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# THE IMPACT OF LUXURY FASHION ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

A Dissertation submitted as part of the MSc in  
Marketing

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores the impact on an individual's self-esteem, satisfaction with life and age within the luxury fashion industry. The 21<sup>st</sup> century consumer is always changing and the need to understand their wants and desires should be at the forefront of any business operating regardless of what industry they are in.

This research was based upon a comprehensive literature review diving into the consumer raised in today's digital era followed by a quantitative research approach through a questionnaire with 98 participants who themselves had an interest in the luxury fashion industry and are between the ages of 18-35. All the data that was collected was converted into numbers using Excel. Based on the results from the findings of the study, it was concluded that age does not impact on whether an individual has an interest and or have a willingness to purchase luxury clothing. Furthermore, an individual's self-esteem is not impacted on the interest and willingness to purchase luxury clothing. Finally, one's satisfaction with has no significant impact on whether an individual has an interest and or willingness to purchase luxury clothing. Secondary data was obtained through a literature review to develop a theoretical understanding that would in return support the findings.

The primary conclusion of this research is that the luxury industry has an influence on an individual's life. Regardless of their age they are willing to pay the high prices presented by luxurious brands as well as their self-esteem and satisfaction with life being impacted by their choices in shopping.

**Keywords:** Luxury shopping, luxury brands, consumer behaviour, millennials, fashion brands, self-esteem, life satisfaction.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between consumer behaviour and the luxury fashion industry. Literature prior to this study emphasise the limited number of studies conducted. Therefore, the need for further investigation is required. Hence the reasoning behind this research. This study further investigates the relationship between the Millennial as a consumer, their social media usage, self-esteem, and life satisfaction and how that influences their choices in luxury fashion.

Due to the recent explosion in advertising across social media platforms and other related settings, businesses and their marketers are fighting through the sea of advertising to come up with new and innovative ways to connect with their target audiences and attract new business. The Millennial generation was chosen due to the digital upbringing as generations before having not experienced this digitalised era. In more recent times, methods of traditional marketing have become less effective with this target audience due to their mass consumption of media. As Lee (2012) notes, this constant shift in the digital world has deemed previously used advertising tactics ineffective. Furthermore, the traditional marketing communications are unable to remain relevant. The buyer's decision journey alone has changed. Now, buyers tend to view products and services information in their own way, through the internet or other sources outside of the business themselves through ways like word-of-mouth or peer reviews (customer reviews) (Lee, 2012).

Therefore, attempting to apply these traditional marketing tactics to the digital/ social media seems have its problems. And as Arnold (2018) notes, 84% of millennials do not like traditional marketing and more importantly they don't trust it. This again further solidifies the need for brands and marketers to gain a better understanding of the behaviour of the consumer and what are their motivations. Now in this new digital era its practically impossible to scroll through any social media platform and not see some sort of advertisement. Luxury fashion brands too are starting to understand the immediate effects of social media. The Luxury Advertising Expenditure Forecast 2018 reported that luxury brands are increasing their digital advertising budget with the overall expenditure expected to surpass \$886 million in 2019 (WARCBestPractice, 2019). Social media is a place where a great deal of luxury brands should invest their marketing budgets into. As luxury brands are seen as an emotional and cultural purchases that in one sense defy the traditional laws of

marketing, around the use of promotion and distribution (WARCBestPractice, 2019). Currently, the market and social media are growing, and multiple brands are seeing the golden standard in digital advertising whereby they can engage with consumers constantly over the lifetime of the customer-business relationship. Thus, having a deeper understanding of the behaviour of consumers can benefit both the individuals and business to achieving better working relationships.

The aim of this study is ultimately building an understanding of the impact on consumer behaviour within the luxury fashion industry. The main objectives of this study are outlined below with the intention of providing insight into the statements along with the research questions:

**Question 1: Does purchasing luxury items affect one's self-esteem?**

**Question 2: Do individuals who are satisfied with their life purchase more luxury items?**

**Question 3: Does age play a factor in how much luxury clothing an individual purchases?**

To achieve the objectives listed above, this study used the suitable quantitative technique of a questionnaire with approximately 98 respondents who were similar in age and had an interest in fashion. All respondents are social media users as the survey was distributed digitally on social media platforms namely Instagram and LinkedIn. The future of this topic does could possibly be explored using different targeted audiences to understand what it is that could potentially give insight into their buying behaviour. This may lend itself to different opinions and stances in contrast to the respondents of this study. Ultimately, fashion has become a form of identify for individuals throughout the world thus having a grasp on the luxury market that will benefit both individual and business will be beneficial for all parties involved.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

A thorough understanding of the present-day literature is vital for all phases of a research study (Maggio, et al, 2016, p. 297-303). The chapter to follow consists of a meticulous review of peer-reviewed journals, publications and research textbooks which have any relevancy to the present study at hand. The intention of this chapter is to provide a deeper insight into the reasons behind the study and bring to light the desire for further research.

This paper will begin with the focus of the research centred around the examination of the current state of play of the luxury fashion industry, social media in a marketing context and the consumer perspective and how the digital era has transcended how brands and businesses communicate their messages to customers. With over 3.6 billion social media users in 2020 the argument can be made that it has become an integral part of many people's everyday life (Clement, 2020). Social media platforms present businesses with opportunities to communicate, engage and interact with potential customer (Ioanas and Stoica, 2014). Taking into consideration the tremendous number on social media users in combination with the luxury fashion sector, which is worth an estimated \$285.1 billion and is expected to rise to \$388 billion by 2025 (Ioanas and Stocia, 2014), the scope of research is extensive lending its hand when researching further into paper. A theme which has emerged over the years is how this digital/ social environment effects the behaviour of the consumer (Stephen, 2017). The hope is that this literature review will conclude with the intention of identifying gaps within the current literature where the researchers study fits the bill, ultimately facilitating the formulation of the relevant research and objectives. Despite the importance and constant growth of the fashion industry, limited research has been conducted regarding consumer behaviour within the luxury industry. Thus, it is essential to understand how the consumer behaves and if these luxury brands take effect on it.

## **2.2 Millennials**

Brands and their marketers are rethinking their marketing strategies towards Millennials. According to Smith (2011), today's generation is rejecting brands that were once popular amongst their parents due to their digital upbringing via a media-saturated environment and being more brand-conscious therefore responding differently to ads. Millennials (Gen Y) are people born between 1982 and 2000 and represent a significant proportion of the population (Approximately 30%) (Paulin, et al., 2013). Janicke-Bowles (2018) states that 90% of all 18–29-year-olds in the US alone possess at least one form of social media while spending approximately 6.20 hours per week browsing on them. Furthermore, studies have found that Millennials have been identified as a major driving force behind online shopping (Smith, 2011). The individuals belonging to this generation have similar interests, lifestyles and standards that influence their consumer behaviour and ultimately define their characteristics as consumers (Naumovska, 2017). Thus, an understanding of their unique characteristics is an optimal base for marketers and brands to create more effective communications and marketing strategies (Naumovska, 2017). A key point to note about this generation is their image. Paulin, et al. (2013) found that Millennials, compared to previous generations, are increasingly materialistic and extrinsic and place a massive influence on money and their self-image. And as Appel, et al. (2019) has mentioned, the use of these online sharing platforms has become the number one source for most Millennials to receive a significant amount of information (even though the validity of the sources may be in question) and share aspects of their own life, seeking validation from others. This again is another reason why the luxury fashion industry was chosen to be investigated as a key selling point of luxury fashion is self-image.

## **2.3 Consumer behaviour**

As profit maximisation through customer satisfaction is imperative for any business, it can be difficult to fully understand/ achieve customer satisfaction (Appel, et al, 2019). The motivations or desires stated by the customer may be entirely different from what they truly want. Having a more comprehensive understanding of a customer's wants, buying behaviours and influences will provide vital information for the development of any product, their prices, channels of distribution and communicated messages (Appel, et al, 2019). For marketers and

brands studying consumer behaviour is essential to recognise how and why an individual make their buying decisions which can help develop better strategy marketing decisions. Brands have recognised that consumers are taking a more aggressive and demanding role, forcing them to modify their attitude (Barmola and Srivastava, 2010). Since the emergence of the study of consumer behaviour in the 1960's it can be said that significant advancements have been made toward a better, more comprehensive understanding of all areas related to the study of consumer behaviour (Barmola and Srivastava, 2010). Understanding consumer behaviour will enable brands to hopefully predict how consumers are likely to interact to various environmental and informational touchpoints which will inevitably help shape their marketing strategies down the line (Barmola and Srivastava, 2010).

The behaviour of consumers depends on multiple factors which are vital to any marketing management department which deals directly with consumers. It involves the initial search, evaluation, purchase, consumption, and post purchase behaviour of the individuals while bearing in mind the environment and personal characteristics within the mind of the consumer (Barmola and Srivastava, 2010). The overall study of consumer behaviour is considered extremely important to marketers. It presents them with the opportunity to understand and predict the buying behaviour and patterns of consumers within the market (Barmola and Srivastava, 2010).

### **2.3.1 Purchase intention**

Consumers in this digital era are targeted by mass media and through this, the consumers way of thinking about needs, wants, demands and emotions has changed (Mirabi, et al., 2015). Consumer researchers have spent billions attempting to identify key factors that influence a consumer's decisions (Mirabi, et al., 2015). Thus, marketeers need a clear strategy which is based on a comprehensive understanding of the reasons of the purchase intentions of a consumer. In the hyper competitive markets of today, brands seek to make their message remain in the minds of the consumers, they should realise however that a change in the variables affecting brand loyalty may have an impact on the intention to purchase of a brand (Mirabi, et al., 2015).

Of course, the purchasing decision of a consumer is an intricate process. As Mirabi, et al. (2015) notes, purchase intention is typically linked to the behaviour, attitudes, and

perceptions of consumers. According to Lin and Lu (2010) that purchasing intention refers to a certain exchange of behaviour that is created after a consumer creates some evaluation of the product. In essence it represents the possibility of a consumer to purchase the product or what they would like to buy in the future. Furthermore, purchasing intention is a vital aspect of the process as it enables the consumer to evaluate the specific product in question. As Musharraf and Ali (2013) note, purchase intention is an effective tool that can help with the prediction of the buying process itself. The corresponding and mutual benefits of consumer-brand relationships can be a prime foundation for the development of long-term relationship between both business and their customers (Bouhel, et al., 2011). Thus, customers who are satisfied and trust in the brand and see the benefit of staying with the brand are more likely to repurchase from them (Bouhel, et al., 2011). Once again showing the need for a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour. The intention of a purchase may change when under the influence of price or perceived quality and value (Mirabi, et al., 2015). This point is vital to note as the luxury fashion industry consists of high price and high quality. The research proposed intends to discover whether the consumer's purchasing decision is indeed affected by these high prices and high quality.

## **2.4 Social Media**

The practice of marketing itself is a highly developed methodological science with the rules constantly changing to compliment the requirements of the new digital era (Saravanakumar and Lakshmi, 2012). From a strategic marketing perspective, social media interaction allows firms as well as customers the ability to exchange resources (Dwivedi, et al., 2021). The increasing implementation of social media and digital marketing has certainly influenced consumers attitudes towards online shopping with a significant proportion of the market share operated by more eCommerce centric organisations (Dwivedi, et al., 2021). Thus, social media interconnectedness and interactions (Between customer and business) is imperative for businesses it can help promote healthy long-term customer-business relationships (Li, et al., 2020). In a practical sense, Appel, et al. (2020) refers to it as a “collection of software-based digital technologies usually presented as apps and websites”. Thus digital environments are formed whereby individuals can send and receive information or content over social networking sites. Furthermore, it can also be considered another form of digital advertising as brands and businesses communicate to their customers across these platforms also (Appel, et al., 2020). Baring this in mind, the implementation of social media to marketing practices is

deemed a necessity due to the new demands of the customer. Social media plays a vital role in this new age of digital progression. Ahmad, et al. (2015), refers to social media as practices, activities and behaviours whereby individuals and groups gather digitally to share information, perspectives and experiences. Social media has opened up new ways of expressing beliefs and ideas that have never been seen before prior its inception. This new form of communication has enabled businesses and individuals to create their own content if deemed necessary. From social media posts via Instagram/ Facebook/ Twitter/ TikTok to YouTube videos with the potential of reaching millions of people and costing very little to create (Saravanakumar and Lakshmi, 2012). Therefore, it is in the best interest of marketeers, brands and businesses alike to adopt social media and understand its impact on consumer behaviour online. In more contemporary times, the phenomenon that is social media has become a cornerstone of marketing communication for a number of entities spanning multiple industries (Appel et al, 2019). Additionally, with the implications of COVID-19, the landscape of social media has changed over the past year and moving forward it could potentially look different a year from now once more. This rapid development of social media platforms in combination with their constantly updated features has both forced and motivated brands and organisations to become more digitally involved (Appel, et al., 2019). And, with the ever expanding role of social media from once a single communication tool to one whereby market and customer knowledge is gained, marketers can now strategically develop distinct resources from these platforms based on business resources and abilities (Alalwan, et al., 2017). Social media consists of individuals sharing information, perspectives and experiences while simultaneously being a driving force for marketing departments in what can be known as a omni-social presence which will be explained next.

#### **2.4.1 Omni-social presence**

Consequently, the consumers of today live in a world where social media integrates itself with almost every aspect of their life through “digitally enabled social interactivity” in multiple domains ranging from travel (TripAdvisor, Airbnb, etc) to music (Spotify, etc) and more (Appel, et al, 2019). While the more traditional social media companies expanding their functionalities and services in the form of the new Facebook marketplace and Instagram’s more recent marketplace respectively (Appel, et al., 2019). These trends suggest that the contemporary consumer lives in an increasingly complex environment known as an “omni-social” environment (Appel, et al., 2019).

To the marketer, this omni-social presence suggested by Appel, et al. (2019), raises the point that almost every part of the decision of the consumers decisions making process is liable to some sort of social media influence. Mobile channels have become the new norm and have embedded themselves into the daily lives of customers through mobile tools and shopping apps which in return all impact the consumer experience (Dwivedi, et al., 2021). The effects of social and digital media marketing can yield positive outcomes for organisations. As Dwivedi, et al. (2021) notes, Social Media Marketing has a positive on customer retention as well as on purchase intention within the context of luxury fashion brands. Furthermore, this development of social media use has a positive effects on customers willingness to participate in eWOM (Word of mouth) communication while raising brand awareness and having a significant influence on brand loyalty (Dwivedi, et al., 2021). Consequently, a consumer may view their favourite Instagram influencer trying a new product or wearing an item of clothing and want it. Or another consumer may use Airbnb to book future accommodation possibly through eWOM or friends and family on social media platforms. These aforementioned examples highlight that social media has the potential to influencer the entire consumer decision making process. Further solidifying the need for brands and organisations to adopt social media and digital marketing.

#### **2.4.2 Social Media impact on Consumer Behaviour**

Solomon, et al. (2020) refers to consumer behaviour as the process concerned with consumption before, during and after of a product or service. And, marketing itself as noted above is a well-developed methodological science with rules constantly changing to facilitate the requirements of the market. Thus, the argument can be made that brands and businesses have to adapt to the contemporary market in order to find success across multiple industries. Doing so would require a deeper understanding of the digital social platforms. Prior to the integration of any form of digital or social media strategy a comprehensive understanding of the principles of consumer behaviour is required (Solomon, et al., 2020) This rise in digital dominance is further solidified by Stephen (2017) when he noted that one-third of all global advertising in 2017 was spent on some form of digital advertising. To add, social media has led to many new ways of obtaining new information that relates to products and services within any market.

Consumer behaviour in a mobile setting is becoming incredibly important as consumers are using these technologies more frequently than ever before (Stephen, 2017). These consumers want to know about the product as well as share their experience relating to the product online. And, as marketing is well-developed methodology “marketers have responded well to this fundamental shift by increasing their use of digital marketing channels” (Stephen, 2017). Consumers of today’s digital age want to find out about a product they want to buy and this can sometimes yield the sharing of the experience online. With this in the forefront of the marketers mind, it looks as though the future will present the distribution of resources through consumer marketing on these digital/ social platform. Hence, the development of consumer behaviour research and consumer behaviour within a digital setting must be examined for brands and businesses who operate online (Stephen, 2017). Even within the past decade there has been a massive shift in the behaviour of the consumer. Previously they would of based decisions about a product on advertisements and other forms of advice form professionals as opposed to now, they base decisions on online reviews or posts by other social media users who bought the product or used a service online (Xhema, 2019).

As mentioned above, the study of consumer behaviour is well-established however, with the development of new digital era, brands must adjust accordingly. Nolcheska (2017) notes, the purchasing decisions of consumers are now heavily influenced by social media where that be through online reviews, alternatives and final and post purchase. Therefore, these digital platforms can now be seen as a destination whereby consumers make decisions regarding products they wish to purchase. The argument can then be made that the future of consumer marketing could be carried out digitally, largely through social media and mobile. It is therefore a necessity for consumer research to understand consumer behaviour within digital environments (Stephen, 2017). As both consumer behaviour and social media are well researched areas, further research must be conducted. Particularly given the ever-changing nature of digital/ mobile/ social media environments where consumers interact with brands as well as one another (Stephen, 2017). Furthermore, the way in which consumers interact on social platforms can have a significant impact on the purchasing decisions as well as post-purchase satisfaction levels (Nolcheska, 2017). Again this links back to the fundamental principles of consumer behaviour. As a result, the researcher will attempt to take stock of recent developments as well as prod new, relevant research.

## 2.5 Luxury Fashion Industry

One industry that can be considered ideal for investigating the impact of social media on consumer behaviour and Millennials is the luxury fashion industry. This industry is worth an estimated \$285.1 billion as of 2020 and is expected to reach a staggering \$388 billion by 2025 (Statista, 2020). The luxury sector is unique in of itself as consumers, irrespective of their economic status will buy luxury fashion items (Hemantha, 2020). In return this raises the question of the growing impact social media has on the consumers buying power within the luxury fashion sector. And, as the number of social media users is on the rise so too will the power and influence of luxury fashion brands the those platforms (Ahmad, et al., 2015). Communication on this new, tech-savvy generation social media is an area where such luxury brands should look if they are to remain competitive within the industry (Deloitte Global, 2019). Each brand has their own distinct marketing strategy on social media which is designed around their traditional customer and their preferences (Deloitte Global, 2019). On these social platforms there has been a rise in brand engagements with niche bloggers and influencers in order to raise brand awareness while pushing new products to the market (Deloitte Global, 2019). Thus, the move by luxury brands to increase brand engagement on these platforms suggest they are understanding the potential power of these digital services offer to their brand. As the number of social media users around the world increases, luxury brands are giving more attention to the impact social media can have on potential customers.

The luxury fashion industry is a sophisticated yet complex industry (Hamantha, 2020). It's characterised by exclusivity, scarcity and a distinct distance between themselves and their customers which can be seen as a contradiction to the user-generated nature of social media platforms (Athwal, et al., 2019). What sets luxury brands apart is their handcrafted aesthetic they present to the world they many of these brands have carefully created in the past (Hemantha, 2020). The overall influence of social media that surround the fashion industry is indisputable. The likes of Instagram and now Tiktok acting as a virtual runway for fashion enthusiasts through the world (Ahmad, et al., 2015). Athwal, et al. (2019) notes that luxury brands are valued by customers due to their perceived rarity, allure and overall sector of the luxury sector itself. Thus, a crucial factor for luxury brands using social media is to maintain that prestige status and overall distinctiveness they possess (Hemantha, 2020). Hence, the communication strategy between luxury brands and their customers must be strong online on these platforms if they are to maintain this prestigious status (Godey, et al., 2012). This is down to luxury brands always having effective communication strategies offline with their



customers. This always came in the form of events and exclusive shows which only a select number of customers are invited to due to the powerful relationship that is formed between both luxury brand and their customers (Hemantha, 2020).

Luxury products look to both stimulate the fantasies and emotions of the consumer which give themselves up to online marketing however, social media can be seen as environment where embracing and inclusivity is the norm (Athwal, et al, 2019). Which can be seen as a total contradiction the luxury fashion industry at large. Historically, luxury brands have always had a rich culture and legacy which of course is in stark contrast to more generic brands which can be found in the fast fashion industry (Hemantha, 2020). This “strictly controlled distribution” is confronted with new challenges with the implementation of these new social media platforms and now more recently the implications that COVID-19 has presented to the world. This puts luxury brands wedged in a position whereby they understand the necessity of social media while simultaneously needing to stay true to their brands distinctiveness and integrity that has landed them in the position they are in (Jin, 2012).

Despite the rising popularity of luxury sector, research within this area is limited. One of the primary motivations to engage with social media is the appeal of the luxury industry to a younger audience, namely millennials (Athwal, et al., 2019). Therefore, as brands within the luxury sector seek to implement some form of digital advertisements, there must be further research concerning the impact of luxury brands have on social media. Studies involving the fast-fashion industry have been extensively covered while this research will review the most recent developments of concerning consumer behaviour, the impact on social media and the luxury industry.

### **2.5.1 Luxury fashion and Millennials**

The Millennials are a vital generation within the luxury market due to their purchasing power and the ultimate power of their social media interactions (Burnasheva, et al., 2019). This generation is so influential as they purchase luxury items online and to determine what their attitudes to luxury is an important area for research. As mentioned previously, they are tech-savvy and are more concerned in online behaviour such as online shopping where this generation ranks the highest in purchasing rates (Burnasheva, et al., 2019). The luxury market is set to remain strong over the coming decade with a staggering 85% of the growth being

powered by Millennials and representing approximately 45% of the global personal luxury good market by 2025 (de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019). Furthermore, Millennials have been considered more sophisticated shoppers and have a tendency to be influenced by symbolic aspects of different luxury brands and have been seen as more motivated for status than previous generations (Shin, et al., 2017). Therefore, this can ultimately lead back to having an impact on their purchase intentions towards these luxury products. This is further solidified by the fact that Millennials will spend money rather than save it to keep up with their peers and the latest fashion trends (Shin, et al., 2017). The argument then can be made that this tendency to spend money is to signal status to other people which in return makes Millennials an attractive customer for the luxury industry.

### **2.5.2 Need for uniqueness and self-expression**

The desire for uniqueness is the need of an individual to convey their uniqueness from others or to be “not just another face in the crowd” (Burnasheva, et al., 2019). In essence the individual looks for some improvement of both their social and personal image by using the status of a good they have purchased (Burnasheva, et al., 2019). Therefore, this can be seen as good indication that brands and their products are used to achieve an individual’s desire for uniqueness. As Ladik, et al (2015) notes, for individuals to identify their characteristics and establish this unique identity, they purchase luxury brands because what they own defines them. The high prices and high levels of quality of luxury brands in return adds to the allure and overall uniqueness of the product or brand.

According to de Kerviler and Rodriguez (2019), an individual is motivated to broaden oneself through new identities, developing new capabilities and finding new perspectives. Brands may offer customers the opportunity to enhance their status, emotions, aesthetics or some sort of cultural discovery. For luxury brands in particular they have the ability to provide intense and fulfilling experiences that offer the customer the opportunity to further develop and enhance their sense of self (Ladik, et al, 2015). These distinct characteristics a luxury brand can offer mentioned by Hemantha (2020) like high prices, superior quality, rare and uniqueness with a rich heritage, highlight the points that luxury brands can impact customers. The ability to offer an original product that is both rare and unique presents itself as extremely desirable and sold in exclusive stores ultimately contributes to a feeling of privilege as well as having a pleasurable moment attached to the product (de Kerviler and Rodriguez, 2019).

Furthermore, the advantage of having a rich heritage and personal history is an area that many luxury brands have over fast-fashion / non-luxury brands. Thus the argument can be made that luxury brands provide a unique experience and presents the opportunity for more self-expression among the individual. Customers can the show who they actually are or show who they want to be by projecting their ideal self by purchasing certain products (Szczepankiak, 2015). Particularly within the fashion industry, products can be utilised to create a message, as well as enabling others to understand it (Szczepankiak, 2015). In essence consumes can look to ‘make a statement’ to others by the clothes or accessories they wear. Conclusively, luxury fashion is used as a communication tool which in return can help in reducing the distance between an individual and society while simultaneously indicating what group membership or society group that individual associates with (Szczepankiak, 2015). Thus, luxury clothing can help in the expressions of oneself and overall identify in a social and personal context.

## **2.6 Literature Review Conclusion**

The literature review presents a critical and purposive examination of consumer behaviour within the area of social media and the luxury fashion industry. Additionally, consumer behaviour is a complex topic with a variety of factors in relation to the purchase of luxury goods. There is agreement within the existing literature that consumer behaviour is indeed impacted by various elements. The sheer size of the luxury market is enormous with the value of the market expected to reach \$388 billion by 2025 (Ioanas and Stocia, 2014). There’s no denying the future of luxury is looking promising. Thus, the research to follow will hopefully identity key factors into why consumers intended to purchase luxury items or why they want to. As Hemantha (2020) mentioned above, irrespective of their economic status of individuals they will continue to purchase luxury items. Therefore, the research will intend to uncover any ulterior motive behind the intention or actual purchase of luxury items. Furthermore, Millennials play a vital role in the future of luxury fashion and where it will inevitably find itself. According to Danziger (2019), Millennials represent approximately 32% of spending in the luxury market however by 2025 this number is expected to hit 50%. The market is projected to have 130% of market growth in the next 5-7 years powered by the Millennial generation (Danziger, 2019). The increasing growth strengthens the argument of the power of social, digital media and the luxury fashion industry. In a world where social media is now second nature to most, especially Millennials, there is an opportunity to shed light on the

influence of social media and luxury has on ones self-esteem as well as consumer behaviour. Specifically, this study will attempt to shed light on the behaviour of consumers and what impact the luxury fashion industry has on their self-esteem and overall life satisfaction.

## **Chapter 3: Research Questions**

The purpose of the research question is to help determine key study methods and having such defined questions help avoid any inappropriate designs or inaccurate statistical comparisons (Giuffrida, 2016).

### **Question 1: Does purchasing luxury items affect one's self-esteem?**

According to Zeb et al. (2011), the consumer today is influenced by how they are perceived by others, their self-image and how they want to show themselves to others. Therefore, it may lead to the willingness to pay a higher price for a luxurious item/ accessories by an individual.

### **Question 2: Do individuals who are satisfied with their life purchase more luxury items?**

The luxury sector can be seen as an abstract concept with its meaning typically determined by personal and interpersonal motives that make up a consumers perception (Wang, et al, 2021). This question will look to find any correlation between an individual's satisfaction with life and their purchase of luxury items/ clothing. Prior research mentioned in this study have discussed how an individual will purchase luxury items regardless of their economic position. Therefore, understanding one's life satisfaction and luxury purchasing habits could provide a greater insight.

### **Question 3: Does age play a factor in how much luxury clothing an individual purchases?**

The luxury customer of today is changing. According to Buckle (2019), the new luxury consumer is the Millennial generation who are well into their careers and are now reaching their peak age when it comes to spending . This generation as mentioned above grew up in the digital era with fashion being important. They are looking to reimagine the value of certain goods in this light that comes in the form of consumerism (Buckle, 2019). Thus, this research question intends to investigate the relationship between luxury fashion and age.

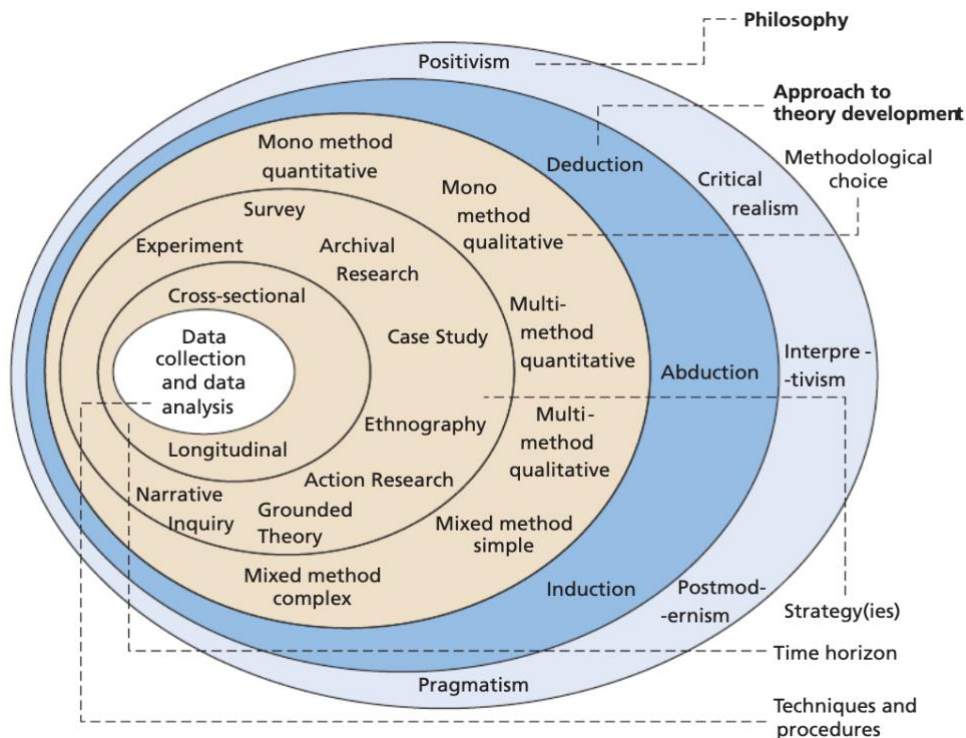
## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Upon completion of the literature review of the research topic, this chapter of the dissertation discusses the methodological issues that are involved within the current study. This may include surveys, published research, interviews and other forms research consisting of information from the past and or present (Kumar, 2019). The research methodological refers to how research should be conducted (Saunders et al., 2019). Ultimately, this knowledge of research methodology can provide the researcher with the correct techniques to find relevant information and answers that relate to the overall philosophy and research of the study (Kumar, 2019). Within this chapter the researcher will investigate and intend to gain a better understanding of the luxury fashion industry and its overall effects on consumer behaviour. For this study a quantitative research approach was conducted. The methods used for this study will act as a basis for the findings of the paper with an overall goal of attempting to identify the impact of consumer behaviour within the luxury fashion sector as this area of study is rapidly developing which encourages the need for additional research to be conducted.

However, to establish what is the most suitable research method the researcher made use of *The Research onion* (Saunders et al. 2019, p. 130) as reference. This highlights each section of the research process. It presents a distinct framework offering methods and strategies the researcher can utilise in order to present an effective methodology.

**Figure 4.1 The research onion**



**Source:** Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130.

Saunders et al., (2019) goes onto explain how research philosophy is essentially a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge. Consequently, throughout the duration of the study, the researcher will have assumptions at different stages that will ultimately establish a research philosophy providing the researcher with the ability to decipher the research strategy, data collection techniques, analysis and over methodological choice. The philosophy that best describes this research study is a positivism philosophy. Saunders et al., (2019) explains positivism philosophy as a natural science or a scientific method with the observable social reality that can create a law-like generalisation to ensure accurate knowledge to which the research is concerned with. The purpose of positivism is to obtain raw data and facts which is not influenced by human interpretation or any bias's. Although some hypothetical explanations can be tested and confirmed with a theory that is already in existence, some studies regarding positivism may not necessarily start with already existing theories.

## 4.2 Quantitative Study

This research is a quantitative study that is typically associated with positivism. Watson (2014) notes that quantitative research is “a range of methods concerned with a systematic investigation of social phenomena, using statistical or numerical data”. This method of research is used to map and find patterns as well as averages, test relationships and variables, and ultimately searching for correlations (Bhandari, 2020). Additionally, quantitative research is closely linked to survey and experimental research strategies whereby the research strategy is carried out through the use of questionnaires, observations or an interview. The table below depicts the differences between both quantitative and qualitative research for context.

Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Meanings that are expressed through words and images.	Meanings that are derived from numbers.
The data is non-standardised and requires classification into different categories.	The data is numerical and standardised.
Analysis is conducted through conceptualisation.	Analysis is conducted through statistic and diagrams.

Table 4.2 Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Data (Saunders, et al., 2019)

A quantitative approach for this research is the most suitable analysis over a qualitative study due to its ability to enable the researcher to determine a relationship between two or more variables (Twesbury, 2009). The research comprises of objectives where the relationship of multiple variables such as consumer behaviour, life satisfaction, self-esteem and luxury fashion are considered. Thus, a quantitative research approach is best suited due to its meanings being derived from numbers. Furthermore, the collection of the data is numerical in nature while the analysis is conducted in conjunction with statistics and diagrams further solidifying the desire to use a quantitative approach (Saunders, et al., 2019).



#### **4.2.1 Questionnaire and Experimental Research Strategy**

A questionnaire was utilised for this quantitative research due to its ability to be quick and easily answered which in turn increases the attractiveness to potential participants (Farrell, 2016). The purpose of a questionnaire is to extract specific data from a specific demographic. Additionally, the desire to collect a large sample is imperative if the data is to represent while validating the population that has been chosen. This questionnaire will have to be conducted digitally due to the implications of COVID-19. Furthermore, the purpose of an experiment research strategy is to observe a possible change in an independent variable that causes a change in another. Saunders, et al., (2019) explains an independent variable as being a variable to measure its impact on a dependant variable that may change its response to other variables.

#### **4.2.2 Time frame**

A cross sectional study will be the time selected for this research. According to Saunders et al., (2019), a cross sectional study can be defined as “the study of a particular phenomenon at a particular time and it often employs the survey strategy”. This is a result of the data being collected at one particular time through the duration the research. From start to finish this research will take approximately 8 months spanning from January 2021 (The proposal stage) to August 2021 (Submission).

### **4.3 Data Collection Method**

#### **4.3.1 Sampling: Participants**

Technological developments in unison with demographic shifts in the luxury shopper is helping redefine and shape new boundaries within the luxury sector and what it represents (WARCBestPractice, 2019). As a result of this point, the Millennial generation and will be targeted. According to a Millennial is considered to be anyone born between the years 1981 and 1996). Preferably individuals within these generations who are social media users with an interest in the luxury fashion industry will be targeted and either male or female. Due to the size, values, attitudes, motivations and media usage, they are the ideal participants for this study. Danziger (2019) notes, that in 2019 Millennials alone represented approximately 32% of spending within the personal luxury market with this same number expected to reach up to

50% of the total market by 2025. Millennials have been described as being a disruptive force within the luxury industry while being heavily influenced by video bloggers online be it YouTube or Instagram or other forms of social media platforms (Athwal et al., 2019). Consequently, with this rise in online influence and spending by Millennials, there's a growing need for research within this market and why this is so. The research will study the behaviour of participants of the survey with a sample of 98.

The sampling technique that was utilised for this was the snowball technique which is a form of non-probability sampling. In essence, this technique is where the researcher initially distributes the questionnaire to family and friends which then is shared to their colleagues and friends who fit the description of the ideal candidate and would be interested in taking part in the survey. According to Saunders et al. (2019), snowball sampling is a form of non-probability sampling method whereby subsequent participants are acquired from the when the information was first issued to them while simultaneously allowing the researcher to obtain a large quantity of responses in less time and do it more effectively.

The collection of data was conducted through the internet and social media platforms, namely Instagram and LinkedIn where there was a total of 98 respondents. This enable the researcher to collect enough data to validate the population. Ultimately, capturing an accurate representation of said population.

#### **4.3.2 Questionnaire: Primary Data**

The collection of data is the gathering and measurement of information which is based off variables that typically consist of numerical data that seek to answer the research question at hand and to meet the other objectives of the research (Saunders, et al., 2019).

#### **4.3.3 Design: Questionnaire**

The primary collection of data is conducted through the implementation of a questionnaire based on the survey which is available in the appendices. The questionnaire was distributed in order to identify factors that affect consumer behaviour within the luxury fashion industry. A five point Likert scale will be used to measure certain variables namely The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale and a seven point Likert scale will also be implemented known as the Satisfaction with Life scale (SWLS). The Likert scale was developed by Rensis Likert and is

used by many researchers in order to measure attitudes (Quinlan, 2011). Both ranging from 1 representing a strongly disagree to a 5 and 7 both representing a strongly agree. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem has become of the most widely used measurements of self-esteem for the adult population while showing high dependency and validity across multiple studies (Spinner and Rudolph, 2019). The Satisfaction with Life Scale is a 5-item scale which is designed to measure the cognitive judgement of one's satisfaction with life, therefore it is not a measurement which has a positive or negative affect (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). In addition to these two Likert scales and additional Likert scale concerning the luxury fashion industry was implemented. Saunders et al., (2019) notes, adopting questions is a more efficient tactic due to there being a strong reference in contrast to attempting to develop new questions. According to Quinlan (2011), such questionnaires and scales represents gathering instruments that are extremely accurate while producing short concise responses to the questions.

#### 4.3.3.2 Questionnaire structure

Section 1	Includes introduction and purpose of the questionnaire.
Section 2	Designed to obtain demographic details of participants.
Section 3	Contains the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.
Section 4	Questions concerning clothing purchases and frequency of purchases.
Section 5	Contains the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).
Section 6	Questions to obtain information concerning the luxury fashion sector.

Table 4.3 (Questionnaire structure)

Within the questionnaire there are 6 sections for the research. Section 1 consists of an introduction section whereby the researcher will explain the purpose and what is to be expected within the questionnaire. Section 2 involves demographic questions where the

participant will have to choose from the multiple choice options which best depicts the participant. The questions include what gender they identify as, what is their age and what is their monthly income \*if applicable\*. Section 3 consists of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The purpose of this scale is to measure information regarding adolescent feelings of self-esteem and self-worth (Spinner and Rudolph, 2019). Section 4 involves question concerning clothing purchases and the overall frequency of said purchases. Section 5 is the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). This was developed in order to assess the satisfaction people's lives (Diener, et al., 1985). This scale does not associate itself with specific areas of life satisfactions like wealth or health but instead enables individuals to make their own choice of significance themselves. Finally section 6 is concerned with an individual's take on the luxury fashion sector as well as additional questions concerning the fashion industry. In this section the intention is to discover the importance of branding and perception of luxury fashion is.

#### **4.4 Secondary data**

For the literature review as well as the findings secondary data will be collected. According to Saunders, et al. (2019), secondary data is collected through articles, journals, annuals reports and records of companies and websites and internet access.

#### **4.5 Hypothesis / Research Questions**

A hypothesis is considered to be a statement that can be tested which can show the association, difference or relationship between two or more variables or it can be considered a propositions that can be tested regarding the relationship between two or more concepts (Saunders et al., 2019). The area of study concerning the luxury fashion industry and consumer behaviour have been documented in the past however there is lack of research which both aspects have been considered together. The researcher intends to include both within this paper.

#### **4.6 Data Analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaire was distributed through MS Forms and the data will be transformed to numbers through the use of Excel. The questionnaire that was implemented and divided into multiple sections which included an introduction,

demographics, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Liker Scale, clothing purchase frequency, Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and desire and influence to purchase luxury products.

As the questionnaire consisted of different categories and rating questions, quantitative data was obtained which in return will aid in determining answers to the overall objectives of the research. The majority of the data collected was measured and analysed in a percentage format to identify the overall impact on self-esteem, life satisfaction, clothing purchases and desire/ influence to purchase luxury clothing.

#### **4.7 Reliability of Analysis**

In order for the data collected to be valid and accurate, an existing/ reliable questionnaire/ Likert scale will enable the data collected to be consistent and overall reliable (Saunders, et al., 2019).

The Likert Scales within this research are adopted from both the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), providing validity within the survey due to their popularity by many researches throughout the world. However, as there is not many quantitative research papers concerning the luxury fashion industry. The research had to provide some questions concerning the luxury fashion sector that would complement the two scales within the study.

##### **4.7.1 Descriptive Analysis**

This type of analysis will enable the researcher to describe as well as compare variables in numeric fashion that can lead to a choice of statistics from the question(s) and objectives presented by the researcher. According to Saunders, et al, (2019), the statistics that are chosen should aim to focus on two aspects which are the central tendency and dispersion. The central tendency refers to the data being described for both the sample chosen and the populations quantitatively which in return typically provides an impression that forms the basis for a middling or average for the data collected. Saunders, et al (2019) notes, there are three main ways of measuring the central tendency, they are as follows: 1. The Mode. This is the vale that occurs most often frequently, 2. The mean, this is often known as the average which includes all data value included within the calculation and 3. The median. This is middle value or the mid-point after the data has been ordered. Furthermore, dispersion is defined as

1. The difference within the middle 50% of the values (Also known as the inter-quartile range) and 2. The extent whereby the values vary from the standard deviation (Saunders, et al, 2019).

Descriptive analysis will be applied to this research as it is being applied to the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale and the luxury clothing questions. While section 2 is the questions concerning the demographic therefore, frequency analysis will be used as this will allow the researcher attain the percentage of participants who are Millennials as well as their monthly income.

#### **4.7.2 Correlation Analysis**

The utilisation of a Pearse Correlation analysis ( $r$ ) enables the researcher to quantify the strength of the relationship between numerical or ranked variables (Saunders, et al., 2019). Furthermore, the overall strength of a linear relationship can take on the value anywhere between +1 and -1. The direction of the relationship can be determined by the (+) or (-) sign. When considering the Pearse Correlation ( $r$ ) analysis, a value which is  $r(+1)$  suggests a perfect positive correlation whereby the value of one variable increasing sees the value of another variable increase also. Therefore, a value which is  $r(-1)$  suggests a perfect negative correlation whereby the value of one variable increases sees the value of the other variable decrease. Consequently, correlation coefficient between +1 and -1 represent positive and negative correlation with the value 0 meaning that the variables are perfectly independent of one another (Saunders, et al., 2019). According to Saunders, et al. (2019), when the P-value is  $<0.001$  there is a significant relationship and the hypothesis will be accepted and if the P-value is  $>0.001$  there is no significant relationship and the hypothesis is rejected.

#### **4.8 Ethics**

As there is human participation within the study, ethical guidelines and procedures will be followed by the ethical standards of National College of Ireland. All participants are over the age of 18. It is assumed that all participants use social media (as it was distributed on social media platforms) and have an interest in the luxury fashion sector.

Although some questions within the questionnaire may be personal to some or all participants. To protect the rights, privacy, autonomy and, confidentially of the participant,

the researcher will abide by the ethical guidelines of National College of Ireland that must be considered when conducting the data collection. The participation of this research will also be voluntary and will be able to retract from the research at any point. Finally, the findings and results of the thesis will also be made available for participants if they wish to receive them upon completion, correction and grading via email.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

Finally, the methodology section discussed the considerations that must be made when deciding whether to choose either a quantitative or qualitative approach based upon the retrieval of information for this research. As a result, a quantitative approach was decided upon where the data collected would happen through distribution of questionnaires. The readjustments made to the questionnaire prior to distribution aided in the overall final structure of the questionnaire, ultimately making it more comprehensible for participants. The target demographic as well as the data collection methods used have been discussed within this chapter. Ultimately, issues concerning data, reliability and ethics was also discussed which landed its hand in the justification for the chosen research methodology.

## Chapter 5: Research Findings and Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

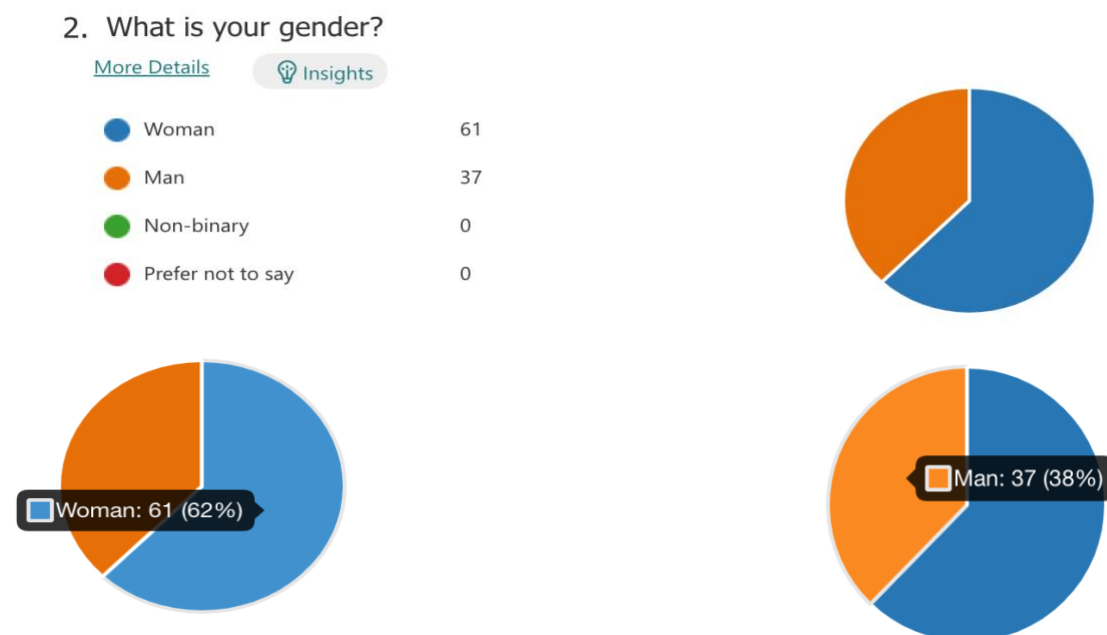
This chapter discusses the data analysis process and presents the overall results of the study conducted. The main purpose of this study is to find out how luxury clothing impacts the behaviour of the consumer. The researcher will further explain the demographic of the respondents, the analysis of the variables at hand, any correlation between the variables mentioned. Furthermore, the respondents provided a wide range of valuable information which is presented below from the data gathered.

### 5.2 Demographic of respondents

The first section of the questionnaire consisted of the demographic profile of the participants involved. It included what gender they identify as, their age and what is their monthly income. For this research there was a total of 98 respondents and thus  $n=98$ . Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 represents the gender and monthly income of the participants.

Table 5.1 presented below shows the percentage and frequency of the participants of the questionnaire. The higher percentage of the two that contributed to the research was female with 62%, followed by 38% of the participants being male.

**Table 5.1- Pie chart of participants gender**

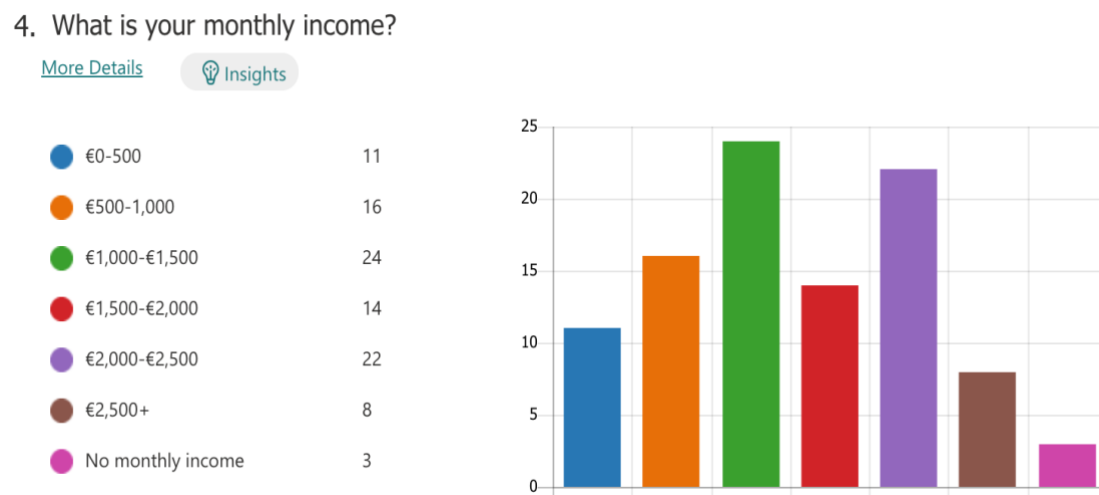




## 5.2 Participants monthly income

Table 5.2 below presents the monthly income of the participants. According to the bar chart the majority of participants have a monthly income of €1,000 - €1,500 with 24 (24.49%) participants claiming so. This is then followed by 22 (22.45%) participants stating they earn €2,000 - €2,500, 16 (16.33%) of participants earning €500 - €1,000, 14 (14.29%) of participants earning €1,500 - €2,000, 11 (11.22%) of participants earning €0 - €500, 8 (8.2%) of participants earning €2,500+ and 3 (3.06%) stating they have no monthly income.

**Table 5.2 – Bar chart of participants monthly income**



## 5.3 How often participants purchase clothing

Table 5.3 represents how often participants purchase clothing. According to the pie chart the majority of participants purchase clothes 'Several times per month' with a percentage of 59%. Followed was 'Several times per year' with a percentage of 34%. Next was 'Several times per week' with a percentage of 4% and finally last was 'Less often' with a percentage of 3%.

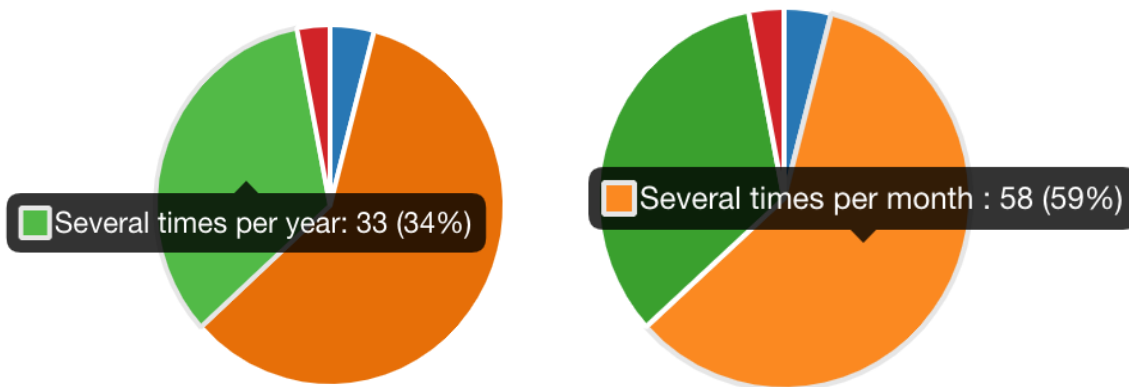
**Table 5.3 – How often participants purchase clothing**

6. How often do you buy clothes?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Several times per week	4
Several times per month	58
Several times per year	33
Less often	3



## 5.4 Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Table 5.4 represents the scoring of the participants Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a 10-Item scale that measures an individual's self-worth which measures both positive and negative feelings about themselves. All items within the scale are answered using 5-point Likert scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. All statements regarding The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale can be seen in the appendix.

**Table 5.4- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale most popular response**

	Statements	Most popular response
1-	‘On the whole, I am satisfied with myself’	50% of participants agree with this statement.
2-	‘At times, I think I am no good at all’	39.8% agree with this statement.
3-	‘I feel I have a number of good qualities’	54.8% of participants agree with this statement.
4-	I am able to do things as well as most people’	55.9% of participants agree with this statement.
5-	‘I feel I do not have much to be proud of’	52.7% of participants disagree with this statement.
6-	‘I certainly feel useless at times’	44.6% of participants agree with this statement.
7-	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others’	48.9% of participants agree with this statement.
8-	‘I wish I could have more respect for myself’	40.2% of participants agree with this statement.
9-	‘All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure’	30.4% of participants disagree with this statement making.
10-	‘I take a positive attitude toward myself’	31.5% of participants agree with this statement.

**Scoring of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale**

The scoring of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale is as follows: ‘Strongly Disagree’ = 1 point, ‘Disagree’= 2 points, ‘Agree’= 3 points and ‘Strongly Agree’= 4 points. Statements 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9 are reversed scored. The highest possible score the participants can achieve is 30 indicating someone who has extremely high self-esteem. The data was inputted into excel and the average score was 15.07143 as seen in figure 5.4.1 below. Figure 5.4.2 represents The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and its averages from the questionnaire distributed on MSforms.

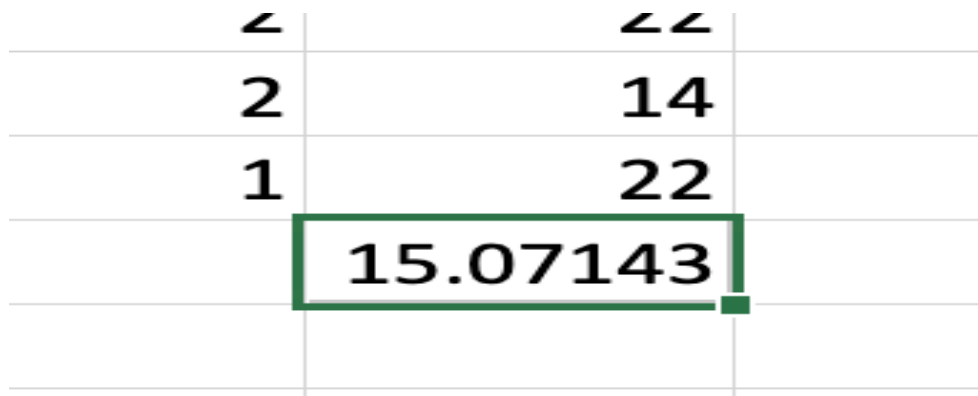


Figure 5.4.1 (Average score of self-esteem among participants)

**Table 5.4 – Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale**

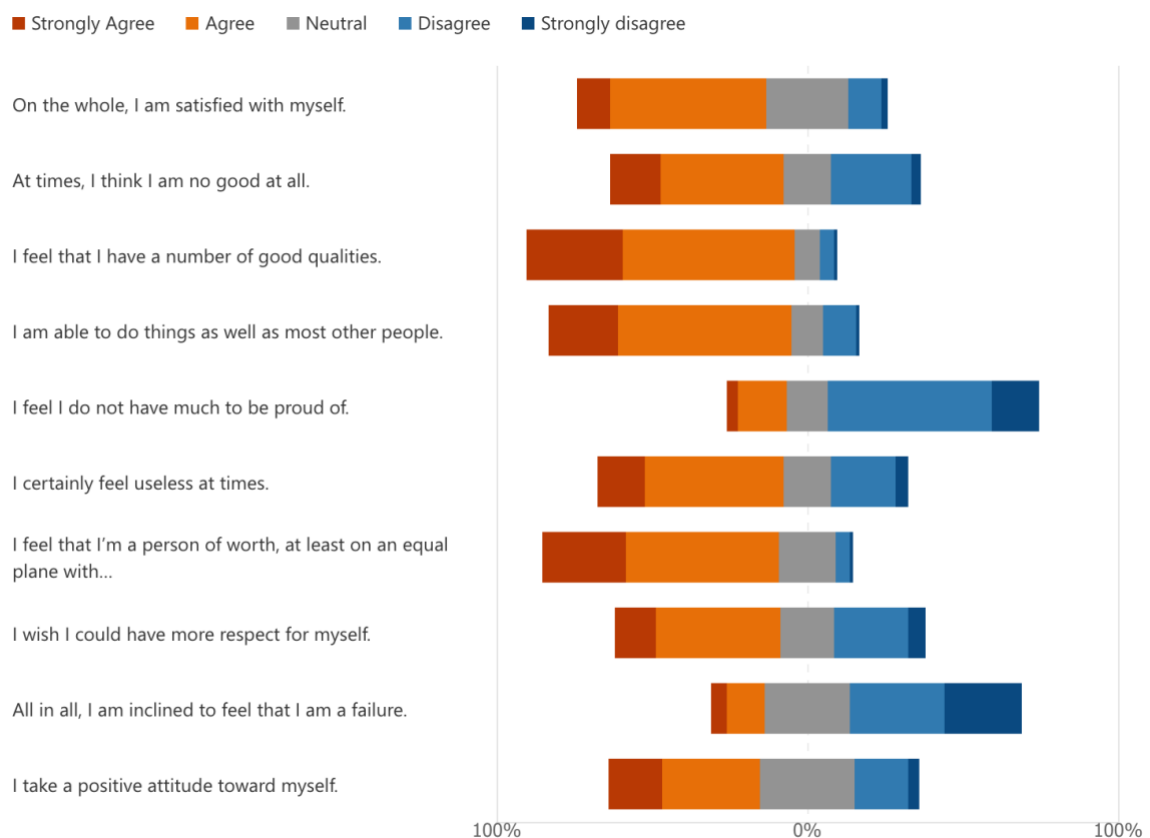


Figure 4.4.2 (The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale score; MSforms)

## 5.5 Participants reasoning behind purchasing clothing

The findings for table 5.5 below show the most common reasons why the participants buy clothing. 76% of the participants have said they buy clothes “To update wardrobe” and the second most popular response was “Replacing worn-out clothes” with 14% of participants.

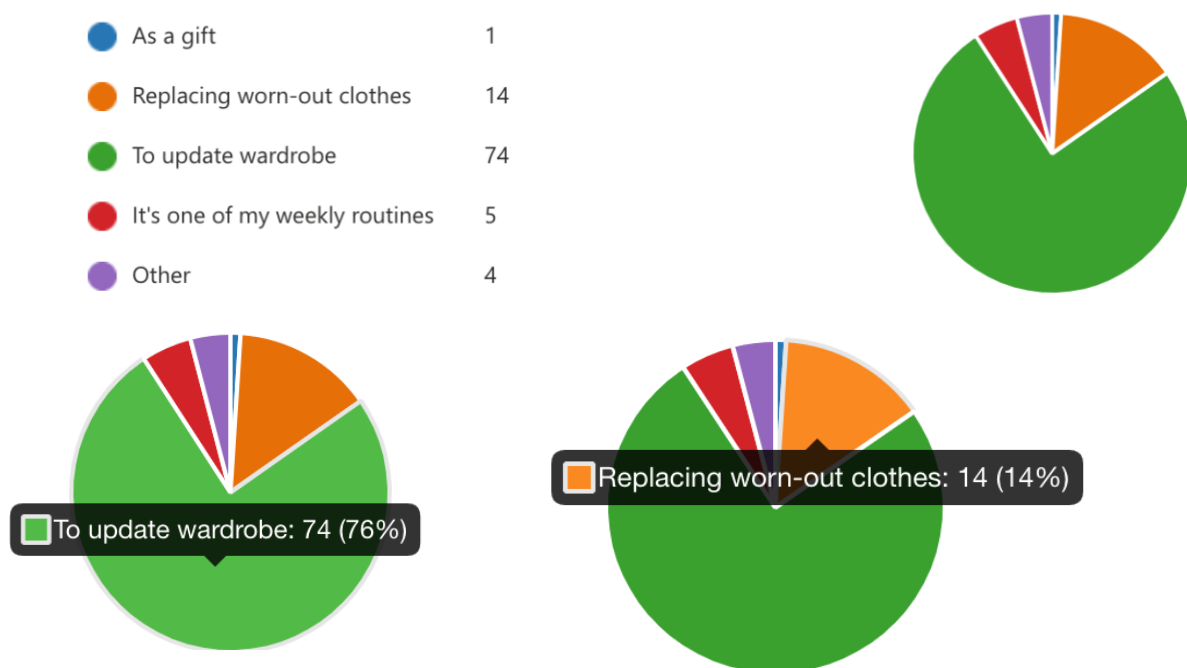
Furthermore, figure 5.5.1 below presents additional data concerning who is more likely to update their wardrobe. 85% of women say they purchase their clothing to update their wardrobe. As a result, only 15% of men say they purchase clothes to update their wardrobe. Thus, this implies that women have more interest in clothing than men.

**Table 5.5 – Participants reasoning behind purchasing clothes**

### 7. What is the most common reason for which you buy clothes?

[More Details](#)

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> As a gift	1
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Replacing worn-out clothes	14
<span style="color: green;">●</span> To update wardrobe	74
<span style="color: red;">●</span> It's one of my weekly routines	5
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Other	4



64% of people answered **Woman** for this question, and the majority answered "**To update wardrobe**" for Question 7.

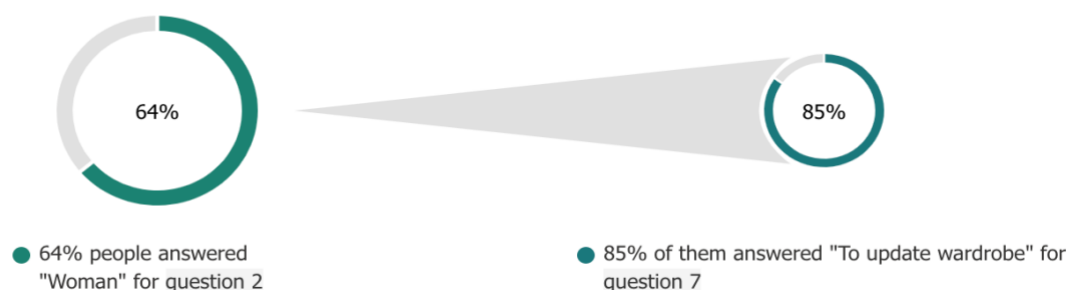


Figure 5.5.1

### **Satisfaction with Life Scale**

Table 5.6 represents the scoring of the participants on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The table above presents the findings for the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and is a 5-Item scale. All items within the scale are answered using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’. It was developed to assess a person’s satisfaction with life as a whole (Including life domains; such as health or finances).

**Table 5.6 – Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) most popular response**

	Statements	Most popular response
1-	‘In most ways my life is close to ideal’	31.6% of participants slightly agree with this statement.
2-	‘The conditions of my life are excellent’	32% of participants slightly agree with this statement.
3-	‘I am satisfied with my life’	38.1% of participants agree with this statement.
4-	‘So far I have gotten the important things in my life’	35.4% of participants agree with this statement.
5-	‘If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing’	21.1% of participants agree with this statement (20.6% of participants disagree with this statement.

### **Scoring the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)**

According to Diener, et al. (1985), the range of scores is 5-35 with a 20 representing a neutral point within the scale. Scoring between 5-9 suggest the participant is extremely dissatisfied with their life in contrast to a score between 31-35 indicating the participant is extremely satisfied with their life. The data was inputted into excel and the average score was 23.2959 as seen in figure 4.6.1 below. Figure 4.6.2 represents the Satisfaction With Life Scale and its responses from the questionnaire distributed on MSforms.

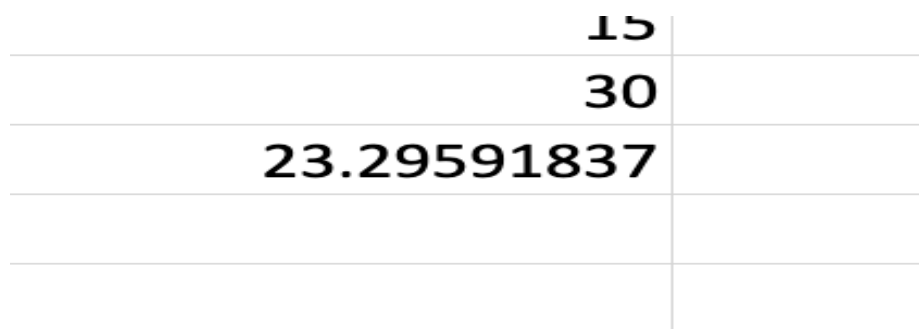


Figure 5.6.1 (Average Satisfaction with Life Scale score)

### Table 5.6 – Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was developed as a measure of the judgmental component of subjective well-being (SWB). Two studies designed to validate further the SWLS are reported.

[More Details](#)

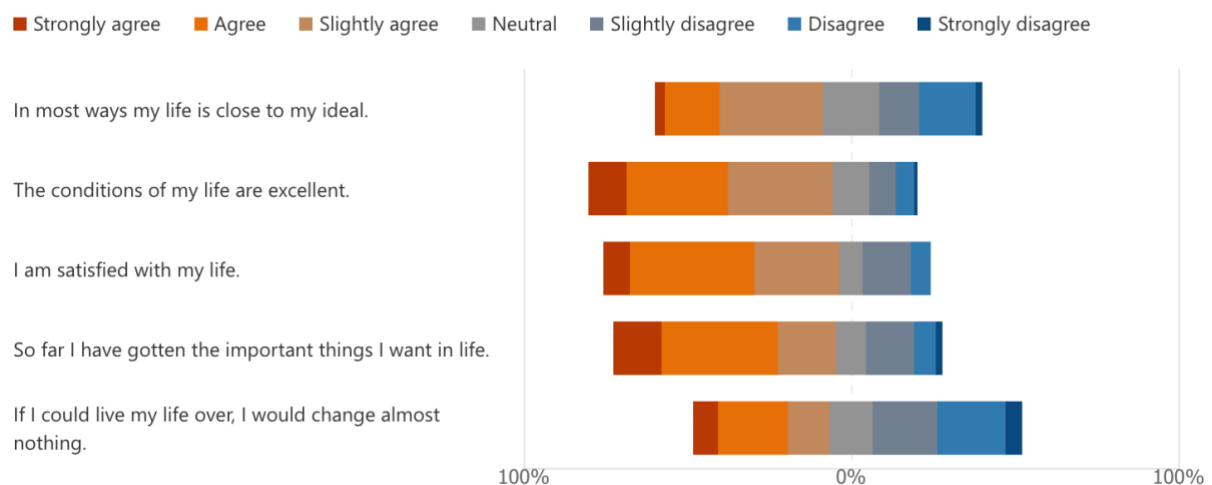


Figure 5.6.2 (Satisfaction With Life Scale score; MSforms)

### 5.7 Luxury fashion and social media influencers scale

Table 5.7 represents the scoring of the participants in the ‘Luxury Fashion Scale’. This was developed by the researcher as many questionnaires like this did not exist out in recent literature. It is a 17-item scale. All items on the scale are answered using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’. It was created to assess an individual’s interest and how important luxury fashion is to them.

**Table 5.7 – Luxury Fashion most popular responses**

	Statements	Most popular response
1-	‘Fashion is important to me’	43.9% of participants agree with this statement.
2-	‘I find that my size dictates what style of clothing I can buy’	37.8% of participants agree with this statement.
3-	‘I feel good when I wear nice clothing’	43.9% of participants agree with this statement.
4-	‘It is important for me to be a fashion leader’	39.8% of participants disagree with this statement.
5-	‘Clothes are one of the most important ways I have of expressing my individuality’,	34.7% of participants agree with this statement.
6-	‘It’s important to be well-dressed’	53.1% of participants agree with this statement.
7-	‘The quality of merchandise I buy is more important than its fashion appeal’	34.7% of participants responded with ‘neutral’ to this statement.
8-	‘I prefer to buy designer labels rather than store-branded merchandise’	38.8% of participants disagree with this statement making.
9-	‘My apparel selections are strongly influenced by individuals I follow on social media’,	34.7% of participants agree with this statement.
10-	‘My choice of luxury brand accessories depends on whether they reflect how I see myself not how others see me’	38.8% of participants agree with this statement.



11-	‘I am highly attracted to unique luxury items’	33.7% of participants disagree with this statement.
12-	‘I dislike luxury accessories that everyone else has’	36.7% of participants agree with this statement.
13-	‘It is important for me to own really nice things’	35.7% of participants disagree with this statement.
14-	‘Buying luxury accessories gives me a lot of pleasure’	31.6% of participants agree with this statement.
15-	‘In my mind higher price equals higher quality’	48% of participants disagree with this statement.
16-	‘An item being higher in price makes it more desirable to me’	48% of participants disagree with this statement.
17-	‘It is important that others like the product I purchase’	29.6% of participants disagree with this statement.

### Scoring the Luxury Fashion Scale

The highest possible score an individual can obtain on this scale is a 50. A score between 45-50 indicates that the individual is extremely interested in luxury fashion and its influences. A score of 25 represents a neutral point within the scale. A Score of 5-10 suggests the participants are not interest in luxury fashion and its influences. Figure 5.7.1 represents the Luxury fashion questionnaire and its responses distributed on MSforms. And, the data was inputted into excel and the average score was 30.6326 as seen in figure 5.7.

## Luxury brands and what they mean to you.

[More Details](#)

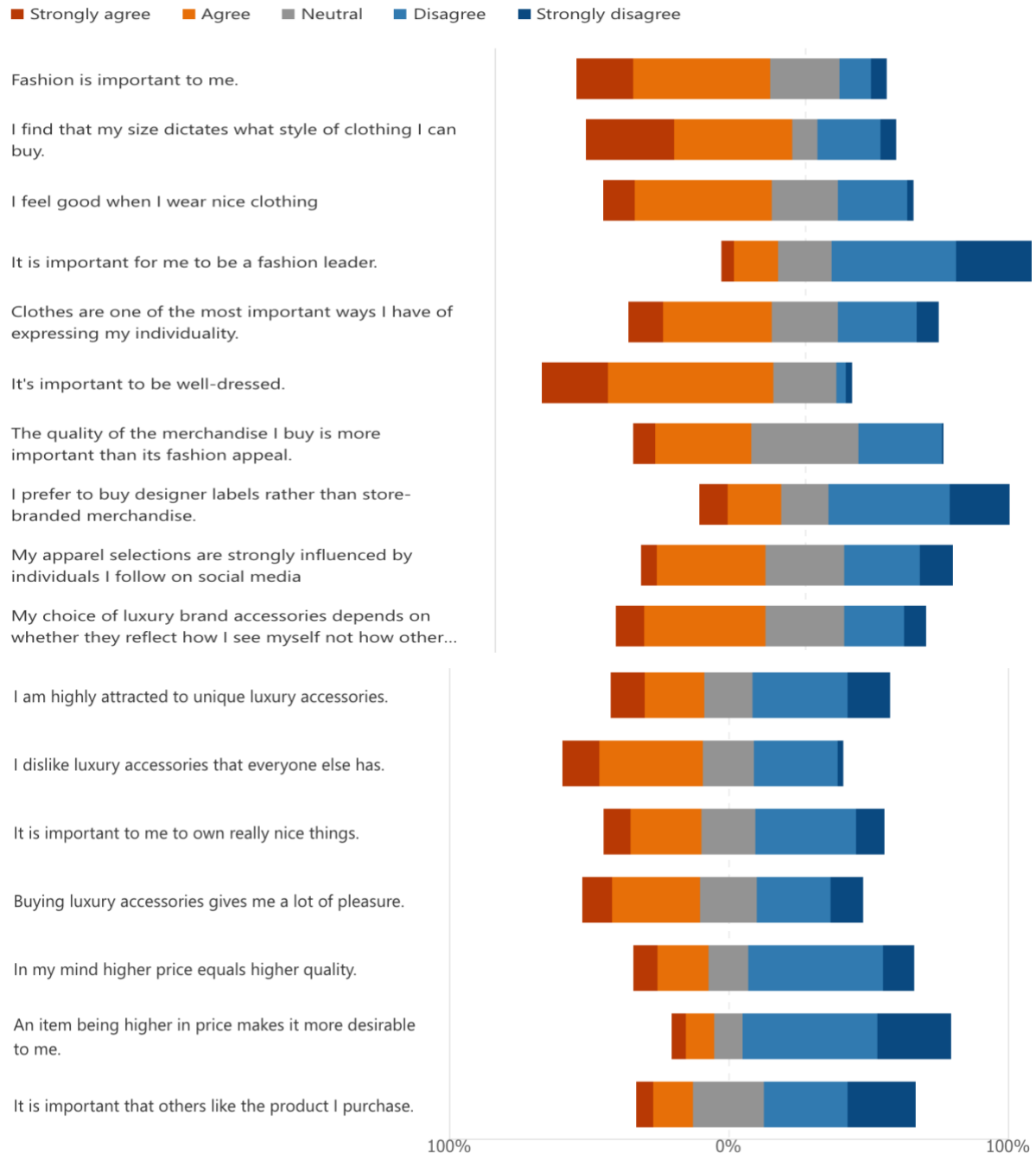


Figure 5.7.1 (Luxury fashion score; MSforms)

15	38
30	36
30.63265306	

Figure 5.7.2 (Average score of the luxury fashion questionnaire)

### 5.8 Research question findings

First and foremost, correlation analysis was used to determine the results. This refers to the relationship or association between two (or more) quantitative variables (Gogtay and Thatte, 2017). With the Y-axis representing the total score on the scatter plot and the constant variable on the X-axis, enables the researcher to see if there is a relationship between the two. Each point on the scatter plots below represent the values of X and Y as a single coordinate.

Figure 5.8.1 adapted from Gogtay and Thatte (2017) provides some examples of different correlations found on a scatter plat that will help provide insight to the findings of the researchers study. The scatter plots created by the researchers can were done so through the use of Microsoft Excel. The Pearson's correlation coefficient was used for these findings which helps in establishing a relationship between two variables. It is based upon three assumptions: 1- The relationship is linear, 2- The variables are independent of each other, 3- The variables are normally distributed (Gogtay and Thatte, 2017). Furthermore, A perfect value is a near +1, this is said to be a perfect correlation. Meaning as one variable increases, the other variable increases. A high degree coefficient value is when the value lies anywhere between  $\pm 0.50$  and  $\pm$ . This is said to be a strong correlation. A moderate coefficient value is when the value lies between  $\pm 0.30$  and  $\pm 0.49$ . This is said to be a medium correlation. A low coefficient value is when the value is below  $\pm 0.29$ . This is said to be a small correlation. And, when the value is 0 there is no correlation (Saunders, et al., 2019).

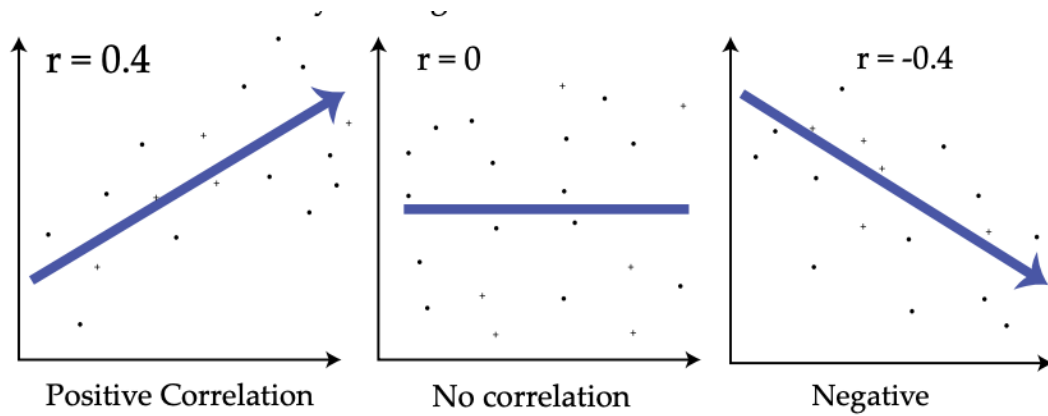


Figure 5.8.1 (Scatter Plot Correlations; Gogtay and Thatte (2017))

### Question 1 findings: Does purchasing luxury items affect one's self-esteem?

The first question proposed for the research was to investigate attempt to establish a relationship between the luxury fashion industry and the self-esteem of an individuals. Figure 5.8.2 represents the correlation scatter plot for the Luxury fashion score and Rosenberg's self-esteem score of the participants of the questionnaire. The value of  $R=0.0268$  with a P- Value of 0.79336. This indicates that there is no significant result. This indicates there is a low coefficient value as the value is below  $\pm 0.29$ .



Figure 5.8.2 (Luxury Fashion – Self-Esteem Correlation)

### Question 2: Do individuals who are satisfied with their life purchase more luxury items?

The second question proposed for the research was to investigate and attempt to establish a relationship between the overall satisfaction an individual has with their life and their between interest and intention to purchase luxury fashion. Figure 5.8.3 represents the correlation scatter plot for the luxury fashion score and The Satisfaction with Life Scale score of the participants of the questionnaire. The value of  $R=0.0145$  and with the value of  $P=0.88731$ . This indicated there is a low coefficient value as the value is below  $\pm 0.29$ . Therefore, the result is not significant at  $P<0.05$ .

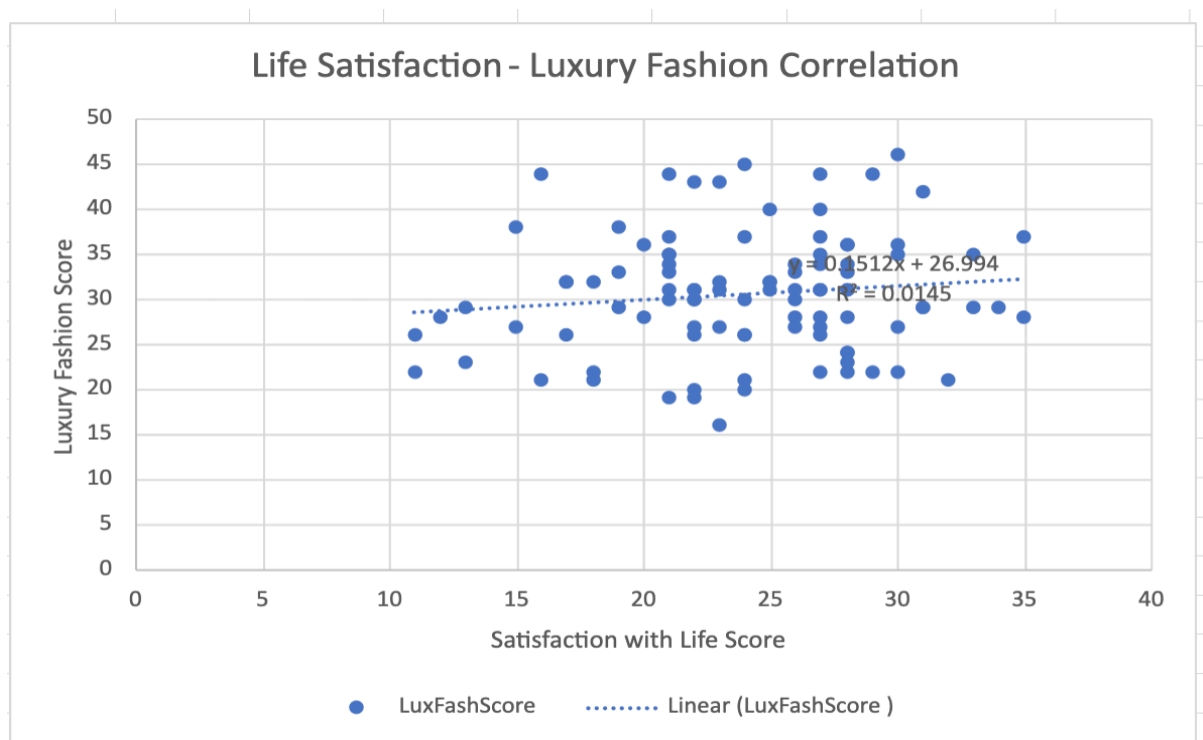


Figure 5.8.3 (Luxury Fashion – Life Satisfaction Correlation)

### Question 3: Does age play a factor in how much luxury clothing an individual purchases?

The third and final research question was to investigate and attempt to establish a relationship between and individuals age and their interest in luxury fashion. Figure 5.8.4 represents the correlation scatter plot for age and the Luxury fashion score of participants of the

questionnaire. The value of  $R=0.0051$  and with the value of  $P= 0.96025$ . This indicates there is a weak negative correlation as the trendline is a downward slopping line. Thus, the result is not significant at  $P<0.05$ .

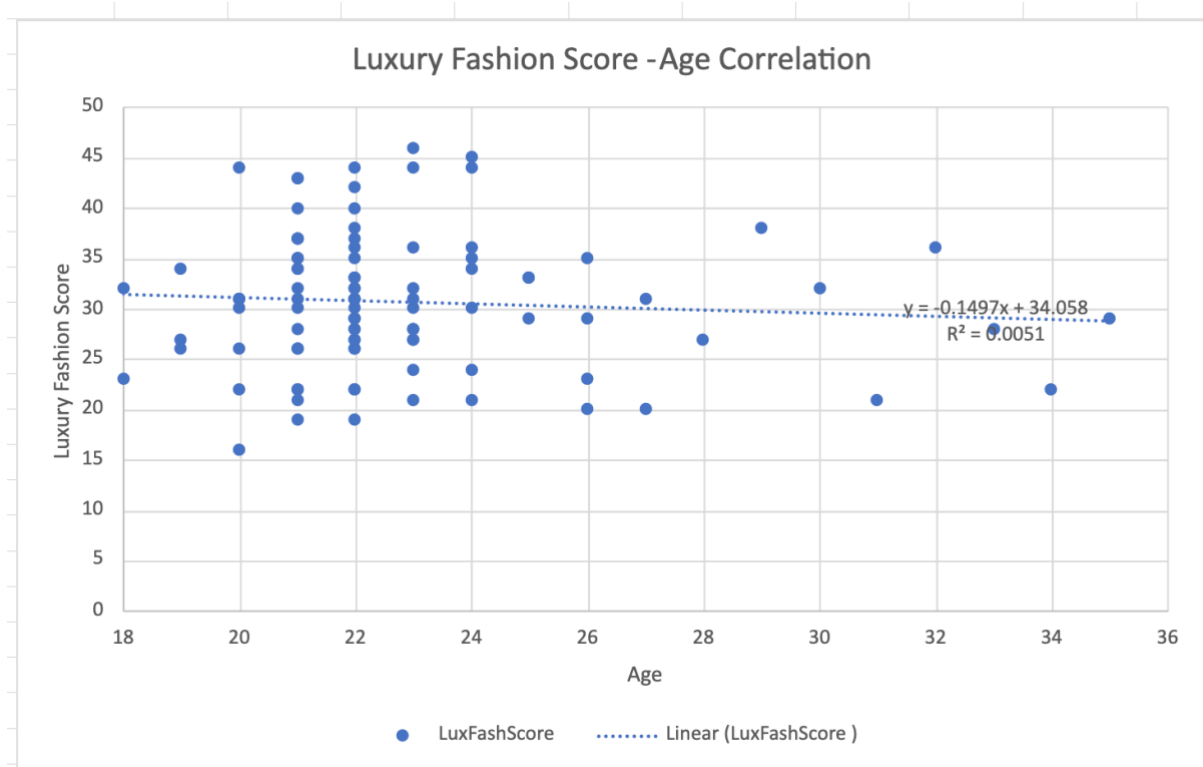


Figure 5.8.4 (Luxury Fashion – Age Correlation)

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

To fulfil the gaps a few procedures were taken within the literature review chapter to identify literature that currently exist within the field and applied to help quantify the data within the methodology section. Meticulous examination by utilising a quantitative approach enabled this research to reach its final destination. This chapter will primarily discuss the findings and how this relates to existing literature. Finally the implications will be made based on the results of the study, followed by its limitations and recommendations for further research into the topic.

The main purpose of this dissertation was investigate the relationship between one's self-esteem, satisfaction with life and their purchasing intention to purchasing luxury clothing and items. The researcher investigated different variables that included the participants age, their level of self-esteem, life satisfaction and their relationship with luxury fashion. The findings of this research is based on 98 participants who answered the questionnaire and are all aged between 18-35 year olds who would be considered millennials. And, with the majority of participants earning between €1,000-€1,500.

### **6.2 Discussion on findings**

The researcher of the study has concluded that the objectives set out from the beginning have been achieved. The findings within this research were to determine if age play a factor in ones interest as well as willingness to purchase luxury goods. As Danziger (2019) has mentioned previously that the Millennial is becoming the new luxury customer. Thus, age was considered when conducting this study as it may provide insight into this statement. Furthermore, the self-esteem of the individual was then considered as the desire to stand out of the crowd has become such a stable of today's society. Hence, if an individual can achieve some form of uniqueness, it can be said that their self-esteem may increase. The objective was to discover if luxury fashion can indeed increase an individual self-esteem through the unique and exclusivity that luxury brands are famous for. Finally, there was the objective of finding out of if an individual is satisfied with their life are they more inclined to purchase and have an interest in luxury fashion.

### **Question 1 findings: Does purchasing luxury items affect one's self-esteem?**

The correlation of  $R=0.0268$  with the value of P Value of 0.79336 suggests that there is a no significant relationship between these two variables. This question explains an individual's self-esteem and the interest and purchasing of luxury clothing is weak. Thus, no matter the individual's self-esteem they will purchase luxury clothing. In essence, the purchase of luxury clothing does not have an impact on the self-esteem of an individual. Furthermore, the self-esteem of an individual does not increase the more luxury items/ clothing they buy. As mentioned in the literature review, an individual's seeks opportunities to express themselves through fashion. They are influenced by how others perceive them and their self-image and how they wish to show themselves to their peers. Thus, if the individual can indeed express themselves using luxury fashion and untimely, having the opportunity to increase their levels of self-esteem. However, as the research shows this is not the case.

### **Question 2: Do individuals who are satisfied with their life purchase more luxury items?**

Individuals who are satisfied with their life tend to purchase more luxury clothing. The correlation of  $R=0.0145$  and with the value of  $P= 0.88731$ . This suggests that there is a no significant relationship between these two variables. The relationship between an individual's satisfaction life and their interest and willingness to purchase more luxury items is weak to having no significant impact. Thus, the question of does an individual who is satisfied with their life purchase more luxury items or does their purchase of luxury clothing increase their life satisfaction to be untrue. Regardless of this life satisfaction levels, the individual will purchase luxury items. It does not increase their satisfaction with life.

### **Question 3: Does age play a factor in how much luxury clothing an individual purchases?**

Finally for question three concerns the role age plays in determining whether an individual will purchase more luxury clothing. The value of  $R$  is 0.0051 with the value of  $P= 0.96025$ . Indicating that there is a negative correlation. Therefore, the result is not significant. Meaning that there is no correlation between an individual's age and how much luxury items they purchase. This in return further solidifies the fact of how big the luxury industry due to their



expensive prices, they remain irrelevant to their potential buyers. Millennials (The age which was collected) don't tend to care about how much a luxury item is. Like mentioned above, they will purchase said items regardless of their price. This may be for other reason not explored within this research.

Although the research question didn't yield the results that were predicted it seems as though it proves the size and potential the luxury fashion industry has to grow. In the literature review, explanations concerning the behaviour of the consumer and their relationship with the new digital era and the luxury fashion industry, which enabled a deep dive into the overall intentions behind both the luxury fashion industry from a business standpoint and behind the individual from a consumer standpoint. The consumer seems to crave the allure of luxury brands and the overall power they can help one possibly feel. Although they may not impact one ones self-esteem directly, presenting the individual with the chance to feel empowered through exclusivity and individuality for a limited period of time.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This final chapter contains the conclusion, recommendation and limitations based upon the findings of this research. The conclusion provides the findings of the research in relation to consumer behaviour and the luxury fashion industry. Furthermore, the researcher will then provide recommendations that may provide insight into this area of study and how it can be improved upon. Finally, there is the limitations of the research and what the researcher had to do when faced with restrictions during the course of the study conducted.

### **7.2 Conclusion**

This research was conducted in order to fulfil the gap in the literature review that was in existence in today's climate which was explained in chapter 2. The overall goal of this research was to establish and understand the relationship the consumer and their desire to purchase luxury goods. Influences that fuelled the desire stemmed from social media and their influencers, a need for self-expression through fashion, the digital era and a need for individuality. It is imperative to understand the behaviour behind consumers when discussing luxury fashion as their high prices and 'superior quality' tend to be their driving forces. Although research may suggest that individuals don't do it for the superior quality but may tend to do it for others to hold them in higher regard. Having this comprehensive knowledge can be both beneficial to luxury brands as well as their consumers.

Moreover, the findings have shown that there is no significant relationship between individuals' self-esteem levels as well as their satisfaction levels when they purchase luxury goods. This again raises the question of why one purchases such products? Again, due to time constraint more research could be conducted around other areas related to luxury brands. It could be an individual loves the story and heritage luxury brands are known for which in return can lead to brand loyalty. This could potentially be a driving factor for interest and purchase.

### **7.3 Limitations**

The researcher acknowledges the fact that most researched projects will always encounter some limitations across the span of the study. Unfortunately, the research sample size of 98 participants was small as it was only focused at people between the ages of 18-35 and distributed through social media and individuals who have an interest in fashion. Additionally, the researcher did not consider individuals who had little interest in fashion. If so, they

possibly could of presented new findings which would of reflected the wider population more accurately.

Time constraint was another limitation as it limited the number of the sample size which could of potentially of been bigger which again could of presented more accurate findings of the overall population. Another limitation was the use of the snowball sampling method utilised by the researcher. This could of potentially limited the respondents to a specific demographic which could lend itself to a bias in the analysis of the data. Finally, this data analysis was measured in a quantitative manner. These descriptive facts that were obtained from the questionnaire distributed regarding luxury fashion, self-esteem etc is difficult to generalise due to the participants having varying degrees of what luxury fashion or self-esteem means to them.

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

The sample size of this research was quite small even though the answers to the research question were able to be obtained. However, the recommendation by the researcher is that the sample should be considerably larger in size as this will enable more accurate and true findings. By having a larger sample size, it will increase the overall accuracy of the research and decrease the margin of error in the findings. The researcher further suggests that future studies should consider other aspect relating to luxury fashion rather than looking at self-esteem or life satisfaction. It is also suggested that other demographic should be considered when conducting future research. Including the possibility of a different age bracket, level of education and or employment status. These variables may yield different results from the research conducted. Again, having varying ages and demographic profiles can be both beneficial to the marketer as well as the consumer. Ultimately, time constraint in combination with the implications of COVID-19 have been the major constraint of the research. It is recommended that for future research, a significant amount of time should be spent designing the questionnaire for the research to help identify the gaps within the research.

It is highly recommended that for future research, the aforementioned limitations and the recommendations should be considered as this could potentially help with the achievement of what was not able to be achieved within this researched conducted.

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# Appendix

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a survey page. The browser's address bar shows the URL: `forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx?lang=en-GB&origin=OfficeDotCom&route=Start#Analysis=true&FormId=wUnbnK_6k6LP6f9CIW2jCOWTD5DbnJGISAMnZ6AHqF...`. The page has a teal header with the title "Consumer Behaviour, Self-Esteem, and Life satisfaction". Below the title, there is a paragraph explaining the survey's purpose and duration. The survey is for an NCI student's Level 9 Marketing degree. It mentions that the data will be used for a Level 9 Masters student in NCI, focusing on luxury clothing brands and their effects on consumer behaviour, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. The survey will take no longer than 5-10 minutes with participation being 100% voluntary. It also states that the data will be analysed to find correlations and that participation requires answering questions about oneself and their opinion. All answers will remain anonymous. A contact email is provided: `X17362393@student.ncirl.ie`. Below the teal section, there is a section for questions. Question 1 asks if the respondent agrees to the terms. Question 2 asks for gender with radio button options: Woman, Man, Non-binary, and Prefer not to say. Question 3 asks for age with a text input field. Question 4 asks for monthly income with radio button options ranging from €0-500 to No monthly income.

forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx?lang=en-GB&origin=OfficeDotCom&route=Start#Analysis=true&FormId=wUnbnK\_6k6LP6f9CIW2jCOWTD5DbnJGISAMnZ6AHqF...

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## Consumer Behaviour, Self-Esteem, and Life satisfaction

The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.  
Dissertation Research:  
This research is being conducted for an NCI student's Level 9 Marketing degree.

The collection of data is being used for a Level 9 Masters student in NCI. The topic of research involves luxury clothing brands and its effects on consumer behaviour, self-esteem and life satisfaction. This survey will take no longer than 5-10 minutes with participation being 100% voluntary.

The data to be collected will then be analysed, intending to find correlations if any, between the responses. Taking part in this research will require the participant to answer questions about themselves and their opinion.

All answers will remain anonymous and do not require the use of any personal information which can lead to the identification of an individual.

If you have any queries concerning the survey, feel free to contact me at: [X17362393@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:X17362393@student.ncirl.ie)

\* Required

1. Do you agree to the terms above? By clicking Yes, you are willing to answer the questions within the survey. \*

2. What is your gender? \*

☐ Woman

☐ Man

☐ Non-binary

☐ Prefer not to say

3. What is your age? \*

Enter your answer

4. What is your monthly income? \*

☐ €0-500

☐ €500-1,000

☐ €1,000-€1,500

☐ €1,500-€2,000

☐ €2,000-€2,500

☐ €2,500+

☐ No monthly income

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Consumer Behaviour, Self-Esteem, and Life satisfaction

Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale

5. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale is a brief and unidimensional measure of global self-esteem. It has demonstrated good reliability and validity across a large number of different sample groups.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At times, I think I am no good at all.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I certainly feel useless at times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

I wish I could have more respect for myself.

All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

I take a positive attitude toward myself.

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\* Required

### Clothing purchases

6. How often do you buy clothes? \*

☐ Several times per week  
☐ Several times per month  
☐ Several times per year  
☐ Less often

7. What is the most common reason for which you buy clothes? \*

☐ As a gift  
☐ Replacing worn-out clothes  
☐ To update wardrobe  
☐ It's one of my weekly routines  
☐ Other

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\* Required

### Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

A 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect).

8. The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was developed as a measure of the judgmental component of subjective well-being (SWB). Two studies designed to validate further the SWLS are reported.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The conditions of my life are excellent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Luxury brands and what they mean to you. \*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Fashion is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find that my size dictates what style of clothing I can buy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel good when I wear nice clothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important for me to be a fashion leader.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clothes are one of the most important ways I have of expressing my individuality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's important to be well-dressed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The quality of the merchandise I buy is more important than its fashion appeal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer to buy designer labels rather than store-branded merchandise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My apparel selections are strongly influenced	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>