

ALGORITHMIC MEDIATIONS OF GENDER AND FASHION ON PINTEREST

White Paper - June, 2022
antropomedia



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Antropomedia's objective is to show our clients the results of research developed in the field of digital anthropology and data sciences while remaining faithful to its editorial line: the concern of synthesis, explanatory pluralism, multidisciplinary, and reflexivity.

Helping organizations understand their audiences allows them to reduce their marketing waste, which is one of the foundations of our motivation and commitment, in addition to a desire to apply our analytical skills to the gradually dehumanized digital world and live off our passion by doing applied research with broader impacts than just academic spheres.

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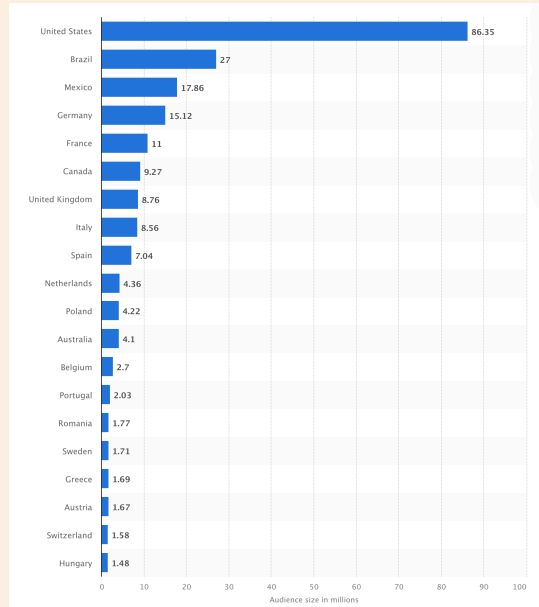
INTRODUCTION

This white paper attempts to show how Pinterest algorithms display different search results for queries that include "women," "queer," or "men" related metadata and how this platform exerts influence on constructions of gender (Burns, 2015) and fashion consumer culture.



As exploratory research, this document's framework is inspired by a current known as **critical algorithm studies** (Neyland, 2019), which discusses algorithms' cultural biases and social effects. Algorithms can be defined as computational recipes or step-by-step instructions for transforming input data into the desired output (Gillespie 2014), and we presume that their implementation in social media platforms can affect the users' agency, or the physical or mental ability, skill, or capability that enables actors to do something (Arnould, 2007).

PINTEREST



Leading countries based on Pinterest audience size as of January 2022 - Statista 2022

Pinterest is a social media platform that allows users to visually curate, share, and discover new interests by posting, also known as "pinning," images or videos to their own or others' pinboards. Users can either upload images from their computer or pin things they find on the web using the Pinterest Save Button, Pin It Button, or just a URL.

Organizations that rely on driving a high volume of website traffic to increase sales should consider joining Pinterest. In fact, according to Pinterest Global Analysis (Q1 2022), 433 million people use Pinterest every month to find ideas and inspire their next purchase.

PINTEREST STATS



60%

of Pinterest global audience are women.

97%

of top Pinterest searches are unbranded.

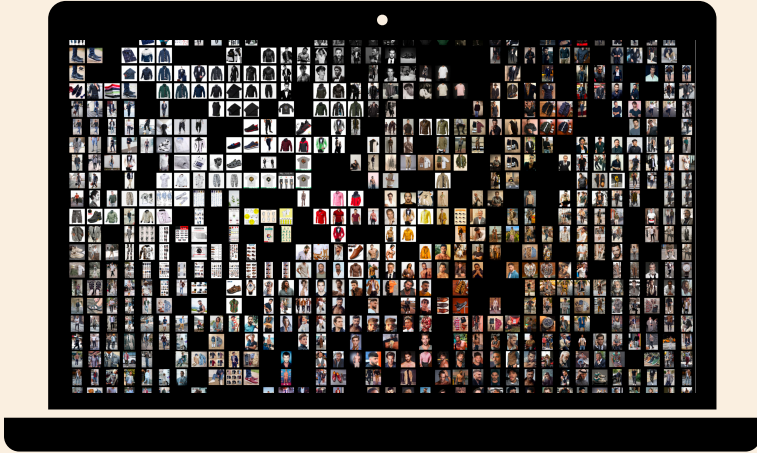
85%

of Pinners say Pinterest is where they go to start a new project.

80%

of weekly Pinners have discovered a new brand or product on Pinterest.

METHOD



For this exercise, we used a node.js-based library that mimics Pinterest users' queries and extracts all digital objects (data + metadata) that appear as outcomes displayed in a frontend built on React. In this case, the three queries used were "women," "queer," and "men.;" in the default location. Data retrieved was limited to 2,000 pins for each keyword, resulting in a database of 6,000 pins.

Databases are then processed using a natural language dictionary that counts and classifies words according to some of their grammatical properties (adjectives, nouns, etc.).

Images, on the other side, are organized according to similar color patterns in a mosaic graph. The purpose of this visualization is to detect look-alikes among the digital objects.


01

WOMEN

This section presents data visualizations encompassing search results for queries that include "women" (as a keyword) related metadata.



MOST POPULAR PINS



#1


mujerde10.com

Netflix lanza documental sobre Michelle Obama: Becoming | Mujer de 10

Series Netflix sobre MichelleObama

Mujer de 10 4.9K reseñas

Mujer de 10 ha guardado en Actualidad



#2


refinery29.com

The Most Authentically Inspiring Street Style From New York

Cool without trying too hard

refinery29 6.5K reseñas

Refinery29 ha guardado en Street Style Fashion



#3


art.com

Photo: Coffy, Pam Grier, 1973 : 24x16in

1973 : 24x16in Photo: Coffy, Pam Grier, 1973 - Art.com

Art.com 692.1 mil seguidores

Art.com ha guardado este Pin



#4

theskinscareedit.com

Critics' Choice Awards 2021: The Best Beauty Looks

Zandave before the 2021 Critics' Choice Awards. (Photo: @zendaya)

The Skincare Edit 400.8 mil seguidores


12 comentarios

theylovepariass isn't she beautiful tom is a lucky guy

Like 4 respuestas

January1990 Girl she's dating Jacob not Tom she was just with Tom bc of the spider man movie so if she didn't do the movie she wouldn't dated Tom and her boyfriend was very uncomfortable but she is still friend with Tom for a very long time. If you have seen the movie and she is not dating Tom she's dating Jacob get that in your mind how do I know bc there's a picture of them it clearly says Jacob and Zandava are dating and not Zandava and Tom so I hope you understand bc I gave you a lot of information bye bye

Sino Responder 1 0



#5

ottalilake.com

Vacation Style: Cover-Up Pants - Cella Jane

Vacation Style: Cover-Up Pants | Cella Jane | Avoca | Poolside | #coverupwear | #ootd | #vacationoutfits

Trendy Mood 203.4 mil seguidores

Trendy Mood ha guardado en Mode - Style

These are the five most frequent pins suggested by Pinterest on each query, classified according to source popularity.

02

QUEER

This section presents data visualizations encompassing search results for queries that include "queer" (as a keyword) related metadata.



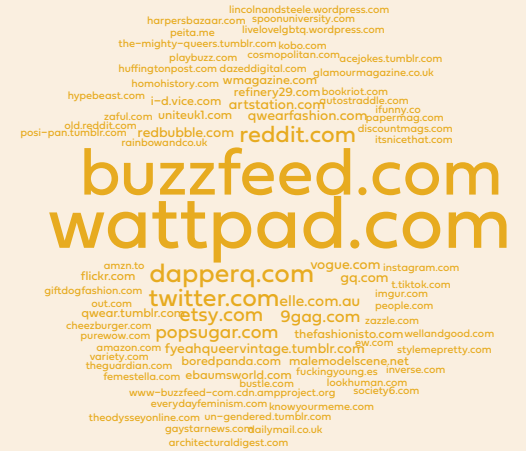
“QUEER” PINS



The mosaic view represents a zoomed-in portion of the pins corpus. Images were classified according to similar color patterns.




This visualization displays hierarchically structured data and a related quantitative dimension. It is composed of an area divided into small cells representing the last level of the tree structure, computed using the Voronoi tessellation. The cells' size depends on the quantitative dimension. Furthermore, it depicts the thirty most frequent bigrams appearing in the titles of each of the 2,000 pins collected using “queer” as a keyword.



This word cloud visualization represents the 200 most repetitive pin sources. The URL size is proportional to the source frequency (repetition).

MOST POPULAR PINS



#1

lilnasx.com

'Self-Made Legend': Lil Nas X On Being A Gay Icon And The Dangers Of Homophobia

Lil Nas X graced the cover of Variety's 2021 Power of Young Hollywood and talked being a gay icon and the dangers of homophobia.

Refinery29 4.6M+ seguidores

Refinery29 ha guardado este Pin



#2

kobo.com

Black, Queer, Southern. Women.: An Oral History

Buy Black, Queer, Southern, Women.: An Oral History by E. Patrick Johnson and read the Book on Kobo's First Access, Discover Author's Best Collection of Books and Audiobooks Today - Over 4 Million+ Views

Kobo eBooks 236.5 M+ seguidores

kobo.com

Kobo eBooks ha guardado este Pin



#3


kobo.com

I Prefer Girls

Buy I Prefer Girls by Jessie Dunnett and read the Book on Kobo's First Access, Discover Author's Best Collection of Books and Audiobooks Today - Over 4 Million+ Views

Kobo eBooks 235.4 M+ seguidores

Kobo eBooks ha guardado este Pin



#4

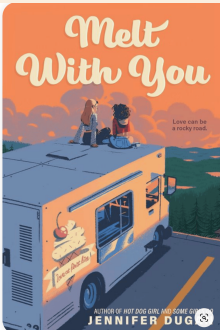
DOSSUGAR.COM

Queer Eye's Antoni on His New Restaurant and ... Broccoli Lattes?

Read our fun, foodie interview with Antoni Porowski. >>

POPSUGAR 4.2M+ seguidores

POPSUGAR Food ha guardado en Ultimate Food Guide



#5

vitalsource.com

Melt With You (eBook)

by Jennifer Dugan, PRINT ISBN: 9780593122564 E-TEXT ISBN: 9780593122571

VitalSource 123.6 M+ seguidores

VitalSource ha guardado este Pin

These are the five most frequent pins suggested by Pinterest on each query, classified according to source popularity.

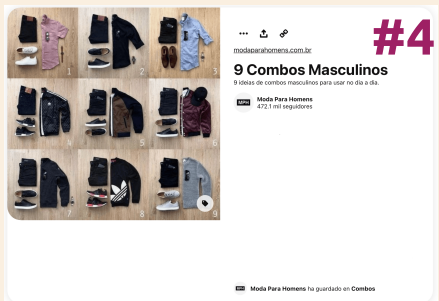
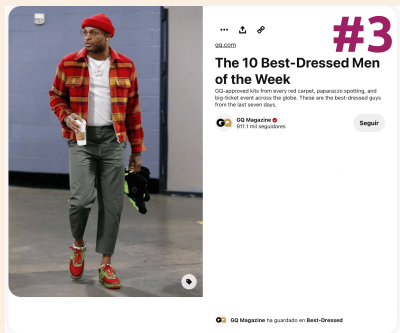
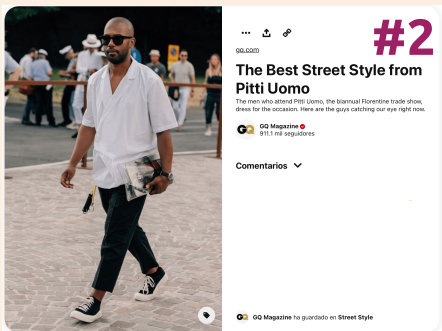
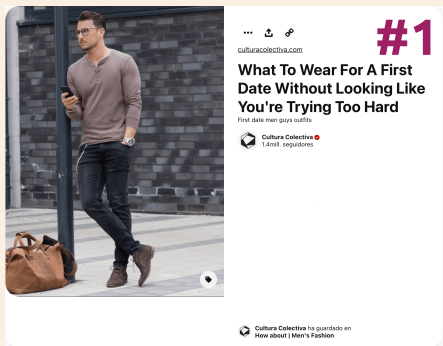
03

MEN

This section presents data visualizations encompassing search results for queries that include “men” (as a keyword) related metadata.



MOST POPULAR PINS



These are the five most frequent pins suggested by Pinterest on each query, classified according to source popularity.

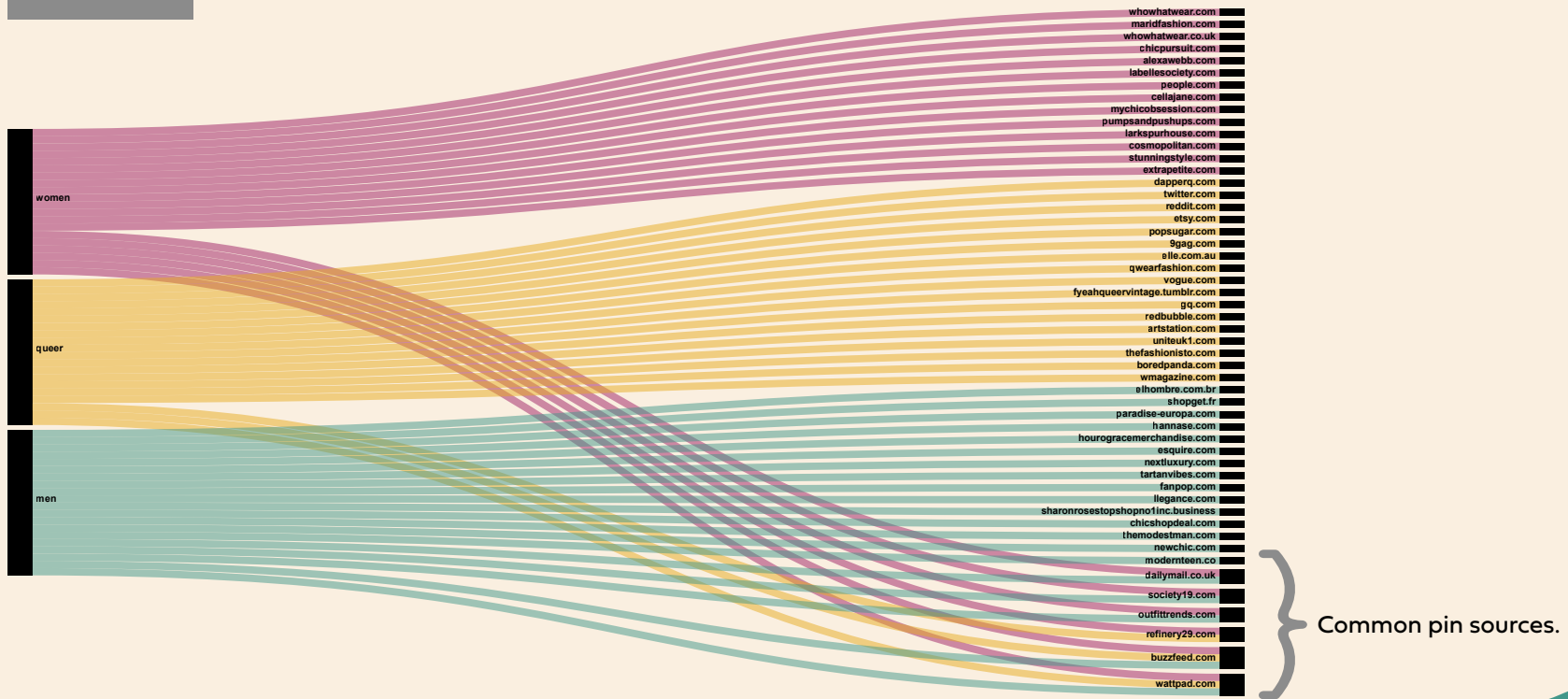
04



CONTRAST: W+Q+M

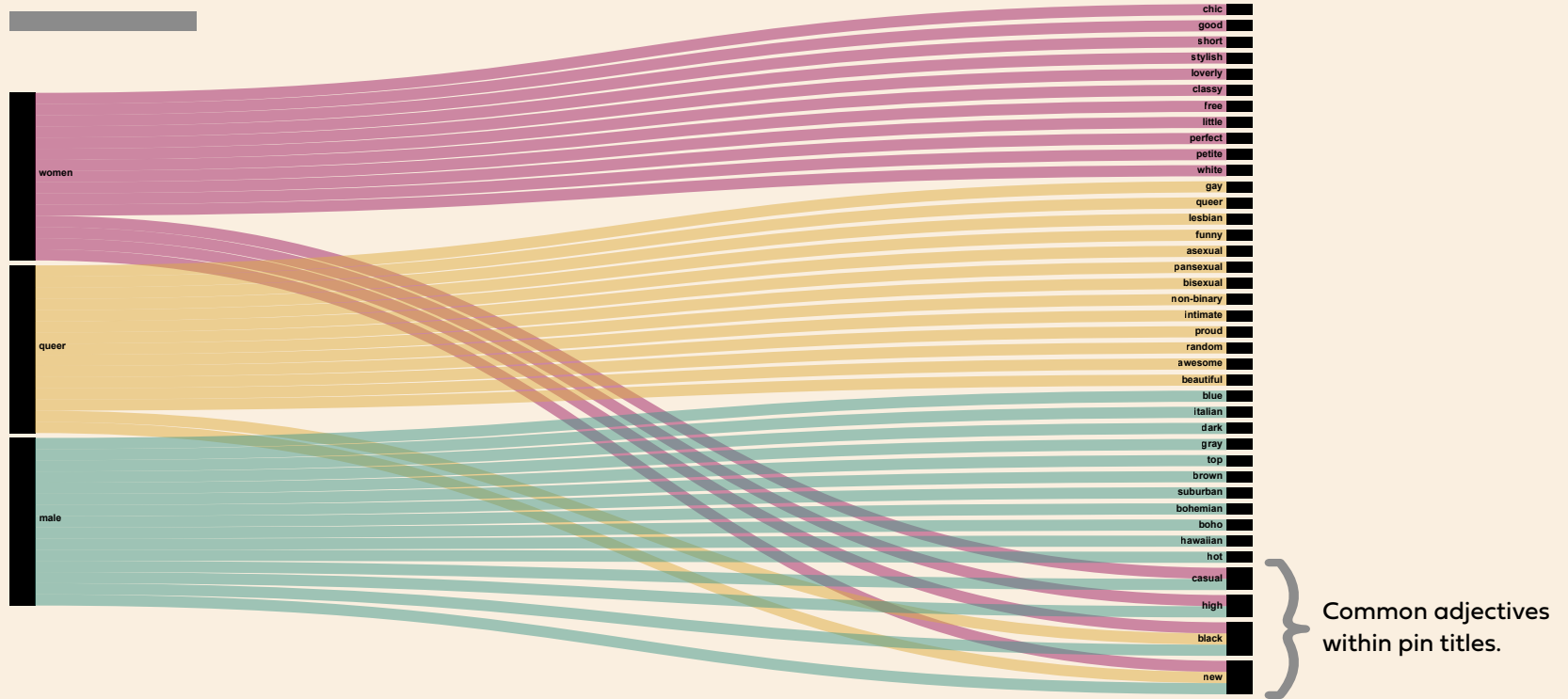
This section presents data visualizations contrasting search results for queries that include "women," "queer," and "men" (as keywords) related metadata.

PIN SOURCES



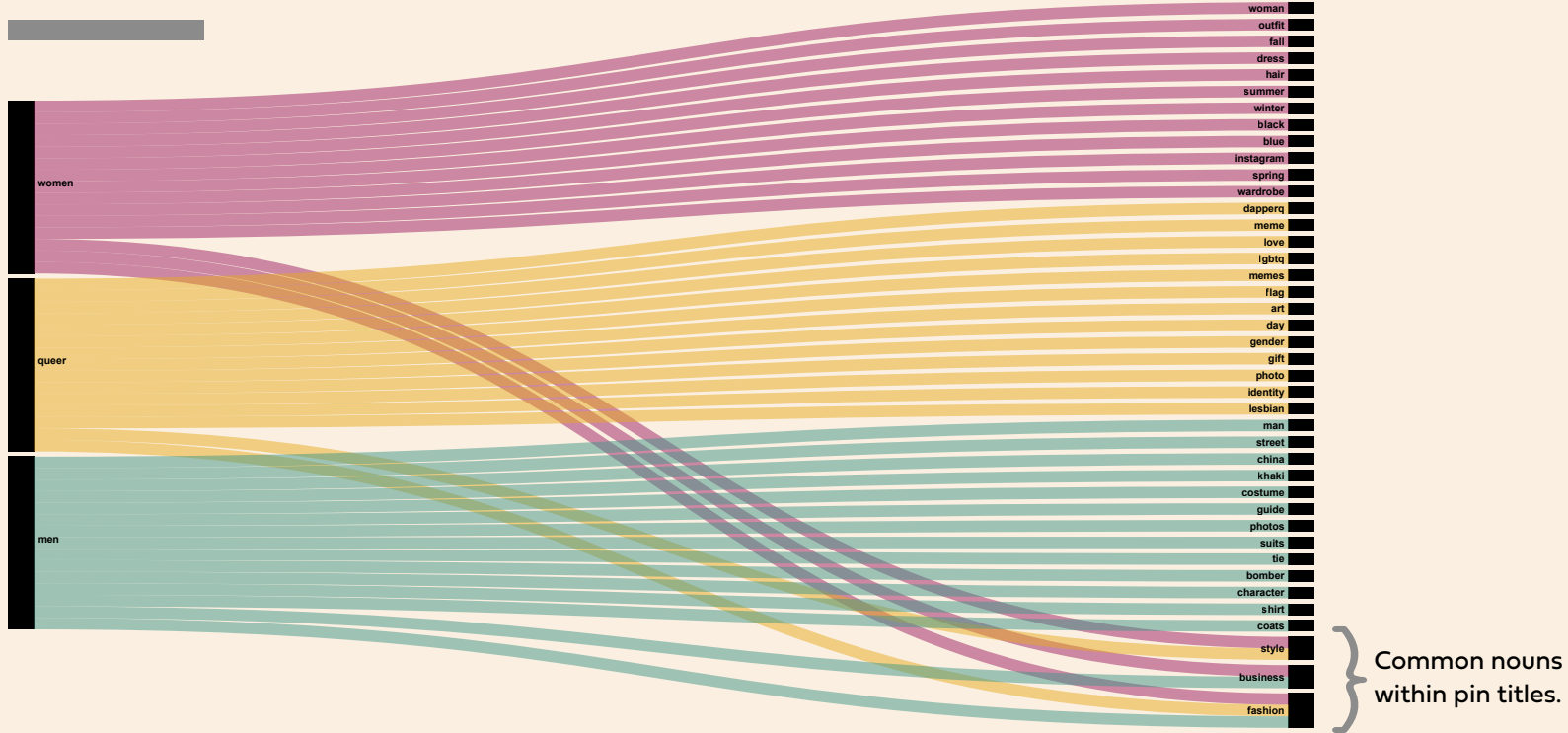
This alluvial diagram shows correlations between categorical dimensions representing them as flows, visually linking gender with **recurring pin sources**. Each rectangle represents a unique value in the selected dimension; its height is proportional to its value. Correlations are represented with curved lines whose width is proportional to their value.

ADJECTIVES



This alluvial diagram shows correlations between categorical dimensions representing them as flows, visually linking gender with **recurring adjectives found in pin titles from the collected corpus**. Each rectangle represents a unique value in the selected dimension; its height is proportional to its value. Correlations are represented with curved lines whose width is proportional to their value.

NOUNS

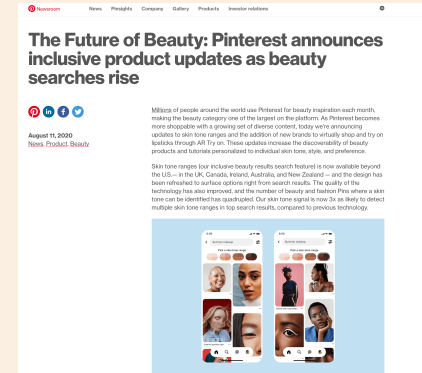
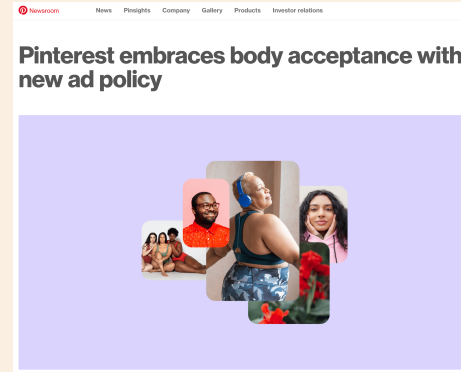


This alluvial diagram shows correlations between categorical dimensions representing them as flows, visually linking gender with **recurring nouns found in pin titles from the collected corpus**. Each rectangle represents a unique value in the selected dimension; its height is proportional to its value. Correlations are represented with curved lines whose width is proportional to their value.

CONCLUSIONS

KEY FINDINGS

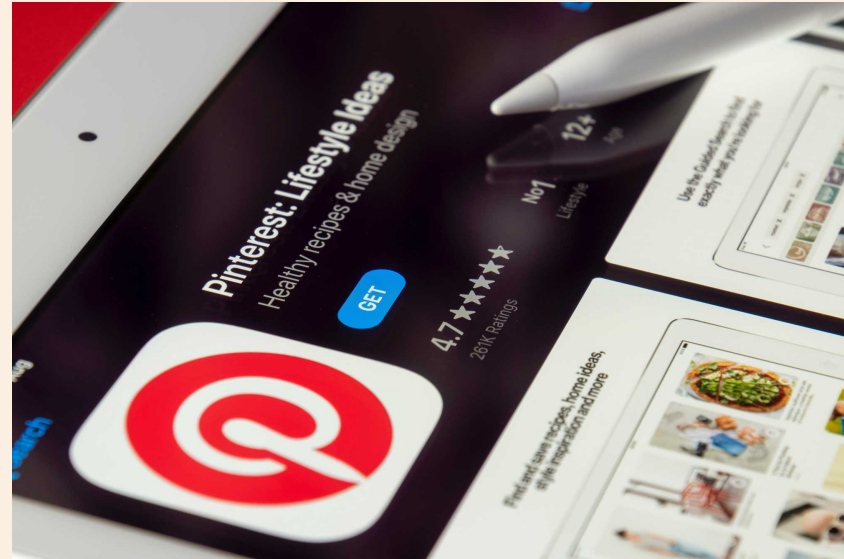
- Aside from georeferenced biases (which were not contemplated for this exercise), Pinterest search algorithms do a good job representing diversity in fashion-related content. This can be confirmed by recent company efforts, such as a feature that lets users filter pins by hair texture or the action of banning all weight-loss ads on its platform.
- Daily Mail UK, BuzzFeed, Society19, Wattpad, Outfit Trends, and Refinery29 are the primary sources for pins served using gender-related keywords. In addition, these websites function as hubs where fashion articles and pictures are taken from to be shared on Pinterest.
- If, as Pinterest reports, 80% of weekly Pinner have discovered a new brand or product on that platform, these web sources must be considered when trying to position a new fashion brand on Pinterest.
- A more profound discussion of these topics can be relevant if replicating this exercise on other social media platforms such as Instagram or TikTok.



CONCLUSIONS

In *The Lonely Selfie King: Selfies and the Conspicuous Prosumption of Gender and Race*, authors Williams and Aldana (2015) quote Judith Butler (1999) to argue that the "rationality that contributes to the way individuals categorize sex, gender, and sexuality is culturally constructed." By repeatedly performing gender roles, selfie-takers (authors set as an example) produce new social norms and rituals. The more "likes" actors have, the more likely they are to re-prosume similar gender presentations.

In the same direction, our perspective emphasizes the dynamics through which search algorithms produce a "technological unconscious" (Beer, 2009), or a force that has been shown to palliate consumers' agency significantly and might contribute to their techno-social reproduction by amplifying cultural biases regarding gender and fashion clothes consumption, for example.



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DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

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