

Luxury and Sustainability

A qualitative analysis of the perception of Generation Z on the CSR
communication of luxury brands

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the perception of Generation Z towards luxury brands' communication campaigns promoting sustainable development. Using the qualitative method and through in-depth interviews, this study aims to explore how Generation Z perceives the values that various luxury brands promote in their advertising. Previous research has shown that luxury and sustainability are opposites in consumer perception. This research attempts to bring nuance and complexity to the perception of sustainable luxury by conducting a thematic analysis, by exploring the feelings and values of the new generation of consumers. Specifically, the objective is to analyze their perception of CSR communication, with a focus on nine advertising campaigns published on Instagram and YouTube. These advertisements concern the LVMH group and the Kering group, as well as LOEWE, Guerlain and Stella Mc Cartney brands.

KEYWORDS: Luxury, sustainability, emotional branding, CSR communication, paradox

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

During the Renaissance, luxury was the exclusive way of life for the aristocracy, each wanting to compete in ostentation (Baudrillard, 2016). The rarest goods, essences and spices, carriages, liveries and castles were reserved for the aristocracy. As luxury was a lifestyle that promoted appearance as the main way to make a place for oneself in society, the aristocracy and its luxurious life dictated the tone for the whole society. In order to curb extravagance, in the 16th and 17th centuries, especially in France, edicts and regulations called "sumptuary laws" emerged, which aimed to control the manifestation of wealth and commanded that everyone should dress according to their rank (Course, 2005). In the absence of sumptuary laws, the social dynamic of imitating the elites is nowadays maintaining a frenzy of buying ever more beautiful, more expensive, more comfortable to associate at least symbolically with them (Lipovetsky & Roux, 2003). If luxury was once a craft activity intended for a limited clientele served by family businesses with a rare know-how, nourished by tradition and audacity (ibid.), today the luxury industry is driven by groups listed on the stock exchange (ABC Bourse, 2020); each of them at the head of a vast portfolio of brands operating in highly diversified sectors.

According to the latest reports on luxury goods market, the revenues of the world's Top 100 companies increased by US\$30 billion within one year, from \$217 billion in 2016 to \$247 billion in the following year (Deloitte, 2019). As per the report, "annual growth jumped to 10.8 percent, on a currency-adjusted composite basis, much higher than the previous year's 1.0 percent growth. Seventy-six percent of the companies reported growth in their luxury sales, with nearly half of these recording double-digit year-on-year growth" (ibid.). A new development is that luxury now occupies a central place in consumer societies, not in terms of volume, as it remains a small sector, but in terms of its visibility and symbolic power. In terms of business strategy, the margins with prices constantly rising, ensure profitable growth. An examination of the 2017 Annual Results of LVMH, the world's leading

luxury group, shows that the average gross margin of its seventy brands amounts to 65% of sales (LVMH, 2018).

At the same time, social responsibility of the luxury industry is questionable. Indeed, every year worldwide, fashion emits 1.2 billion tons of greenhouse gases (MacArthur, 2017). The question of the responsibility of such practices, in face of the climate change arose and triggered heated discussions. This is particularly accentuated by the recent massification and democratization of luxury (Kapferer, 2017). The standardization of the offer at the global level brings luxury goods up against the same questions of responsibility as those of mass consumption products (Kapferer, 2017). Over the years, the ecological crisis has challenged the luxury industry and has put its practices back into perspective in terms of ethics and responsibility. Media, activists and governments are denouncing the environmental imprint of companies, and more and more organizations are publishing reports and ranking companies according to their ecological footprint (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Therefore, even if the luxury industry does not represent a significant production volume within the fashion market, the luxury industry cannot ignore environmental issues and luxury brands are increasingly taking the measure of their responsibility by undertaking initiatives in terms of marketing, sourcing and manufacturing (Athwal, Wells, Carrigan, & Henninger, 2019).

Insistent questions from journalists, NGOs, whistleblowers and the pressure from investment funds and financial analysts themselves increases the risk of tarnishing a luxury brand's reputation. Charging very high prices implies a perfect reputation. Since the late 1990s, world's major luxury and fashion groups, and in particular French groups, such as LVMH owned by Bernard Arnaud, have gradually applied a series of measures throughout the value chain. For example, in 2012 LVMH launched a project called LIFE, which aims to improve the environmental performance of their various houses. This includes objectives concerning the supply chain. On their corporate website, it states that they aim to "More closely monitor the traceability and conformity of the raw materials used to create our exceptional products while at the same time preserving natural resources and applying the highest standards across 70% of procurement chains" (LVMH, 2020). This initiative promises a 25% reduction in LVMH's CO₂ emissions by 2020, to improve their energy efficiency by 15%, to improve their

water, energy and waste production sites by 10% according to the performance indicators, and to improve the environmental impact of all their good products in general.

It is also a concern for consumers. There seems to be a consensus among marketing academics on the fact that identity is the key element in the complex emotional relationship that a customer has with the brand, and that it generates loyalty (Swimberghe, Astakhova & Wooldridge, 2014). Furthermore, consumers are increasingly concerned and selective towards the products they choose to buy, favoring goods that are as harmless as possible to the environment (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2007). Thus, corporate social responsibility is a way to strengthen consumer loyalty, since it allows a brand to differentiate itself from its competitors by conveying societal values and thus shape customer perception (Cha, Yi, & Bagozzi, 2016). Today, in the face of external pressure and the transparency injunction, companies can no longer ignore CSR component in their corporate agenda and their symbolic positioning (Porter & Kramer, 2006), to maintain and strengthen the relation with consumers. Thus, new practices have emerged.

Although sustainable consumption concerns all kind of sectors, this study focuses on the luxury industry, as previous the research has enlightened a paradox between the concepts of luxe and sustainability (Wong & Dhanesh, 2017; Athwal, Wells, Carrigan, & Henninger, 2019; Kapferer & Michaut, 2015). Indeed, luxury brands have to manage both the environmental responsibility of their business and their elite branding (Wong & Dhanesh, 2016). Previous studies have discussed the contradiction between luxury and sustainability, concluding that the values of luxury are in opposition to those of sustainable development (Kapferer & Michaut, 2015). According to the Oslo Symposium, a conference held in 1994, sustainable consumption is "the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs". This stands in contrast to the opulence and uselessness of luxury (Harper & Peattie, 2011). There is a growing volume of research on this subject, but it remains minimal compared to that done on everyday shopping and on consumer goods qualified as "low involvement" (Athwal, Wells, Carrigan, & Henninger, 2019). Most studies on sustainable consumption focus on everyday consumer products and much less is known about high-engagement consumption, such as luxury goods (ibid.).

Therefore, it is important to explore how do luxury goods consumers perceive the relationship between luxury and sustainability. The study seeks to understand how people perceive sustainability initiatives and values promoted by luxury brands. It is relevant to focus on the consumers' thoughts and personal experiences to answer the question in-depth. As Athwal, Wells, Carrigan & Henninger (2019) point out, it is relevant to "understand the contexts, institutional frameworks and collective practices within which they [consumers] consume" (p.416).

The study focuses on the CSR communication implemented with the aim of creating image enhancement and behavior change (Crane & Glozer, 2016). Studies indicate that CSR communication can be used to strengthen links with consumers in order to achieve company objectives. Relationships are often improved, and this encourages consumers to behave positively towards the company (Crane & Glozer, 2016; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). Previous research on CSR communication has placed significant emphasis on the effectiveness of controlled corporate communication (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2013) on improving the perception of a company's reputation as credible and trustworthy (Aras & Crowther, 2011). Good communication is necessary to build brand identity and image (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2010). Specifically, "CSR communication aims to provide information that legitimizes an organization's behavior in trying to influence the image of the company among stakeholders and society" (Birth, Illia, Lurati & Zamparini, 2008, p.3). In marketing research, it can be seen that the change in consumers' attitudes and perceptions of brand image is triggered by CSR communication, and may even motivate purchase (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009; Barone, Miyazaki & Taylor, 2000). However, the findings of these studies often show that awareness and attitude is a more salient outcome than visible actions such as the act of buying. As Bhattacharya & Sen (2004) pointed out: "the impact of CSR initiatives on outcomes internal to the consumer (e.g., awareness, attitudes, and attributions) is significantly greater and more easily assessable than its impact on the external or visible outcomes (e.g., purchase behavior, word-of-mouth)." (p. 12). As it is difficult to measure in terms of statistics, it is interesting to look at how and why this affects the consumer.

Moreover, Generation Z will become in the coming years an important market share, especially for the luxury sector. As a matter of fact, this population of young people, born

between 1995 and 2014, would already represent 30% of the luxury market and is expected to rise to 40% in 2025 (Paris Luxury Submit, 2019). In fact, it has been observed that the desirability of luxury (+16% points in Europe on the Top 20 incomes) is more evident among the Z generation (+25 points) (World Luxury Tracking, 2018). Moreover, the 2019 edition of the World Luxury Tracking, the study conducted by Ipsos, reveals that the younger generation in France is becoming increasingly demanding with regard to the traceability and ethics of good products. Precisely, 65% of French people (68% of 18-34-year-old) declare that they are concerned about ethical and ecological issues (ibid.). Luxury brands are therefore constrained to take these evolutions into account in their strategies in order to reach this new target as closely as possible. Thus, it is worth exploring whether CSR communication applied to luxury brands can influence their perceptions.

Considering the above and the fact that sustainable development is a new issue in the luxury industry, and that there is a lack of information on new consumers who constitute a growing market, the research question is as follows: ***How does Generation Z perceive the CSR communication implemented by luxury brands?***

This research focuses on the French market as France can be considered a unique example with regards to its distinctiveness and dominating role in the luxury market, as nine French firms are ranked in the top 100 largest luxury companies (Deloitte, 2019). This leadership is underpinned by historical *savoir-faire*, an ecosystem rooted in the territory and a strategy of brand concentration (Kapferer, 2016). Kering, Hermès, L'Oréal and LVMH, known as the KHOL, are compared to the American giants of new technologies, the GAFAM. Together, they represent a market capitalization of EUR 422 billion, that is 25% of the CAC 40 (the interaction between the stock market and economic growth) (Kantar WPP, 2019).

Finally, the focus will be on apparel and perfumes, as this is the sector that attracts the most attention and expectations from stakeholders in terms of environmental responsibility (Athwal, Wells, Carrigan, & Henninger, 2019).

1.2. Chapter outline

The second chapter presents the research and papers that already exist on the subject. The chapter covers the topics of emotional branding and presents the central concepts of the research, namely Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Corporate Sustainability (CS). The last part of the chapter focuses on the concept of luxury, in relation to sustainable development, and the population studied, Generation Z. Also, luxury brand strategies and Social Media Marketing (SMM) is presented. The third chapter describes the method used, how the study is approached, and why. It includes the sampling approach, sampling criteria, and how the sampling was executed, as well as the rationale for in-depth interviews, the materials used, operationalization, analysis and reliability. The fourth chapter provides the thematic analysis of the dataset. The last chapter is the conclusion, with the implications, the limitations, and further recommendations.

1.3. Academic and societal relevance

First of all, this paper will contribute to the empirical work on CSR and corporate identity and can be useful for other industries for which core values are at odds and not aligned with the core values of CSR (Wong & Dhanesh, 2017). Then, as Athwal, Wells, Carrigan & Henninger (2019) pointed out in their paper, there is a gap in the literature on luxury and sustainable development on several levels. The paper by Athwal, Wells, Carrigan & Henninger (2019), offers an agenda for future research on the topic. They indicate that research on the subject and, in particular, on consumer profiles is not sufficiently provided: "these studies are perplexing and contradictory, which confirms how little we know about consumers of sustainable luxury" (p. 410). Therefore, there is a gap regarding the profile of sustainable luxury consumers, whereby there is very little information about them. The objective is to generate in-depth data on the experiences of the new young generation of consumers towards luxury, and to explore the extent to which sustainable luxury can be a highly potential sector for the future. This research can be used as branding guidelines, as critically assessing the branding challenges and opportunities for luxury brands can be helpful for the practitioners.

Secondly, Athwal, Wells, Carrigan and Henninger (2019) mention that studies on luxury and sustainable development do not provide an in-depth understanding of the opposition between luxury and sustainability. They explain that in the existing literature, the values of luxury and those of sustainable development are ontologically opposed (ibid.). However, there is a lack of details on the foundations of this phenomenon. As a result, this research brings additional conclusions to the research on sustainable luxury, in the sense that previous studies have focused on one type of market or one type of sector (ibid.). A study on the category of luxury clothing and perfumes, conducted among the French population, adds additional results to the literature on the subject.

Given the weight of this industry in the global economy, this research is also of societal relevance. Indeed, the luxury industry, because of its weight in the French economy, should have a societal role to play. Companies should have a key role on issues related to the common good. Moreover, the luxury industry has an influence on the fashion industry in general and it institutes a whole system of codes and representations that fast-fashion brands imitate (Barrère & Santagata, 2005). Thus, it is relevant to explore the new generation's perception of the messages conveyed by communication campaigns, knowing that today the codes of luxury are being renewed (Okonkwo, 2007). There is therefore a societal importance to explore the new perceptions about this industry which, in France, is the most dynamic industry, and represents more than a quarter of the economic weight of the CAC 40.

2. Theory and previous research

The chapter presents a review of existing literature, which is used to investigate the research area and summarize knowledge. First, the concepts of brand image and reputation are defined, including an overview of emotional branding literature. Following this, literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Corporate Sustainability (CS) is reviewed. This is done in order to highlight the importance of the impact of companies on its environment. Subsequently, literature about luxury is summarized to address the relevance of communication in branding sustainability, to draw conclusions about sustainable luxury. Then, the existing literature on the relationship between luxury and Generation Z, as well as on luxury brand strategies and Social Media Marketing (SMM) is presented.

2.1. Emotional branding

As Cornelissen (2008) argues, in today's society, the future of a company is highly conditioned by the perception of stakeholders, including shareholders, investors, employees and consumers. For this study, the focus is on the latter stakeholder, since the future of brands depends mainly on strengthening relationships with consumers (ibid.)

Technology plays a significant role in today's consumption, as it dictates a frantic pace that leaves the consumer with very little time to decide on which product they want to buy (Acharya, 2019). Customers are increasingly focusing on the attributes of a product, before looking at the product or service in its entirety, whether for high or low involvement consumption, as a result of which consumption is nowadays guided by reason, and less by feelings (ibid.). However, even though today's fashion consumers are demanding and apathetic, they are increasingly seeking meaning in the way they shop, and they strive for emotion in their relationship with brands (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). This can be explained by the fact that while the technical aspects of a brand or product may be rememberable, consumers tend to remember more how a brand makes them feel (ibid.).

As several studies have pointed out (Jenkins & Molesworth, 2017 ; Otley, 2016 ; Schmitt, 2009), personal experiences and feelings are more important elements in forming an opinion of a brand than information on product characteristics. Several aspects are of significance.

First of all, imagination is an important point. Jenkins and Molesworth (2017) theorize the role of the imaginary in consumption, whether through its presence or absence, both in individual consumption practices and at the macro level of the market. Schmitt (2009), discusses the sensory and creative aspect of importance of the imagination to theorize, what he calls, *experiential branding*. For him, the branding experience would be the most important facet of a brand, because consumers are no longer sensitive to targeted advertising messages, but to real commitments (Schmitt, 2019). *Emotional branding* therefore appears to be a key element in building consumer loyalty to a brand, which according to Fournier (1997) can be defined as a long-term committed relationship.

A long-term commitment implies being a consumer of a brand on a regular basis, and for several years. Otley (2016) claims that emotionally engaged consumers would be 51% more loyal to a brand, than those who are only satisfied, so the emotion felt for a brand is said to generate an increase in sales.

Thus, it is important for brands to consolidate and create a lasting relationship with their consumers and to maintain an emotional bond. In the fashion market, brands are increasingly struggling to distinguish themselves from each other, as competition is intense and the market is saturated and volatile (Clark, 2017). To remedy this situation, brands engage in communication strategies referred to as emotional. According to Youn-Kyung Kim & Pauline Sullivan (2019), emotional branding, storytelling, empowerment and cause branding strategies respond to consumers' desire to find themselves in positive, authentic and warm experiences in order to co-create meaning with brands. As a matter of fact, specifically, the fashion industry has empirically been associated with products with a high symbolic value, and therefore involve imagination, experience and emotion (Johnson, Lennon & Rudd, 2014).

Thus, emotional branding involves appealing to the consumers' feelings by stimulating the imagination and the symbolism of a product, to reinforce loyalty to a brand, and this especially applies to the fashion industry.

2.2. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Corporate Sustainability (CS)

2.2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility: concept definition

One of the central concepts of this research is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This concept has been one of the major topics in the academic literature related to management and has been a subject of corporate attention in the last few years (Garriga & Melé, 2004). In the widest sense, CSR is a concept that measures and defines the impact and role of a company or business on the environmental, economic and social field in which it operates (Golob, Elving, Nielsen, Thomsen, Schultz, Podnar, & Elving, 2013).

Nevertheless, there is a flourishing number of theories on CSR and the meaning of such concepts depends largely on the theories that allowed their creation. As Votaw (1972) said: "Corporate Social Responsibility means something, but not always the same thing to everybody. To some, it conveys the idea of legal responsibility or liability; to others, it means socially responsible behavior in the ethical sense; to still others, the meaning transmitted is that of "responsible for" in a causal mode; many simply equate it with a charitable contribution; some take it to mean socially conscious; many of those who embrace it most fervently see it as a mere synonym for legitimacy in the context of belonging or being proper or valid; a few see a sort fiduciary duty imposing higher standards of behavior on businessmen than on citizens as large". (p. 146).

The concept of CSR tackles the relationship between business and society. One of the most commonly accepted definitions is that of Carroll (1991), which he constructed around four dimensions of the concept - philanthropic, economic, legal and ethics - by taking the stakeholders' point of view. However, this model can today be overtaken by the complexity and multiplicity of theories and practices. Garriga & Melé (2004) sought to review and categorize existing theories. In "Corporate social responsibility theories: Mapping the territory", a first distinction is made between corporate sustainability and corporate citizenship, and a subdivision highlight four kinds of theories. For this paper, it is interesting to concentrate on the first category, which covers the concept of sustainable luxury. According to the Cambridge Online Dictionary, sustainability is "the quality of causing little

or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue for a long time" (Cambridge Online Dictionary, nd.).

From there, CSR and luxury goes on to the category of the so-called instrumental theories, meaning that strategies involving corporate responsibility are implemented in order to make a profit, and are conceived as tools to achieve specific objectives in order to keep the company in good health (Friedman, 2007). This can be considered as a functional approach to communication (Al-Fedaghi, 2012). The environmental dimension definition will be used for this paper. Consumers increasingly expect companies to optimize and reduce the negative impact of their activities on the environment.

Indeed, one could say that companies today are under pressure to "go green" (Babiak & Trendafilova, 2011). In the academic literature, CSR is often associated with so-called "political consumption" (Wirt, 2017). Citizens take responsibility and use their power by consuming in accordance with their political opinions. This concept makes the boundaries between economy and politics, as well as between citizen and consumer, porous (Boström, Micheletti & Oosterveer, 2019).

2.2.2. Corporate Sustainability: definition and implications

In this study, the theory is grounded on the concept of Corporate Sustainability (CS) from an ecological point of view. CS is recognized as a major component of CSR, and CSR with an environmental focus is increasingly identified as a value driver with multiple benefits (Montiel, 2008). In *Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Sustainability: Separate Pasts, Common Futures*, Montiel (2008) sees that CSR and CS are increasingly congruent. He concludes that corporate sustainability is one of the most important facets of social responsibility. In fact, CS focuses particularly on environmental issues, while the CSR accepts a wider range of fields, as discussed above.

Although CS can decrease operating cost and increase appeal to investors and financial analysts (Kotler & Lee, 2005), these benefits are not necessarily financial (Porter and Kramer, 2006), but can also create opportunities and competitive advantage. Indeed, it can also strengthen brand positioning (Kotler & Lee, 2005) since supporting an environmental cause

allows consumers to go beyond the functionality of the product or the emotional relationship to the brand. As a matter of fact, Kotler & Lee, 2005 explain the possibility that consumers today are in the interest of "self-realization".

Studies, such as the one developed by Babiak & Trendafilova (2011), have shown that the promotion of ecological initiatives can strengthen commitment and has the ability to expand the consumer base of companies. Consequently, companies are taking into account environmental performance with the help of indicators.

For instance, the Triple Bottom Line, a theory used by companies, demonstrates that they should combine the so-called 3 bottom line of "profit, people and planet" (PPP) to maintain good relations with their stakeholders (Smith, 2016). The triple bottom line can be considered a new sustainable business model, because it can improve corporate image and clout, as positive press from reports enhances reputation.

Indeed, companies publish reports, launch campaigns, set up public consultation forums and conduct surveys to assess the reception of these initiatives. Governments, institutions and associations are claiming for accountability and transparency from companies around the world, which has encouraged them to bring CS to the top of their media agendas. For example, over 90% of the FTSE (Financial Times Stock Exchange) 100 largest companies publish these types of reports (Langer, 2009).

2.2.3. Corporate Social Responsibility communication

This subpart describes the concept of CSR communication, and explains on which definition this paper is based. According to Podnar (2008), "CSR communication is a process of anticipating stakeholders' expectations, articulation of CSR policy and managing of different organization communication tools designed to provide true and transparent information about a company's or a brand's integration of its business operations, social and environmental concerns, and interactions with stakeholders."(p.75). Concretely, there are different applications of this concept that companies can implement. For instance, Kotler & Lee (2015) proposed a taxonomy of 6 different practical and strategic approaches, namely Corporate Cause Promotion, Cause-Related Marketing, Corporate Social Marketing,

Corporate Philanthropy, Community Volunteering, and Socially Responsible Business Practices. This thesis focuses on the first approach (Corporate Cause Promotion), which main attributes are persuasive communication and building awareness and concern on the long term (ibid.). *Corporate cause promotion* is the act of allocating resources to support a cause of general interest or social order, and to talk about it through a communication campaign.

The goal of these initiatives is to improve the company's brand image, generate loyalty and publicize a cause.

As pointed out by Garriga & Melé (2004), there are several epistemological approaches to the CSR communication. Here, we focus on the promotional approach of communication, which brings to the fore the instrumental aspect of such practices, in which promotional communication is used to support the image, identity and reputation of the brand (Gond & Matten, 2010). It is therefore a functionalist approach, as it is widespread in marketing and public relations research, in which CSR issues are measured according to consumers' perception of the company's performance, in particular through the motivations and benefits of CSR communication (Golob, Elving, Nielsen, Thomsen, Schultz, Podnar, & Elving, 2013).

One of the key problems of CSR communication is called the CSR promotional communication dilemma. It can be understood as a conflict between “business and morality” (Andersen, Nielsen & Høvring, 2017). As a matter of fact, the purpose of promotional communication is to maximize profits and increase a company's customer base, whereas CSR is about social responsibility towards society. (Andersen, Nielsen & Høvring, 2017). The dilemma at issue here is that of self-promotion dilemma (Andersen, Nielsen & Høvring, 2017), which induces a dissonance between the initiatives undertaken and the communication thereof. Indeed, CSR communication can be beneficial in influencing the perception that a community has with a brand, so that its social and environmental activities are perceived as transparent (ibid.) However, it can also trigger a negative perception of the brand, as over-communicating about CSR actions can be seen by consumers as greenwashing (GW) (Bazillier & Vauday, 2009).

Indeed, today's consumers are overwhelmed by messages advocating sustainable development values and have more and more difficulty in trusting brands (Parguel, Benoît-Moreau & Larceneux, 2011). This dilemma is encountered in a lot of CSR communication analysis under different names. For example, this dilemma is discussed in ethical corporate marketing, which can be defined with model of Balmer and Greyser (2006), according to which six aspects must be taken into account.

The six aspects are character (corporate identity), communication (corporate communication), constituencies (marketing and stakeholder management), suitability (corporate brand management), conceptualization (corporate reputation), and culture (organizational identity) (Balmer & Greyser (2006). They explain that the character ("what we indubitably are") must be consistent with the communication ("what we say we are") in order to avoid the dilemma of CSR communication (Balmer, Fukukawa & Gray, 2007; Parguel, Benoît-Moreau & Larceneux, 2011). The efficiency of communication depends on the congruence between the cause being supported and the company. It will be discussed in the next section how the issue of congruence is particularly complex for the luxury industry, whose values can be at odds with sustainability.

Thus, CSR communication can lead to a good reputation and a good brand image (Kotler & Lee, 2015; Gond & Matten, 2010), as well as building legitimacy (Parguel, Benoît-Moreau & Larceneux, 2011). However, less is known about the reaction of consumers as a specific stakeholder group (Parguel, Benoît-Moreau & Larceneux, 2011). Although there have been quantitative and qualitative studies on the consumer perspective given the increasing attention devoted to CSR communication in recent years (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2017; Maignan and Ferrell, 2004; Swaen, Chumpitaz, Bigné & Andreu, 2003; Morsing & Schultz, 2006), little is known about young consumers, known as Generation Z, since they are new to the luxury market.

2.3. Luxury

2.3.1. The paradox of Sustainable Luxury

Defining luxury can be challenging. The theoretical literature on luxury goods is dense and is not limited to one discipline. Historically, luxury has been associated with the following aspects: superior quality, uniqueness and superficiality, as well as the expertise, *savoir-faire* and craftsmanship dimension (Atwal & Williams, 2017; Berry, 1994; Heine & Berghaus, 2014). Some theories have placed emphasis on the social factor (Baudrillard, 2016), stating that the definition of luxury can differ according to individual experience, socio-demographic profile and time factor (Poelina & Nordensvard, 2018; Sekora, 1977).

Indeed, identity is very important, in the sense that consumption is often motivated by a desire to stand out socially, which place the paradox of luxury individualism to boost one's ego and the altruism of sustainable development (Baudrillard, 2016). At the heart of luxury consumption is hedonism, a taste for beauty and excellence, but also materialism, the belief that happiness is built by money and access to the rare pleasures it allows, among which ostentation figures prominently (Atwal & Williams, 2017). Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote as follows: "Luxury can only be enjoyed by showing it" (Leigh, 1962, p.43). In this sense, numerous studies and research have analyzed luxury associated with abundance, over-consumption and uselessness (Carcano, 2017; Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2017; Athwal, Wells, Carrigan & Henninger, 2019). Adam Smith (1973) (as cited in Brewer, 1998) defines luxury as an opposition to necessity. However, still according to Smith (1973), the very notion of necessity is subjective as one can get used to the superfluous and make it a necessity. Brewer's (1998) conceptual analysis of the notion of luxury shows that it intertwines and lies at the crossroads of desire and need. Thus, the definition of the notion of luxury is multifaceted and consistently elusive and each theory has its own version of the definition.

Here, the study focuses on the communication of a luxury goods, and there is a wide range of theories exploring the complex notion of sustainable luxury (Dekhili & Achabou, 2016; Kapferer & Michaut, 2015; Wong & Dhanesh, 2017). Existing literature highlights the tensions, as well as the opportunities of such a relationship, although most of previous

studies have shown that luxury and sustainability are contradictory and have conflicting values (Kapferer & Michaut, 2015; Wong & Dhanesh, 2017). According to Dekhili & Achabou (2016), brands may even lose their desirability when associated with sustainable development, as it can be perceived as a provocation.

The definition of sustainable luxury and its lack of clarity is particularly problematic (Dean, 2018), since the contradiction also lies in the definitions of luxury and sustainability separately, which varies considerably (De Barnier, Rodina & Valette-Florence, 2006). The exploration of the semantic fields specific to the two notions of luxury and sustainability is, therefore, a rich source of information on their supposedly antagonistic values.

A lexical analysis of the discourse of luxury and sustainable development is very revealing, and draws two almost antagonistic universes: luxury, as the etymology of the word highlight, corresponds to a dislocation (*luxation* in latin), a deviation from normality (Kapferer, 2019). The vocabulary of luxury belongs to the register of excess, of dream, of the extraordinary and for the benefit of a privileged minority. On the contrary, sustainable development is linked to terms such as "reuse", "restrict", "take care", "share", "exchange", "sort", for the benefit of the wider community (Kapferer, 2019). This contradiction is perceived differently depending on how people define luxury. For example, 70.2% of those who define luxury as what is expensive and 68.4% of those who define it as what is rare feel this contradiction. On the other hand, it is those who see luxury as an exceptional level of quality who perceive this contradiction the least (48.2%) (Kapferer & Michaut, 2015).

2.3.2. Luxury and Generation Z: The 9C theory

Generation Z represent today 31% of the world's population (almost 50% in certain regions of Africa) and it spends just under 60 billion euros per year in France, according to the World Bank public database. Its spending goes mainly on technological goods and clothing (Briones & André, 2020). The *shock* is a concept used by Briones & André (2020) to qualify the upheavals induced by Generation Z on luxury and fashion. Because of their economic power, and their singularity, they are a force for immediate change in the marketing field. These changes have been classified by Briones & André (2020) in what they

call "The 9 shocks" (p.11), which's main feature is the mistrust of the fake in marketing practices. According to Piers Fawkes, founder and CEO of PSFK, a company that follow and report trends, "Generation Z have made traditional marketing based on demographic segmentation obsolete, as they are increasingly likely to connect around a common goal or interest" (para. 5). The 9 shocks are the following: the archipelago shock, the purchase-price shock, the business shock, the visual shock, the emotional shock, the stimulation shock, the influence shock, the indignation shock and the stereotype shock (Briones & André, 2020).

The archipelago shock is used to describe the fact that the Z generation has inscribed the principle of diversity at the heart of its DNA. This generation cannot obviously be stigmatized and defined as a whole, but it is rather an archipelago made up of a multitude of variations.

To get an accurate picture of Generation Z, two forces that can be contradictory must be combined: a certain conformism in values (linked to the fact of using social networks every day), but also a very strong desire for singularity. These values evolve very quickly. The purchase-price shock, which raises the consumer to the rank of scholar. The level of general culture related to fashion, luxury and beauty is increasing considerably among this segment of the population. Indeed, the study *The New Luxury: Defining the aspirational in the age of hype* by Highsnobiety, also speaks of this erudite consumer, saying that the future of luxury lies less in what one wears, than in what one knows about luxury. This is, what they call, the democratization of luxury, which must combine with uniqueness (linked to the rarity of luxury), with inclusiveness. The use of the discourse on luxury products is, therefore, today changing.

Then, the business shock is a concept used to say that Generation Z is realistic and ambitious. He talks about "teenpreneurs", who are young entrepreneurs that are not afraid to propose business plans to investors.

The fifth shock is called the visual shock, because Generation Z grew up under the prism of Instagram. This would have profoundly transformed their way of seeing things, as they are used to an aestheticism and compulsive consumption of image. This makes them both attracted to brands and demanding.

The emotional shock is particularly interesting, since it echoes emotional branding. This generation would have a very strong emotional component and would be less sensitive to the rational discourse of luxury, such as heritage and traditional know-how, compared to a discourse with a high emotional density (Briones & André, 2020).

Then, the seventh shock is the stimulation shock, which promotes video as the most impactful way for brands to convey a message. The seventh, influence shock echoes the horde of influencers associated with luxury brands, and the obsessive relationship of Generation Z with truth.

The indignation shock (the eight one) specifies that the three main values attached to Generation Z are honesty at 81%, reliability at 72%, and commitment at 71% (Morning Consult, 2019). Indignation is social in nature but is not always reflected in the way people consume.

Finally, the ninth, stereotype shock, specifies that the generation hates all forms of stereotypes and wants to be inclusive in terms of social justice and freedom. The 9 C's matrix is a strategic management tool in marketing, in order to qualitatively assess a company's performance (Briones & André 2020).

To synthesize, presented authors have tried to understand the perceptions of Generation Z, although it is impossible to generalize. This study is interesting in the sense that it shows that these young people are in a state of disruption or create a "shock" that invalidates previously used marketing techniques. It is therefore interesting to explore the perception of this population, to try to see if they are also in a disruption with luxury communication campaigns, particularly in terms of CSR.

2.3.3. Luxury brands and Social Media Marketing (SMM)

It is important to review what the literature states about the relationship between social media and luxury fashion brands, as in this study, the Instagram communication of selected brands will be discussed with the interviewees.

Social media, that have profoundly changed the way in which we express ourselves in the societal debate, are platforms for two-way information exchange (Lee & Kim, 2016). The rhythm of the proliferation of messages is accelerating, along with their almost immediate response. In this era of rapidity and transparency, brands are less and less able to manage information about themselves, and therefore their reputation (Wolton, 2007). Therefore, it is clear that companies must incorporate social media into their communication strategies, in order to control their image as much as possible (Kim & Ko, 2010).

The fashion industry is well familiar with this mode of communication. In fact, it is said that luxury brands have been pioneers in the use of social media (Briones & André 2020). As a matter of fact, this communication tool is particularly relevant to the fashion world, since they have common attributes, such as style and self-image representation (Ananda, Hernández-García & Lamberti, 2015).

Studies, such as that of Kim & Ko (2010), have investigated the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on the perception of luxury brands, particularly in terms of aspects like intimacy, trust and purchase intention. They conclude that social media marketing strategies are the triggers for purchasing luxury products.

Similarly, Godey, Manthiou, Pederzoli, Rokka, Aiello, Donvito & Singh (2016) used a conceptual model based on Kim & Ko's (2012) analysis, which explains the effects of SMM by highlighting 5 dimensions (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and Word Of Mouth (WOM)). They conclude that brand equity improves consumer perception.

Of particular interest for this study is the section on trendiness, which is defined as the action of disseminating information about a product and a brand, which covers surveillance, knowledge, pre-purchase information and inspiration. Indeed, it is said that luxury consumers would be more likely to turn to social media for information, since for them they would be a more reliable source of information than the rest of promotional communications (ibid.). This is interesting in the context of analyzing consumer perceptions of the CSR commitments of luxury brands, which, as we saw earlier, involves a dilemma and a mistrust.

Looking at the relationship between social media and CSR communication is also of interest of this study. The issue has been studied academically in the field of legitimacy organization. In these studies (Golob, Elving, Nielsen, Thomsen, Schultz, Podnar & Colleoni, 2013), it is concluded that social media are seen as marketing tools that allow companies to share messages, and did not lead to alignment in dialogues (Golob, Elving, Nielsen, Thomsen, Schultz, Podnar & Colleoni, 2013).

Although it has been shown that media are a good mediator between information on sustainable development and citizens' attitudes, especially in terms of global warming (Luedecke & Boykoff, 2016), very few empirical researches on the use of social media in the CSR communication of luxury brands exist.

The assimilation of these concepts allows the researcher to shed light on the dimensions of perceptions that can be analyzed in this paper. Indeed, the perception of an advertising campaign depends in fact on different personal and value-related beliefs. Generating data of a qualitative nature proves to be crucial. Firstly, the section on emotional branding suggests focusing the analysis on the place of feelings in purchase motivation, which appears to be a key factor in building brand loyalty. This aspect of perception finds its continuity in the chapter on CSR, which discusses that when consumers support an environmental cause, the emotional bond with the brand goes from having to being, or in other words to personal fulfillment. Also, the chapter on luxury demonstrates that the definition of luxury can differ according to individual experience, socio-demographic profile and time factor. Getting respondents to share their personal experiences is important to explain their vision of luxury brands and the initiatives they undertake. Design research is also shaped by the presentation of the 9C theory, which seems to draw certain traits from an almost native digital generation. This also justifies the chapter on social media strategies and the trust relationship with brands. Overall, the majority of studies conducted are quantitative in nature, and there is a need for qualitative studies on the subject. This thesis contributes to expand the literature by exploring the perception of CSR communication of luxury brands.

3. Method

As discussed in previous chapters, emotional attachment to a brand is a factor in building consumer's loyalty, and it plays an important role in brand reputation and CSR communication, as it can positively influence a consumer's perception (Andersen, Nielsen & Høvring, 2017). However, these promotional actions are more complex for companies with whom core values are at odds, such as the luxury industry, which is under pressure to respect the environment, is taking CSR initiatives. The purpose of this study is to analyze how such initiatives are perceived by luxury consumers born between 1995 and 2001, through the communication that brands implement on social media. Therefore, in order to generate an understanding of this current state in terms of brand positioning perception, the most suitable approach for this study is the qualitative approach, and in particular in-depth interviews. This chapter contains a description of the research design conducted and justifies the methodological choices made to answer the research question. This chapter discusses the research design, the use of in-depth interviews, the materials used, the sampling and the data collection, the operationalization, the thematic analysis, and the validation and reliability of the thesis.

3.1. Research design

The qualitative approach is the most suitable for this study in particular as it allows for the collection of rich data on participants' attitudes, experiences, and beliefs. This enable to gather insights on a subject or phenomenon being researched, in a particular context (Nathan, Newman & Lancaster, 2018). This method makes it possible to investigate and reach conclusions, through the identification of patterns, on the construction of the reality that some luxury consumers make of the products. Indeed, as Boeije, (2010) pointed out, "individuals have an active role in the construction of social reality" (p.275). The research question is qualitative in nature, as it deals with the subjective notion of perception. Therefore, in attempting to answer it, it is important to learn as much as possible about what is important to the participants, so that we can again understand the context in which the answers are presented and derive variables from them.

It is deemed that the most relevant approach is that of interviews, which allow for the recovery of insights about the population under study and to consider the cultural context in which they reflect. Nathan, Newman and Lancaster (2018) stressed that qualitative interviews seek to “curate historically and culturally specific insights into how the subjective experience of a unique social world is viewed and how those perspectives come to be knowable in particular ways” (p.3). Thus, understanding their beliefs, knowledge and concern structure is key. Specifically, during qualitative interviews, participants are encouraged to describe their personal experiences, to argue their points of view through their experiences, and to justify the use of certain terms. Testimonials are a precious source for the researcher to extract thoughts and opinions (Nathan, Newman & Lancaster, 2018).

Once again, the research question deals with the perception of the CSR communication of luxury brands, and the qualitative method enables an understanding of behaviors, thoughts, meanings or experiences towards the situation. It is essential to understand the personal values and experiences of individuals, in order to analyze a phenomenon : "The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (p.13).

Also, the characteristic of qualitative research is to be flexible : "the research questions are studied through flexible methods enabling contact with the people involved to an extent that is necessary to grasp what is going on in the field" (Nathan, Newman & Lancaster, 2018, p.45). This is a very important asset for this research, since flexibility helps to create a fluency in communication and to deliver information more easily (Nathan, Newman & Lancaster, 2018). Finally, as Boeije, (2010) said: "the methods produce rich, descriptive data that needs to be interpreted through identification and coding of themes and categories leading to findings that can contribute to theoretical knowledge and practical use." (p.132).

3.2. In-depth interviews

This section discusses why in-depth interviews were used, and why it can be considered the best choice for this study. According to Maso (1987), an interview is “a form of conversation in which one person – the interviewer – restricts oneself to posing questions concerning behaviors, ideas, attitudes, and experiences regarding to social phenomena, to one or more other – the participants or interviewees – who mainly limit themselves to providing answers to those questions.”(p.203). The objective is to learn about social life, in order to understand and interpret thoroughly what people think, to explore patterns of thinking, and to generate meaningful data. It is clearly apparent that in order to explore the different opinions and views of the respondents, it is the conversation that needs to be favored (Boeije, 2010).

The method chosen, in-depth interviews, is a form of conversation, and is characterized by a balanced combination of structure and flexibility (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). For this research, it is relevant to adopt an interactive and active position, in order to capture the sensations and experiences of the interviewees. Thus, the questions were both content mapping questions, which allow an inventory of the context, and content mining questions, which allow to explore “the details in which lies within each dimension” (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). Content mining questions include probes and follow up questions, which will be detailed below in the operationalization section. The use of probes and follow-up questions in interviews is very valuable, as it allows the researcher to search for meaningful data. The advantage of the flexibility of the method is also the opportunity to ask respondents to elaborate on certain points that seem important to answer the research question.

The approach chosen is called semi-structured interviews. Several characteristics of this structure make it the appropriate design for this research. First of all, the semi-structured interviews are conducted in an open approach, in order to elicit the participant’s experiences (Nathan, Newman & Lancaster, 2018). Thus, the researcher keep a flexibility in questions, while addressing all important issues. The questions are not asked with the intention of creating precise answers, but rather to let the respondent express himself or herself in his or her own words (Boeije, 2010). Concurrently, the researcher uses a topic list, to ensure that

important concepts are addressed in the interview. Here, an interview guide was used (Appendix 1). The questions asked during the interview are divided into categories before being specific questions, since it is crucial to remain flexible and be ready to adapt the structure of the interview depending on the interviewee's reactions and behavior (Boeije, 2010). Indeed, semi structured interviews offer a degree of structure that allow the researcher to make some adjustments and decide to adapt the interview. As (Boeije, 2010) said, "the interviewer facilitates the process of remembering and articulating, and shows respect for what the interviewee has to say". In this sense, the researcher is a co-participant in the process (Nathan, Newman & Lancaster, 2018).

3.3. Material probe

Nine advertising campaigns (Appendix 2) are used as support in order to generate reactions and explore precisely the perception of the respondents. The advertising campaigns are shown in the middle of the interview, in order to be able to deepen what has been said previously. This material is selected in order to test whether the answers given in the first part of the interview are applicable in practice when the respondent is put in a media content receiver situation. Concrete examples are needed to stimulate the respondent because it can help to increase commitment. In addition, the use of photos and videos is an interesting approach for its interpretative dimension.

Indeed, people receive an image with their own sensitivity, since an image has a polysemy of meaning and interpretations (Barthes, 1964). The interpretation of images is linked to the way of perceiving and experiencing the world, through cultural and social institutions (ibid.). Thus, images and especially advertising material constitute a range of encoded messages that the respondent is asked to decode with the help of the researcher's questions during the interview. The combination of semi-structured interviews and material probes is well-suited to obtain information on the impressions of young luxury consumers on the CSR initiatives undertaken by the brands, and allow to gain insights such as personal values, feelings or experiences.

It seems relevant to select several brands in order to explore the notion of brand perception and to understand whether there may be a divergence in the perception of sustainable luxury depending on the image or emotional attachment to the brand (Kim & Sullivan, 2019).

Table 1 : Material probe information

	Brand / Group	Type of format	Publication date	Support
1	LVMH	Photo	18/07/2020	Instagram
2	LVMH	Photo	17/07/2020	Instagram
3	LVMH	Photo	17/07/2020	Instagram
4	Guerlain	Video	09/01/2020	Instagram
5	LOEWE	Video	10/01/2020	Instagram
6	LOEWE	Photo	20/05/2020	Instagram
7	Stella Mc Cartney	Photo	30/01/2020	Instagram
8	Stella Mc Cartney	Photo	27/01/2020	Instagram
9	Kering	Video	24/01/2017	Youtube

These nine campaigns are advertisements from luxury brands, highlighting their CSR commitments. These publications were selected on several criteria.

First, their date of publication. The advertisements had to be recent at the time the interviews were conducted, since this is a topic that deals with current events. It is therefore relevant to present contemporary campaigns. That is to say that the publications must date from the year 2020. However, one advertisement, that of Kering, is a little older. Indeed, to homogenize the types of formats, the researcher had to select an older video (2017), for lack of more recent content.

Then, the selected campaigns had to deal with CSR. These campaigns were selected following extensive research into the latest campaigns of many luxury brands. As we have seen in the theoretical chapter, the definition of luxury varies from one author to another and

cannot be defined precisely. Thus, the selection of luxury brands was based on brands recognized as selling luxury products and operating in the luxury industry.

For the campaign to be selected, it is necessary that a CSR initiative is clearly mentioned either in the caption of the post Instagram, or in the content proposed by the brand.

For the LVMH group, it is written in caption : "On the occasion of the release of the Group's Environmental Responsibility Report, LVMH and its Houses reaffirm their commitment to spearhead environmental excellence".

For the video posted by Guerlain on Instagram, the caption indicates : "In 2020, Guerlain is proud to launch our partnership with UNESCO. This 5-year program is designed to train new beekeepers, create beekeeping affiliates across the world and measure the benefits of the pollination in biosphere reserves".

For the LOEWE brand, it says: "The collection weaves in a variety of organic and recycled fabrics, acting as a laboratory for us to explore more sustainable practices. For every product sold, we will donate 15 euros to environmental causes".

For Stella Mc Cartney, the publication Instagram states: "At Stella, we try to ensure that our products are crafted with as little impact on the planet as possible".

For the video posted by Guerlain on Instagram, the caption is: "In 2020, Guerlain is proud to launch our partnership with UNESCO. This 5-year program is designed to train new beekeepers, create beekeeping affiliates across the world and measure the benefits of the pollination in biosphere reserves".

Finally, the video published on Youtube by the Kering group illustrates the commitments made by the brand for the next 5 years : "reducing our environmental impact, preserving raw materials, ensuring animal welfare, supporting our suppliers" etc.

3.4. Sampling and data collection

Four criteria are selected for sampling selection. The first two criteria are socio-demographic, the first being age and the second being place of residence. Participants must to be born between 1997 and 2012 to suit the target population under study. Respondents are selected on the basis of their age, since Generation Z represents 31% of the world's population according to the World Bank public database, and will soon account for 40% of the

luxury sector. Second, participants must be resident in France for at least two years, since the subject is limited to one country. By this criterion, the researcher ensures a geographical limitation and this allows the subject to be refocused on the specificity of french consumers.

Indeed, the participants must be luxury consumers. This criterion is chosen since it is estimated by the researcher that consumers of this category of products are obviously familiar with at least one brand or type of product, and would be more likely to have an interest in the topic, and to be able to discuss it for a minimum of 45 minutes. This criterion allows for quicker recruitment of participants since being a consumer allows the researcher to ensure insightful opinions. However, this criterion has limitations since it implies a bias in perception. As the sampling is composed solely of consumers, it may lack homogeneity, and non-consumers could also provide interesting information.

Finally, the last criterion is to be active on Instagram at least once a month. Here again, this criterion may be considered as implying a lack of diversity, since non-users of the platform may also provide answers that would be interesting to contrast. However, the advertisements are addressed to the users and it is therefore the perception of these receivers that it was considered relevant to analyze.

Initially, the method of recruitment was to approach people at the exit of the stores, and to propose them to participate to the interviews after having made sure that they met the 4 criteria. However, due to COVID-19, this method could not be carried out. Thus, to find respondents who met the criteria and agreed to participate, 30 Instagram DMs were sent to active profiles that interacted with content related to the luxury brands selected for the study. Four of them were interested in participating in the interviews. Therefore, to get in touch with more people, the snowball (or chain) sampling was used (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013). Each of the four participants was asked if he or she could recommend an acquaintance who fit the selection criteria. This nonprobability technique made it possible to recruit four additional participants. When using this method, the researcher must be aware of the risk of lack of diversity in the sample frame (ibid.). Thus, in order to reduce this risk to a minimum, respondents were asked not to recommend close friends or family members. Although this method has limitations, due to its subjective nature, it is valuable for "identifying and selecting the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources" (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016, p.2).

Thus, the body of interviewees is composed of 8 active Instagram users, all luxury consumers, born between 1997 and 2012, and resident in France. Full list of interviewees is available in the Appendix 3. Although it is important to note that the interviews carried out allowed to reach a saturation point, the last bias to be raised on this sampling is the number of respondents. As the interviews were conducted in a context of lockdown due to COVID-19 and then summer vacations, it was difficult for the researcher to reach the recommended number of participants, as few people agreed to make themselves available for a minimum of 45 minutes.

Also, as Ostrander (1995) has suggested, it's preferable for the interviews to take place in a public place, so as not to destabilize either party. Furthermore, as May (2011) said, the non-verbal data can also be interpreted as social cues help in understanding the answers. They are important when the interviewee is the subject (Opdenakker, 2006). However, due to COVID-19, some interviews had to be conducted via Skype. As a result, out of 8 interviews, 1 took place in a physical meeting, and the 7 others were conducted via Skype. Therefore, social cues could not easily be analyzed.

However, Skype also has the advantage of synchronous communication in time, since there is no time delay in answering, which permits more spontaneous answer. Indeed, the advantage of interviews is the convenience of synchronization (Opdenakker, 2006), Face to Face (FtF) interviews have "no significant time delay between question and answer; the interviewer and interviewee can directly react on what the other says or does" (p.37). The interviewee can therefore react immediately to the questions and the researcher can ask for more in-depth answers. Each face to face interview lasted between 43 minutes and 1 hour.

Conversations were conducted in French, and transcribed verbatim. A pilot interview was conducted, to ensure that the questions are sufficient to advance the research question. The guide has therefore been adapted according to the various remarks and conclusions that have been drawn.

For the data collection, the interviews were audio recorded, so that the discussions could be revisited thereafter. Once the interviews were completed, being able to listen to

them again was useful to clean the dataset, get rid of irrelevant data, and focus on the important information to identify the codes and themes that emerged from the data. The data collected resulted in a 98-page transcript. For ethical reasons, the names of the participants have been changed.

3.5. Operationalization

The interview guide (Appendix 1) is divided into 7 categories, each with three or four blocks of questions : demographics, luxury, emotional branding, the paradox of sustainable luxury, CSR communication, exploration of perception of the luxury brands communication about sustainability, and material probe stimulation. As illustrated in the table below, both explorative and theory driven approaches investigating these themes are applied.

Table 2 : Operationalization of the research question

Theme	Example of question	Concept exploration
Demographics and habits	What's your name? How old are you? What do you do? How often would you say that do you purchase a luxury clothing? Do you have a favorite brand? Why?	Loyalty
Luxury	Could you give me your definition of luxury? Which values/terms do you associate with it?	Exploratory
Emotional branding	When purchasing an item, what are the key aspects of the product or brand that influence your purchase the most? Why? About luxury, how does buying luxury products make you feel?	Self-realization Commitment
The paradox of sustainable luxury	Do you care/think about the environmental impact of a product when making a purchase? Why? Could you give an example? And when purchasing a luxury good?	Paradox

<p style="text-align: center;">CSR Communication</p>	<p>Are you familiar with any brand that aims to be sustainable (that incorporate environmentally responsible practices in their processes)? Give an example. Follow up – what they do? Are you responsive to brands that communicate about their ecological initiatives?</p>	<p>Loyalty Dilemma</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Perception exploration of the luxury brands communication about sustainability</p>	<p>Have you noticed any changes in the way luxury brands communicate about their products? If yes, explain. What do you think about the way luxury brands communicate about themselves and their products?</p>	<p>Exploratory Brand positioning</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Material probes</p>	<p>What is your first thought these campaigns after seeing it? Follow up and explore. What values/terms come to your mind when you think about these campaigns? Does these campaigns change the way you thought about those brands? How? Why?</p>	<p>Exploratory + keep an eye on all concepts</p>

This table shows how the operationalization was performed. Each theme explores the perception of the consumer population interviewed in a theoretically driven but also deductive way. For greater clarity, the following discussion explains why and how the themes have been structured in this format.

First of all, the demographics and habits section allows to establish a sociological framework and to start the interview by making the respondent think and talk about his or her consumption habits. Then, he or she is also asked to think broadly about a definition of luxury. This part helps to understand the consumer's social life and his or her degree of loyalty (Swimberghe, Astakhova & Wooldridge, 2014) related to emotional attachment. Then, the section called emotional branding is designed to generate responses on what drives the consumer to buy, and in particular to test how the concepts of self-realization (Youn-Kyung Kim & Pauline Sullivan, 2019) and commitment (Babiak & Trendafilova, 2011) are applicable. Then, the interview focuses on the subject of sustainable development. A methodology is applied to each introduction of topics of interest, which is to ask the respondent to give his or her own definition. It is then, starting from their own definition of luxury and sustainable

development, that they are asked how they perceive the analogy between the two terms, in a conceptual way. This part is exploratory but also a way to test the concept of paradox (Kapferer & Michaut, 2015). Next, the section on CSR communication is particularly important for understanding consumers' expectations and their perception of the relationship between business and ethics, particularly through the prism of the notion of dilemma developed by Andersen, Nielsen & Høvring (2017). Finally, the reflection work carried out with the participant during the previous sections leads to the exploratory part of brand positioning (Kotler & Lee, 2005). The participants are asked to give their opinion on how they perceive the media presence of luxury brands.

3.6. Thematic analysis

In order to analyze the data collected, the method used to explore Generation Z's perception of luxury brands' CSR initiatives is called thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is the "foundational method for qualitative analysis"(p.4). Boeije (2010) refers to this method as a theoretical sensitivity approach. It is, as its name indicates, an analysis that is grounded in theory (p.112). Strauss (1987) describes it as "sensitive to thinking about data in theoretical terms". The thematic method allows to code the data set keeping in mind the theoretical concepts. When reading his dataset, the researcher has to sensitize concepts, which helps to focus on the relevant parts. However, this method is open and flexible, and the researcher must pay attention to how the concepts can be used differently, and keep an eye out for new concepts that may emerge.

This method is designed to allow the researcher to code according to several phases. The purpose of thematic analysis is to convert the collected data into categories, which will allow patterns to be identified, and to classify them into several themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p.10) "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set."

The process of analyzing starts as early as the data collection, since as Braun and Clarke (2006) mention, to perform the thematic analysis, the researcher must constantly go back and forth on the data set during six phases. First of all, it is necessary to become familiar with the

data set, and do the transcription verbatim. Once the data set is well acquired, generating codes is the next phase. Here, the process of organizing the data set into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is done manually. The third phase then corresponds to the identification of themes. Thus, some codes go into themes, some become sub-themes, and some turn discarded. The next phase consisted in revisiting the themes. This phase is beneficial to realize that some themes do not have enough data to cover them. The final phase is the writing of the analysis, and the selection of data that would be relevant to support the themes.

The themes and patterns are identified in two ways. Deductive approach, in order to achieve an analyst driven approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As shown in the operationalization, sensitizing six concepts (Loyalty, Self-realization, Commitment, Paradox, Dilemma and Brand positioning) helps the researcher to focus on the important parts of the dataset, as it is impossible to keep all the data. This deductive approach is therefore based on these six different concepts in a flexible and open manner. Thus, the inductive process is also adopted, in order to depart from the researcher's preconceived opinions. Thus, following the first round of coding, more than 30 open codes were noted. These codes were grouped into 4 axial codes, then into two themes, in order to propose a clear analysis (see Appendix 4).

3.7. Validity and reliability

The validity and reliability of qualitative research are very important aspects of the research, proving the replicability of the results. As Silverman (2015) explains, a major criterion for ensuring the validity and the reliability of research is transparency. According to Kvale (2006), the validity "refers to the truth, the correctness, and the strength of a statement" (p.122), and reliability "pertains the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings" (p.122). In order to guarantee these two aspects, it was important to be as transparent as possible (Silverman, 2015). I was therefore transparent as to how the analysis of the data was carried out, describing precisely the steps of the analysis and the selected

approaches. Precisely, some of the concepts used to design the interview guide were taken from the theoretical part, and therefore grounded in literature.

One of the weaknesses of qualitative analysis, is that answers are given in a certain context, and respondents may respond in a way they would like to be perceived. However, what may have been helpful for the validity of the information collected is the fact that the respondents were anonymized. In this way, their responses could be delivered with more openness.

In addition, the consent form described at the beginning of the interview reassured the respondent that this study would be used for academic purposes only. The fact that the respondent did not give his/her full name, and that the answers would have no resonance in their lives, could have made respondents feel comfortable and allowed the research to be as valid as possible. In addition, for reliability, as discussed previously, all interviews were audio-recorded, and transcripts are transmitted along with this paper.

4. Result and analysis

This chapter presents the results and interpretations of how consumers responds to CSR communication initiatives. Through the analysis, two key themes have emerged from the data: the dilemma and the congruence.

4.1. The dilemma

The first term that emerged as a result of the analysis process, therefore, is that of dilemma. The dilemma is a concept that has been explained in the theoretical part. This concept, developed by Andersen, Nielsen & Høvring (2017), is related to CSR communication. The dilemma of CSR communication lies in the fact that today's population and consumers are increasingly being overwhelmed with messages about preserving the environment, and are thereby in a position in which they are constantly confronted with the clash between business and morality (Andersen, Nielsen & Høvring (2017). Regarding the present analysis, this dilemma includes two attitudes towards brands : skepticism, and conflict in values.

4.1.1. Skepticism

The data set analysis has revealed that the dilemma of CSR communication is a form of skepticism. Indeed, all the participants expressed a form of skepticism about the advertising campaigns shown. This translates into the fact that respondents are seeking transparency.

To quote participants, their skepticism was expressed in the form of "but we don't know what's behind it" (Interviewee 1), "it's pure communication" (Interviewee 7) and "I find it hypocritical" (Interviewee 2). All the participants received presented campaigns with a critical eye. By inquiring about the reactions and opinions of the people questioned, one can see that there was a real distrust of the fake. The consumers questioned were very critical of the advertising campaigns offered to them. They had doubts about advertisements made in favor of a house's commitment to a cause:

"It's about creating a spot that makes you want to, and that conveys the impression of eco-responsibility, when it's not. There are no concrete commitments, we don't have any information, it's really just bluster. It's all about image. For me it just shows that it's a brand that tries to be, to stay in the eco-responsible trend." (Interview 7).

"LVMH I didn't like it. They could have done better. Especially since I had a positive apriori. A text with a photo is too basic. It gives me the impression that LVMH does the job, but under pressure. They don't give their all." (Interview 6).

Furthermore, there is a clear dilemma between the fact that consumers would like to see more luxury brands commit to environmental causes, and the fact that when they do see them, they are very skeptical about the sincerity of the brands. It is therefore the self-promotion dilemma (Andersen, Nielsen & Høvring, 2017), which is a dissonance between the commitments made by the brands, and the way they communicate. Balmer, Fukukawa and Gray (2007), and Parguel, Benoît-Moreau and Larceneux (2011) stated that for communication to be effective, it must be congruent with corporate identity. However, in the findings presented, it can be interpreted that for the interviewees, CSR communication should focus on the product. As explained, they expect transparency and want to know concretely how the commitments made are translated into actions. Only in this way can the dissonance between the values of luxury and the values of sustainability be overcome. Indeed, they will be more inclined to adhere to the campaigns since they are particularly attached to the quality and durability of the products at the time of purchase.

They explain this by the fact that their generation is bombarded with discourse on the environment, and they know that brands are positioning themselves for causes that are good for their image. "In the video we can read things like reducing our environmental impact. That's the thing, our generation has been so drunk with these kinds of phrases, that it's a bit empty to just say, reducing our environmental impact". (Interview 2).

So, they all have an inquisitive eye, since what most of them appreciate is transparency in communication. Indeed, the majority of the participants (7/8) said they expect to read something concrete, to have figures or to know the actions implemented

concretely. “I have a bit of a skeptical reaction, which comes right away, and I think I need to see some concrete stuff made by this brand. If it's a brand that says "our bags are 10% recycled and 3% of our profits are re-distributed? It won't do anything for me. It won't change my image of the brand. There has to be a real communication in depth, with numbers, on the environmental impact. I would need really concrete and empirical indicators to change my opinion of a brand.” (Interview 3)

“Especially since luxury is expensive. So they have the means to produce in a way that respects the planet, so I really, concretely expect to know how the clothes they produce are made. For me it's more important than showing nature in a post Instagram, it's easy.” (Interview 3).

Therefore, in order for a brand advertising campaign to have a positive impact on them, they want to have access to technical information, or they want to see that brands enjoy institutional recognition, or a certified label. For example, one of the respondents noted that the fact that LVMH and Guerlain were associated with UNESCO reduced their level of skepticism. "When I see UNESCO, it adds credibility! »

From these interviews, it is clear that the interviewed participants expect concrete commitments from brands, translated into figures, reports, partnerships or labels, in order to adhere to the campaigns. Indeed, they are very attentive to the traceability of their products, the quality of a garment and the ecological impact of a garment when they make a purchase. It is the concept of price-purchase shock (Briones & André, 2020) explained in the theoretical part, which means that the perception of a brand is not only a question of aesthetics, but above driven by knowledge of the modes of production. In this way, the emotional attachment to the luxury brand image almost completely disappears. This is certainly why the respondents are asking for transparency in terms of environmental commitment. As we saw in the chapter on theoretical literature, consumers today are extremely volatile, since they are knowledgeable consumers. Therefore, they expect a great deal of transparency from brands in their communication. Indeed, they are also mostly committed to political

causes, and in particular ecology. They are therefore extremely demanding with regard to the ecological commitments of major luxury brands, as they scrutinize and analyze advertising campaigns in detail.

Some believe that the luxury industry is making commitments not because they are motivated by a real fight, but because the social responsibility of the brand is imposed on them. "I think you can understand, when a brand takes the opportunity to make a black rectangle to say "Black Lives Matters", I think we all really understood that it wasn't enough." (Interview 8).

During the interviews, in the part concerning their consumption habits, they say that they are very familiar with the brands they buy, and 6/8 indicate that they look at the labels indicating the origin and composition. This explains their skepticism, because they want transparency on the products they consume, and demand a real and sincere commitment from brands on environmental issues.

"If I don't have the information of, we produce fairly and "made in" on the product poster, I'm not going to go poking around and thinking that if they don't communicate about it, it doesn't smell good. So I'm really going to go for brands that show their commitment and say "our products are made here. So really committed brands." (Interview 3).

This echoes the concept of the 3 bottom line of "profit, people and planet" (PPP), which is used by companies to maintain a good relationship with their stakeholders (Smith, 2016). It is therefore interesting to see that Babiak & Trendafilova (2011) showed that indicators or the publication of reports could allow the expansion of the consumer base of companies, and that participants perceive sincerity when brands adopt a transparent positioning.

4.1.2. Paradox in values

For the majority of participants, the values of luxury and the values of sustainable development do not naturally go together. As a result, in the visuals and videos shown, they were not able to recognize the codes and values that they had assimilated to luxury. For instance, one participant said: “on the second video, the one where you can see an individual picking something up in the fields, it represents something so distant from their reality, that... this one doesn't convince me at all.” (Interview 2). Another explained that for her, luxury represents something unattainable and very aesthetic, whereas for her, sustainable development does not involve this aspect: “We have the unattainable on the one hand, and on the other hand, sustainability is down to earth, we are more in the concrete. Here, I don't see it in fact. And, therefore, not in their advertising either”. They are therefore in a state of incomprehension, in the sense that they do not find a relationship between the two terms at first sight.

“Well, I don't find it luxurious enough. In my eyes, it's very, well, it's very far from the identity of luxury for me. What I like to see in a luxury ad is the aesthetics of the ad, everything is beautiful, everything is... well, it's a nice setting, it tells a nice story. It's like a dream. Here, it's much more realistic” (Interview 4).

Indeed, most of the participants qualify luxury as something dreamlike, beautiful and luxurious. As a result, the 10 campaigns shown do not reflect their vision of luxury, from the point of view of the image they have of the luxury communication campaigns they knew before.

“I would like to know the detail of the production, more transparency, like which penny goes where! But I know it's a bit contrary to the DNA of luxury, which is to have this thing.” (Interview 2).

Here again, the participant contrasts the world of dreams with that of rationality.

“It's true that luxury, luxury brands need to sell products that are supposed to make people dream, and uh, I'm not sure that talking about sustainable development, ecology, social respect and responsibility really, really are an angle for dreaming, and for making people consume.” (Interview 2).

Indeed, seven out of eight participants opposed the two terms. For them, luxury represents something "superficial", "bling-bling", which appeals to "the appearance", or "the things that shine and that immediately will catch the eye". As for sustainable development, for them it is more about what appeals to "altruism" and "ethics". As a result, most of the participants were perplexed by the advertisements shown. "It's a bit contradictory with the fashion world, because for sustainability is about producing a lot less."

In addition, the media used was questioned. As interviewees said that they often look at the brands on Instagram, and that it often helps them choose clothing, their perception is also influenced by the type of media used to communicate the engagements. One of the participants explained that on social media, some brands were doing performative activism. "I have the impression that it's performative. I have the impression that it's performative-activism of social media." (Interview 8). For her, Instagram is not necessarily the place for this type of discourse. For her, Instagram is not necessarily the place for this type of discourse, since Instagram is a platform where aesthetics and beauty are most important. Kim & Ko (2010) have shown that Social Media Marketing can trigger the act of buying. This contrasts with the responses of the participants, who take a critical look at these strategies. Above all, these claims show that there is a conflict between sustainable development and the actual use of Instagram. Thus, for CSR communication, this contradicts the model of Godey, Manthiou, Pederzoli, Rokka, Aiello, Donvito and Singh (2016) which explains that Social Media Marketing Efforts create brand equity, i.e. brand awareness and brand image, which leads to consumer preference and loyalty.

4.2. The congruence

However, while participants were perplexed by the advertisements, it is interesting to note that not all were completely closed to the idea of bringing the two terms together. In this section, it is explained how the interviewed consumers perceived the communication campaigns promoting ecological initiatives, and how they made a positive sense of sustainable luxury.

4.2.1. Self-realization

When they feel concerned by environmental issues, they also want to recognize themselves in the values that the brands convey, since they see fashion as a mode of self-expression, which allows them to build their identity. As it was presented, the fashion industry produces goods with high symbolic value, which appeal to experience, emotion, and imagination (Johnson, Lennon & Rudd, 2014). An analysis of the language used and the experiences described to describe their reactions to the campaigns shows that in some cases, CSR communication can positively influence the perception of a brand. Especially when seeing the two LOEWE campaigns, the participants felt impacted because they recognized themselves in some of the references in the video clip. For instance: “It reminds me of my trip to Japan... I really like the landscapes and colors... I didn't know this brand at all, but it's a good surprise!” (Interview 8). One respondent highlighted the fact that she would be more inclined to learn about a brand, or even buy a product or clothing, when an advertising campaign appealed to her feelings and sentiments.

“I think it's the kind of stuff that, of course, it's about traveling, meeting people and so on. So at first it's pretty positive, but I know the actor well and I like him, and the video is quite beautiful, it's in Japan, a country that I would like to see, a priori, honestly, there's a good chance I'll go digging because it's an aesthetic that I like. As for the theme, I think it's a little bit like the myth of the little Westerner who meets people and oh! but honestly, the consumer in me wouldn't hold it against it and would go and look at what they do. (laughs)” (Interview 2).

The perception of these campaigns was influenced by the appeal of the senses, sensations and emotions.

“So for Kering, which I actually like, there's one thing that struck me, it's that they actually managed to make me think about the fact that, you know, there's a moment when they launch a scarf, and in fact I found this really nice (...) it's true that as soon as you go for a luxury brand, you're on a quality fabrics, that are really extremely pleasant... it almost makes me think about touch, and it's something that immediately appealed to me. Because I love that feeling, you know, really about silk, especially silk. And yes, immediately it calls for the sense, what I see immediately made me think... feel the touch.” (Interview 2).

There is also the fact that some felt that there was a shift in the way of conceiving the consumption of clothing, and that the Eye/Loewe collection emphasized a way of living, rather than the fact of possessing.

“LOEWE, I like what they convey, since they emphasize the experience and not just the sense of "having, possessing". Here, clothing becomes a tool for an experience. It makes you want to see more.”

Participants who say they have environmental concerns, also need to wear clothing that has been produced in a certain respect of environmental standards. It is also that, they say, that gives added value to the clothing they buy, that allows them to feel in adequacy with their values, and that is part of their identity. Their relationship with fashion is linked to self-confidence and can, sometimes, be even political. Thus, when a brand communicates on its commitments to sustainable development, it constitutes a real added value in their perception of the clothing.

“I really feel concerned about sustainability, and besides, I try to buy only brands that respect the environment.”

Some mentioned that what touched them was the fact that they felt included in the advertising, that they felt a sense of belonging and closeness.

“I would also say interaction, and proximity. Proximity because, you can feel that they are trying to communicate this proximity with us, and interaction. Because they almost want to integrate us into the video, and integration with the world around us. All the characters in all the different spots are integrated into the nature in which they are, and they are not there by chance either.”

It is relevant to interpret here that *experiential branding* described by Schmitt (2009) is applicable for CSR campaigns. When they feel concerned by environmental issues, they also want to recognize themselves in the values that the brands convey, since they see fashion as a mode of self-expression, which allows them to build their identity. As it was presented, the fashion industry produces goods with high symbolic value, which appeal to experience, emotion, and imagination (Johnson, Lennon & Rudd, 2014).

4.2.2. Congruence in values

Moreover, after having seen the campaigns and after having elaborated a reflection on sustainable luxury, some statements showed that luxury and sustainability are linked together in quality, and durability.

Indeed, when asked what sustainable luxury might mean to them, 7 out of 8 people were able to come up with a definition. It can be seen that there is still a ground for reconciliation between luxury and sustainable development. Indeed, when the question of the values associated with luxury and sustainable development was put to them separately, none of the terms used were the same. However, when the question on sustainable luxury was asked, reflections on what could bring the two universes closer together were carried out and elaborated. First of all, an important aspect that can lead to the conclusion that there may be congruence between the two terms is the fact that 6 out of 8 participants had positive reactions to some of the campaigns shown. Indeed, they had never thought about this correlation. They were all able to give me examples of ready-to-wear brands that have

developed sustainable collections and communicated about them, but never luxury. "I know some fast fashion brands that are doing sustainable, like H&M and their capsule collections, but I don't have any luxury brands in mind.". So, they already had a thought or an opinion about the impact of the fashion industry on the environment, but they had never thought about the notion of sustainable luxury.

For one of the participants, sustainable luxury is something that is taken for granted: "For me, it goes without saying. It shouldn't be opposed. So, I would say it's necessary. " (Interview 7). Indeed, there is an important aspect to emphasize, it is the fact that all the participants mentioned at least once during their interviews, that luxury is a quality garment. The word quality was found 57 times in all the interviews. It is from this aspect of their perception of luxury that sustainable luxury could be considered for them. When I asked them to elaborate on their perception of what sustainable luxury could be, based on the visuals and videos of the different brands and groups, they considered the fact that the quality offered by luxury clothing is part of a sustainability phenomenon. Indeed, the luxury consumers interviewed said that they buy luxury products also for their durability over time. "If I buy a Louis Vuitton bag, for example, I know that I will keep it for the rest of my life". Thus, quality and durability are also important aspects that motivate the purchase of a luxury garment.

4.2.3. Generation Z promotes the "new luxury" as a catalyst for change

For this last part, a new term has emerged, that of the new luxury. Indeed, the participants made a difference between what they call the old and the new luxury. The ten advertising campaigns shown, namely those of LVMH, Guerlain, LOEWE, Stella Mac Cartney and the Kering group, were perceived as renewing the traditional codes of luxury.

"For example this LOEWE campaign, I think it's great for a brand to break away from the classic codes of fashion and luxury, and make a video that appeals to nature, to the forest, since it's not something you see a lot of in the fashion world."

“I think that luxury is a notion that needs to be redefined, and it's good to know that they're renewing themselves. That it's not conservative, or very cold, in all these values, or at least their way of talking to the public, and changing the way they talk to the public and adapting.”

In what they imagine to be the future of the fashion industry, they find it important to show in the communication campaigns all the production processes of the garment, from the origin of the materials and fabrics, to the production sites. For example, Stella Mac Cartney's campaign was strongly criticized, even though it is a brand that has always been committed to the protection of the planet and animals. The campaign represents a model in the wild, and nothing else is explained. It is therefore interesting to see that the interviewed consumers do not naturally equate the aesthetics of luxury with that of nature, and that this creates a dilemma, even a paradox. But what they call “the new luxury” to qualify communication campaigns (5/8), is a brand that reinvent the codes, highlighting concrete actions, as well as the quality and durability of the product. Indeed, campaigns that offered a glimpse of the production process (Kering) or those that put forward a garment in what it was useful for (Loewe), were perceived much more positively than others, which were perceived as “greenwashing”.

“I think it's good that we put production forward, because it puts forward the moment when decisions are made, more than the models with their bags etc. Luxury is the big companies that produce the most, so it shows that they are really committed and that it's not just for the sake of looking good. It can improve the vision I had of brands. If I see a product that I like, I have a better chance of buying it if I know that they are committed to sustainable development.”

In addition, some emphasized the fact that they see the luxury industry as a catalyst for change and innovation, as they see luxury brands as a model for many ready-to-wear brands. This is why, at the end of the interviews, eight out of eight participants came to a

positive conclusion about the future of the luxury industry, "if they continued in this direction". One of the participants used the word "hope" to describe the Kering spot.

Also, six out of eight participants indicated that they would like to see more such campaigns. "I was not aware that all these brands were committed, for me it would be a factor to be put forward more. They don't communicate enough". What they liked in the campaigns is the pedagogical approach, they have to learn things and get concrete content. For them, it is a condition for luxury to make this kind of commitment. "it has allowed me to see that this is indeed a consideration that they have, and that I would be pleasantly surprised if I considered that in fact it really goes in that direction. After seeing the facts, I completely accept the campaign, but then I have to see." (Interview 3).

The findings about "new luxury" indicates that participants nevertheless accept two definitions of luxury, which they classify as old and new. The first one is the one that is in total opposition to sustainability, and the second one emphasizes quality and durability, which are also terms used to qualify sustainable development.

These results echo the 9 shocks theory, developed by Briones & André (2020). The concept of shocks is used to describe the fact that Generation Z stands in opposition to the discourse of pre-existing brands. The theory of the 9 shocks also highlights the fact that these groups seek to come together around a common goal and a common interest. This is illustrated by the fact that the participants speak of a generation that would be much more interested in ecology than the previous one. Thus, a sense of inclusiveness and belonging is crucial in this research. In addition, the best received campaigns were two videos, the LOEWE one and the Kering one. Participants had more to say about these campaigns and gave enthusiastic feedback.

Thus, as we have already noted, identity is a key factor in a consumer's emotional attachment and loyalty to a brand (Swimberghe, Astakhova & Wooldridge, 2014). In this case, in order for them to feel in line with a brand's identity, they want to be co-creators of meaning, and to feel included in the communication. It's no longer a question of dreams but rather of inclusiveness. It is this new conception that makes them positively influenced by the CSR initiatives undertaken by the brands. In this sense, we can see that the people

interviewed adopt a political approach to consumption, their relationship with fashion is linked to self-confidence, and can sometimes even be political.

5. Conclusion

In the present paper, the perception of Generation Z of the CSR advertising campaigns of luxury brands was analyzed, through the prism of the theory drawn from the existing literature on sustainable luxury and CSR communication. The research question focuses on exploring the perception of Generation Z, on the CSR campaigns of luxury brands. To answer this question, the qualitative method was selected. With the help of semi-structured interviews carried out on eight participants, several conclusions could be drawn. It appeared that the two key themes are those of the dilemma, and that of the congruence of values. The theories concerning the notion of paradox and dilemma proved to be conclusive in answering the research question. The deductive approach of the thematic analysis was suitable since the construction of an interpretation of the results in the existing literature showed that the paradox was perceived by Generation Z. However, the analysis revealed that the paradox was to be nuanced. Based on the analysis conducted, participants revealed that the self-promotion dilemma could be overcome when the brands focus their communication on the process of production of the product and provided technical information about their CSR commitments. Then, the participants gave their perception of luxury, through qualifiers that show that there can be a congruence between luxury and sustainable development. The participants' feelings about the CSR campaigns of luxury brands allowed them to reflect on a new vision of luxury and its values. Indeed, the sample of Generation Z interviewed felt concerned about sustainable development, and they were able to positively perceive these campaigns when they felt included or emotionally affected by the messages conveyed. Thus, it turns out that identity is a key element in the appreciation of the CSR campaigns of luxury brands.

Despite the advances and contribution of this research, it has some limitations. First of all, this research has limitations in the method used. The purpose of the in-depth interviews is to obtain the least biased data possible (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). However, during

interviews, the researcher's interventions may obstruct the interview process. In addition, the sampling method, snowball sampling, carries the risk that the sample frame may not be diverse enough. However, this risk was taken into account, as participants were asked not to recommend a family member or close friend. In addition, this risk was limited since snowball sampling was not the only method used. Another limitation of this research may be the social desirability bias. Participants may say that responsible brand engagement contributes to the daily act of buying, when in fact very few actually do so (Auger and Devinney 2007; Devinney et al. 2010). "Although (when asked directly) people say that CSR matters in their purchase decisions, the statistics reported in these aggregate marketplace polls mask the real nature of customer response to CSR initiatives." (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Then, as Golob, Elving, Nielsen, Thomsen, Schultz, Podnar, & Elving (2013) explain, considering CSR communication only from a functionalist point of view, meaning focusing on the company's CSR performance based on the perception of stakeholders, can be reductive. CSR communication is not only a question of seeing how the oriented use of information can influence the consumer, but of analyzing CSR communication from an organizational and constructivist point of view.

Future research should focus on the same population, but in a different geographical area so that results could be compared. A relevant angle would be to carry out a cross cultural study between the French market and the Chinese market, which today is the second largest market in terms of consumption. In addition, it would be interesting to conduct a quantitative research on the potential triggering of purchase, in order to concretely analyze whether the perceptions of CSR advertising campaigns of luxury brands can lead to the act of buying.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Consent form: I'm going to ask you some questions as part of my research paper on the luxury industry. Your name will be anonymized, and you can skip a question if you don't know how to answer it. Please try to answer as honestly as you can.

- Demographics and habits

1. What's your name? How old are you? What do you do? What do you study?
2. To what extent do you like fashion? What is your relationship to fashion and clothes?
3. Can you tell me about the way you buy your clothes? (Where, how often do you shop, for what occasions do you buy, what is your monthly clothing budget, how often would you say that do you purchase a luxury clothing?)

- Luxury

1. Could you give me your definition of luxury?
2. Which values/terms do you associate with it?
3. What is the symbolic you associate with luxury?

- Emotional branding

1. When purchasing an item, what are the key aspects of the product or brand that influence your purchase the most? Why?
2. Have your clothing consumption habits and tastes have changed over the past years? How?
3. What is it that makes you like a brand? Explore. When purchasing an item, what do you look at first?
4. About luxury, how does buying luxury products make you feel?

- The paradox of sustainable luxury

1. How do you understand what sustainability is? Which values/terms do you associate with it? Do you have environmental concerns? If yes, which one(s)? Are there any causes that are you committed to? If yes, what are they? Why do you think they are important? If no, why not?
2. How do you understand the term of sustainable luxury? When you think about sustainable luxury now - Which values/terms come to your mind?
3. Do you care/think about the environmental impact of a product when making a purchase? Why? Could you give an example? And when purchasing a luxury good?

- CSR communication

1. Are you familiar with any brand that aims to be sustainable (that incorporate environmentally responsible practices in their processes)? Give an example. Follow up – what they do?
2. Are you responsive to brands that communicate about their ecological initiatives?
3. Do you have a favorite brand that aims to be sustainable ? Why ?
4. Is there a communication campaign from a luxury brand that has caught your attention? If so, which one and why?

- **Exploration of perception of the luxury brands communication about sustainability**

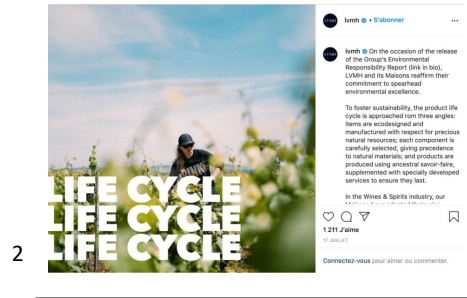
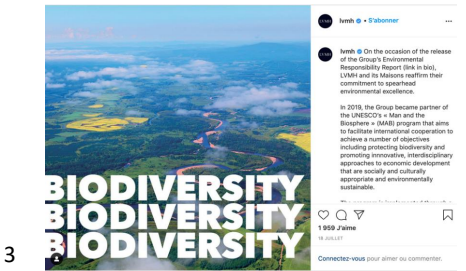
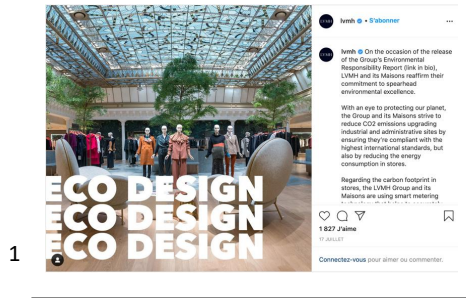
1. Are you familiar with any luxury brand that aims to be sustainable (that incorporate environmentally responsible practices in their processes)? Give an example. Follow up – what they do?
2. Do you have a favorite brand ? Why ?
3. What do you think about the way luxury brands communicate about themselves and their products? Have you noticed any changes in the way luxury brands communicate about their products? If yes, explain.
4. What are your primary sources of knowledge about luxury fashion brands and products? Do you follow any luxury fashion brands in social media? If yes, what are they?

- **Material probe**

1. What is your first thought these campaigns after seeing it? Follow up and explore. What values/terms come to your mind when you think about these campaigns?
2. Do you think luxury brands should be engaged in the programs like that? Why? Do you think they should be engaged in the programs like that even if it means more expensive products for you? Why?
3. Does these campaigns change the way you thought about those brands? How? Why? Do you think that knowing that you would be more willing to buy their products?

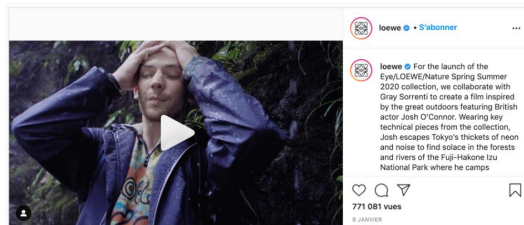
Appendix 2 : Material probe

LVMH



Guerlain

LOEWE



STELLA MC CARTNEY



stellamccartney • S'abonner ...

stellamccartney • Plant life will overcome almost any obstacle to renew and regenerate itself. This ability has inspired us at Stella from day one. Today, we launch our Summer 2020 campaign to celebrate our most sustainable collection yet and our continued journey towards circularity in fashion, that is restorative and regenerative by design.

Featuring @AmberValletta in organic cotton macramé and lace: the

5 627 J'aime

27 JANVIER

7



stellamccartney • S'abonner ...

stellamccartney • We have a symbiotic relationship with nature, at Stella we try to ensure that our products are crafted with as little impact on the planet as possible. Our Summer 2020 collection, our most sustainable yet, demonstrates the emotional connection between women and fashion.

Inspired by women who aren't afraid to make the world their own. Discover the new #StellaSummer20 campaign on Stella's World now.

#StellaMcCartney #StellasWorld

34 seen

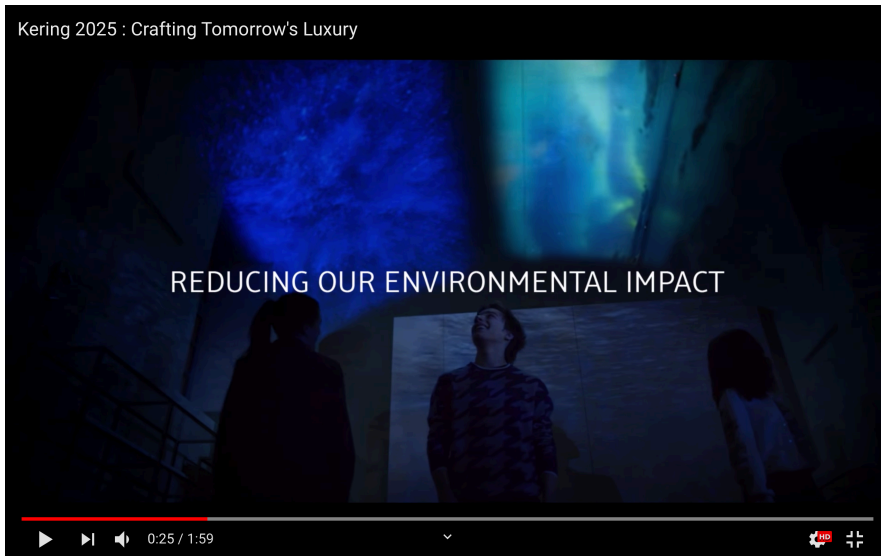
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30 JANVIER

8

KERING

Kering 2025 : Crafting Tomorrow's Luxury



9

APPENDIX 3 : Information about interviewees

	Name	Age	Gender	Occupation
Interviewee 1	Rachel	24	F	Just graduated
Interviewee 2	Sophie	20	F	Student in finance
Interviewee 3	Sacha	22	F	Student in audiovisual
Interviewee 4	Clemence	17	F	High school
Interviewee 5	Ella	19	M	Student in law
Interviewee 6	Philippine	20	F	Student in psychology
Interviewee 7	Claude	18	F	High school
Interviewee 8	Lucas	17	M	High school

APPENDIX 4 : Coding tree

Selective

The **dilemma**

Axial

- Paradox in values

- Skepticism

- **Self-realization**

Open

- superficial, bling bling, rare, inaccessible, collectivity, altruism, equity, equality inclusiveness, opposition **paradox**, etc.

- dilemma, trust, Greenwashing, etc.

The congruence

- **emotions**, memories **feelings**, story,

- New luxury
 - proximity with brand,
community, common
identity, **loyalty**, etc.
 - new practices,
durability,
commitment, etc.