. Meanwhile, as supported by the membership system, the firms can always remove any users upon any fraud or improper use. Hence, users with the C-G lookbook platforms are bound by the rules set by the owner of the platform (i.e. the companies) (de Certeau, 1984).

### **5.1.2 Control via Guidelines**

In order to control the outcomes, by adopting Lefebvre (1991) and de Certeau's (1984) theory on conditioning consumers' behaviour through rules implemented within a particular place, both Uniqlooks and Zara People! have given instructions to the users regarding the requirements of looks to be posted. Both C-G lookbooks set rules (de Certeau, 1984), and require users to include certain amount or even designated collections of products in their looks and tag them, in order for the looks to be posted. In this way, discipline is ensured (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982), in which all looks posted are made sure to contain item(s) from the brands. Besides, in Uniqlooks, users can upload at most three photos for each look. Whilst, in accordance to Lury (2004) and Arvidsson's (2006) idea of directing creativity of the social intellectuality in particular directions, Zara People! has demonstrated how the look should look like through a page of sample looks, so as to guide users to generate photos in a preferred way. Through these guidelines, users are guided to generate looks that match companies' preferences. In other words, they are conditioned to act in a firm's preferred way (Lefebvre, 1991). Moreover, as a form of management through enforcing "laws" (de Certeau, 1984), users are required to submit looks along with their personal information. This gives identity to each look, allowing firms to maintain the authenticity of all looks.

### **5.1.3 Control via Censorship**

Censorship, as a means to control information and ideas circulated within a space, has been employed by companies to control the free labours (i.e. consumers who

participate in the C-G lookbook). As indicted by Ritzer (2004) and Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982), it is important for firms to control labour and consumption processes. Consumers who work as free labours within the C-G lookbook make consumption by means of acting in the platform (i.e. space) (de Certeau, 1984). Therefore, in order to make sure all looks contain designated amount and/or type of item(s) and fulfill all requirements, both companies check all looks submitted by the users before posting them. Companies censor every look submitted, and decide whether it is posted or not, so as to ensure that consumers act in a disciplined and orderly way (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982).

#### 5.1.4 Control via Screening

As observed, in Uniqlooks, looks do not necessarily appear in the descending order of rank. Instead, they appear in an order decided by the company. We believe that Uniqlo have been screening the looks and arrange them in a preferred order. Whilst in Zara People!, only 10 looks are posted each week, and all winning looks are selected by the company. Hence, Zara takes control of which looks to be presented on Zara People! through screening. And through screening, both companies are in fact restricting consumers' behaviour by means of enforcing the "law of the proper" (de Certeau, 1984).



IMG 50. Looks actually do not appear in the descending order of rank in Uniqlooks



### 5.1.5 Control via Restrictions

Uniqlooks and Zara People! are found to have very different approach in the “Like” and comment system, which can be considered as a distinct choice of strategy with accordance to varied goals (de Certeau, 1984). The former enables all visitors to “Like” every look, and registered users to comment on each look; while the latter does not allow any “Like” or comment to be made on individual look. The only way that one can “Like” or comment on the looks is through the one picture posted on Zara’s Facebook page every week, and this can be interpreted as a way to condition consumers’ behaviour (Lefebvre, 1991; de Certeau, 1984). For Uniqlooks, it opens the “Like” system to public, while restrict the commenting function to members only, trying to build discipline and order (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982) within the platform through the “restricted to members only” approach. As for Zara People!, it appears to have tried to minimize the evaluation of looks by prohibiting the “Like” and commenting functions, attempting to restrict consumers’ activities via rules (de Certeau, 1984); while consumers are restricted to “Like” and comment on the weekly lookbook as a whole instead of evaluating looks individually, in which in this way, they are led by the planned environment (Lefebvre, 1991) to make comment on the look being posted on the Facebook page; the company; Zara People!, etc instead of each individual look.



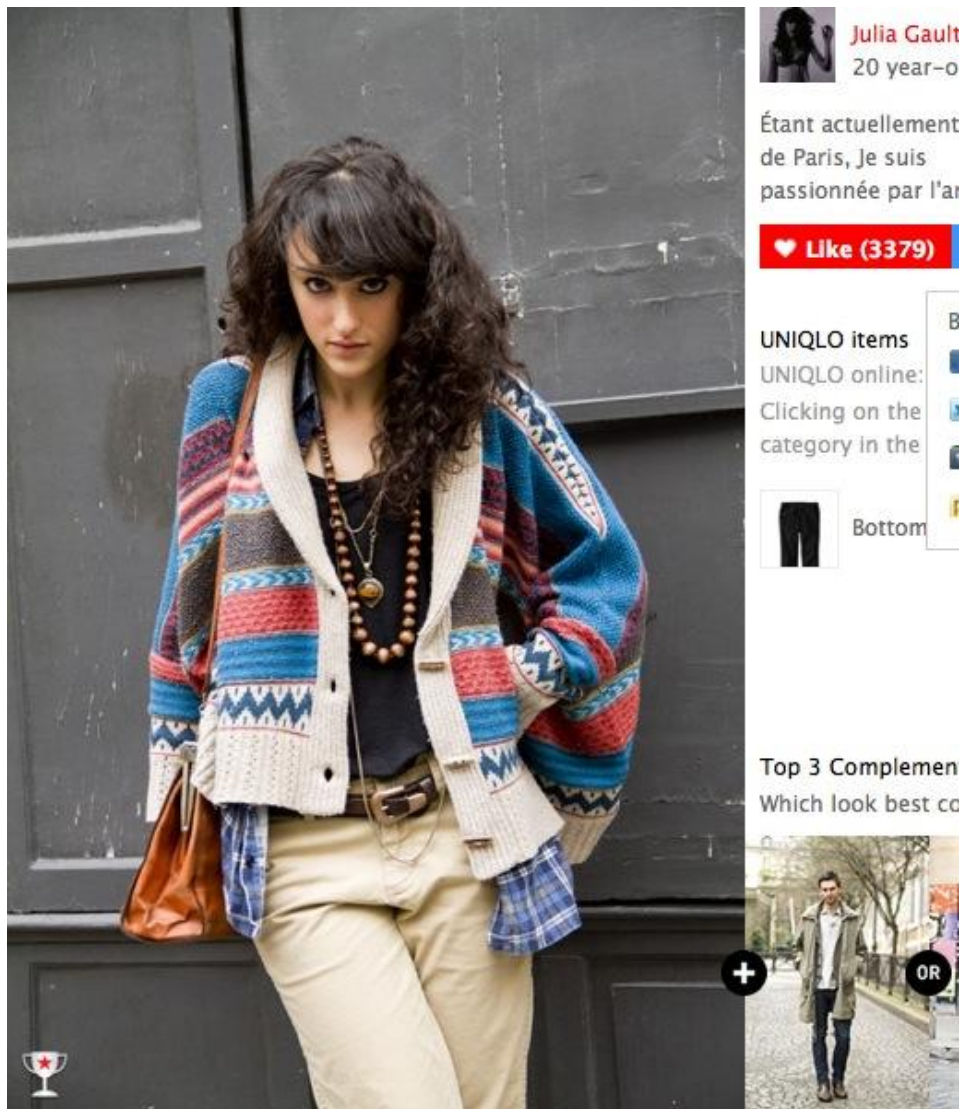
IMG 51. Comments made on Zara People! May Week 4 on Zara’s Facebook page

Apart from the “Like” and comment system, Uniqlooks and Zara People! have applied restrictions (de Certeau, 1984) to the sharing of looks as well. This is actually done by, as indicated by Lefebvre (1991) as the conditioning of behaviour through planned environments, providing only links of preferred social networking sites. Uniqlooks allow the sharing of looks with 335 online platforms, which has made restriction much less obvious. But for Zara People, it has restricted the sharing of looks via Facebook, Twitter and email only. As a result, companies take control by directing and restricting (Lefebvre, 1999; de Certeau, 1984) which online platforms the looks can be shared to.

#### **5.1.6 Control via Governmentality**

Rose’s (1999) concept of governing consumers through freedom have been applied to the C-G lookbook platform. In Uniqlooks, the company allows consumers to vote and comment on each look, while all winning looks are voted by the consumers as well. As pinpointed by Lefebvre (1991), “the space of modernity [...] is mapped in a highly visual way] (Cassinger, 2010), in which space is defined visually through perception. In the case of Uniqlooks, consumers perceive it as a high degree of freedom and rights to make decisions granted to them, but indeed Uniqlo is exploiting the voting and commenting mechanism to make consumers control each other (Rose, 1999). In other words, consumers decide which looks to be complimented and rewarded. And by exercising their rights (Rose, 1999), they are actually exploited by the company to manage themselves.

All in all, companies have been setting rules in their “terrain” to shape users’ activities (Lefebvre, 1991; de Certeau, 1984) In C-G lookbook, particular measures are found to be used by firms to take control of the co-creation process, for instance, *control via membership; control via guidelines; control via censorship; control via screening; and control via restrictions*. By means of these measures, companies are able to take control of different issues, and this is how the co-creation process within C-G lookbook being managed.



IMG 52. A «LOOK OF THE WEEK» voted by consumers which received 3379 “Like”

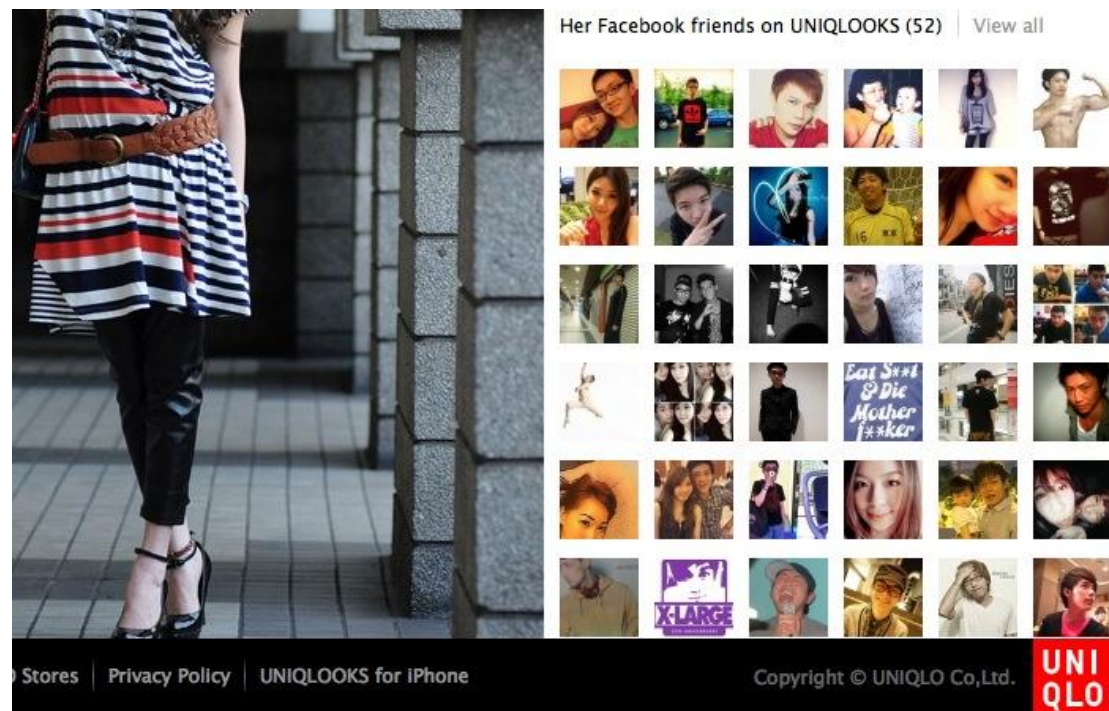
## 5.2 How to Get Consumers to Participate in C-G Lookbook

As we have already mentioned, the task for companies is to provide managed platforms for consumer practice (Lury, 2004) in order to enhance consumers’ creativity and direct these activities in ways preferred by the marketers. There are several motivators (financial, social, technological, and psychological) of participation in co-creation (van Doorn *et al*, 2010) and their combination is a good way to stimulate co-creative activities. In our case, investigated companies are using a different combination of motivators.

### 5.2.1 Uniqlooks

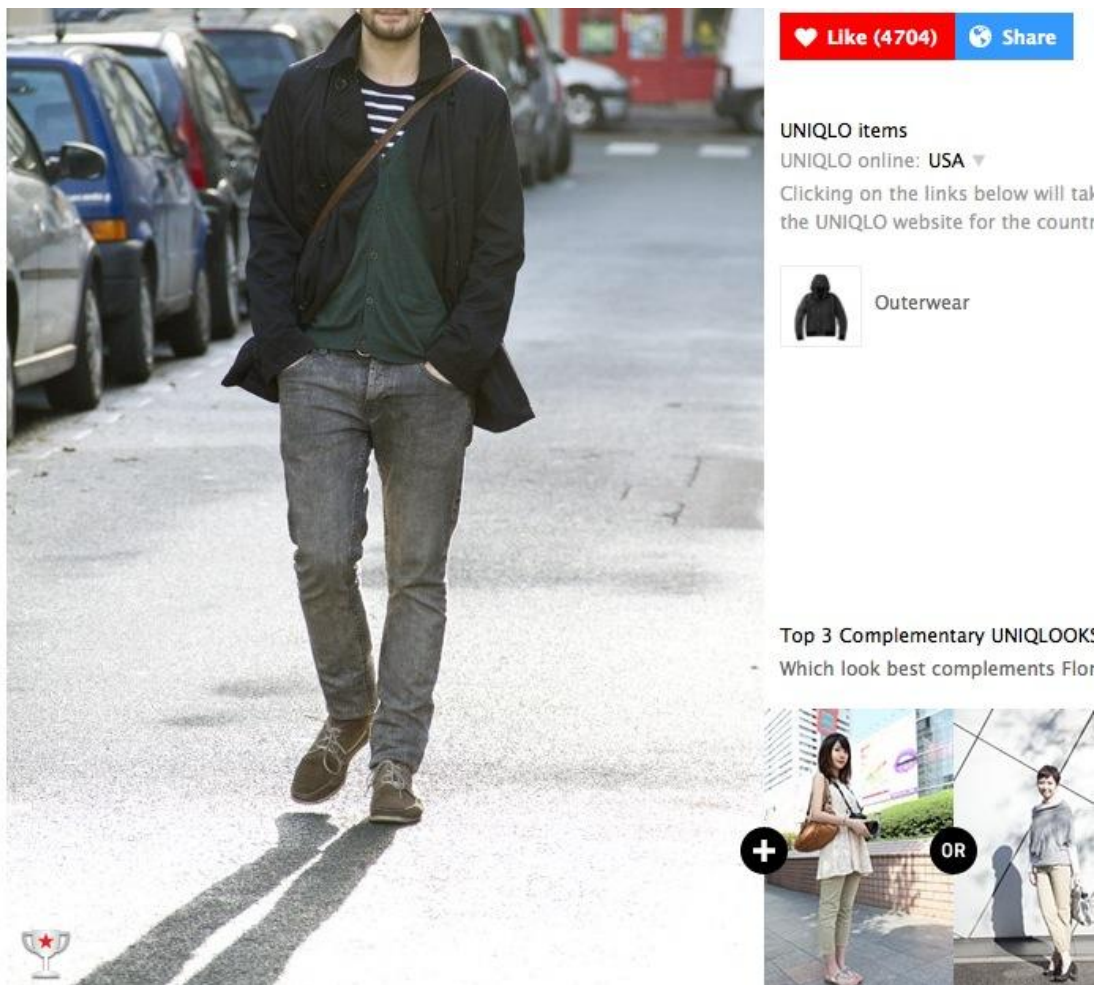
According to Nambisan and Baron (2009), social remunerations include social esteem, enlarged status, “good citizenship”, and intensification of ties with relevant others. Sense of community might cause an existence of exchange of support between members (Greer, 2000), shared emotional connections among members (Rheingold, 1993), sense of belonging and membership (Baym, 1995, 1999; Markus *et al*, 2000).

We assume, that Uniqlooks’ platform is built with an intention to create a community. First of all, in order to become a member, one should create an account for Uniqlooks with a Facebook, Twitter or renren.com account to be able to post a look or comment on others’ photos, so as we can observe, users are linked to each other via social networking. Then, there is a possibility for users to vote for and comment the pictures they like, so there is an interaction present among users. Moreover, the participation of every customer is visible to others, meaning that whenever user is leaving comment or voting for some pictures, all other users (even non-members) can see that.



IMG 53. Users are connected with each other in Uniqlooks, e.g. a user’s friends who are also registered In Uniqlooks are linked to his/ her profile page

We consider, that there is a linkage among users in a way that under every picture there are complementary looks of other users, who have the same style, and the site is suggesting pictures that one may like, taking into account the type of style that he/she is viewing. Besides, winning looks are chosen by users (the top-voted pictures of each week become «LOOK OF THE WEEK», implying that winners are credited with an approval and acceptance of their style and fashion sense from others, which can be seen as another motivational factor.



IMG 54. LOOK OF THE WEEK is selected by users with the most "Like"

Also users without a Facebook, Twitter or renren.com account can browse and "Like" the looks, and share them to 335 online platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Gmail, Tumblr and Posterous. All registered users can fill in their profiles and everything filled in will be shown. In this case, there is an investment of time and effort and customer's desire for self-recognition and status observed. As mentioned

by Baumeister (1998), status is based on other members' approval and acceptance of an individual's contributions to the community (Baumeister, 1998).



IMG 55. Users create their profile in Uniqlooks

Even if users are not posting their own pictures, they are still active participants in a process of value co-creation, as they are leaving their comments and voting for looks. We may assume, that there is a shared emotional connection can be noticed in Uniqlooks case, developed from frequent and high quality interaction (leaving comments and voting), investment of time and resources, the effect of honor and humiliation for members (the most and least voted looks), and spiritual bonds among members (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).



IMG 56. Users leave comment on looks in Uniqlooks

Furthermore, psychological factors are also used here, that are provoking sense of pride and priority. First of all, those winning looks have a special sign in the left bottom corner as a symbol of victory. Then, those chosen looks of the week are published on top of the site and used as the profile picture of Uniqlo's Facebook page. Moreover, they are uploaded to the photo album in Uniqlo's renren.com page and shown in Uniqlo's official website together with a hyperlink to the Uniqlooks site, providing customers with a desired state of visibility.



IMG 57. Photos of a «LOOK OF THE WEEK» posted to the photo album of Uniqlo's renren.com page

Product knowledge is also employed by Uniqlooks as a motivational factor. Through taking part in the co-creation process, consumers can get inspiration and knowledge of how to mix-and-match outfits so as to create new styles. They are gaining fashion knowledge through exchanging ideas with other users. (Nambisan and Baron, 2009)

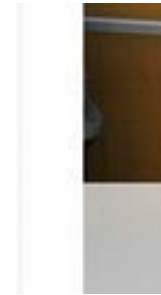
### 5.2.2 Zara People!

We assume that in People!, the emphasis is on financial and psychological motivation. As observed, the monetary reward is the most evident, as Zara is promising a reward in a form of 300 Euro to spend on Zara's latest collection for users, whose looks have been chosen.

· If your photo is selected you will receive 300€ for your collaboration (or the equivalent in the currency of your country).

## PHOTO PROPERTIES

High quality JPG photo. Minimum size: Width 1300px and Height 1050px



IMG 58. Consumers who have their look(s) selected will be rewarded with 300 Euro

We perceive Zara People! as a competition between users, as only 10 looks are being chosen each week, and in that way Zara is motivating customers by triggering their desire to compete. Those, whose looks are chosen, then get a sense of priority and pride for his/her style being rewarded. (Etgar, 2008) And as being chosen among others, the winners might have a feeling of influence within the group, because their style was officially approved by Zara representatives. (Markus, 1994a)

Moreover, winning looks are shown on Zara People! webpage, Zara's Facebook page and Zara's iPhone application, and in that way Zara is motivating people by their desire for obtaining visibility and pride through taking part in the C-G lookbook.



IMG 59. Winning looks being posted on Zara's Facebook page

As we have already mentioned, at the bottom of a posted picture, there is a link to



the author's fashion blog, and we perceive it as another motivator for people who are striving for self-expression and recognition, and this is a perfect way for them to promote themselves.



IMG 60. Link to the author's fashion blog

Zara People! is also using product knowledge as a motivational factor, because through taking part in a lookbook's co-creation, users are getting inspiration and knowledge about fashion and how to mix outfits to get a fabulous personal style. Consumers are gaining fashion knowledge through exchanging ideas and contributions between community members. (Nambisan and Baron, 2009)

To draw a conclusion, it can be noted, that from a wide spectrum of motivators (financial, social, technological, and psychological) (van Doorn *et al*, 2010) of participation in co-creation Zara and Uniqlo are using different combinations. Uniqlooks is making emphasis on community building, so social motivation is more appropriate in this case (sense of community and belonging). Zara People!, which is designed on a competitive base, is using financial incentives (300 euro for winners to spend in Zara stores). But both companies are using psychological and technological motivators, by providing consumers with product knowledge and by triggering their desire for recognition, fame and self-expression.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we conclude our findings from our analysis based on the theoretical framework and empirical findings. Further, recommendations on how companies within our research field can use our findings will be argued in terms of managerial implications. Finally, we will give our suggestions for future research.

### 6.1 Answering Our Research Questions

By analyzing how firms manage consumers' activities in C-G lookbook; and how to get consumers to participate in in C-G lookbook, we have answered our research question: *How does co-creation work in practice via Web 2.0?* In which it is further divided into three main questions:

- 1) How do companies manipulate the workforce in virtual co-creation?
- 2) What are the motivations for consumers to take part in virtual co-creation?

Our findings are based on our theoretical framework, which has three main focuses on shaping consumers' behaviour, motivation, and control. Through studying the two selected samples, Uniqlooks and Zara People!, we identify that the construction of C-G lookbook is not purely a design matter, but rather an intention to build a planned environment. The layout and settings within a C-G look are all carefully planned, in order to lead consumers to behave in certain ways, or for particular purposes. We identified 6 main ways for companies to control the co-creation process within C-G lookbook: 1. Control via membership, in which companies manage the participants and maintain the discipline of the platform; 2. control via guidelines, in which consumers' behaviour is conditioned by instructions; 3. control via censorship, in which companies inspect the looks before posting them; 4. control via screening, in which companies decide the looks to be posted, and the order that looks to be appeared in; 5. control via restrictions, in which companies prohibit consumers' activities; 6. control via governmentality, in which consumers are exploited to control themselves.

As for motivations, there are two major approaches on motivating consumers to participate in C-G lookbook: through social motivation (i.e. building of a community); or financial motivation (i.e. monetary reward). The former depends mostly on social and psychological satisfaction, which encompasses sense of community; sense of belonging and membership; self-recognition; status; investment of one's time and resources; interpersonal connection; pride and priority; visibility; as well as product knowledge. The latter is primarily based on financial incentives, which is the tangible reward that one can get. Whilst psychological satisfaction, such as sense of priority and pride; visibility; self-expression; self recognition; and product knowledge also play an important role.

## **6.2 Contributions**

Previous studies in the area of value co-creation have provided this study with theories and a foundation to develop a conceptual framework on. The concept of value co-creation has long been discussed by authors such as Lovelock and Young (1979), Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000; 2004a), Vargo and Lusch (2004) and Penaloza and Venkatesh (2006). However, most of the existing researches on co-creation are built upon the theoretical level. Through this research, we have made a major contribution to prior studies by increasing the knowledge of how co-creation works in practice.

Co-creation taking place in the context of customer communities has also been well examined by a considerable number of researches (e.g. Stauss *et al*, 2001; Butscher, 2002; Gustafsson *et al*, 2004; Rowley *et al*, 2007). Potts (2008) has examined the efficacy of value co-creation with the use of web-based technologies. And despite a few studies that have slightly touched upon value co-creation within web 2.0 (e.g. McLoughlin *et al*, 2007; Rollett *et al*, 2007), we were first to examine how co-creation via C-G lookbook or any other similar platforms work in Web 2.0. And to be more specific, we have illustrated how firms manipulate and motivate the workforce in virtual co-creation.

This study also contributes to prior researches on spatial construction, as we examined firms control over consumers in virtual co-creation by applying de Certeau (1984) and Lefèbvre's (1991) hypotheses. De Certeau (1984) and Lefèbvre's (1991) studies were built upon the architectural stance, and applied to the living space in everyday life. We transferred their theories to the virtual co-creation platform, and proved that the concepts of producing place and space can be applied to the virtual world. We have also found out that firms are actually employing these theories when creating a business platform, and through carefully planning the interior design of the platform, firms try to condition or restrict consumers' behavior, so as to achieve wanted outcomes. And with the rise of the empowered consumers, the key of spatial construction in the business world is not simply about how to shape consumers' behavior through the platform design; but rather how to design a platform that is perceived as restriction-free, whilst firms can still take control over the consumers.

We have also contributed to the theoretical explanation of the motivation that drives consumers to participate in co-creation. We took into consideration various theories: that consumers work for free (e.g. von Ahn, 2006); some claim that consumers are motivated by monetary reward (e.g. Hippel and von Krogh, 2006; Füller, 2008); while some maintain that consumers are driven by social and psychological motivation (e.g. Füller, 2008; Nov *et al*, 2008). But we came up with a conclusion, that according to the goals of companies, various combination of factors should be used. If the company's aim is to create a consumer community, so social motivation is more appropriate in this case (sense of community and belonging), as in the case of Uniqlooks. If the company strives to create a competition between users, it is appropriate to use financial incentives (Zara as an example, when the winner gets 300 euro to spend in Zara stores). Also we found out, that psychological and technological motivators (providing consumers with product knowledge and by triggering their desire for recognition, fame and self-expression) are applicable in both cases.

Meanwhile, our study also contribute to the prior works of crowdsourcing. Desipte being brought up by Dawkins in 1986, the idea of crowdsourcing is rarely examined, and there are relatively limited studied conducted on that. As defined by Dawkins (1986), crowdsourcing is a process of managing a great number of online users, and using their knowledge to cope with assigned tasks. In view of this, C-G lookbook can indeed be regarded as a kind of crowdsourcing activity. Therefore, we contribute by improving the knowledge of crowdsourcing in practice upon previous studies carried out by various scholars, for instance, Dawkins (1986), Brabham (2008), Scoble and Israel (2006), von Ahn (2006), Nov *et al* (2008), and Kleeman *et al* (2008).

### **6.3 Research Limitations and Future Research**

Though we have tried to research the area of value co-creation via C-G lookbooks as thoroughly as possible within a time limit of two months, we should admit some of the research limitations.

First of all, we should note that the way we have analyzed our data is formed by our situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988). And as we are marketing students, our previous knowledge and professional background predetermines the way we perceive, understand and analyze the gathered data. And one should take into account that, if the same study was conducted by students of sociology or psychology, the whole thesis could have been done in a different manner, which would have led to conclusions from a different angle.

By reading this paper, we hope one would be inspired and continue to study how value co-creation works in practice, since most of the existing researches on value co-creation are built upon the theoretical level, while knowledge in practice is limited. It would also be interesting to further study value co-creation within Web 2.0, as this issue is not properly explored and further studies are needed on how co-creation via C-G lookbook or any other platform of the kind works in practice so far.

Moreover, there are limited studies on how firms motivate consumers to participate in this kind of co-creation, and manage the co-creation process through censorship.

On top of our study, we suggest further studies to be conducted by studying other fashion companies that are also using C-G lookbook, in order to further generalize the study. In addition, it would also be rewarding to study how companies are creating C-G lookbooks in co-operation with already existing user-generated lookbooks (e.g. LOOKBOOK.nu). For example, American Apparel and H&M collong-terminated with LOOKBOOK.nu to create C-G lookbook before. By studying those two cases, another form of C-G lookbook could be researched.

It would also be worthy of note to make a further study on the examples we have described, as they are new and were launched only in year 2011. And as our study is more descriptive, further studies might put an emphasis on evaluating the efficiency of using these C-G lookbook platforms, by conducting observations, questionnaires, or interviews with companies and participants, as there is a lack of research on the impact of co-creation activities in business performance. Moreover, a longitudinal study might be performed to determine how the view of C-G lookbook changes through time, and whether it continues to develop along with the advancement of the technology and forthcoming consumer trends.

Also we should mention, that we have conducted our study as an unobtrusive observers without any contacts with either consumers or companies. So we suggest studying consumers' perception of co-creation process by conducting interviews and observations with participants and the same study can be conducted with companies in order to find out their attitude to motivation and control tools in this process to get a wider picture.

Finally, as this thesis presents a conceptual framework based on qualitative analysis, quantitative empirical research should be conducted to confirm the applicability of the proposed models for using C-G lookbooks as a marketing tool. The quantitative

research should further find out whether the conceptual frameworks of this paper can be applied to other industries apart from the fashion one.

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