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SUSTAINING LUXURY BRAND PRESENCE ACROSS DIFFERENT GENERATIONS: STRATEGIES TO ENDURING DISTINCTION AND GROWTH

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Abstract. This study aims to analyse how luxury companies can remain timeless and compatible with the ideals of new generations. Additionally, it aims to identify what are the strategies that luxury brands are adopting to attract the new generation (Gen Z). A qualitative study was conducted with brand activation, public relations and advisory professionals who work with the luxury market, who would be able to tell us what strategies are used and what the weight of the distinction between generational cohorts is. The findings reveal that younger generations are more technologically and old approaches such as advertising through magazines or paper press are already not the focus of the marketing budget available. Digital presence through social media profiles, ads and partnerships with influencers has become the focus for keeping brands in touch with their audience. In addition, it is important to provide experiences for the public. For Gen Z, it is important to take a stand on social and environmental issues and to show concern for larger themes. This generation cares about what brands have to offer other than their name, they are looking for authenticity and humanism. The originality of this study lies on analysis of how luxury brands evolve to meet the expectations of Gen Z, a demographic with unique values and purchasing behaviors compared to past generations. While existing research often focuses on digital marketing or generational consumer trends, this study distinguishes itself by analysing the interplay between tradition and innovation. It offers industry perspectives, highlights the shift toward experiential and values-driven marketing, and explores changes in marketing budget allocation. By integrating real-world industry insights with academic analysis, this research adds to the conversation on luxury brand adaptation and provides practical guidance for brand managers navigating the evolving luxury landscape.

Keywords: luxury brands; generation Z; consumer behavior; strategies

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1. Introduction

Despite the current geopolitical tensions and the uncertain macroeconomic scenario, the luxury personal goods market set a record in 2022, reaching a market value of €345 billion (Bain & Company, 2023). However, it is not just fluctuations in the economic sector that the luxury market survives. Historically, luxury brands have been associated with exclusivity, tradition, prestige, and superior quality (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999).

Gen Z grew up in a world of cell phones, social media, and rapid access to information (Williams et al., 2010; Hysa et al., 2021). Distinguished by digital nativeness, an entrepreneurial drive, and social awareness, Gen Z differs from Millennials in terms of communication patterns, educational viewpoints, and institutional expectations (Twenge, 2023). As consumers, this generation is worried and aware of social and environmental problems, so when purchasing from luxury brands these individuals look for companies that align with their values such as authenticity, inclusion, and diversity; this cohort wants brands that adopt sustainable and responsible practices (Roberts, 2023). Gen Z, differs by its emphasis on authenticity, sustainability, and innovation, has a distinct set of values and expectations that necessitate novel strategic approaches (Thangavel et al., 2019; Puiu, 2016; Thomas et al., 2022). This circumstance generates a conflict between maintaining brand heritage and the requirement for innovation to attract and keep younger customers (Sjahrudin & Adif, 2024).

Drawing on Piric et al. (2024), there are pronounced generational differences in how social media is used, including variations in user motivations and reactions to brand-related content. Younger audiences tend to be more active on the platforms and are more strongly influenced by Instagram in shaping brand perceptions and purchase intentions. By contrast, older users interact more selectively, showing greater interest in brand and celebrity content rather than peer-driven engagement. These findings highlight the importance for luxury brands to incorporate generationally tailored strategies in their digital marketing efforts to preserve distinctiveness, build emotional resonance, and support long-term growth in a fragmented market landscape.

Similarly, Hua et al. (2025) demonstrate that consumers' willingness to share content, driven by desires for self-presentation, social validation, and identity formation, enhances the perceived conspicuous value of a brand, which in turn fosters loyalty. This study further shows that materialistic values intensify the impact of socially driven motives and reinforce the relationship between perceived value and brand loyalty, underscoring the role of status signaling in online environments. Importantly, these patterns are consistent across Gen Z (and Gen Y), suggesting that despite differences in platform usage, the core psychological drivers related to visibility, recognition, and distinction remain largely stable across generations.

The existing literature on luxury brands provides a thorough examination of the factors that define their essence and the significance of tradition while explaining how this market keeps seeking the attention of older generations (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999). Although, it was found a lack of articles clarifying how luxury companies can maintain their historical identity while aligning themselves with the growing ideals of Gen Z. This gap motivated this thesis, which seeks to investigate the unique tactics used by luxury companies to reconcile these two factors. In this literature review, we dive deep into characteristics of each generation and how the luxury market survives to these fluctuations. The market's need to adapt and innovate is becoming more urgent (Fredberg & Pregmark, 2016).

Therefore, the following research questions (RQs) are formulated:

RQ1: How can luxury companies remain timeless and compatible with the ideals of Gen Z without losing their essence?

RQ2: What are the strategies that are being adopted by luxury brands to attract the Gen Z?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Luxury brands and Generation Z

It is now evident that the Internet and social media have played a significant role in making luxury more accessible. Additionally, it can be argued that online interactions and social media activities contribute to socialization processes, influencing the way conspicuous consumption is perceived and experienced (Dobre et al., 2021).

Zhang et al. (2022) targeting four big luxury brands (Louis Vuitton, Ralph Lauren, Gucci, and Burberry) noticed that all these luxury brands focus on enhancing their presence on TikTok by creating brand-generated content, such as showcasing their brand image and fashion shows. They also collaborate with influencers, highlight visually creative and aesthetic elements, and incorporate original songs and hashtags. These strategies not only fulfill consumers' functional and hedonic expectations but also promote engagement by encouraging likes and follows on brand channels.

Shukla and Rosendo-Ríos (2021) state that luxury goods consumption is highly dependent on what others consume within the network and highlighted the significant role of social comparisons and the effects of reference groups regarding luxury consumption basing themselves on network effect theory. These scholars include snob motivation, bandwagon motivation, the Veblen motivation and affirm that when reinforced by the network effects these symbolic motivations will have a direct and positive effect on luxury purchase intentions. Snob motivation reflects a desire for exclusivity and avoidance of widely owned goods, bandwagon motivation reflects a tendency to purchase items because others are buying them, and Veblen motivation reflects a preference for expensive goods as a signal of status and prestige. Within this framework, social media platforms serve as instruments that guarantee widespread public visibility, thereby affording owners of luxury goods the chance to dazzle other owners by showcasing their riches, tastes, expertise, and brand preferences. This may demonstrate how well social media and premium brands work together (Creevey et al., 2021).

With the arrival of the third technological revolution, the digital age has become omnipresent in the lives of Gen Z; With the growth in the use of technology in our daily lives and the growth of social media, various professionals in the virtual field have begun to emerge (Forster-Carneiro et al., 2022). Craig (2019) explains that content creators are all the people who use social media channels such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and others to publish entertaining or educational content with an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to generate leads. Therefore, traditional marketing no longer works for this generation. One of the strategies that is working very well with this group is influencer marketing (Roberts, 2023).

Since Gen Z is the first generation to have grown up exclusively in the digital era, its members are extremely tech-savvy and dependent on Internet channels for communication, knowledge, and shopping. As people move across various channels and devices, they anticipate flawless omnichannel purchasing experiences. To guarantee a unified and integrated brand experience is important for brands to maintain consistency across physical stores, internet platforms, and social media (Roberts, 2023). However, despite their great reliance on digital, Gen Z exhibits a desire for interpersonal communication, which contributes to explaining why influence marketing works so well to promote brands (Cho et al., 2021).

The increasing emphasis on sustainability is one of the most noticeable shifts in the trends influencing consumer behaviour (Mohr et al., 2021). Consumers nowadays, especially the younger ones, show a stronger awareness of the environment. This translates into a need for transparent supply chains, sustainable materials, and moral production methods. Consumers seeking to balance their opulent lifestyle with a positive environmental impact are drawn to luxury brands that uphold and promote these ideals.

Brand loyalty is changing. Some scholars (e.g., Thangavel et al., 2019; Puiu, 2016; Thomas et al., 2022) refer that customers are less likely to form a lifelong commitment to a single luxury brand, particularly younger ones. Loyalty is gained by continuously outstanding experiences, common values, and continued relevance. Luxury brands are responding to this through innovative loyalty programmes, strategic collaborations and exclusive events that seek to keep consumers engaged over time

2.2. Luxury companies' market trends and business strategies

The luxury business, which is continually evolving, confronts substantial problems such as generational attitudes shaping customer preferences where (1) new trends and concerns are brought up by each generation and companies need to keep themselves updated so they can conquer new clients and (2) social, cultural, and technical revolutions have a significant impact on the business tactics used by luxury brands, necessitating ongoing adaptation to remain relevant and attract consumers of various ages (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015). Unlike previous generations, Millennials and Gen Z favour authentic experiences, ethical principles, and sustainability over the ostentation and status of expensive items; This has changed the focus of luxury companies, which now seek to present authentic stories, emphasize sustainable methods, and demonstrate social responsibility (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). The purchasing patterns of millennial consumers are identified as socially influenced, brand image affective, and information-intensive behaviours in developed countries (Parment, 2013; Smith, 2011).

Due to consumer demand for information about product origins, manufacturing processes, and the environmental impact of luxury brands, transparency has emerged as a critical component of marketing strategies; businesses that embrace ethical and sustainable practices can stand out in the marketplace and gain the support of customers who care about the environment (Smith, 2011).

Digitalization is essential for communicating with the next generation. Luxury brands are spending money on social media presence, digital marketing tactics, and an online presence. According to Reinikainen et al. (2020), Gen Z is digitally native and highly engaged with content and social media. In order to respond to this new generational trend, companies have been using social networks as a new means of bringing their services/products to their target audience (Hutter et al., 2013; Okonkwo, 2009). Social media marketing has become a must-have for businesses trying to connect with their consumers and reach a larger audience (Quinn, 2016) but not just social media, a full online presence such as websites, online campaigns and social networking is needed (Plowman & Wilson, 2018).

In the digital age, luxury brands have recognized the importance of social media for promoting their goods and services (Kim & Ko, 2010; Okonkwo, 2010). Luxury businesses may interact with consumers, build brand recognition, and raise demand for their products by utilizing social media like Instagram (Kim & Ko, 2010). Luxury brands have leveraged social media to showcase their PR content to reach a younger demographic; This has resulted in a closer relationship between the company and the customer thanks to more relatable, honest, and authentic content (Kim & Ko, 2010). Chanel, Gucci, Burberry, and Louis Vuitton are a few of the companies that actively distribute their content on social media. As an alternative, luxury firms can use digital influencers to target demographics; these influencers build fan networks that draw luxury brands (Vinerean and Oprea, 2019). Luxury buyers' decisions can be influenced by using the viewpoints and experiences of common people who wish to live affluent lives (Seo & Buchanan Oliver, 2019). According to Marwick (2013), influencers can be described as a "state of being famous to a niche group of people" and involves the curation of a persona that feels "authentic to viewers".

3. Methodology

Methodology approach

A qualitative methodology approach was adopted due its capacity to delve deeply into individuals' experiences, attitudes, and behaviours, providing unique insights into complex phenomena such as luxury brand trends and evolution. This data was collected and analysed using qualitative methods, which included techniques such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from brand activation, public relations and advisory professionals who have directly dealt with luxury brands. These interviews seek to elicit their viewpoints, experiences, and insights into strategies for sustaining luxury brands over generations (Pandey & Pandey, 2015).

The qualitative methodology was the chosen method to gather data, considering the nuanced nature of luxury brand management. This way the data collection would be more specific, have more contextual understanding and we would be able to analyse deeply the interviewed perspectives. Unlike quantitative methods, which focus on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative methodology allows for a deeper exploration of the underlying meanings, motivations, and contexts that shape the strategies employed by luxury brands.

Sample, measures and instrument

Four interviews were conducted with brand activation, public relations and advisory professionals from luxury brands such as Givenchy, Dolce & Gabbana, and Saint Lauren (Table 1). These professionals are from the company Treasurecode Lda., a consultancy and public relations company specialized in the beauty, fashion and lifestyle sectors, whose clients include major national and international brands.

Table 1. Sample

Interviewee	Role in the Company
I_1	Accountant of luxury brand Givenchy Beauty
I_2	Accountant of luxury brand Givenchy Beauty and Leitão Irmão
I_3	Accountant of Dolce & Gabbana and Steve Madden
I_4	Accountant of Elisabetta Franchi and Liu Jo

Source: own work based on the conducted study

The interview was the method used to collect the primary data (Taherdoost, 2021). Interviews are a type of social interaction in which the information obtained comes from a conversation in which the interviewer poses purposeful questions, and the subject of the interview responds with responses that will be utilized to draw a logical conclusion later. These interviews happened during the month of May of 2024. According to Taherdoost (2021), this methodological approach makes it feasible to obtain more detailed information since it involves direct communication. Compared to simply filling out a questionnaire, the interviewee is more likely to be forthcoming while under interrogation, particularly if the interviewer is equipped with the appropriate skills. The interview structure is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Interview structure

Question(s)	Author(s)
Q1. How important do you think it is to understand and differentiate generations in your daily job?	Adapted from Williams and Page (2009)
Q2. Do you think different generations need different marketing approaches? Justify.	Adapted from Williams and Page (2009); Parment (2013)
Q3. To execute your job in the most effective way possible do you differentiate cohorts when thinking about marketing campaigns?	Adapted from Williams and Page (2009; Grewal et al. (2004); Schade et al. (2016); Wilcox et al. (2009)
Q4. Do you think luxury brands have difficulty in maintaining their essence across generations?	Adapted from Heine (2012); (Kapferer, 2014)

Q5. How luxury brands have been adapting their communication and strategies throughout generations?	Adapted from Ko et al. (2019); Zhang et al. (2022)
Q6. What changing in trends you perceived in the luxury market throughout your career?	Adapted from Kim & Ko (2010); Bian and Forsythe (2012); Williams and Page (2009)
Q7. Do you think these changing trends were related to the differences between generations?	Adapted from Bian and Forsythe, (2012); Grewal et al. (2004); Schade et al. (2016); Wilcox et al. (2009)
Q8. Do you think Generation Z is an important generation in the luxury market?	Adapted from Roberts (2023)
Q9. How would you define Generation Z as consumers?	Adapted from Roberts (2023)
Q10. What strategies of marketing/channels are being used to attract this cohort?	Adapted from Dobre et al. (2021)

Source: own work based on the conducted study

4. Results

Concerning Q1, the results highlight a strong consensus on the importance of understanding the target audience in brand communication. All interviewees emphasize that effective communication requires aligning brand strategy with generational and audience segmentation. The responses suggest that brand communication is not one-size-fits-all; instead, it must be tailored based on factors such as brand identity, product type, and the intended consumer demographic. This reinforces the idea that a deep understanding of consumer behavior across generations is crucial for sustaining a luxury brand's essence and market relevance. The results are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Q1 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Understanding generations means understanding the audience; crucial for communication.	Audience understanding is essential for effective communication.
I_2	Brand strategy and target audience must be understood first before executing communication.	Aligning brand strategy with audience targeting is key.
I_3	Communication depends on the product, brand segmentation, and type of message.	Segmentation is necessary at both brand and product levels.
I_4	Different brands have different target audiences and generations, requiring tailored communication.	Communication strategies must adapt to different target audiences.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

Regarding Q2, the results emphasize the necessity of adapting communication strategies based on generational differences in media consumption. All interviewees agree that different age groups engage with distinct platforms, requiring tailored approaches. Younger generations are more active on digital platforms, while older audiences may still rely on traditional media such as print, television, and radio. This highlights the importance of a multi-channel strategy for brands, ensuring that messaging reaches each demographic effectively. The findings reinforce that a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective in marketing, particularly in the luxury sector, where brand reputation and exclusivity play a crucial role in audience targeting. The results are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Q2 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Different generations use different platforms; older generations are present on TikTok but may struggle with technology.	Communication should adapt to generational tech preferences.
I_2	Different platforms, approaches, and campaigns are needed for different generations.	Tailoring communication strategies is essential.
I_3	Communication methods should vary by age group; older generations prefer traditional media like print, TV, and radio.	Traditional media is more effective for older audiences.
I_4	Luxury brands target specific audiences using appropriate media; print magazines work for older consumers, but not younger ones.	Media selection should align with generational habits.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

Respecting Q3, the results enhance the complexity of audience segmentation beyond just generational differences. While generational targeting is important, several interviewees emphasize the need to consider additional factors such as socioeconomic status, consumer habits, and brand positioning. There is a strong consensus that marketing strategies must be highly differentiated, with tailored campaigns, events, and activations designed for specific audience segments. Particularly in the luxury sector, balancing exclusivity with relevance is a key challenge. These insights reinforce the importance of precision in communication strategies to ensure brand messaging effectively reaches the intended audience. The results are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Q3 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Beyond generations, targeting within a generation is crucial; factors like wealth and media consumption habits matter.	Effective communication requires both generational and socioeconomic targeting.
I_2	Events and campaigns should be tailored to specific audiences; combining them is not ideal.	Customization of marketing activations is necessary for different targets.
I_3	Differentiation in communication strategies is essential.	A one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective.
I_4	Luxury brands must balance exclusivity with maintaining a modern appeal, especially in different markets.	Luxury brand positioning must align with exclusivity while staying relevant.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

With reference to Q4, the results reveal a nuanced perspective on the challenges of sustaining a luxury brand's essence over time. While some interviewees believe maintaining a luxury brand is easier than establishing one, they all emphasize the need for continuous innovation to remain relevant. A key challenge is striking a balance between reinvention and brand identity, as seen in examples like Tiffany & Co. and Dolce & Gabbana. Successful luxury brands adapt to modern trends and audiences while preserving their core values and exclusivity. Overall, the findings highlight that while adaptation is necessary, it must be strategic to ensure longevity without diluting the brand's prestige. The results are summarised in the Table 6.

Table 6. Q4 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Establishing a luxury brand is harder than maintaining it, but innovation is necessary to stay relevant.	Luxury brands must continuously innovate to capture attention.
I_2	Reinvention without losing identity is challenging; successful brands like Tiffany's adapt by collaborating with modern icons.	Balancing tradition with modern appeal is key to longevity.
I_3	Brand evolution can be seamless if identity is preserved, as seen in Dolce & Gabbana's adaptation to trends while maintaining its essence.	Adaptation should enhance, not compromise, brand identity.
I_4	Innovation is a major challenge for luxury brands as they must constantly evolve.	Continuous innovation is essential but difficult.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

As to Q5, the results highlight the evolving nature of luxury brand marketing, emphasizing the shift from traditional exclusivity to more immersive and diverse experiences. Social media has transformed the way luxury brands engage with consumers, allowing for new forms of experiential marketing beyond traditional fashion shows. While exclusivity remains a core pillar, brands now focus on offering unique, money-can't-buy experiences to maintain their prestige. Additionally, a balance between digital and traditional marketing strategies is essential, ensuring broad reach while leveraging influencer partnerships and 360-degree communication strategies. Overall, the findings suggest that adaptability and multi-channel engagement are crucial for sustaining luxury brand appeal in the modern era. The results are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7. Q5 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Luxury brands now offer diverse experiences beyond fashion shows, leveraging social media to engage audiences with exclusive activations.	Experiential marketing is key to modern luxury branding.
I_2	True luxury lies in exclusivity; consumers seek unique, money-can't-buy experiences that enhance a brand's prestige.	Exclusivity through unique experiences sustains luxury appeal.
I_3	While digital marketing is essential, traditional advertising like TV commercials still holds value in reaching a broad audience.	Luxury brands blend traditional and digital strategies for reach.
I_4	360-degree communication strategies, including digital presence and influencer partnerships, are crucial for brand success.	Integrated communication across channels strengthens brand impact.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

Concerning Q6, the results emphasize a significant transformation in luxury brand marketing, driven by the decline of traditional print media and the rise of digital platforms. Younger generations no longer engage with magazines as before, prompting brands to shift their budgets toward digital campaigns, exclusive experiences, and large-scale activations. TikTok has emerged as an unexpected but powerful platform for luxury marketing, demonstrating the industry's need to adapt to new social media trends. Additionally, collaborations with digital influencers and themed collections reflect efforts to remain relevant to younger audiences. Overall, these findings emphasize the necessity for luxury brands to embrace digital innovation while maintaining their core identity. The results are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8. Q6 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Luxury brands have shifted budgets from print and TV ads to digital due to declining readership among younger generations.	Print media is losing relevance, leading to increased digital investment.
I_2	Marketing budgets now prioritize digital campaigns, major events, and exclusive experiences instead of traditional fashion magazines.	Luxury brands focus on digital, events, and experiential marketing.
I_3	TikTok has revolutionized luxury marketing; once seen as an unserious platform, it is now a key space for major brands like Gucci.	TikTok's rise has reshaped luxury brand strategies.
I_4	Luxury brands are adapting to younger audiences through digital influencers and themed collections, such as Harry Potter-inspired fashion.	Brands evolve through digital partnerships and generational adaptations.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

Regarding Q7, the results enhance the evolving nature of luxury brand marketing in response to generational shifts and changing digital landscapes. Social media platforms play a crucial role in shaping brand relevance, with TikTok emerging as a key space for engaging younger audiences, while Instagram remains essential for visibility. Younger consumers prioritize experiences over traditional status symbols, using social media to showcase exclusivity and brand engagement. While luxury brands maintain strong identities, they must continuously adapt to avoid losing market relevance. Overall, the findings highlight the necessity of a dynamic, platform-specific approach to effectively connect with different generations while preserving brand prestige. The results are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9. Q7 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Social media platforms evolve, and brands must follow their target audience. Givenchy, aiming for a "cool kid" image, prioritizes TikTok while maintaining presence on Instagram.	Luxury brands must align their platform choices with their brand identity and audience.
I_2	Younger generations value experiences over status and use social media to showcase them. Social media has transformed how luxury is perceived.	Experience-driven marketing is more important than traditional status symbols.
I_3	Luxury brands have strong identities but must still evolve with generational shifts. Adapting to platforms like TikTok is essential for long-term relevance.	Luxury brands must modernize while maintaining their essence.
I_4	Adapting strategies helps brands connect with different generations.	A multi-generational approach is key to luxury brand success.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

Respecting Q8, the results reveal the importance of Gen Z as the future consumer base for luxury brands. While they may not yet have strong purchasing power, they are deeply influenced by social media, influencers, and the aspirational nature of luxury items. Unlike previous generations, who embraced fast fashion and mass consumption, Gen Z is more conscious of sustainability and quality, preferring fewer but higher-value purchases. Luxury brands must cultivate brand desire early, ensuring that when Gen Z enters the workforce, they are loyal consumers. Social media plays a crucial role in shaping their perception of luxury, making digital engagement essential for long-term brand success. The results are summarised in Table 10.

Table 10. Q8 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Gen Z does not currently drive luxury brand profits but is crucial for future sales. They desire luxury and will buy more once they enter the workforce.	Gen Z is a future luxury consumer, and brands must build desire early.
I_2	Social media and influencers have made luxury items aspirational for Gen Z. More young people now prioritize owning luxury items.	Social media fuels Gen Z's aspiration for luxury products.
I_3	Gen Z is the next generation of luxury buyers, making them an important target for brands.	Gen Z will eventually become key luxury consumers.
I_4	Gen Z lacks purchasing power but values sustainability and quality over quantity. Social media amplifies their appreciation for luxury, unlike previous generations.	Gen Z's approach to luxury is driven by sustainability, quality, and social media influence.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

With reference to Q9, the results highlight the profound impact of social media on Gen Z's consumption habits, particularly in the luxury sector. Unlike previous generations, their purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by peer validation, online trends, and brand storytelling. Social media platforms, especially TikTok, serve as key spaces where trends emerge, making virality a crucial factor in sales. Additionally, Gen Z places a high value on the experience and meaning behind a product rather than just its function. The rise of "cancel culture" also means brands must align with values that resonate with this generation. Overall, luxury brands must focus on digital engagement, authenticity, and experiential marketing to effectively capture Gen Z's interest and loyalty. The results are summarised in Table 11.

Table 11. Q9 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Gen Z consumers are highly influenced by social media and peer pressure. Viral products sell out quickly because everyone wants to be part of the trend.	Social media and group influence drive Gen Z's purchasing behavior.
I_2	Gen Z cares about a brand's mission, values, and storytelling rather than just the product itself. Cancel culture plays a role in their purchasing decisions.	Gen Z buys based on brand values and storytelling, not just the product.
I_3	This generation values the experience behind a product rather than just the act of buying. They seek deeper meaning in their purchases.	Gen Z prioritizes experiences and emotional connections over simple consumption.
I_4	Social media shapes Gen Z's consumption habits, making it "cool" to showcase branded purchases online. Unboxings and luxury product displays influence buying behavior.	Social media trends and the desire for online validation impact Gen Z's luxury purchases.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

As to Q10, the results emphasize the evolving landscape of luxury brand marketing, emphasizing the dominance of social media, influencer marketing, and experiential activations. TikTok and Instagram emerge as key platforms, with a shift from traditional celebrity endorsements to real, relatable influencers and user-generated content. Additionally, strategic product placement in TV series, music videos, and podcasts proves to be an effective way to position luxury brands in aspirational contexts. Beyond digital, in-person brand activations at festivals and public events create memorable consumer experiences. The insights reinforce the importance of a multi-channel approach, blending digital influence with real-world engagement to maintain luxury brands' desirability among younger generations. The results are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12. Q10 Results

Interviewee	Key Points	Main Idea
I_1	Social media is crucial, but product placement in TV series, music videos, and podcasts is also a powerful marketing strategy.	Luxury brands should use both social media and strategic media placements to enhance brand presence.
I_2	TikTok is the dominant platform, but Instagram remains relevant. Platforms like YouTube and Twitch are important for specific products. Influencer marketing is key in decision-making.	Social media and influencer marketing significantly impact consumer purchasing decisions.
I_3	Social media activations, especially at festivals and public events, create memorable brand experiences. Facebook is no longer relevant.	Interactive brand activations help brands connect with Gen Z beyond digital platforms.
I_4	Luxury brands are shifting from traditional celebrity endorsements to digital influencers and everyday social media users. TikTok plays a key role in brand exposure through organic content like unboxings.	Influencer marketing and user-generated content are shaping luxury brand communication.

Source: own work based on the conducted study

5. Discussion

The results highlight the need for luxury businesses to successfully handle the shifting dynamics of generations (Williams & Page, 2009). The subtleties of consumer behaviour also change when the torch is passed from one generation to the next. It was confirmed that different generations need different marketing approaches as these scholars defended. To stay in line with the zeitgeist, brands must adapt their tactics and be aware of these changing ideals.

Luxury brands are actively adjusting their strategies as they are acutely aware of this reality. The focus on having a strong online presence is a calculated reaction to the inclination towards virtual interaction among digital

natives. In line with Batat (2019), the results show that in contrast to previous generations, these generations are driving a transformation of the luxury sector, with a focus on experiences, sustainability, digitalisation, and personalisation, in contrast to the traditional model centred on product ownership. Importantly, a key component of luxury firms' strategies is their dedication to providing experiences and being meaningful on their campaigns and missions, always providing feelings and sending a message instead of just showcasing a product.

This study reinforces that the use of storytelling and the linking of emotions to marketing campaigns are essential to the customers' purchasing decision. In this context, it was found that Gen Z values the feelings evoked by campaigns more than the intrinsic characteristics of the products themselves (Bian & Forsythe, 2012). Additionally, it highlights that Gen Z, unlike other age groups, responds more intensely to narratives that appeal to emotions. Therefore, to attract and retain Gen Z consumers, brands must go beyond simply presenting the qualities of their products. It is essential to create campaigns that tell engaging and exciting stories, establishing a deep and meaningful emotional connection with consumers. This not only differentiates the brand in the competitive market, but also fosters a lasting connection that can positively influence purchasing decisions.

Although the results argue against the ones by Kapferer et al. (2019), mentioning that the essences of luxury brands are not difficult to maintain since their presence in the market is already very strong, results have shown that innovation is fundamental to keeping the brand's name relevant in today's day (Thangavel et al., 2019; Puiu, 2016; Thomas et al., 2022).

Without question, the younger generations (Gen Z in particular) become essential focal areas for premium businesses. These generations have a great deal of influence over market trends because they are seen as the future and, more and more, as the dominant players in the consumer landscape. It is crucial to research and comprehend their preferences as Roberts (2023) defended.

Similar to Mohr et al. (2021), this study also revealed that sustainability causes such as avoiding fast-fashion and consumerism behaviours are in the core of Gen Z, a factor that plays on the side of luxury brands since this generation rather buy less but better-quality items. Like Zhang et al. (2022), it was concluded that for marketing campaigns, influence marketing campaigns are the most effective way to create a connection between brand and customers always through online platforms. TikTok was mentioned as the social media most used by younger generations and how it is important nowadays to communicate with the population.

This study emphasizes how important it is for luxury brands to understand generational trends. A constant state of awareness and adjustment is necessary for the complex dance between changing consumer values and brand initiatives. Luxury companies present themselves not simply as purveyors of grandeur but also as dynamic entities that resonate with the pulse of societal change, all while keeping a close eye on the next generation. Successfully navigating generational gaps emerges as the compass guiding luxury brands towards enduring differentiation and growth in the constantly changing market landscape, as consumer behaviour continues to track new frontiers.

6. Conclusion

Final remarks

This study aims was to analyse how luxury companies can remain timeless and compatible with the ideals of new generations. Additionally, it aims to identify what are the strategies that luxury brands are adopting to attract the new generation (Gen Z).

Through semi-structured interviews with brand activation, public relations and advisory professionals who work with the luxury market, several key themes emerged, highlighting the importance of generational distinctions, the

evolution of marketing strategies, and the unique characteristics and preferences of younger consumers, particularly Gen Z.

It was concluded that recognizing and addressing the distinct behaviours and preferences of different consumer generations in their daily work is fundamental. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing effective marketing and brand activation strategies. Despite these generational variations, it was concluded that luxury brands do not face significant challenges in maintaining their essence across generations due to their established prestige and reputation. The primary focus is on ensuring that the brand name remains top-of-mind in the luxury market through innovative marketing campaigns and products.

A significant shift in marketing strategies from offline to online channels was noted. Offline marketing is losing its influence over time, with marketing budgets increasingly being allocated to online platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. TikTok was also identified as the leading platform for engaging younger generations, especially Gen Z. However, an interesting perspective was shared, cautioning against the complete abandonment of offline channels. It was argued that offline channels still play a critical role in building credibility and consumer confidence.

It was concluded that different generations require tailored marketing approaches. For older generations, traditional channels like television and magazines are still effective, whereas younger generations gravitate towards online platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. This divergence necessitates a dual-channel strategy to effectively reach and engage a diverse consumer base. Even so Gen Z is still not the main target for luxury brands there was consensus that Gen Z represents the next generation with significant purchasing power, making it imperative for luxury brands to understand and connect with them.

We can conclude that Gen Z values authenticity, realness, public concerns, and experiential engagement. They seek brands that resonate with their values and offer meaningful connections. This generation's demand for authenticity and experiences marks a shift from traditional luxury experiences, such as fashion shows, to more interactive and innovative interactions. However, because of the big presence of social media in their lives, Gen Z is very influential, and trends change fast. Reviews and recommendations are very important in the purchase decision-making of this generation.

In summary, the findings from these interviews reveal that sustaining luxury brands across generations involves a nuanced understanding of generational differences, a strategic shift towards online marketing channels, and a keen focus on the evolving preferences of younger consumers. These insights provide a foundation for developing strategies that ensure the enduring distinction and growth of luxury brands in a dynamic market landscape.

Research limitations

This study encountered several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the interviewees were professionals operating within the Portuguese market, which may restrict the applicability of the findings to this specific market and culture. Secondly, the inherent complexity of the luxury market presents a significant challenge. Only a small segment of this market was analysed, which may limit the generalizability of the results. In addition, the concept of luxury is highly subjective, making it hard to analyse. It is also important to note that this research focused exclusively on brands offering luxury products, excluding luxury services, which could have influenced the findings.

Future research lines

This study has helped us to understand a little better the complexity of the luxury market and the importance of knowing the different consumers and their characteristics. This study provides a better understanding of

generational shifts and guidance for luxury brands by identifying effective marketing strategies that resonate with the younger generations.

During this research, interesting discoveries were made about the consumer behaviour of Gen Z individuals and the strategies of the luxury market. The reallocation of the available budget from television and press marketing strategies to online channels was one of the most highlighted topics during this research. However, I₃ stressed the importance of never abandoning offline, arguing that this is what brings brands notoriety and credibility. For future research is suggested to dive deep into the co-dependence of online and offline channels in terms of credibility that one brings to another. Studies with future generations may also be interesting to compare and understand the changing trends in the luxury market.

It is also suggested that future research should consider a broader scope, including diverse markets from other countries and both luxury products and services, to enhance the robustness and applicability of the findings.

Additionally, it is suggested to conduct a similar study from the consumers' perspective. This study would explore what consumers would like to see more of in the luxury market, what this generation considers relevant in a luxury brand, and the strategies that consumers approve or disapprove of.

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