



CREATIVITY IN FIRMS CASE-STUDY

Slow Artist

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Introduction

The world in which we live in is in the process of constant changes and shifts. These changes affect all societies and firms as we are in a global world where limits and boundaries are being steadily eradicated. This makes firms to have to face new challenges, so it is necessary for them to have a pro-active scope and adopt organizational measures in accordance to this ever shifting world.

In this paradigm, we should not find strange that creativity and innovation in the organisational field are being paid increasing attention: both concepts are the sources of competitive advantage that allow firms not only to survive but make a difference with their competitors and achieve any goals. Creativity and innovation play therefore a fundamental role nowadays, being important in any sector or industry.

Fashion industry, in which we are going to dig deeper in the present study, has not been alien to this reality. This sector, just as any other, has suffered many changes. Nowadays, society is more demanding when it comes to fair trade and wants a bigger environmental commitment aiming towards transparent and green business models. This translates into the fashion business too where the number of firms aiming for a new perspective on fashion is increasing: *sustainable fashion*, manufactured with eco fabrics that offer products ruled by social conscience and environmental conscience offering products with a unique design. The traditional manufacturing way is sought after as well as getting back that great love for those garments that were with us for years and so became part of our years.

In this project we have proposed focusing in a particular case in this industry, the Castellon based sustainable fashion label Slow Artist. It was founded in 2014 based on the wishes of two ambitious young ladies. It is expected to become a referent in the near future regarding this new fashion concept. The main aim of the project will be **analysing the creativity and innovation in this firm**. To do so, we will offer a theoretical approach in both concepts and its historical evolution. Secondly we will introduce Slow Artist; we shall focus on the sustainable fashion industry in which we will place the technologic park where its headquarters are located (Espaitec), without forgetting about its philosophy and its products. Next, we will analyse the case-study of the firm itself. Here we will get the investigation objectives and the results will be shown. Lastly, we will deal with the conclusions that are drawn from this project as well as with the limitations in this case-study and possible improvement proposals.

Chapter 1 – Theoretical framework

In this chapter we are going to explain and analyse theoretical knowledge about creativity and innovation found throughout exhaustive investigation on both terms, both at an individual level as well as at an organizational level. This will let us the bases for carrying out the study of our practical case further ahead.

1.1- Creativity

Creativity boosts perfectionism; it allows to overcome problems or difficulties when providing different perspectives, reach goals and take profit of any opportunities or changes (Díez, López & de Rivas, 2010). In the business ground, this means competitive firms with proactive approach, able to differentiate and compete in a global world characterized by a troubled environment, where changes occur daily in an unexpected way.

Therefore it is essential to study the concept of creativity as well as to have in mind which are the factors that have some kind of influence on it. In this part of the report we shall start by defining the concept according to different approaches and we shall finish by offering a study on such factors.

1.1.1 – The Concept of Creativity

There are several authors who offer definitions of the concept of creativity, definitions that have evolved with time enriching from different contributions. Even though creativity has always existed due to the fact that it is an innate skill in humans, its concept was not studied until recent years, as said by Esquivias (2004:3). This author himself, when carrying out a study on different authors and definitions on the concept of creativity, establishes the statement made by Wertheimer in 1945 as the **first definition** for this term:

“Productive thought consists on observing and taking into account features and structural needs. This is the vision regarding to structural truth, not a fragmented one” (Wertheimer, 1945).

Creativity has been an object of study by philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and other specialist so we have to take into account the different approaches that the authors offer about this concept. Rhodes (1961) and Kneller (1965) have suggested that creativity should be defined in terms of process, product,

environment and person. By Table 1, we offer examples of different definitions on creativity according to these approaches:

Table 1: Definitions of creativity

Approach	Definition	Authors and references
In terms of Process	<i>“That process that results in a novel work that is accepted as tenable or useful or satisfying by a group at some point in time”.</i>	Stein (1956)
In terms of Product	<i>“The ability to produce new and valuable things”.</i>	Rodríguez (1999)
In terms of Environment	<i>“The process of manipulating the environment which results in the production of new ideas, patterns or relationship”.</i>	O'Brien, Sibley & Ligon (1953)
In terms of Person	<i>“A combination of aptitude factors and disposition that enables a person to use his importance in novel ways”</i>	Guilford (1963)
All the four components	<i>“The emergence in action of novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual, on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other hand”</i>	Rogers (1959)

Source: Own elaboration

As seen before, regardless of the approach any author holds or the historical moment in which such definitions sprang, all of them have the term “novelty” and “contribution” as pointed out by Mitjans (1995).

1.1.2 - Factors which influence creativity

Once the concept of creativity has been defined, it is essential to study which the factors that promote it are, in order to favour them as well as the ones who inhibit creativity so that they can be reduced or deleted. This way advantages such as the generation of new ideas, which is one of the key determinants if innovation will be obtained; obtaining a differentiation when producing unique products and/or services, which will translate in a better performance enhancing its customer loyalty and satisfaction; and get to obtain a competitive advantage (Im & Workman, 2004).

Therefore, which are the aforementioned factors? Regarding this, the study carried out by Amabile (1988), stand out. Amabile in her work “*A model of creativity and innovation in organizations*” makes a distinction between two categories: the factors that are determined by the individual and the ones which come from the influence of the environment. We will next cite the factors classified in both categories.

1.1.2.1 - Quality of Individuals that influence creativity

There are people who think that whether you are creative or not is determined since you are born, that is in fact something, that cannot be developed. There are also people who relate creativity to inspiration and "being lucky", as well as doing crazy things. It is essential to bring the myth down; it is true that there are birth factors that favour them, but everyone can boost his or her creativity (Díez, López & de Rivas, 2010). Inspiration or good luck, are not enough as Thomas Alba Edison said: “*Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration*”. In order to be creative you do not have to be "mad", you only have to look for new perspectives and get to live used to what is considered as "normal". So do not look for excuses, you are also creative, you only have to start having some self-esteem, having an open mind and make some effort and dedication.

Amabile (1988:128) shows in her study the factors determined by the individual that have some influence in creativity classified from higher to lower grade, according to percentage of scientist who mentioned the factor at least one.

Table 2: Quality of Individuals that Influence Creativity

Qualities of problem solvers that promote creativity	Qualities of problem solvers that inhibit creativity
<p><i>Various Personality Traits</i> (41%): persistence, curiosity, energy and intellectual honesty</p> <p><i>Self-motivation</i> (40%)</p> <p><i>Special Cognitive Abilities</i> (38%): problem solving abilities</p> <p><i>Risk-orientation</i> (34%)</p> <p><i>Expertise in the area</i> (33%)</p> <p><i>Qualities of the Group</i> (30%): synergy</p> <p><i>Diverse Experience</i> (18%)</p> <p><i>Social Skill</i> (17%)</p> <p><i>Brilliance</i> (13%): high level of general intelligence</p> <p><i>Naivete</i> (13%): being naïve or new to the field)</p>	<p><i>Unmotivated</i> (30%)</p> <p><i>Unskilled</i> (24%)</p> <p><i>Inflexible</i> (22%)</p> <p><i>Externally Motivated</i> (14%): motivated by factors aside from work itself, like only by money</p> <p><i>Socially Unskilled</i> (7%)</p>

Source: Adapted from Amabile (1988:128)

1.1.2.1.2 - A Model of Individual creativity

Using the model of individual creativity, Amabile (1988:130); unifies all the individual factors so that an answer to the aforementioned question is answered (which factors have influence on creativity), establishing **the three basic components** that promote an organizational setting:

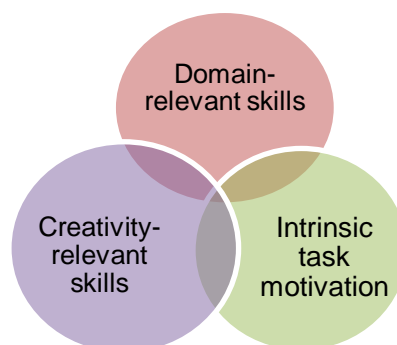
Domain-relevant skills: *“cognitive pathways for solving a given problem or doing a given task, such as factual knowledge, technical skills and special talents in the domain in question”.*

Creativity-relevant skills: *“cognitive style favourable to taking new perspectives on problems, an application of heuristics for the exploration of new cognate pathways, and a working style conducive to persistent, energetic pursuit or one’s work”,* like personality traits, risk orientation, qualities of the group and social skills among others”.

Intrinsic task motivation: *this includes two elements: the individual’s baseline attitude toward the task, and the individual’s perceptions of his or her reasons for undertaking the task in a given instance.* Within this basic component self-motivation stands out. It is said that when employees enjoy the work itself, they process information in a flexible way, they experience positive affect and they become willing to take risks and persist in efforts to develop and refine ideas (Grant, 2011).

Therefore we can claim that both motivation and social tools as well as knowledge, influence in creativity. We can graphically see the aforementioned factors in this graphic:

Figure 1: Personal factors influencing creativity in an organizational setting



Source: Adapted from Amabile (1988)

1.1.2.2 – Qualities of Environments that influence creativity

We also have to take into account the great influence that the environment plays on creativity. We cannot make the mistake of judging creativity as an isolated item only boosted in an individual way. The aforementioned environmental factors are mentioned here, set depending on the percentage of scientist who mentioned the factor at least once (Amabile's studio):

Table 3: Qualities of environments that influence creativity

Qualities of environments that promote creativity	Qualities of environments that inhibit creativity
<p><i>Freedom (74%)</i></p> <p><i>Good Project Management (65%)</i></p> <p><i>Sufficient Resources (52%): access to necessary resources</i></p> <p><i>Encouragement (47%): management enthusiasm for new ideas</i></p> <p><i>Various Organizational Characteristics (42%): valuation of cooperation and innovation</i></p> <p><i>Recognition (35%)</i></p> <p><i>Sufficient Time (33%)</i></p> <p><i>Challenge (22%)</i></p> <p><i>Pressure (12%)</i></p>	<p><i>Various Organizational Characteristics (62%): excessive red tape, lack of cooperation across divisions and levels</i></p> <p><i>Constraint (48%): lack of freedom, lack of sense of control</i></p> <p><i>Organizational Disinterest (39%)</i></p> <p><i>Poor Project Management (37%)</i></p> <p><i>Evaluation (33%): inappropriate or inequitable evaluation</i></p> <p><i>Insufficient Resources (33%)</i></p> <p><i>Time Pressure (33%)</i></p> <p><i>Overemphasis on the Status Quo (26%)</i></p> <p><i>Competition (14%): interpersonal or intergroup activity within the organization</i></p>

Source: Adapted from Amabile (1988:146)

In this detailed study, we can see that there is a great number of environmental variables that influence on creativity. "Brilliant and eloquent" people can feel put off due to the environmental influence having a negative effect on the individual itself and on the organization in which he takes part. Therefore we have to be conscious of all these factors and this way we can boost innovation.

1.2 - Innovation

Nowadays firms have to face increasing levels of competence, as well as a high rate of uncertainty, changes and threats. This is why it is essential for firms to stand out from their competitors and have the resources they need in order to face any challenge they may come across. All this makes innovation necessary in order to obtain competitiveness in a business environment which will translate in a long term advantages (Mathison, Gándara, Primera, & García, 2007).

Once the concept of creativity has been clarified, we will proceed with the analysis on innovation; its meaning, the different typologies and stages of innovation as well as other aspects focused on the business environment, getting to know what makes a firm be innovative and which are its main components. All this will let us later establish the existing relationship between creativity and innovations, core concepts for our study case.

1.2.1 – The Concept of Innovation

In this field we also find many meanings about this concept. We will state now the ones we believe are the better ones, given their accuracy:

According to the University of Melbourne, innovation is “The practical translation of ideas into new or improved products, services, processes, systems or social interactions”.

“Innovation is the generation of a new idea and its implementation into a new product (good or service), process, new marketing method, or organizational method or practice”. (Urabe, 1988)

It is widely accepted that the term innovation refers to both the concept of generating ideas as well as the process of implementing them, so that all the definitions about this concept are reduced to the following scheme:

INNOVATION = Generation of ideas + Implementation

So, what is the difference between creativity and innovation? This is an important question that needs to be clarified as many people mix both terms or tend to think they are the same concept. As various definitions on both concepts have been given, it is clear that the difference is in each concept's implementation (Amabile, 1996).

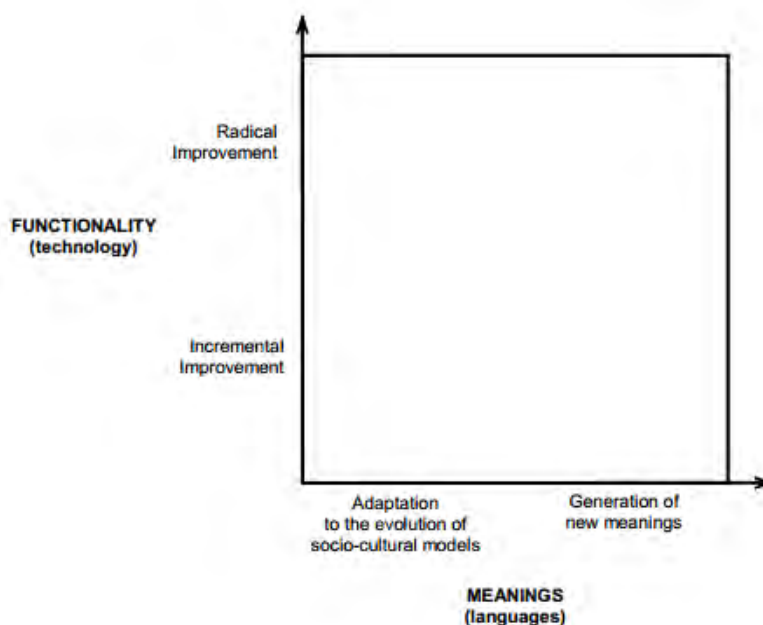
1.2.2 – Typologies of Innovation

It is important to know the charts of the different types of innovation as it enables us to take a wider look at the existing possibilities to innovate and the difficulties any firm can come across. Given different types of innovation require different kinds of knowledge (Flor, 2014:15). We shall explain the three most relevant charts so far:

Innovation depending on degree of novelty. Incremental Innovation is the one that improves a product or a service that already exists by adding extra value to it. Radical Innovation is the one that stands for a rupture with what is already established, a radical change¹.

Innovation according to technology changes or changes in meaning as well as on the degree of novelty. According to Verganti (2008) innovation may concern a product's functional utility, its meaning or both. Moreover, functional innovation may imply an incremental or radical improvement of technical performance, also meaning innovations may be more or less radical², as the following figure shows:

Figure 2: The dimensions of innovation



Source: Verganti 2008

¹ <http://retos-directivos.eae.es/innovacion-incremental-vs-innovacion-radical-ventajas-e-inconvenientes/>

² Innovation of meanings is incremental when a product adopts a design language and delivers a message that is in line with the current evolution of socio-cultural models. However, innovation of meanings may also be radical, which happens when a product has a language and delivers a message that implies a significant reinterpretation of meanings.

Product, Process, Marketing and Organizational Innovation. The OECD (2005) classifies innovation in four categories, which are reflected in the chart:

Table 4: Product, Process, Marketing and Organizational Innovation

Categories of Innovation	Definition
Product Innovation	<i>“The introduction of a good or service that is new or significantly improved with respect to its characteristics or intended uses”.</i>
Process Innovation	<i>“The implementation of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method (including significant changes in techniques, equipment and/or software)”</i>
Marketing Innovation	<i>“The implementation of a new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing”.</i>
Organizational Innovation	<i>“Organisational innovation means the implementation of a new organisational method in the undertaking’s business practices, workplace organisation or external relations”</i>

Source: Own elaboration

1.2.3 – The Diffusion of Innovation. Stages

According to Rogers (1983), diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. This process of diffusion consists of **5 stages**:

- Knowledge: person becomes aware of an innovation and has some idea of how it functions.
- Persuasion: person forms a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the innovation.
- Decision: person engages in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation.
- Implementation: person puts an innovation into use,
- Confirmation: person evaluates the results of an innovation-decision already made.

Later on, Damanpour (1991) simplified these five stages into two: beginning and implementation.

1.2.4 – What is understood by Innovative Firm?

The understanding of what makes a firm be innovative has evolved during different periods of time. The OCDE considered a firm as innovative (1977) if the company had

developed products or processes that incorporated technological advances of a radical nature in any determinate period of reference; later on in 2005 the OCDE classified the innovation in the four categories of product, process, marketing and organization (has we have previously seen in the section titled “*Innovation Typologies*”). This way, nowadays, not only firms that have incorporated technological improvements are considered innovative but also the ones which have carried out any improvement in one of the aforementioned 4 categories, it being in an increasing way or a radical way.

On the other hand, following this thread, the Spanish INE (“*Instituto Nacional de Estadística*”) considers that a firm is innovative not only when it produces technological improvements but also when it is carrying out activities such as: research & development (R&D); industrial design; purchase and modification of machinery, tools and methods to create a new product or process; marketing of new products and acquisition of technologies (both material and immaterial). We can therefore see the great parallelism that exists in both definitions when considering as innovative any firm that produces improvements in any of the aforementioned fields.

1.2.5 – A model of organizational innovation.

Amabile (1988) establishes the **3 basic elements of innovation** within the organization by using this model:

Motivation to innovate: “*this component is made up of the basic orientation of the organization toward innovation*” (Amabile, 1988:153). It is essential for any organization to be involved and be conscious of the importance of innovation. In this sense, communication among the different members of the firm is also essential in order to establish an adequate group vision, having the people in charge of the firm as the responsible ones for this specific communication.

Resources in the Task Domain: “*this component includes everything the organization has available to aid work in the task domain*³” (Amabile, 1988:154). A great variety of elements for carrying out a task in a given domain such as funds, materials, systems, people and information are included.

Skills in innovation Management: it’s necessary an appropriate balance between freedom and constraint, participative and collaborative management, open

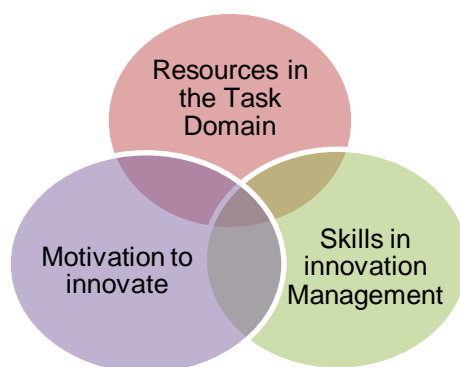
³ The task domain is the general area that has been targeted for innovation.

communication systems for top-down, bottom-up, and lateral communication, equitable and generous reward and recognition of creative efforts (Amabile,1988:155).

The aforementioned elements appear graphically summarized in Figure 3, where an intersection of the three elements is to be found. Any given firm which is located in the intersection, that is, the one which gets to have the combination of the three elements, has more chances of being creative and innovative just as Amabile (1988:156) claims:

“For both the individual and the organization, then, all the three elements are crucial. The greater the areas of overlap between resources, techniques for using those resources, and motivation, the greater the probability of true creativity and successful innovation”.

Figure 3: Three basic components of organizational innovation



Source: Amabile (1988)

1.3 Relationship between Creativity and Innovation

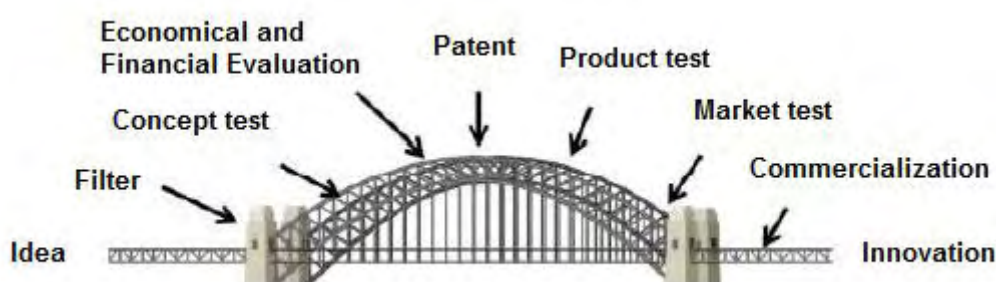
Just as we saw in the theoretical framework, we shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that creativity is the same as innovation. Innovation is, in fact, a **combination between the boost of ideas** (creativity) and **implementation**. Therefore, both concepts share a close relationship as creativity is the first step towards innovation. Just as Amabile points out, *“there will be no innovation in an organization without creative ideas from individuals; you need the ideas before you can develop and implement them”* (Amabile, 1988:151).

In the section above, *A model of organizational innovation*, we have been able to see that both the motivation to innovate, as well as the resources in the task domain and the skills in innovation management have a great influence in innovation and therefore they also influence on creativity. In this sense, Zhang and Bartol (2010) study the influence of intrinsic motivation in the creativity process.

It is important to remember the great influence that environment plays in both terms as it was mentioned before in the study carried out by Amabile (1988) called “*Qualities of Environments that influence creativity*”. In addition to this author, other experts have investigated on this issue; Dul and Ceylan (2014:1) claim that “*people working in a creativity-supportive environment may generate ideas that are useful for product innovation*”.

This relationship between creativity and innovation can be understood by using the **model** called “**The Bridge**”. Here the 9 stages which the majority of times firms follow in order to achieve innovation are established. It is not required to follow each one of these stages as it will depend on the kind of innovation that is wanted to be achieved. In case a product innovation is pursued, it would be more than advisable to follow the whole 9 stages.

Figure 4: The Bridge



Source: MVA (2005) Medicon Valley Annual Report 2004. Lund and Copenhagen: Medicon Valley Academy.

Chapter 2 – Empirical Work. Methodology

Once the theoretical framework that involves business creativity and innovation has been analyzed, we are to move to this chapter, where both the work methodology as well as the case-study firm will be introduced. Therefore it will be essential to write about the sustainable fashion business in Spain and in EspaiTec, the location where the firm is based.

2.1 – Description of the case-study: SLOW ARTIST

The chosen firm for our case-study is Slow Artist: It is a firm aimed at design, the making and marketing of trendy, sustainable and social oriented fashion, based in EspaiTec (Castellon). In the present project we are going to analyze creativity and innovation within this enterprise.

Why we chosen this firm? The main reason is because Slow Artist seems a firm with **great potential** on creativity and innovation due to **differentiation**: it not only has to do with the design, materials used and the making process of the garments but also due to its great presence in social networks and because it has a very pro-active vision, always looking for new ways to surprise and grow. All of the aforementioned factors add value to the firm and so it becomes a very interesting case-study.

It is important to add that we have chosen a case-study as this method is useful to study and understand any phenomena in its real-life context. It is also based in multiple evidence sources because the phenomenon is studied from every possible angle; therefore this method is appropriate when it comes to taking several variables (Yin, 1994).

2.1.1 - Sources of Information and data

To carry out the analysis of creativity and innovation in the company, secondary sources have been used firstly. Information and data have been collected from documentary sources via the Internet by visiting Slow Artist's official web and news on other websites that can provide useful information.

Once collected information, an interview was conducted (to see the interview, check "*Annex 1: Interview 1 - Tania Tárrega, Slow Artist*") with questions established from the theoretical framework.

Later on a second interview was conducted (see “Annex 2: Interview 2 - Esther, Tania and María, Slow Artist”) in which appeared some more specific questions to expand relevant information. In addition was prepared a questionnaire addressed to all members of the company (check “Annex 3: Individual Questionnaire”) in order to obtain more information related to both *Intern Environment* and *Persona*. These latter questions were also established from the theoretical framework.

Thus, in the research it have been used both **primary** and **secondary sources**.

- Regarding to primary resources, it has been carried out 2 Interviews and an Individual Questionnaire as we have explained. The first interview was recorded and later transcribed, which favored the collection of information more convenient for both parties. Both the second interview and the Individual Questionnaire were conducted by telephone, noting that Esther, Tania and María responded.
- On the other hand, regarding to secondary resources, it has accessed to both the official web of the company, its blog and accounts in Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter; as access to other web pages, specifically their contributors pages and another pages necessities for more information.

Before offering the results of this case-study we are going to present the context of sustainable fashion in Spain and Españete in the following sections.

2.2 – Industrial environment of the company: Sustainable Fashion Business

Once the Company has been depicted it becomes necessary to focus on the sustainable fashion business to which the firm in question belongs.

Fashion business has gone through many changes over the recent years, the same as other industries (Martínez, 2008). Traditionally garments were made in an artisan way, being unique and original garments which are thoroughly manufactured during a specific period of time. In addition, customers have been wearing them for years so each garment was much appreciated. These garments were also remade so new models appeared and the cloth was reused.

Nevertheless, due to the rise of new production systems and globalization, everything changed. Mass production began, looking to maximize production and lower costs. This lead to the production of a great deal of clothes manufactured all at once and with

short periods of manufacturing. This led to the loss of artisan manufacturing and to the loss of unique designs (Godoy, 2015).

Big firms started to locate production in less developed countries so they could produce the garments in a cheaper way. This made artisans unable to compete with costs. Fast Fashion also started and so customers had new demands: they were looking for nice and cheap clothes and did not want to wait in order to take the clothes with them. They just wanted to buy and go.

Therefore, there are two antagonist views in today's fashion business (Godoy, 2015). The first one is the mass production of clothes that look the same and are produced fast, many times by overexploiting resources and with unfair working conditions which have a negative impact on the environment and society. The second one is a new concept in fashion: **sustainable fashion**. It is fashion made with eco-friendly fabric that is aiming to offer lasting garments with unique designs and made in a traditional way, helping improve the environment and fair trade, assuring good working conditions.

This new approach, the one sustainable fashion is offering, is increasing its followers⁴. It is the very one that lets artisans compete with great enterprises when it comes to differentiation and not price.

This is the context in which Slow Artist was born. It is one of the few pioneering firms in Spain when it comes to sustainable fashion. What does Slow Artist offer that is different from other sustainable fashion firms in Spain? The answer to this question will be offered in the "Conclusion" section.

2.3 – Slow Artist location: Espatec

In this section we are going to write about Espatec, the place where the firm's headquarters are currently located.

Espatec is the Scientific, **Technological and Business Park**⁵ in Castellon promoted by Jaume I University (UJI) and The Association of Businessmen from Castellon (CEC).

⁴ There is a steady increase of fairs and events related to this new concept of fashion. In this sense the "Jornada de moda sostenible" stands out. It is held in The Museo del Traje in Madrid. On its 3rd edition (April 2014) there were more than 200 participants. The number of participants is expected to increase in its 4th edition (May 2015).

It started in 2007 with the aim of contributing to the socio-economical development in Castellon and to the diversification of its industry. In short, Espatec has a Management team up of 5 members from Jaume I University and 4 from the CEC.

Not every single firm that belong to Espatec is born in the Business Park. There are some Spin Offs which do see the light in Espatec. There are also Grow Ups which are already consolidated and “Tractor” Firms which due to their size, can start and exchange and cooperation area with the rest of firms and the university itself.

Slow Artist is, nowadays, a Grow Up. We shall see this in detail in the next section. Just the same as other businesses belonging to the park, the firm has taken profit of its location in Jaume I University as the founders themselves admit. Some advantages are location and institution organization, the presence of several entrepreneurs (which generate positive synergies) as well as the assessment offered by the team of professionals at Espatec.

2.4 – Beginnings, Philosophy, Structure and Product/Market of Slow Artist

In this section we are going to introduce the firm, as we have previously shown both the vision of sustainable fashion in Spain and Espatec.

2.4.1 – How did the idea start?

As we have been Reading, Slow Artist is a firm aimed at design, production and selling of trendy, sustainable and socially oriented fashion based in Espatec (Castellón).

Now we know Slow Artist a little better. This young firm was born in 2014. We shall explain how the idea of this business project started.

Esther and Tania met years ago at Jaume I University. They worked together and kept in touch while Tania was living in the USA for three years. She had the chance of going to work abroad thanks to Esther’s support. Who saw a great potential and great effort in young Tania. After 3 years Tania came back to her home town here in Spain and Esther asked her for advice. She was doing a master on sustainability and wanted to

⁵ According to the “International Association of Science and Technology Parks” (IASP), a technology and scientific park is an organization ran by specialized professionals with the main aim of increasing the regions wealth and promote the culture of innovation. In addition, another of its aims is to promote the firms competitiveness as well as the competitiveness of knowledge booster institutions located or associated to the Park.

stand out from the rest of her peers. What she could do? Tania told her to get a new perspective, *“if you asked me, I will tell you to get to fashion”*.

Then they decided to work together and look for sustainable fashion. Nevertheless they did not have much success. In addition to not being very popular, the few firms that existed did not follow the trend and they made very simple and basic fashion. Therefore they **made their own fashion line** for their report and took part in a contest following a professor’s advice. To their surprise they got first prize for the best project on sustainability in Elche. What was the prize? TO START THE PROJECT, with the assessment of one of the greatest firms in the shoe industry: Panama Jack and Pikolinos and by a team from the business association for a year. Precisely, thanks to this contest, they had the chance to be in touch with the workshop *“A puntadas”*, in which the garments for the label are being made.

2.4.2 – What is Slow Artist. Business Philosophy

The best way to get to know this firm is by directly asking Tania and Esther, its founders. They defined Slow Artist as:

“A sustainable fashion firm which contributes to a better environment and shows that this is possible by getting the latest trends, being fashionable and wearing “way” clothes as we like to call our clothes ourselves”.

Its leitmotiv is being a UNIQUE, DIFFERENT, SUSTAINABLE and SOCIAL firm. Slow Artist stands for its friendliness, positivism, closeness, transparency, effort and *“WILLINGNESS TO CONQUER THE WORLD”* (quoting its founders). This same positivism and ambition are the reason the firm has expanded so quickly and is present, nowadays, in many countries selling all over Europe, the USA, India, Australia or Russia among others.

PASSION for fashion is what drives Slow Artist to grow and design **unique garments**, inspired in the sensations experimented in their trips and by taking a look to what goes on in the streets and in the catwalks. This means trendy garments with a style of their own.

Due to its connection with **environment**, garments are made by using organic, ecological and recycled fabric. This led Slow Artist to be the first firm in Spain to obtain the GOTS certificate for sustainability (Global Organic Textile Standard). They also hold the OEKO-TEX, *“Textiles you can trust”*.