https://doi.org/10.22398/2525-2828.925131-150

# Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market in Southern Brazil: a comparison between three companies

*Mercado de vestuário litúrgico afro-brasileiro na Região Sul do Brasil: um comparativo entre três empresas*

Angele Maine Rhoden[I], Fernanda Hänsch Beuren[I], Icleia Silveira[I], Lucas da Rosa[I]

## ABSTRACT

This article aimed to carry out a comparative analysis between three companies in the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment located in the South region of Brazil using product mix and marketing tools. For this research, the inductive method was applied, with an applied purpose, with qualitative data analysis and descriptive from the point of view. Among the technical procedures, the preparation of the bibliographic research was based on an unsystematic review and online field research to identify the intentional samples analyzed in this study. The result obtained allowed the creation of a comparative table of the aforementioned companies, their common points and their market differences.

**Keywords:** Liturgical clothing. Afro-Brazilian. Product mix. Marketing mix. E-commerce.

## *RESUMO*

*O presente artigo teve como objetivo realizar uma análise comparativa entre três empresas do segmento de vestuário litúrgico afro-brasileiro localizadas na Região Sul do Brasil por meio das ferramentas mix de produto e marketing. Para a presente pesquisa, aplicou-se o método indutivo, de finalidade aplicada, com análise de dados qualitativos e descritivos do ponto de vista. Entre os procedimentos técnicos, a elaboração da pesquisa bibliográfica deu-se mediante uma revisão assistemática e realização de uma pesquisa de campo online para identificação das amostras intencionais analisadas neste estudo. O resultado obtido permitiu a elaboração de um quadro comparativo das referidas empresas, seus pontos em comum e seus diferenciais mercadológicos.*

***Palavras-chave:*** *Vestuário litúrgico. Afro-brasileiro. Mix de produto. Mix de marketing. Comércio eletrônico.*

[I]Universidade Estadual de Santa Catarina, Fashion Postgraduate Program – Florianópolis (SC), Brazil. E-mails: angele.design@gmail.com; fernanda.beuren@udesc.br; icleiasilveira@gmail.com; darosa.lucas@gmail.com.
**Received on:** 01/12/2024 – **Accepted on:** 03/13/2024

## INTRODUCTION

In Afro-Brazilian religions, *axós*[1] play a vital role in interpreting and acknowledging a cosmogony that originates from the sacred. Consequently, Afro-Brazilian religions attribute significant importance to clothing. When combined with specific rituals, colors, garments, and accessories, clothing represents a symbolic universe influenced by diverse environments. In these religions, initiates are typically provided with ritualistic clothing and accessories that serve various purposes. These items communicate authority, symbolize power or wisdom, convey magical qualities, or denote sacramental significance, among other functions.

Clothing and ritual accessories, owing to their distinctive nature, are not widely available in commercial outlets in urban centers. Instead, they are typically crafted by small ateliers specializing in the development and production of Afro-Brazilian liturgical costumes. These ateliers are often situated near *terreiros* (places of worship in Afro-Brazilian religions) and traditionally employ seamstresses who are either members of Afro-Brazilian religions or sympathetic to their beliefs, securing a loyal and steady source of income among them, as finding seamstresses willing to work within this niche is not the easiest of tasks (Teixeira, 2005).

Campos (2015) explores the composition of Afro-Brazilian liturgical costumes, highlighting that historically, the majority of these garments were crafted from simple and rustic materials such as raw cotton, calico, and jute. Over time, with the urbanization and expansion of practitioners, the production of these garments has grown and undergone a process of industrialization. According to the 2000 census, only 0.3% of the adult Brazilian population identified themselves as followers of Afro-Brazilian religions, totaling just over 470 thousand followers (*apud* Prandi, 2007). However, the census conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* – IBGE) in 2010 reported an increase in self-declared practitioners to 588,797. Given the significant time elapsed since the last census and the tendency for statistics on followers of Afro-Brazilian religions to underestimate the actual numbers, it is likely that this figure has considerably increased by the year 2024.

Based on the above findings, Campos (2015) suggests that changes in the conception of Afro-Brazilian liturgical garments have occurred, influenced by various factors including the integration of urban culture into *terreiros* and the increased use of industrialized fabrics. This transformation, facilitated by the urban environment, has provided opportunities for African-based religions to engage in the market to fulfill the consumption demands of their followers.

Hence, the demand for the aforementioned costumes has created a business opportunity for the sale of *axós* and Afro-religious accessories. Specialized stores now cater to practitioners by offering a variety of options for personal ornamentation, with a constant search for new pieces, fabrics, and prints. Currently, the use of

1 Ritualistic clothing in African-derived religious ceremonies in Brazil. They are considered magical items when their functions go beyond simply wearing a piece of clothing and integrate a rite (Campos, 2015).

ready-made *axós* has become increasingly common, and this new production method has gained widespread acceptance among followers in *terreiros*. However, the formal commercialization of these costumes in physical stores struggles to keep pace with the growing number of followers of Afro-Brazilian religions, who are dispersed across various locations in the country and the world. Thus, overcoming the physical barriers of commerce through online sales proves to be a viable and effective alternative to meet this demand (Anderson, 2006).

Competition in the online sphere has seen a notable rise since 2020, prompting companies to prioritize differentiation strategies to maintain their market presence. In this context, the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment holds a distinct advantage as it inherently operates within a niche market. Ateliers specializing in Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing offer a unique service that is experiencing growing demand across the nation. They possess the potential to scale their sales and cater to the needs of various states in the country, capitalizing on the rapid growth of online consumption in recent years.

Given the informal nature of many producers of liturgical clothing, along with the lack of instructional and academic resources to assist them in scaling their niche sales online, it is imperative to conduct research on how these companies approach their marketing and product mix. Understanding the strategies adopted by these companies and their average effectiveness can provide valuable insights into developing an overall mix capable of meeting consumer demands.

This article aimed to create a comparative table between three companies in the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment located in the Southern Region of Brazil, focusing on their product mix and marketing tools. Firstly, the research provides an overview of the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market and the aforementioned tools. Subsequently, a comparative table is presented, showcasing the selected companies, with the objective of understanding the impact of this business strategy on the ritualistic clothing niche.

The significance of this research is justified by its potential to provide valuable information on the subject of marketing and product mix, as well as on the market niche of Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing. Additionally, it contributes to addressing a gap identified through exploratory searches in scientific databases.

The research is classified as basic in nature, qualitative in terms of its research problem, and descriptive in terms of its objective. Technical procedures were applied to conduct bibliographic research through an unsystematic narrative review, along with online field research to select the companies analyzed in this study. The results were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The theoretical foundation encompasses the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market, as well as marketing and product mix tools.

## AFRO-BRAZILIAN LITURGICAL CLOTHING MARKET

According to Gama (2016), consumption transcends mere economic transactions and is deeply intertwined with culture and society. The author emphasizes that individuals' purchasing decisions are influenced not only by their immediate environment but also by the broader social and cultural context in which they live and interact. In the context of Afro-Brazilian religious consumption, this influence extends to both human beings and the spiritual entities associated with these cults, who also act as consumers. Moreover, it is essential to recognize that the social aspect encompasses non-human elements as well.

Verbal and non-verbal communication modalities, both conventional and interactive, play a crucial role in all forms and levels of organizations. In the context of the consumption of Afro-Brazilian liturgical costumes, additional forms of communication are employed, involving interlocutors, meanings, and specific communicative practices. This includes communication between religious practitioners and the producers responsible for crafting ritualistic clothing and adornments (Guimarães & Rodrigues, 2015).

Gama (2016) underscores that *Umbanda terreiros* and centers operate within market dynamics, adapting to the demands and offerings of the surrounding society, thereby reflecting social changes. However, consumption patterns in *Candomblé*, for instance, while possessing an individual dimension, are intricately tied to the group's prescriptions and, notably, to the desires, requests, or demands of the *orixás* and other spiritual entities. While the spirit in *Candomblé* does not dictate everything, it unveils many aspects. Thus, it is the religious system and the deities themselves that dictate what, how, and when consumption should occur, taking into account the hierarchy of the *terreiro*, the liturgical calendar, the characteristics and preferences of the *orixás*, the faithful, among other factors.

In a study on Afro-Brazilian consumption and religiosity in the Southern Cone, Oro (1998) reveals that in the city of Montevideo (Uruguay), specialized stores offering Afro-Brazilian liturgical costumes can be found. These stores showcase a variety of items including *axós*, gloves, hats, and covers for *exus* and *pombagiras*, all crafted by local seamstresses. Conversely, in Buenos Aires (Argentina), ritualistic clothing is not readily available in specialized stores; rather, it is typically handcrafted by members of the religion themselves or by conventional seamstresses. Additionally, the author notes that consumers in Argentina perceive Brazilian products as synonymous with quality. They attribute greater efficacy to Brazilian products, as they are crafted in the country where the religion originated and was structured.

Transformations in consumption patterns are also evident in the *terreiros* of Afro-Brazilian religions, particularly in the clothing worn during ceremonies. In the past, women typically danced in skirts made of chintz, an affordable fabric often adorned with floral prints, while the daughters of saints were distinguished by their satin coats in specific colors representing the *orixás*. Despite the availability of more luxurious fabrics, they were rarely utilized, typically reserved for a select few mothers of saints. However, a recent trend toward greater sophistication in the crafting of *axós* has emerged in *terreiros*. What was once considered a privilege, a luxury item worn only by a select group of mothers of saints, has now become nearly indispensable (Gama, 2016).

In this context, which encompasses both society at large and the sacred spaces of Afro-Brazilian religions, maintaining an established network for religious consumption is crucial. As per the data presented by Gama (2016), followers strive to uphold loyalty to specific stores, while also expressing a desire to forge connections and bonds with priests (who can provide recommendations for commercial establishments) and with the children of saints.

As time progresses, new modes of consumption emerge. Gama (2016) contextualizes that *Candomblé* also intersects with fashion, particularly evident in the evolving fabrics used for women's clothing. Additionally, he explores the concept of investment as expressed by the sons of saints. To them, purchasing an *axó* is not merely an expense but rather an investment in their own lives, intended to please their *orixá* or entity.

When searching for the term *umbanda clothing store* on Google, the platform retrieves approximately 1,620,000 results in just 0.30 seconds. These results include physical stores, online stores on their own websites, online stores on marketplaces (Mercado Livre, Shopee, Magalu, Amazon, Elo7, among others), as well as stores on social networks and resale platforms (OLX and Enjoei).

With the assistance of the Trends tool, a Google-provided application that presents the most searched terms within a recent period, it is feasible to gauge the frequency with which a particular term is searched across various regions worldwide and in different languages. Consequently, upon searching for *umbanda clothing stores*, as illustrated in Figure 1, the results indicate that interest over the last 12 months (Mar. 2023 – Mar. 2024) in *Umbanda* clothing stores is primarily observed


Figure 1. Frequency of interest by sub-region.

in the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, Piauí, and Paraná, respectively.

To become part of the online Afro-religious market, additional investments and dedicated efforts are necessary. Virtual communities not only help overcome geographical barriers but also provide a sense of closeness to the religious space, even in a virtual setting, for users who may be “more isolated” from physical stores (Guimarães; Rodrigues, 2015). Therefore, it is evident that the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing market is an existing and growing niche that requires a strategic approach to encompass all the changes in today’s consumption landscape. Effective strategic planning for the online environment is crucial for this expansion. The marketing mix and product mix tools presented below can aid in achieving this objective.

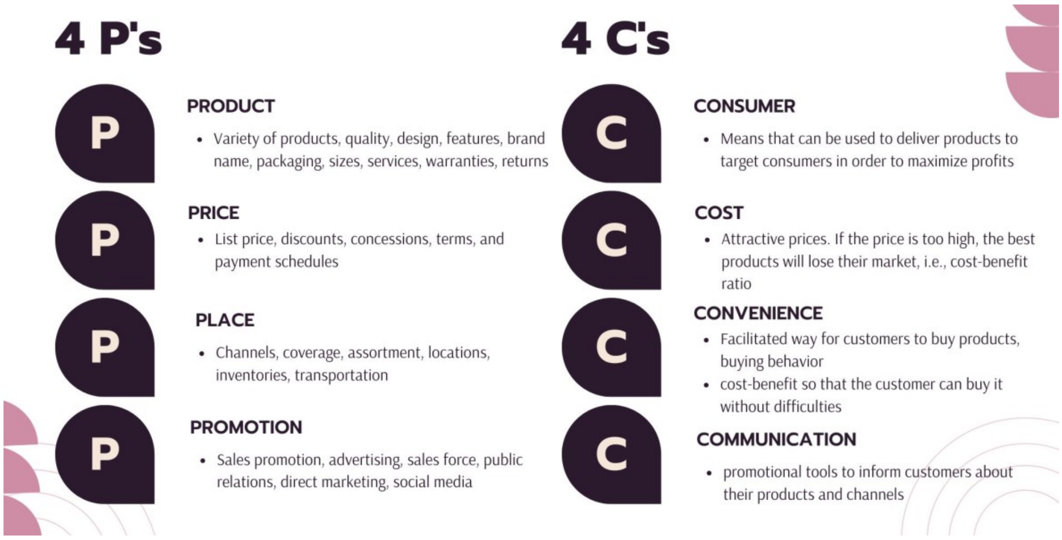
## Four marketing mix: four Ps and four Cs

The current economic situation is prompting many individuals to venture into the business realm, leading to the emergence of entrepreneurs in the market. The majority of these entrepreneurs fall under the category of small and medium-sized enterprises. However, entering the business arena is no simple feat, particularly for these smaller companies. They must navigate market competition and develop effective marketing strategies to capture customer attention and distinguish themselves. Thus, it is imperative for small and medium-sized enterprises to establish robust planning and precise strategies to mitigate substantial losses and effectively compete in the market. Utilizing the marketing mix is considered one of the fundamental marketing strategies (Idris, 2021).

Over nearly seven decades, the field of marketing has undergone significant evolution, transitioning from a product-centric approach to recognizing the centrality of human beings. Throughout this transformative period, several concepts have remained enduring. Despite their “traditional” nature, the principles of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning, coupled with the four Ps model (product, price, place, and promotion), have become universal touchstones for contemporary marketers (Kotler; Kartajaya; Setiawan, 2021).

According to Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), marketing can be approached through two distinct frameworks: the four Ps and the four Cs. The four Ps encompass the foundational elements of the marketing mix: product, price, place, and promotion. In contrast, the four Cs revolve around consumer, cost, convenience, and communication. While the four Ps marketing mix remains fundamental for companies aiming to market their offerings, the four Cs framework holds particular significance due to its consumer-centric orientation.

As per Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), the marketing mix comprises a collection of marketing methods and strategies available to a company. These tools, when integrated, facilitate the formulation of a competitive market strategy that directly influences commerce, ultimately reaching the end consumer. Each element of this strategy ensures the precise execution and planning of actions tailored to the specific target audience. A comprehensive understanding of this entire process and the significance of each tool is crucial for companies, given their pivotal role and impact on business success. Figure 2 illustrates the concepts of each of these tools.




Source: adapted from Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017).
Figure 2. Four Ps and four Cs.

According to Gonçalves *et al*. (2008), product-related decisions within the definitions of the four Ps involve identifying opportunities for product launches and adapting these products to meet customer needs. Meanwhile, Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017) mention that companies employ various pricing methods, such as cost, competition, and customer value, to determine the sales price. However, the consumers' willingness to pay, estimated through pricing based on customer value, constitutes the most significant contribution of consumers to the pricing process. Regarding distribution strategies, consumers are accustomed to purchasing products from accessible, suitable, and available places when needed and expected, as outlined by Kotler and Keller (2006). Promotion encompasses a set of actions aimed at promoting the commercialization and dissemination of products or services, with the primary objectives of expanding reach and generating profitability.

Robert Lauterborn, a renowned expert in marketing theory, is credited as one of the pioneers of integrated marketing communication theory. He introduced a customer-centric marketing model known as the four Cs, which include *customer*, *cost*, *convenience*, and *communication*. In contrast to the traditional four Ps theory, the four Cs theory shifts away from product-centric approaches and instead emphasizes communication between companies and consumers, tailored to their interests, to foster and maintain customer loyalty (Rongxuan, 2019).

In the age of connectivity, the concept of the marketing mix has evolved to include greater customer participation. According to Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), the traditional four Ps of the marketing mix were redefined as the four Cs: co-creation, currency, communal activation, and conversation. In the digital economy, co-creation has emerged as a crucial strategy in product development. By involving customers from the early design stages, companies can enhance the success rate of product launches. Co-creation also empowers customers to personalize and tailor products and services, leading to superior value propositions.

Furthermore, the concept of pricing has evolved in the digital era, moving away from standardized approaches to embrace dynamic pricing. Dynamic pricing involves setting flexible prices based on market demand and capacity utilization. With technological advancements, this practice has extended to various sectors. For instance, online retailers gather vast amounts of data enabling them to utilize big data analytics to offer personalized pricing for each customer. Also according to Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), dynamic pricing enables companies to optimize profitability by charging customers differently, considering factors such as their purchase history, proximity to physical stores, and other aspects of the customer profile. In the digital economy, price functions as a currency that fluctuates according to market demand.

According to Idris (2021), marketers should focus on developing products based on consumer needs and desires, setting prices considering the cost to the consumer, ensuring convenient availability of the product to the customer, and effectively communicating the product's attributes to the consumer, going beyond simple promotion. The prevailing viewpoint among experts is that marketing activities yield greater success when professionals integrate the concepts of the four Ps and four Cs. These concepts serve as essential guides, enabling businesses to identify improvement opportunities and establish the most efficient promotion strategies.

Hence, the utilization of the marketing mix tool assumes a fundamental role in pinpointing areas for enhancement and executing the requisite changes. Within this business framework, the application of both the four Ps and four Cs is indispensable for devising a marketing strategy that fulfills customer demands and ensures the company's sustainability. As noted by Kotler and Keller (2006), the significance of this tool lies in its capacity to offer a tactical approach that culminates in satisfactory sales outcomes and exponential business expansion.

With that in mind, to complement the planning strategy, a contextualization of the product mix is presented below.

## Product mix

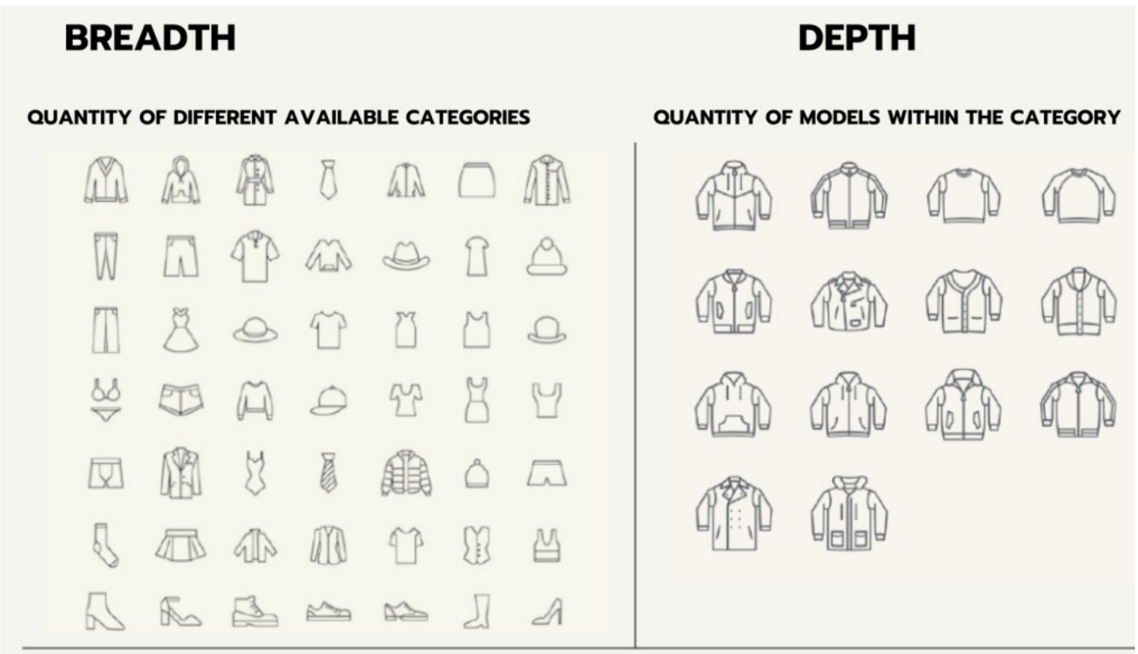
According to Bahng and Kincade (2014), the product mix represents the assortment of items offered by the retailer in each category, whether in physical or virtual stores, aimed at maximizing profits. Utilizing the product mix in retail entails ensuring the right quantity of products is offered at the right place and time to meet the company's financial objectives. This tool necessitates a series of quantitative decisions in product development to attain these goals. Therefore, effective management of the product mix is crucial for achieving sales and profitability targets, as well as satisfying customer needs.

Parente and Barki (2014) emphasize that the primary motivation for consumers to visit stores is to fulfill their product needs, underscoring the significance of decisions related to the product mix for retail companies. In this context, the product mix also serves to attract and entice customers into the store. This objective is achieved through a well-balanced assortment, which entails harmonizing colors, designs, and styles of the items, offering relevant brands, setting prices suitable for the target audience and the store's positioning, as well as ensuring availability of stock in various sizes, colors, and designs (Barbosa, 2021).

Barbosa (2021) suggests that product mix management extends beyond meeting customer needs and desires; it is also essential in shaping the identity of the retail brand. Before finalizing the assortment, the company must define the image it aims to portray. Thus, the product mix should align with the brand's positioning. It is crucial to recognize that both the company's image and the product mix play roles in reinforcing the brand's positioning.

Barbosa (2021) further emphasizes the importance of achieving a balance in the product line, both quantitatively, ensuring the right quantity at the right time and setting appropriate prices, and qualitatively, selecting suitable products, colors, designs, and cohesive styles. This pursuit of balance is a key objective in the development of the product mix, which is a central activity in clothing retail.

In their study, Parente and Barki (2014) outline the process of preparing the product mix in clothing retail, which involves planning inventories and determining the variety and quantity of products to be made available in each period. Variety, also referred to as breadth, denotes the diversity of product categories offered, while quantity, known as depth, constitutes a strategic decision for the company. Striking the right balance between a broad or more compact variety poses a continual challenge when defining the product mix. A wide variety can enhance sales volume by better catering to customer demand, but it also entails greater investments in stock, heightening the risks associated with products that have low turnover, thereby negatively affecting the company's profits. Figure 3 illustrates an example of the concepts of product breadth and depth.




Source: Barbosa and Seibel (2021a).

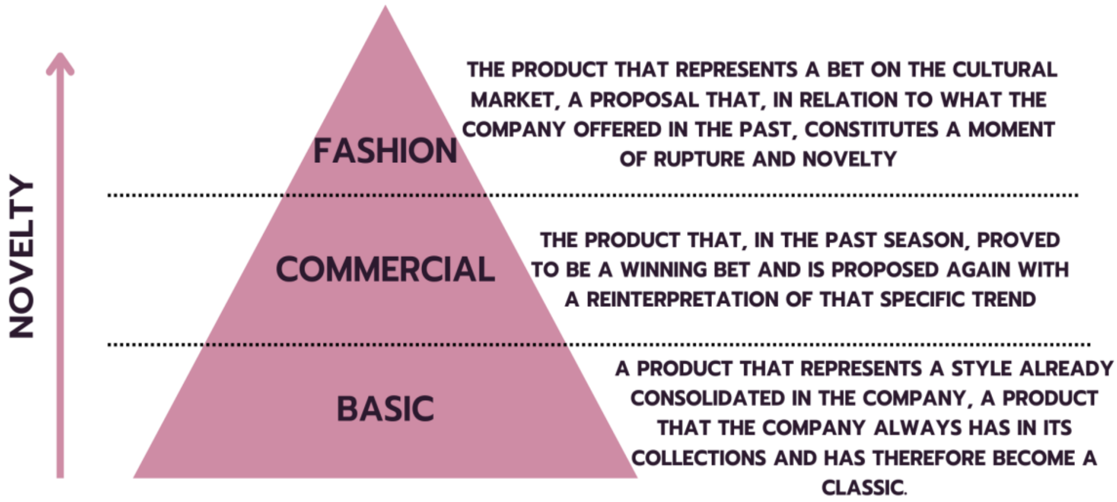
Figure 3. Example of product breadth and depth.

In addition to determining variety and depth, the retail company must establish the hierarchy of grouping products at various levels. As noted by Parente and Barki (2014), in this process, the primary reference for guiding product classification should be the way customers make their purchasing decisions. Understanding how customers categorize products in their perception is crucial for creating relevant categories that will inform everything from product development to the visual layout of the store.

Among the products present in the mix, some are essential in attracting customers to the store. According to Parente and Barki (2014), these products are called "destination category" and "routine category" and, therefore, require special effort in their promotion. They play a significant role for the company by bringing in an influx of customers and conveying the brand's positioning. The authors also present different types of products in this category. Firstly, there are the "icons" or "occasionals", which evoke emotions and perfectly represent the brand's positioning. Next, there are "traffic builders" or "convenience" items, which are part of the routine product mix and encourage customers to visit through promotions. Figure 4 provides an illustration of these roles and their concepts.


Source: Barbosa and Seibel (2021a).
Figure 4. Product Roles.

In his work, Cietta (2017) addresses the categorization of clothing products concerning the level of risk and its importance in planning the product mix in retail. This classification is based on distinguishing between *fashion*, *commercial*, and *basic* products, supporting supply strategies. *Fashion* products revolve around innovative trends and represent the cutting edge of fashion information. *Commercial* products are contemporary and comprise reinterpretations of fashion or successful past commercial products. Finally, *basic* products are the brand's classics, timeless and established. This categorization is illustrated in Figure 5, which demonstrates the classification of products according to fashion trends.




Source: adapted from Cietta (2017) and Barbosa e Seibel (2021b).
Figure 5. Risk levels.

According to Barbosa and Seibel (2021a), developing the mix of clothing products in retail is a complex process requiring the integration of various areas of knowledge. This process involves the flow of information and aims to make decisions based on data to maximize the return on investment made in product stocks. With a large volume of information available, it is crucial to conduct data processing and interpretation activities to enable the development of better products for customers.

The theoretical foundation section concludes here, and the following section presents the methodological procedures.

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Building on the concepts outlined earlier, the marketing mix and product mix tools, as articulated by Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), will form the foundation for the analysis of three companies operating within the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing niche.

Following this, the criteria for selecting the companies will be outlined, followed by a contextualization of each of them.

### Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing companies in the South of Brazil

According to Iyemonja (2020), Rio Grande do Sul, despite being the second whitest state in Brazil, boasts the largest number of *terreiros* in the country, estimated at around 65 thousand. This abundance of *terreiros* has fostered a thriving community of ateliers and seamstresses specializing in crafting *axós*, many of whom hail from humble backgrounds and operate within local communities. While some of these artisans remain relatively unknown, catering primarily to nearby customers, others have ventured into the realm of online sales. Given this rich landscape of Afro-Brazilian religious practices and associated businesses, the South Region was selected as the focal point for the analysis of Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing companies.

An exploratory nationwide online survey was undertaken to probe into the consumption patterns surrounding Afro-Brazilian religious clothing. The findings unveiled a vibrant market, particularly thriving on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok. This discovery aligns with the observations posited by Guimarães and Rodrigues (2015), underscoring the instrumental role of these social platforms in institutional communication. These platforms facilitate a broadened connection between organizations and their audiences, transcending the conventional notion of bilateral communication. Consequently, relationships are forged within an interconnected network, where all nodes are interlinked and mutually influential. In this milieu, Afro-Brazilian religions are actively engaged on social networks, wielding a notable presence, notably within the South and Southeast regions of Brazil.

Iyemonja's (2020) assertion regarding the prevalence of practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions in the state of Rio Grande do Sul finds support in the abundance of specialized stores and producers engaged in crafting and trading *axós* in the state. In Rio Grande do Sul, the research unearthed a total of 118 establishments. Remarkably, only six of these establishments explicitly conduct online sales, either through their proprietary websites or via marketplace platforms. The vast majority still primarily operate through in-person transactions and/or made-to-order sales. In the neighboring state of Santa Catarina, out of the 27 identified companies/producers, three acknowledge engaging in online sales, with two of them leveraging their own websites and one utilizing a marketplace platform. Conversely, in the state of Paraná, the search yielded the lowest number of stores in the segment, totaling only 17 results. Among these, merely one store declares conducting online sales through a marketplace platform and its proprietary website.

Of the establishments identified, only six explicitly engage in online sales, either through their proprietary websites or via marketplace platforms[2]. The vast majority still primarily operate through in-person transactions and/or made-to-order sales. In the state of Santa Catarina, out of the 27 identified companies/producers, three acknowledge conducting online sales, with two utilizing their own websites and one leveraging a marketplace platform. Conversely, in the state of Paraná, the search yielded the lowest number of stores in the segment, totaling just 17 results, among which only one store declares conducting online sales through both a marketplace platform and its proprietary website.

It is important to note that the results mentioned are just a sample/market trend and may not accurately reflect the exact number of these producers. Many operate informally, lack an online presence, and the category lacks a specific union to measure this amount.

The companies included in this study constitute an intentional sample selected based on the following criteria: one company from each state in the Southern Region of Brazil; and their online relevance, determined through social media

2 Considered an online network economy, buyers seek to go where the majority of sellers are, and vice versa (Hasker; Sickles, 2010).

statistics and the availability of virtual sales channels to showcase their range of products and prices. The analysis will focus on the four Ps and the product mix of each company.

## *Company 1*

Situated in Porto Alegre's city center (Rio Grande do Sul – RS), this store, established in 2010, engages in both in-house and outsourced manufacturing. Specializing in ready-to-deliver costumes tailored for the rituals of *Umbanda*, *Quimbanda*, the nation (*batuque*), and the gypsy community, it boasts a diverse array of male and female models, catering to sizes ranging from S to XL, as illustrated in Chart 1. Beyond its brick-and-mortar location, the company operates a virtual storefront on its website, along with providing direct customer service via Instagram and WhatsApp.

Chart 1. Four Ps of company 1.

| **Company 1 – Rio Grande do Sul** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Product** | **Price** | **Place** | **Promotion** |
| • Long and short skirts;<br>• Male and female tunics;<br>• Unisex *bombacha* pants;<br>• Accessories;<br>• Petticoats;<br>• Dresses. | From R$ 25 to R$ 470. | • Physical store in downtown Porto Alegre (RS);<br>• Online sales through website, social media, and WhatsApp. | • Advertising on social media (Instagram and TikTok);<br>• Partnerships with influencers in the niche. |

Upon analyzing the product mix available on the virtual sales channel, an observation was made regarding the number of varieties, sizes, colors, and materials in which the products are offered. As a result, Chart 2 presents an overview of the product mix offered by Company 1.

With that in mind, the subsequent subtopic replicates the same methodology for identifying the marketing and product mixes of Company 2.

## *Company 2*

Situated in Joinville (Santa Catarina – SC), Company 2 operates both a physical and online store through its website. The company engages in in-house and on-demand manufacturing, with a predetermined production period ranging from 25 to 30 business days, with only a few pieces in ready-to-deliver mode. It offers limited customization options (color variations, details, lengths), but does not provide made-to-measure services, relying solely on pre-existing models in its inventory. Chart 3 outlines the four Ps of Company 2.

During the examination of its product mix accessible through the virtual sales channel, attention was given to the assortment of varieties, sizes, colors, and materials in which the products are offered. Accordingly, a selection of these elements, compiled to form Chart 4, offers an overview of Company 2's product mix.

Chart 2. Product mix of company 1.

| Risk levels | Basic | Commercial | Fashion |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reference image |  |  |  |
| Detailed description | **Product:**<br>• Capes with collar or hood;<br>• Female tunics;<br>• Long and short flare skirts;<br>• Straight skirts;<br>• Unisex *bombacha*-style and straight pants;<br>• Headscarves. | **Product:**<br>• Long capes with collar or hood;<br>• Long and short flare skirts;<br>• Short and long hoop (petticoats) skirts;<br>• Female blouses with ruffles, flare sleeves;<br>• Unisex *bombacha* pants;<br>• Headscarves;<br>• Accessories (imitation jewelry, belts, hair flowers). | **Product:**<br>• Long capes with collar and overcoat;<br>• Long and short flare skirts;<br>• Dresses;<br>• Hats with embellishments;<br>• Accessories (imitation jewelry, gloves);<br>• Embroidered corsets. |
| | **Fabrics:**<br>Oxford, satin with elastane. | **Fabrics:**<br>Satin with elastane, glitter tulle, jacquard, lace, voile. | **Fabrics:**<br>Satin with elastane, embroidered tulle, velvet, jacquard, lace, voile. |
| | **Colors:**<br>White, black, red, purple, green, golden, blue, yellow, silver. | **Colors:**<br>White, black, red, purple, green, golden, blue, pink, yellow, silver. | **Colors:**<br>White, black, red, purple, green, golden, blue, pink, yellow, silver. |
| Depth | The basic products of company 1 have average depth of the total presented and lower prices. | Commercial level products have the highest variety of models and colors. Prices also vary. | Fashion level products have the lowest depth and the highest prices. |
| Breadth | Five categories at the basic level | Eight categories at the commercial level | Four categories at the fashion level |

Chart 3. Four Ps of company 2.

| Company 2 – Santa Catarina | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Product** | **Price** | **Place** | **Promotion** |
| • Long skirts;<br>• Male and female tunics;<br>• Unisex pants;<br>• Accessories;<br>• Capes. | From R$ 35 to R$ 549. | • Physical store in Joinville;<br>• Online sales through own website and WhatsApp. | • Advertising on social media;<br>• Instagram;<br>• Partnerships with influencers in the niche. |

Chart 4. Product mix of company 2.

| Risk levels | Basic | Commercial | Fashion |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Reference image** |  |  |  |
| **Detailed description** | **Product:**<br>• Female and male tunics;<br>• Unisex pants;<br>• Long flare and straight skirts;<br>• Headscarves. | **Product:**<br>• Long, flared, and straight skirts, skirts with ruffles and embroidery on the hems;<br>• Female blouses with ruffles and details;<br>• Male blouses with subtle embroidery;<br>• Paints with details;<br>• Capes. | **Product:**<br>• Female sets with details, ruffles, and embroidery;<br>• Flared skirts with embroidery and ruffles;<br>• Female tunics with embroidered tulle;<br>• Embroidered capes with buttons and chains; |
| | **Fabrics:**<br>Oxford, satin with elastane, knit, eyelet knit fabric. | **Fabrics:**<br>Satin, crepe, embroidered tulle, lace. | **Fabrics:**<br>Crepe, embroidered tulle, velvet, lace, satin. |
| | **Colors:**<br>White, black, red, green, yellow, light blue, purple. | **Colors:**<br>Black, golden, white, red, purple, yellow, blue, colorful. | **Colors:**<br>Black, golden, red, purple, green, pink, white, blue. |
| **Depth** | The basic products of company 2 have average depth of the total presented and lower prices. | Commercial level products have the highest variety of models and colors. Prices also vary. | Fashion level products have the lowest depth and the highest prices. |
| **Breadth** | Five categories at the basic level. | Six categories at the commercial level. | Four categories at the fashion level. |

With that being said, the subsequent subtopic replicates the same methodology employed for identifying the marketing and product mixes of Company 3.

## *Company 3*

Operating exclusively as an online service store based in Curitiba (Paraná – PR), Company 3 conducts its sales through its proprietary website, the Shopee marketplace, as well as via direct customer service through Instagram and WhatsApp channels. Although relatively new, with initial online presence records dating back to 2019, the company offers a limited range of products compared to those of the other analyzed companies, as illustrated in Chart 5.

Chart 5. Four Ps of company 3.

| **Company 3 – paraná** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Product** | **Price** | **Place** | **Promotion** |
| • T-shirts;<br>• Capes;<br>• Headscarves;<br>• Skirts. | From r$ 15 to r$ 230. | • Online sales through own website, shopee marketplace, social media, and whatsapp. | • Advertising on social media. |

During the examination of its product mix available through the virtual sales channel, attention was given to the assortment of varieties, sizes, colors, and materials in which the products are made available. Consequently, a selection of these elements, curated to compose Chart 6, offers an overview of Company 3's product mix.

Chart 6. Product mix of company 3.

| **Risk levels** | **Basic** | **Commercial** | **Fashion** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Reference image** |  |  |  |
| **Detailed description** | **Product:**<br>• Unisex t-shirts and baby looks (printed);<br>• Plain straight skirts. | **Product:**<br>• Long, flared, and straight skirts with overlays in glitter tulle/lace;<br>• Headscarves;<br>• Lace capes. | **Product:**<br>• Long flare skirts with ruffles;<br>• Flare skirts with scarves;<br>• Embroidered capes. |
| | **Fabrics:**<br>Satin, pv knit fabric. | **Fabrics:**<br>Satin, glitter tule, lace. | **Fabrics:**<br>Satin, glitter tule, lace, embroidered tulle. |
| | **Colors:**<br>White, black, red, purple. | **Colors:**<br>Black, golden, white, red, purple, yellow, blue, pink. | **Colors:**<br>Black, golden, white, red, purple, silver, yellow, blue, pink. |
| **Depth** | The basic products of company 2 have the lowest average depth of the total presented and lower prices. | Commercial level products have the highest variety of models and colors. Prices are comparable to the fashion level. | Fashion level products have depth comparable to the commercial level and prices comparable to the commercial level. |
| **Breadth** | Two categories at the basic level. | Three categories at the commercial level. | Three categories at the fashion level. |

As such, the companies examined in this study are concluded, and the findings proposed by this research are presented in the following section.

## RESULTS

Upon observing the marketing and product mixes of the analyzed companies, notable observations can be made. Companies 1 and 2, representing the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, respectively, exhibit significant similarities in their marketing and product offerings. Similarities extend to the materials used and the pricing of their products.

Company 1 distinguishes itself from the others through its extensive product depth and breadth. Across all three risk levels, it offers a wide array of products featuring variations in color, model, and materials, enhancing public acceptance through increased choice options. Regional influence is evident in the development of costumes, with trousers resembling those worn by *gauchos* and skirts reminiscent of traditional *gaucho* garments. This discovery aligns with Teixeira's (2005) assertion that regional varieties enable the inclusion of distinctive clothing items such as *gaucho pilchas*.

Company 2 distinguishes itself from others by catering to the individual demands of its customers, offering a customization service for its products. This capability, as previously noted, fosters greater customer loyalty and, consequently, enhances profitability through repeat purchases. On its website, customers have the option to select various lengths for their skirts and customize colors for specific details of the pieces. However, this convenience is balanced by a longer production time; the store requires 25 to 30 business days (depending on the model) to produce and ship each piece. Additionally, it offers simplified and adjustable garment designs (utilizing wide shapes, elastic bands, and adjustable laces on the waistbands of pants and skirts), while the quality of manufacturing is further highlighted by reinforced seams in its pieces.

Company 3 stands out for its competitive pricing, which is lower compared to the other companies discussed here, as well as for its more limited product range. By utilizing affordable materials and operating solely as an online store without a physical presence, their costs are lower, thereby influencing the final consumer price and attracting a segment of the market that seeks ritualistic clothing but may have financial constraints preventing larger investments.

Following the analysis of the marketing and product mixes of the chosen companies, data was reviewed to construct a comparative table of these three companies' mixes in the Southern Region of Brazil, thereby fulfilling the primary objective of this study. Chart 7 provides an illustration of the aforementioned comparison.

## CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis conducted among the three companies operating in the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment in the Southern Region of Brazil, utilizing product mix and marketing tools, has led to the satisfactory achievement of the study's objectives. Through an examination of the product mix, notable disparities in the product lines offered by the companies were identified, encompassing variations in style, material, finish, and size. This thorough analysis yielded valuable insights into the product strategies employed by the companies, facilitating a deeper comprehension of their ability to meet market demands and consumer preferences.

Chart 7. Marketing Mix Comparison.

| | Product | Price | Place | Promotion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Company 1** | Female and male tunics, unisex pants, skirts, dresses, accessories, petticoats, headscarves, capes, corsets. | R$ 25 to R$ 470. | Physical and online store (own website) | Advertising on social media, Instagram, partnerships with influencers in the niche. |
| **Company 2** | Female and male tunics, unisex pants, skirts, headscarves, capes, sets. | R$ 35 to R$ 539. | Physical and online store (own website) | Advertising on social media, Instagram, partnerships with influencers in the niche. |
| **Company 3** | T-shirts, skirts, capes, headscarves. | R$ 15 to R$ 230. | Online store (own website) and marketplace (Shopee) | Advertising on social media. |

Regarding the marketing mix, the price, product, place, and promotion strategies implemented by the companies were examined. Subtle differences were observed in the approaches of each, emphasizing the significance of tailoring marketing strategies to suit the characteristics of the target audience and the desired market positioning.

This study lays the groundwork for future research in this field. Its preliminary nature is notable, considering the challenges associated with obtaining reliable results. These challenges stem from the prevalent informality among most producers and traders, as well as the absence of a centralizing entity, such as a union.

As a recommendation for furthering this research, it is suggested to broaden the comparative analysis to encompass other regions of Brazil. This expansion would facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the Afro-Brazilian liturgical clothing segment. By including additional geographic regions, it would be possible to identify potential regional variations in product mix and marketing mix strategies. Moreover, such an expansion would deepen the understanding of consumer needs and preferences in diverse contexts.

## REFERENCES

ANDERSON, Chris. **A cauda longa:** do mercado de massa para o mercado de nicho. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 2006.

BAHNG, Youngjin; KINCADE, Doris H. Retail buyer segmentation based on the use of assortment decision factors. **Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services**, v. 21, n. 4, p. 643-652, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2013.12.004

BARBOSA, Cristina Rodrigues. ***Roadmap*** **para o processo de desenvolvimento de *mix* de produtos aplicado ao varejo de vestuário**. 171f. Dissertação (Mestrado) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Moda, Ceart, Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, 2021.

BARBOSA, Cristina Rodrigues; SEIBEL, Silene. ***Mix*** **de produtos**. Florianópolis: Udesc, 2021a. 18 p. Available from: https://www.udesc.br/arquivos/ceart/id_cpmenu/10685/E_book_Mix_de_produtos_16130813143681_10685.pdf. Cited on: Mar 12, 2023.

BARBOSA, Cristina Rodrigues; SEIBEL, Silene. Riscos na moda: recomendações associadas ao desenvolvimento de *mix* de produtos de vestuário no varejo sob ótica de especialistas. **Modapalavra**

**E-Periódico**, Florianópolis, v. 14, n. 34, p. 284-307, 30 set. 2021b. https://doi.org/10.5965/1982615x14342021284

CAMPOS, Zuleica Dantas Pereira. *Axós* em evidência: uma análise da indumentária litúrgica afro-brasileira no Recife. *In*: CONGRESSO INTERNACIONAL DA SOTER, 28., 2015. **Anais** [...]. 2015.

CIETTA, E. **A economia da mod**a. São Paulo: Estação das Letras e Cores, 2017.

GAMA, Luciana Barros. ***Laroyê*! Exu: os caminhos que levam ao mercado consumo religioso afro-brasileiro no Recife – PE**. 185f. Tese (Doutorado) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Antropologia, Centro de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Recife, 2016. Available from: https://repositorio.ufpe.br/bitstream/123456789/28983/4/TESE%20Luciana%20Barros%20Gama.pdf. Cited on: May 25, 2023.

GONÇALVES, Fernanda Paula Silva; SILVA, Carlos Henrique Osório; SILVA, Fernanda Cristina da; XAVIER, Wescley Silval TAVARES, Bruno. O impacto das certificações de RSE sobre o comportamento de compra do consumidor. *In*: ENCONTRO NACIONAL DA ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DOS PROGRAMAS DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM ADMINISTRAÇÃO, 32., 2008, Rio de Janeiro. **Anais** [...]. Rio de Janeiro: Anpad, 2008.

GUIMARÃES, Julliana de Almeida; RODRIGUES, Alfredo Sotero Alves. Comunicação e o universo *on-line* das indumentárias do povo de santo. *In*: CONGRESSO BRASILEIRO DE CIÊNCIAS DA COMUNICAÇÃO, 38., 2015, Rio de Janeiro. **Anais** [...]. Rio de Janeiro: Intercom – Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação, 2015. Available from: https://www.portalintercom.org.br/anais/nacional2015/resumos/R10-3306-1.pdf. Cited on: May 5, 2023.

HASKER, Kevin; SICKLES, Robin. EBay in the Economic Literature: analysis of an auction marketplace. **Review of Industrial Organization**, v. 37, n. 1, p. 3-42, ago. 2010. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11151-010-9257-5

IDRIS, Junainah. Marketing mix 4Cs: impact on small and medium entrepreneurs (SMES) marketing performance. **Journal of Management e Muamalah**, Kajang, v. 8, n. 8, p. 221-226, 8 jun. 2021. Available from: http://conference.kuis.edu.my/icomm/8th/images/021-113.pdf. Cited on: May 20, 2023.

INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA (IBGE). **Censo demográfico 2010:** Características gerais da população, religião e pessoas com deficiência. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2010. 211 p. Available from: https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/periodicos/94/cd_2010_religiao_deficiencia.pdf. Cited on: Oct 24, 2022.

IYEMONJA, Baba Diba de. **Comunidade tradicional de terreiro: Batuque do RS e o racismo religioso**. Porto Alegre: Sindicato dos Servidores da Justiça do Rio Grande do Sul, 2020. Available from: http://www.sindjus.com.br/comunidade-tradicional-de-terreiro-batuque-do-rs-e-o-racismo-religioso/12607/. Cited on: Nov 20, 2023.

KOTLER, Philip; KARTAJAYA, Hermawan; SETIAWAN, Iwan. **Marketing 4.0:** do tradicional ao digital. Rio de Janeiro: Sextante, 2017. 257 p.

KOTLER, Philip; KARTAJAYA, Hermawan; SETIAWAN, Iwan. **Marketing 5.0:** tecnologia para a humanidade. Rio de Janeiro: Sextante, 2021. 216 p.

KOTLER, Philip; KELLER, Kevin L. **Administração de *Marketing***. 12. ed. São Paulo: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006.

ORO, Ari Pedro. Religião e mercado no Cone-Sul: as religiões afrobrasileiras como negócio. *In*: REUNIÃO ANUAL DA ANPOCS, 22., 1998, Caxambu. **Anais** [...]. v. 22, n. 22, p. 1-31, 31 out. 1998.

PARENTE, Juracy; BARKI, Edgard. **Varejo no Brasil:** gestão e estratégia. 2. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2014.

PRANDI, Reginaldo. As religiões afro-brasileiras e seus seguidores. **Civitas**, Porto Alegre, v. 3, n. 1, p. 15-33, 2007. https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2003.1.108

RONGXUAN, Duan. Analysis method of marketing. **Aktual'Nyye Problemy Aviatsii I Kosmonavtiki**, Krasnoyarsky, v. 2, n. 2, p. 719-721, fev. 2019. Available from: https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/analysis-method-of-marketing. Cited on: May 7, 2023.

TEIXEIRA, Talita Bender. **Trapo formoso:** o vestuário na Quimbanda. 126f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Antropologia Social) – Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, 2005.

## About the authors

**Angele Maine Rhoden:** Master's student in Design at Universidade Estadual de Santa Catarina.
**Fernanda Hänsch Beuren:** Ph.D. in Production Engineering by Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.
**Icleia Silveira:** Ph.D. in Design by Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.
**Lucas da Rosa:** Ph.D. in Design by Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

**Conflict of interests:** nothing to declare – **Financial support:** none.
**Authors' contributions:** Rhoden, A. M.: Conceptualization, Investigation, Data curation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. Beuren, F. H.: Supervision. Silveira, I.: Supervision. Rosa, L.: Supervision.