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SHAPING MILLENNIALS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LUXURY BRANDS IN INTERNATIONAL CITIES: THE CASE OF ABU DHABI

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SHAPING MILLENNIALS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LUXURY BRANDS IN INTERNATIONAL CITIES: THE CASE OF ABU DHABI

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the impact of two intrinsic motives (perceived self-identity and perceived self- status) and two other extrinsic motives (celebrities and social media presence) on millennials' attitudes towards luxury brands; ultimately reflecting on their buying intention. Illustrated through a conceptual framework model, results reveal that intrinsic motives strongly influence millennials' attitudes while extrinsic motives slightly influence their attitudes towards luxury brands; both resulting in molding millennials' buying intention correspondingly.

Keywords

millennials, motives, attitude, influence, intrinsic, extrinsic, purchase intention

1. INTRODUCTION

Brands have been identified and conceptualized widely through significant research that measures and emphasizes their dimensions and symbolic uses (e.g., Aaker 1991; Keller 1991; Aaker 1997). When it comes to associating the term luxury to brands, luxury is broadly and differently defined; being subjected to changes and evolvments that have been altering such term for centuries (Brun & Castelli, 2013: 826; Bellaiche et al., 2010: 2). Luxury is believed to encompass physical and psychological values (Kim et al, 2009), however; we can't deny the fact that the luxury market has been experiencing a worldwide sturdy growth throughout the past decade. Amazingly, millennials have contributed largely to this growth being the largest population; 1.8 billion millennials on earth (World Economic Forum, 2021); with high spending power (Michael Rendell et al., 2011). Mediakix Team (2018) expected the global millennial spending power to grow to \$3.3 trillion placing millennials in a position, where they become an essential demographic that brands of all types seek to reach. By 2030, the collective annual income of Millennials worldwide is expected to exceed 4 trillion dollars (Khoros, 2020). Millennial consumers have developed different shopping styles than previous generations and more research is needed on millennial shopping styles to provide guidelines to marketers targeting this generation (Backwell and Mitchell, 2003). Young and Hinesly (2012) stress that research is needed on the motives that underlie millennials' behaviors. Surprisingly, no studies exist that show how luxury brands are perceived and influenced by millennials, where the neglect in this field of study would probably result from an underestimation of this generations' high population, large spending power, economic and social contribution, different shopping styles and buying behavior.

Millennials are characterized by being connected and open to change (Ressel, 2016) where their attitudes and intentions towards luxury brands could be influenced by various motives characterized by being intrinsic or extrinsic. Therefore, a thorough understanding of millennials' attitudes towards luxury brands and factors shaping such attitudes are of great demand to businesses and markets today.

Henceforth, this study aims to investigate the impact of two intrinsic motives (perceived self-identity and perceived self- status) and two other extrinsic motives (celebrities and social media presence) on millennials' attitudes towards luxury brands; ultimately reflecting on their buying intention. Illustrated through a conceptual framework model, results reveal that intrinsic motives strongly influence millennials' attitudes while extrinsic motives slightly influence their attitudes towards luxury brands; both resulting in molding millennials' buying intention correspondingly.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Millennials

Millennials are today's largest living generation reaching 1.8 billion around the world. They form 23% of the global population with Asia being home to a quarter of the global population of millennials (Khoros, 2020).

Michael Rendell et al. (2011) points out that millennials' spending power and their sheer size urge advertisers, producers, companies, and marketers to rethink and reconsider both their business and marketing models. They are referred to as Generation Y, Echo Boomers, Why Generation, Net Generation, Gen Wired, We Generation, First Globals, and many other namings. Although the naming is clear, however, the age group to which millennials belong isn't still definite! According to Pew Research Center (2017), millennials are people between the ages of 21 and 36, which are born between 1981-1996, whereas Norum (2003) states that millennials are those born from 1977 to 1987. This group is made up of several age cohorts ranging from 10 to 33 with a high purchasing power being \$733 billion (Philip Kotler and Gray Armstrong, 2012). On the other hand, Eastman and Liu (2012) believe that Generation Y or millennials are born between 1986 and 2005.

According to Meister & Willyerd (2010), millennials are viewed as the most socially conscious generation in the past fifty years. As per Norum (2003), they are considered the first high-tech generation. They are described as optimistic, diverse, social, open to change, independent, connected, and tech-savvy (Ressel, 2016). For them, everything seems possible,

and they can accustom themselves to a diverse universe (Dietz, 2003; Li, 2010). Older teens and young adults share characteristics, attitudes, and lifestyles among millennials. However, and when it comes to the spending motivation of this generation, not much is known! This generation which was not perceived as economically important a decade ago is considered a group of powerful consumers today (LaFelre, Edwards, & Lee, 2000). That's a reason why marketers must get more involved with millennials' experience to gain their respect in terms of buying the product (William and Page, 2010) and understand them more since millennials are perceived as sophisticated shoppers and consumption-oriented (Jackson, Stoel, and Brantley, 2011; Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001).

2.2 Brands and Luxury

If we were to ask what a brand is, answers would vary! It can be a name, a sign, a symbol, a term, or a design, and even a combination of them all (Kotler, 1991), however adding the term 'luxury' to brands makes them exclusive and distinct (Alleres, 1991; Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). Traditionally, luxury was defined as something that is out of the ordinary when it comes to daily living needs (Vickers & Renand 2003). This definition has changed and evolved and new depictions arouse.

As per Keller (2009), luxury brands have ten characteristics including premium image, pleasurable purchase, and consumption experience. However, Phau and Prendergast (2000) insist that luxury brands are to be defined around four characteristics which include exclusivity, increase brand awareness, and customers loyalty. While Kemp (1998) explains that the degree of luxury for a brand depends on two; the context and people questioned, Christodoulides et al (2009) believe that what to be considered luxury varies from one society to another society. Surprisingly, Danziger (2004) defines luxury goods as "a good 95 percent of which is accessible to only 5 percent of the population". And as per Husic and Cicic (2009), luxury is associated with quality and design, while Vigneron and Johnson (2004) consider luxury goods to be goods, whose consumption satisfies both functional and psychological needs. Others associated luxury with exclusivity and thought of it as being "designed for an exclusive market" (Nueno and Quelch, 1998).

The market for luxury brands has been growing noticeably since 1990 (Nueno & Quelch 1998; Vick ers & Renand 2003) and there isn't a single, definite meaning of luxury brands (Chevalier & Mazzalovo 2008). However, the traditional luxury market was considered the place where exclusive brands with the highest price tag are found, but this has been altered over the past few decades, where new luxury brands are considered today more affordable, attainable, and easier to find. Multiple factors have contributed to this change and massive growth, where it was encouraged through the rising demand for luxury from the luxury markets that are emerging such as India, besides the massive expansion of the luxury category according to Silverstein & Fiske (2003). The spending capacity of the middle class had also increased and so impacted this twist in the market of luxury through what is called the democratization of the luxury market (Dubois & Laurent 1995; Truong 2009).

Consequently, the luxury market isn't considered exclusive for the elite anymore (Yeoman & McMahan-Beattie 2006; Wiedmann et al. 2009) and through this phenomenon, part of what is considered luxury brand lost its rarity trait and by being widely owned, they have lost their luxury character (Dubois & Paternault 1995). Several attempts were done to define the luxury market of goods and services (see Phau & Prendergast 2000; Dubois & Czellar 2002; Catry 2003; Tynan et al. 2010) but such definitions stay difficult and vague to manage since the luxury concept isn't stable but is a subjective term (Kapferer 1998) that is constantly evolving and changing according to person, place or time (Michman & Mazze 2006; Yeoman & McMahan-Beattie 2006).

2.3 Attitude towards Brands and Luxury

As per Plato's theory, the human mind possesses different faculties including cognition or knowing emotion or feeling, and connotation or willingness (Scott, Osgood and Peterson 1979). The discussion of products' symbolic aspects and what they represent formed a hot topic during 1960 (Gardner and Levy 1955, Levy, 1959). When do products become symbols? How do these symbols act, and how does the mind perceive them? Samuel Novey

(2017) has pointed out the fact that external objects do have a psychological representation within our minds being a widely known concept in psychoanalysis. Through his metaphor "consciousness is like a bottomless lake", Pierce claimed that just a part of brand association enters the self-conscious and all the rest just sinks to the subconscious being associated as contiguity, resemblance, or interests or might get forgotten forever. Pierce wanted to indicate that these brand associations work on the subconscious level more (cf. CP 7.547; 7.553–4) and reveal how these percepts impact us as human beings. Moreover, many writers insisted on the vitality of mental representation theories to be adequate (Stephen Stich, 1992), claimed, and tested. Buying and experiencing the product would contribute to the percepts of brands and luxury, and this is emphasized through Taylor and Schneider (1989) who discussed that events too could relate to mental representations.

The definition of attitude varied among researchers and the concept itself evolved. McGuire (1985) defines attitudes as the responses locating 'objects of thought' on 'dimensions of judgment' (p. 239). Moreover, the attitude was defined as the tendency conveyed through an entity's evaluation in terms of favorability or dis-favorability (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). Likewise, this concept of the evaluation was supported by others emphasizing that evaluation is to be considered a core notion of attitude (Petty, Wegener, & Fabrigar, 1997, p. 611) and Schwarz and Bohner who stated that attitudes are perceived as the evaluations that are formed when needed (Schwarz, 2007, p. 639) beside Crano and Prislin (2006) who defined attitudes through combining multiple characteristics including evaluations, judgments in addition to cognitive and affective reactions (p. 347).

2.4 Theoretical Relevance

Self-determination theory (Figure 1) is a human motivation and personality theory that proposes that people can become self-determined when their needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy are met. The presence or absence of environmental conditions that allow for the satisfaction of these basic needs (in people's immediate situations and developmental histories) is a key predictor of whether or not people will exhibit vitality and mental health. This theory relates directly to the aim of our study and serves its goals where the ability of a person to manage themselves, make confident choices and think for themselves is referred to as self-determination (Deci, 1971). Through the influence of their intrinsic motives which findings revealed to have a strong influence on millennials' attitude towards luxury brands, self-determination enables millennials to make confident choices when it comes to liking or disliking a certain brand then intending to buy it or not.

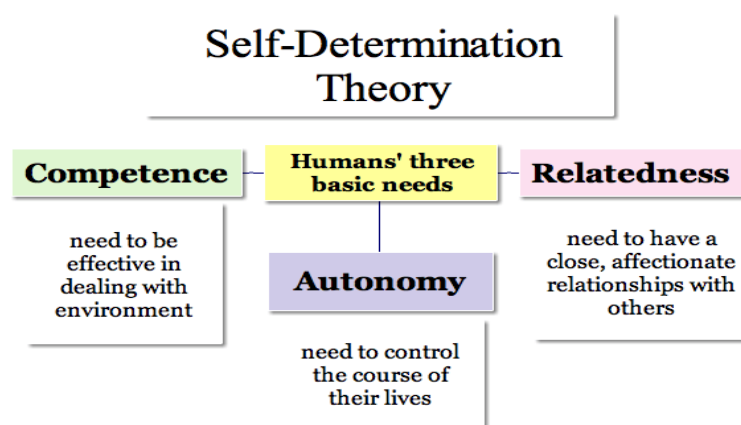


Fig.1: Self- Determination Theory

2.5 Proposed Framework Model

Based on our literature landscapes and adopted theory, (Figure 2) reveals our proposed framework model which hypothesizes a positive relationship between multiple variables. We assumed that the two intrinsic motives: being perceived self-identity and perceived self-status positively influence the attitudes of millennials

towards luxury brands. The millennials' generation chooses luxury brands with all that they include from dimensions, symbols, and representations as one of the means that would help them reflect themselves. However, the way the self is perceived in terms of identity and status play a significant role in shaping their attitudes towards these brands reaching to our first and second hypotheses; H1: Perceived self-identity influences millennials' attitudes towards Luxury Brands and H2: Perceived self-status influences millennials' attitude towards Luxury Brands.

Additionally, knowing that motives can't be limited within the psychology of a human being but extrinsic motives are also factors that do influence our attitudes, we assumed that celebrity endorsement of luxury brands and social media presence relate positively to these attitudes, and since this generation is said to be highly influenced by celebrities and social media networks, we realized that those two extrinsic motives can crucially manipulate and modify millennials' attitudes towards luxury brands and so a positive relationship is hypothesized among them in our third and fourth hypotheses H3: Celebrities' endorsement of luxury brands influences millennials' attitude towards Luxury Brands and H4: Social Media Presence influences millennials' attitude towards Luxury Brands. Consequently, once millennials' attitudes get shaped and influenced by such motives whether intrinsic or extrinsic, we hypothesized that this attitude including evaluations, judgments, and reactions will relate positively to millennials' purchase intention and affect it. Thus, our former hypotheses combined altogether lead us to our fifth assumption: H5: Millennials' attitude towards Luxury Brands influences their Purchase Intention.

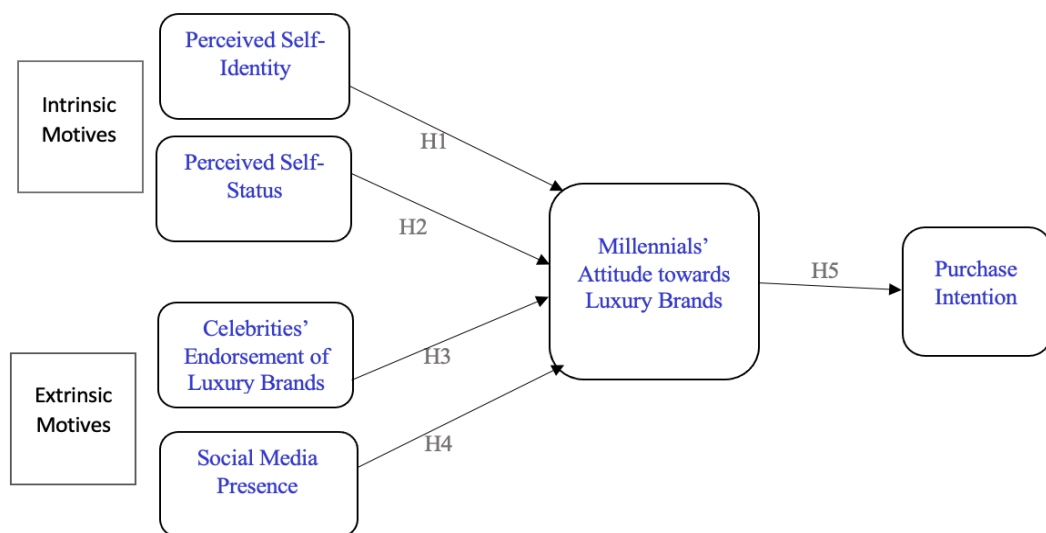


Fig.2: Proposed Framework Model

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Approach

This study follows the Qualitative Research Approach, which helps offer a perspective for engaging in attentive critique and analysis. It was chosen for its significance, flexibility, and the way it seeks the understanding of context-specific settings such as the real-world setting that strongly serves our aims of the study. Moreover, this approach allows the collection of different kinds of data and is not limited to words, but it expands to include attitudes, feelings, facial and vocal expressions in addition to other involved behaviors, and as Rubin (1996) declares "qualitative studies that capture the fullness of experience, the richness of living" (p. 14). As a primary source, a face-to-face survey (Appendix A) was conducted with 40 respondents, which lowered the possibility of unanswered questions that could have

affected the validity of our results. Replies from 35 surveys were the ones considered based on what serves our study's objectives. Moreover, literature from empirical and theoretical studies was utilized as a secondary source to aid the aim of this study.

3.2 Sampling

Based on Eastman and Liu's (2012) claim that Generation Y or millennials are born between 1986 and 2005, we chose our sampling frame to be limited to millennials born between 1986 and 2005. Respondents that fit such age group were chosen randomly. Our sample included respondents from diverse genders, cultures, and nationalities as demonstrated in (Figure 3) which reveals the participants' demographic information. Such information is key in our study, where they serve as a strong foundation for comparison and secondary data analysis (Bein, 2009). Diversity was key here to help us generalize from the sample to a whole generation, where the lack of diversity among research participants could result in serious implications for both ethics and research.

<i>Demographic Data</i>						
<i>Total Number of Participants</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Countries of Participants</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>40 Participants</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>(1986- 1992)</i>	<i>15 participants</i>	<i>UAE</i>	<i>8</i>
					<i>Lebanon</i>	<i>7</i>
					<i>Morocco</i>	<i>3</i>
			<i>(1993- 1999)</i>	<i>15 participants</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>3</i>
					<i>UK</i>	<i>3</i>
	<i>Males</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>(2000- 2005)</i>	<i>10 participants</i>	<i>Palestine</i>	<i>3</i>
					<i>USA</i>	<i>2</i>
					<i>India</i>	<i>4</i>
			<i>(1986- 1992)</i>	<i>15 participants</i>	<i>Irland</i>	<i>2</i>
					<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>3</i>
				<i>Syria</i>	<i>2</i>	

Fig.3: Demographic Data of Participants

3.3 Multicultural Location

Famous for being a multicultural and multinational city, Abu Dhabi was our choice to conduct this study. Being politically, legally, and economically stable, Abu Dhabi City ensured that no external pressure or force would shake our study's conveyance or findings. Surveys were conducted in two of Abu Dhabi's busiest malls "Yas Mall" and "Marina Mall" which are both considered great destinations for millennials who seek a great shopping experience. Both malls include a noticeable variety of luxury brands ranging between fast fashion and high-end brands. Both malls are also located in strategic areas for shoppers where "Yas Mall" serves as a midpoint for visitors from the Northern Emirates' (e.g., Sharjah, Dubai) and Southern Emirates (e.g., Al Ain, Abu Dhabi). IKEA, Ferrari World, Warner Brothers, Yas Water World, and different brand stores are considered the main attractors to the island where the mall is located.

On the other hand, "Marina Mall" is considered one of the first attractions in Abu Dhabi. Strategically located in the corniche area, this mall has been listed as a central destination for tourists for years. As shown in (Figure 4), survey preparation started in Jan. 2020, then data collection took place first in Yas Mall through three visits during Feb. 2020 and then in Abu Dhabi Marina Mall through two visits in Mar. 2020. Later, data from surveys were coded and analyzed manually throughout Apr. 2020 for results to be interpreted during May 2020. In total, this study took 5 months to be completed due to COVID 19 lockdown in Abu Dhabi starting Mar. 2020 what made it challenging to approach people during Feb. 2020 and Mar. 2020 for FTF surveys.

Phase	Duration	Location	Research Procedure
First	Jan. 2020	Abu Dhabi	Survey Preparation
Second	Feb. 2020	Yas Mall (Abu Dhabi)	Data Collection Face-to-Face Survey
Third	Mar. 2020	Marina Mall (Abu Dhabi)	Data Collection Face-to-Face Survey
Fourth	Apr.2020	Abu Dhabi	Manual Data Coding and Analysis
Fifth	May 2020	Abu Dhabi	Interpretation of Results
Total		5 Months' Period	

Fig.4: Data Collection Schedule

4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Intrinsic Motives Strongly Influence Millennials' Attitudes towards Luxury Brands.

4.1.1 Perceived Self- Identity

The ability to fulfill psychological needs is one of the many uses of possessions and this can happen through reinforcing and expressing the self-identity, differentiating oneself and connecting it to others, asserting individuality and creation of self-concept (e.g. Ball & Tasaki, 1992; Belk, 1988, Klein, Klein & Allen, 1995, Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Belk (1988) has emphasized considering possessions part of the self and the identity too. However, people don't all share the same self-representations towards objects; of which brands are considered one of; which leads to having different behaviors and attitudes towards such brands (Markus, 1983; Markus & Sentsis, 1982). So, what is the self? According to earlier studies, self was explored as a predictor of various human behavior including cognition, motivation, brand, and purchase intention (Grubb & Grathwohl; 1976, Marcus & Kitayama, 1991, Sirgy, Lee, Juhar & Tidwell, 2008; Tsai, 2006). Such studies about self were mostly found in the sociology and psychology fields, but the studies that connect the self with consumer behavior are recent and limited in number (Wong & Ahuvia, 1996). The self is made up of many traits (Linville, 1987) of which the schematic self-aspects are the most important among (Markus, 1977). Self-concept is set to be the way the self is perceived by a person and one of the various traits self-concept comprises is the self-perceptions, where Neisser (1993) claims that when thinking about ourselves, self-concept is what comes to mind. And as per Danziger (2004), people buy luxurious goods intending to make the brand part of the self and of the personal identity, where the large majority of our study's respondents chose "Perceived Self-Identity" to be the main influence that impacts their brands' choices and future intentions. Through their responses, they declared that such brands reveal their personality and reflect their identity:

Such brands give me self-pleasure... I buy them to use and enjoy. (Respondent 19)

I buy what presents me and the best way, and expose my personality (Respondent 20)

I like to enjoy wearing brands that reflect my identity. (Respondent 24)

Each one has their own identity and style. (Respondent 27)

The most important thing is to fit my personality. (Respondent 10)

Belk (1984) highlights this point again when stating that these possessions will surely contribute to the consumer's identity and be a reflection of it. And as we mentioned above, brands are capable of defining part of the self which is called self-brand identity through which consumers tend to display, express, and understand their selves using brands (Swaminathan, Page, & Gürhan-Canli, 2007) and by doing so, they turn those brands from just concrete objects to being a precious meaningful

part of the self. These brands will have symbolic meanings that will form part of the consumer's own identity too (Holt, 1995). When it comes to luxury brands in specific, such brands have power over the consumer's heart and mind, where Martina Bauer (2011) sheds the light on the support these luxury brands are capable of giving to customer identity, thus creating a very private affair among the two of them.

"It is intuitively appealing and generally accepted by our society that people use products and brands to create and represent desired self-images and to present these images to others or even to themselves." (Escalas, 2004). Escalas (2004) claims that consumers tend to value the symbolic and psychological benefits of a brand both privately and publicly since it cultivates and defines one's self-concept through helping these consumers build their self-identity and present then to others. She also adds that brands can express individuality, differentiate themselves, give self-esteem to symbolize personal accomplishments, and help through life changes. This forms a precious intimate relation between the customer and the brand so that brand associations get linked to the consumer's mental representation of the self (Krugman, 1965).

4.1.2 Perceived Self- Status

The symbols of status have reformed over time and among age groups, and when it comes to luxury brands and prestige, their consumption can symbolize status and signalize wealth. A brand becomes a status symbol once customers believe that it will elevate their status (Mazali and Rodrigues-Neto, 2013) and this status will motivate the consumer promoting the symbolism provided by such brands to become more significant than the brand's attributes themselves (O'Cass and Frost, 2002). Eastman et al (2007) claim that a greater value and significance is placed on status possessions by consumers, and he described these consumers as materialistic, where materialism reflects one's perspective towards the role which possessions play in his/her life (Richins 1994b, 522) highlighting here the fact that the society of which millennials has been raised and socialized in is increasingly materialistic (Kim and Jang, 2014). Status consumption is defined as gaining status or what is also known as social prestige through consuming and acquiring goods, which are to be perceived as high in status (O'Cass and Frost's, 2002, p. 68). Eastman et al. (1999, p. 43) described the process of status consumption as motivational, where consumers strive to raise their status through such consumption of goods; luxurious brands here; acting as status symbols to both the self and others.

As per Kapferer and Bastien (2009), luxurious products can be bought for the aim of displaying wealth and impressing others with the ability to pay high prices, which helps fulfill emotional factors combining desire with feelings and satisfaction. Dubois and Duquesne (1993) described this as "scoring high on symbolic interactionism". Martina Bauer S.v. (2011) adds that possessing such luxury items will form a contribution to status, symbolic value, and extension of self. According to Vigneron and Johnson (2004), the high price will always be perceived as a sign of luxury, so by buying and owning them, an added value is received regarding prestige, esteem, and status (Dijk, 2009). Moreover, obtaining this high social standing; called status; is obtained through distinction from others. This distinction, value, and aspiration will take place when luxury products are bought (Martina Bauer S.v., 2011). Therefore, our study supports the above where perceived self-statuses rank second right after perceived self-identity as a high intrinsic motive for millennials to seek luxury brands.

I care for well recognized brands (Respondent 13)

I depend on personal live experience of friends. (Respondent 18)

4.2 Extrinsic Motives Slightly Influence Millennials' Attitude towards Luxury Brands

4.2.1 Celebrities' Endorsement of Luxury Brands

As per Silverstein and Fiske (2003), luxury consumers seek goods that reflect a positive image and their current self and their future dream self. Possessing luxurious items endorsed by celebrities to help create an imaginative picture in the consumer's mind getting to the sense that they are related to such a powerful famous group of people (celebrities) in one way or another. It can also create the affections and feelings of being a celebrity whenever these items are worn, displayed, or shown by the consumer. The names, symbols, and conspicuous logos of these luxury brands' items give the consumer a feeling of an extended self and a standing above others through their belief in receiving part of the brand creator's aura (Kapferer's, 2012) whenever their items are possessed and displayed. Consumers have reported a higher intention to purchase and use a company's products once endorsed by celebrities (Michael A. Kamins, 1989). So, when it comes to millennials being optimistic, diverse, connected, and open to change (Ressel, 2016), this kind of change is what they seek; the change that adds to their existence, importance, status, and sense of belonging to impressive groups such as celebrities knowing deep inside that these "luxury products create aspiration and desire" (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999).

In his paper "Impact of Celebrity Brand Endorsements on Buying Behavior Towards Luxury Brands", Anand (2019) found through the study he did that consumers between the age bracket 18-29 are most responsive to the impact of celebrity endorsements since they are more easily impressionable than people above this age bracket. Thus, this generation being "marketers' latest nightmare" (Vân Nguyen, 2010), and a big challenge for marketers through their habits, beliefs, and viewpoints (Qader, 2013) need to be addressed in new, creative, and impressive ways that urge this generation to evaluate, judge and react to luxury brands and celebrities endorsing these luxury brands is one effective way. This challenge was highly reflected in our findings where only a few respondents considered Celebrities or social media to be a major influence that might control their interest in certain brands highlighting the fact that even if they like such brands once endorsed by celebrities and social media's great marketing campaigns; that doesn't mean that this would affect their attitude towards such brands or sway their buying intention.

4.2.2 Social Media Presence

The changing and increasing modes of communication; including Social Media Networks; revealed consumerism to millennials and exposed them to it more than their previous generations (Kim and Jang, 2014). It has also acculturated them into a materialistic and consumer culture (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003, p. 97). Called "digital natives" (Marc Prensky, 2001), millennials grew up around internet access, personal computers, mobile devices (Ressel, 2016) beside latest technology, and plentiful communication channels (Qader, 2013). This high exposure to technological innovations resulted in millennials' suspicion towards ads, commercials, and marketing campaigns. And since millennials are open to change, connected, and tech-savvy (Ressel, 2016), they tend to adopt technology and use social media heavily maintaining large online social media profiles. This resulted in giving millennials a "sense of immediacy and instant gratification" (Petroulas, Brown, and Sundin, 2010). Moreover, Wolburg & Pokrywczynski (2001) highlight the fact that millennials acquire a positive response towards brand participation on social media emphasizing Hewlett, Sherbin & Sumberg (2009) point that millennials social networks are "vital to them" and is used by them to feel accepted connect with others socially too (Dickey and Sullivan, 2007; Donnelly, 2008). As a result, millennials' attitudes including their evaluation, judgment, and reaction are slightly influenced by the Social Media Presence even though it is considered an essential part of millennials' everyday life.

Word of mouth (Respondent 9)

Social Media (Respondent 6)

4.3 Millennials' Attitude Shapes their Purchase Intention.

In their response to our question, "Do the above influences affect your purchase intention of such brands?", lights were shed again on perceived self-identity being millennials' main driver while affordability and needs were key to urging millennials' to buy such brands.

Buying for me totally depends on my likes and need! (Respondent 3)

I would like to buy things which make me look more confident with style (Respondent 32)

buy what is within my budget (Respondent 9)

Creative commercials are super powerful, where marketing makes it more desirable to buy from such brands (Respondent 21)

Early studies have revealed that self predicts different human behavior; three of which are cognition, motivation, and purchase intention (Grubb & Grathwohl; 1976, Marcus & Kitayama, 1991, Sirgy, Lee, Juhar & Tidwell, 2008; Tsai, 2006). Social psychologists revealed that mental stimulation can positively affect attitudes, behavioral intentions, and actual behavior (e.g., Gregory, Chialdini, and Carpenter 1982). Some argued if attitude and behavior do even relate in one way or another! As per Freud's psychoanalysis and the psychodynamic approach, there is an emphasis on the influence of the unconscious mind on behavior, where Freud speculated a world of inner psychic experience, which drives the individual toward motor response in an external real world.

Compared to previous generations, millennials are the cohort most likely to purchase prestigious goods according to Moore and Carpenter (2008), and they are more socially motivated consumers (Martin and Turley, 2004), of which shopping is considered an amusing hobby and a pleasurable experience for many of them (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003; Lehtonen & Maenpaa, 1997) and their wish to impress others through paying for such brands (Mason, 1981) makes them open to change, independent and social (Ressel, 2016) at the same time. This led to millennials developing different shopping styles (Backwell and Mitchell, 2003) than their ancestors, where part of them rely on parents' money to shop and this is certainly affecting their expenditure habits and behavior (Kim and Jang, 2014). Norum (2003) also claimed that differences in the consumer purchase patterns do exist based on generation, where millennials are considered a generation who have learned to make shopping decisions earlier (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003; Lehtonen & Maenpaa, 1997) and began to shop actively at a younger age than previous generations (Grotts and Johnson, 2013).

Therefore, based on the research that relates attitudes to behavior emphasizing judgments, evaluations, and reactions to be part of consumers' attitudes (Crano and Prislin 2006, p. 347), where millennials represent a big part of these consumers too. Moreover, millennials are open to change, independent, and social (Ressel, 2016) with high spending power (Martin & Turley, 2004) being the cohort most likely to purchase luxurious goods (Moore and Carpenter, 2008) will relate their attitudes to their purchase intentions.

4.4 Conceptual Framework Model

Considering the above findings, we propose the following conceptual framework model (Figure 5). This model demonstrates the strong influence that intrinsic motives have on millennials' attitudes towards luxury brands and reveals the slight influence of extrinsic motives have on their attitudes. Eventually, this model illustrates how both influences come to shape millennials' purchase intention.

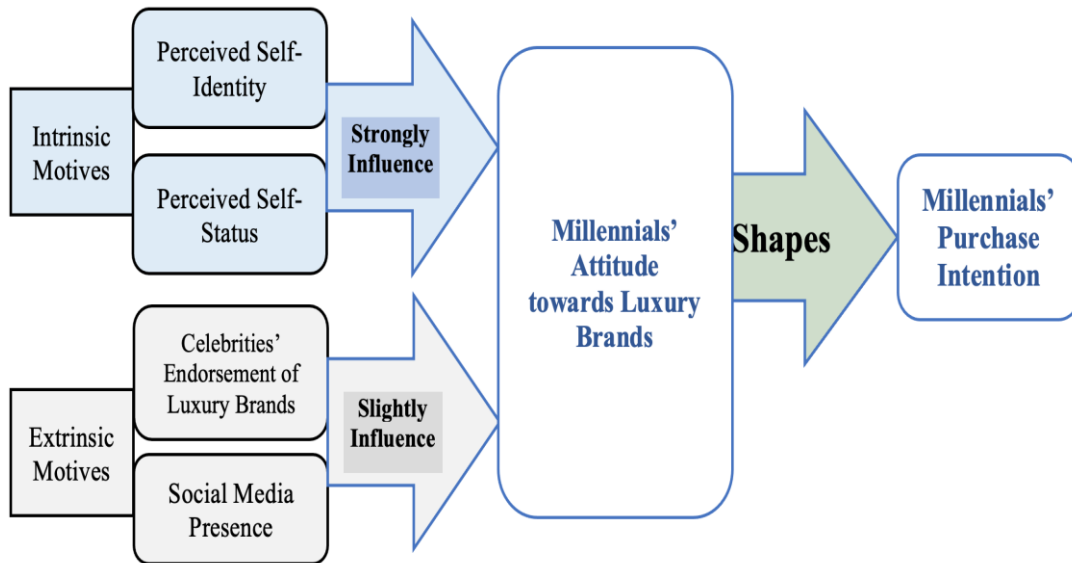


Fig.5: Conceptual Framework Model

4.5 Other Findings

4.5.1 Quality and Style Top the List of Luxury Brands' Preference

Luxury brands have been defined in a variety of ways. However, and since one of our main aims behind this paper is to understand the way luxury brands are perceived by millennials and the way they're shaped through intrinsic and extrinsic motives, we choose to define luxury brands as goods consumed to satisfy both functional and physiological needs (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). Moreover, since we aim to facilitate and reveal millennials attitudes and intentions towards luxury brands, we see that this typology supports our chosen definition of luxury brands and enhances it depending on our purpose in particular, which emphasize that luxury brands encompass physical and psychological values (Kim et al, 2009). To define the relationship between millennials attitudes and luxury brands, we decided to choose this definition of millennials that will serve better the topic of our paper and the aim behind it; Millennials are described as optimistic, diverse, social, open to change, independent, connected and tech-savvy (Ressel, 2016). Millennials are diverse and open to change, which means their perceptions, attitudes, and behavior would vary among markets and with time. They're independent too, which helps us understand why they have different shopping styles than previous generations and different judgments, evaluations, and reactions to luxury.

Our findings support the above, where fast fashion luxury brands that seemed affordable to this generation were the most named and sought by millennials. The following brands topped our respondents' lists; H&M; Zara; Bershka; and Guess. However, asking them "What makes these brands special to you?", responds highly emphasized quality, variety, and style:

Fashionable collection (Respondent 2)

Quality of products (Respondent 34)

The comfort and style (Respondent 4)

Special designs... fits my personality (Respondent 10)

Changing the vision of people about traditional function and aspects of these companies' fields (Respondent 11)

Reliable, long-lasting, unique (Respondent 12)

Having good quality and affordable prices (Respondent 15)

Their clothes are so trendy and fit my style (Respondent 16)

Luxury and diversity (Respondent 20)

Creative style and quality (Respondent 21)

Sporty, manly, good prices (Respondent 22)

I like customer service and quality (Respondent 26)

5. LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this paper was the lockdown that took place in the UAE due to COVID 19 starting Mar. 2020, what made it challenging to conduct FTF surveys in the malls and forced the limitation of the number of respondents to 40 respondents.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The implication of this research is of high significance for marketers and scholars who relate to the field. The implication of this research is of high significance for marketers and scholars who relate to the field of luxury brands, perceptions, and generations. This study will help marketers get a better insight into millennials; target them successfully especially since they represent the largest buying power; draw a pattern of their different shopping styles; predict their behavior and future reactions; forecast their purchase intentions in the near and far future; forecast ways to deal with the generations that follow (e.g. Generation Z); fill the gap among generations in the market through targeting one and all generations at the same time; cut on costs avoiding the trial and error techniques and wrong targeting; direct luxury market towards new paths to serve current and future market demands; open doors to future researches highlighting other intrinsic and extrinsic motives (i.e. variables) that are visible; hidden or could maybe rise in the future as mentioned earlier, where consumer behavior, shopping styles, buying intentions, judgments, evaluations, and reactions could evolve or get altered with time.

7. CONCLUSION

Given the unique nature of luxury goods, the size of the millennial cohort, the abundance of media, the high exposure to products, the lifestyle choices, the shopping patterns, and the democratization of luxury (Dubois & Laurent 1995; Truong 2009), this study aimed to investigate the underlying factors that influence millennials' attitudes and purchase intention for luxury brands. Findings state that millennials are primarily driven by intrinsic motives; being the reflection of the way they perceive their self-identity and self-status; to choose certain luxury brands among others and thus consider a future purchase, while extrinsic motives appear to have a slight impact on millennials' choices and decisions. This paper opens paths for future studies that could compare the impact of the same motives on other generations, Generation Z for instance. Future research could also aim to study new intrinsic and extrinsic motives and factors that would have evolved, transformed, or risen in the future. This paper proposes opportunities for repeating the same study in other multinational and multicultural cities worldwide such as London, Paris, or Toronto. A similar study adopting a quantitative research method can also help compare and analyze results.

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APPENDIX A

Survey

Dear Respondent,

This survey aims to study the impact of certain influences on millennials' purchase intention. We appreciate you spending a few minutes to fill it in. Your opinion matters! 😊

1. Gender

- A. *Male*
- B. *Female*

2. Year of Birth

- A. *1986- 1993*
- B. *1994- 1999*
- C. *2000-2005*

3. Name three brands that you are interested in.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

4. What reasons make you prefer the mentioned above brands?

5. What influences you 'the most' to favor such brands?

- A- *Seeking Self Identity (Personal)*
- B- *Self-Status (Social Recognition)*
- C- *Celebrities*
- D- *Social Media*

6. Does such influence impact your purchase intention?

A- Yes, why?

B- No, why not?