Cultural Identity that appear in Latin American Fashion:
With a focus on the Mexican brands, Taller Flora and Fábrica Social

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(Received May 12, 2013, Revised June 4, 2013, Accepted June 15, 2013)

Abstract This study takes a look at the distinct and exclusive culture of Latin America, with a specific focus on Mexico, and attempts to understand its unique cultural identity by comparing, analyzing, and evaluating the characteristics of the Mexican fashion brands, Taller Flora and Fábrica Social, which are brands that have actively used the Latin American cultural identity in its designs. The research method was as follows: 1) performing literature research with specialty publications and thesis that dealt with the two brands 2) analyzing the contents of various articles from the Internet and interviews related to the brands. Thus, this research attempts to understand the characteristics of the fashion brands that use the cultural traits of Latin America in order to dissect its methods and find a way to apply it so that it can be used in different cultures, and in effect, lead to the advancement of the fashion industries, in general. Taller Flora and Fábrica Social are two brands that are able to stand out with a distinct identity by applying traditional native Latin American qualities in its products, as well as its products reflecting a respectful and balanced relationship between people and nature. The characteristics of the two brands are as follows: 1) showing the concept of "the coexistence of diversity" by expressing "the old and the new", "simplicity and flash", and "melding of the Western culture via colonialism and traditional cultures of the aboriginals and other diverse native cultures" 2) achieving "the recovery of the human dignity" by protecting the human rights of the native female artisans and building a network for equality 3) pursuing "free naturalism" by balancing the natural provision of nature and man in addition to promoting environmental protection and conservation of goods 4) becoming "the bridge between communication and exchange" by connecting the artisan, the designer and the consumers together, or the producer and the market, as well as the different cultures of markets from diverse countries.

Key words Latin America, Mexico, cultural identity, Taller Flora, Fábrica Social

Introduction

Globalization has led to increased interest in new cultures, and this has trickled down to the third world countries thanks to easier access to those places. Also, the influence of multiculturalism, which became

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prominent with the rise of postmodernism in the 1980s, has made it important for countries to recognize the diverse cultures in their nation as well as the rights of the minorities. Since the late 20th century, the attention on these diverse cultures have increased quickly in the global market, and its influence is only getting stronger, so it is necessary to evaluate what the diversity and distinctiveness of these cultures bring to the table.

Latin America, which is considered to be part of the Third World, is a general term used for the regions in North and South America that were colonized by European countries of Latin origin. It is a region that features a unique culture where various forms of mixed-races and cultures coexist. Ancient traditional cultures and certain facets of the European culture from the colonial periods have mixed together to create a new blend of culture that has become Latin American culture. Lately, Latin American culture and arts, with the music and fine arts at the center, have garnered increased attention. Not to be outdone by other industries, its fashion industry has become an inspiration to global fashion design by their ability to not only blend the diverse Latin American cultures together, but also incorporate the different types of natural environments that can be found in their broad region. They have been able to distinguish themselves in twofold: 1) by emphasizing their ethnic tradition through designs that express their cultural identity 2) in their brand management policies.

Although all the Latin American countries have a similar cultural identity, there are varying degrees of differences between them. Each country has different ratio of race mixtures, depending on the dominant tribe or race of the region that habituated there originally; and so as each region was being established as a nation, the mixing of cultures and races were not identical. Mexico is, of all the Latin American countries, the nation that is populated the most with natives. It is a country where the indigenous culture of the region is protected and is able to coexist with the modern times, as well as a place with the best preservation of the mestizo culture, a culture that best exemplifies Latin American racial mixture and coexistence of culture identity. Also, Mexico has developed strong ethnic and national identity based on their strong and deep history of culture in fields such as astronomy, architecture, arts, and hieroglyphics. So this research will aim to study the general cultural identity of Latin America, and the method that the fashion brands of those countries utilize it in their products. Compared to other Latin American countries, Mexico has had the most chaotic history, however they withstood it, and somehow established a unique cultural identity. Also, their fashion industry is the standard bearer in the Latin American market, so the study has chosen to evaluate Mexico for its analysis as the focal point of the Latin American culture in this paper.

Latin American culture has become a big part of the global trend, and so the purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics of the Latin American cultural identity, which is very distinctive and exclusive to that culture. It will evaluate the characteristics of the Mexican fashion brands, Taller Flora and Fábrica Social, two brands that have differentiated themselves from others by actively using the Latin American cultural identity in its designs as well as forming regional manufacturing networks. Mexico is a special country because it actually combined the factors that could have paralyzed the development of the country to develop its own unique culture. In other words, it was able to mix the