Luxury fashion brand customers' perceptions of mobile marketing: evidence of multiple communications and marketing channels

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Abstract

Previous studies have addressed some of the issues of customers' perceptions of mobile marketing, particularly the affordances of multiple communications and channels. Despite a proliferation of studies in this field, the theoretical exploration of luxury fashion customers' perceptions of multiple mobile communications and marketing channels remains at an exploratory stage. Drawing on the elaboration likelihood model and a social constructivist perspective, the current study conducted 37 in-depth interviews with Generation Z mobile luxury customers. We specifically examined how customers' emotionally and cognitively based perceptions emerge as they navigate multiple mobile marketing channels and message communications. Our model conceptualizes four elements of customers' perceptions of their mobile marketing journey that can drive mobile customer engagement and acquisition behavior. The integrative model opens up interesting avenues for further research on mobile marketing and luxury fashion consumers' perceptions of the effects of multiple communications and marketing channels.

Keywords*:* mobile marketing, luxury customers, Gen Z, mobile customers

1. Introduction

Businesses are integrating mobile marketing into the core of their omnichannel strategies (Zubcsek *et al*., 2017; Wang, 2020). This is an unsurprising result of the increase in mobile e-commerce. In the USA alone, "in 2021, 53.9% of all retail e-commerce is expected to be generated via m-commerce" (Coppola, 2020). The number of customers who consider mobile devices to be their primary purchasing platform is increasing; "mobile buyers account for 60.9 of the U.S. population" (Sabanoglu, 2020b). However, research into mobile marketing is at an exploratory stage. It began as an exploration of customers' perceptions of the construct of mobile marketing communications, such as message content and visuals (Gao *et al*., 2013; Okazaki *et al*., 2017; Banerjee *et al*., 2021). In this regard, Guido *et al*. (2016) explored the positioning of animated logos ("logos moving across the screens of mobile devices") (p. 6054) and proposed that "upward movements" enhance acceptance among customers more than "downward movements" (Guido *et al*., 2016, p. 6054). Feng *et al*. (2016) suggested that customers regard the content of mobile messages that aligns with their "interests or preferences" more favorably than other content (p. 338).

Other studies have advanced our understanding of how mobile marketing communications generate customer engagement and acquisition. With few exceptions (Rohm *et al*., 2012; Tong *et al*., 2020), engagement and acquisition are approached as two separate topics. Nasco and Bruner II (2008) explored mobile customer engagement as an outcome of different means of message presentation. These authors tested for the means that generated the highest levels of engagement. They proposed that "streaming video with audio" message content triggers customer engagement with advertisements (Nasco and Bruner II, 2008, p. 832). Recently, Wang (2020) explored customer engagement and acquisition as an outcome of mobile marketing channels, specifically,

branded apps. Wang (2020) suggested that branded apps "positively influence promotional responses"/purchasing (p. 9), implying that branded apps trigger customer acquisition. Wang's (2020) study assumed that this was evident, even among customers who "do not yet fully understand the brand's value proposition" (p. 5). Wang's (2020) study generated theoretical insight into pre-purchase engagement and customer acquisition, implying these are complementary rather than standalone outcomes of mobile marketing.

Although Wang's (2020) study recognizes the impact that branded apps have on the successful usage of other mobile marketing channels, namely mobile websites and email, the main focus of Wang's (2020) study was on a single mobile marketing channel (i.e., branded apps). This resonates with the recent stream of mobile marketing research that focuses on specific mobile marketing channels, namely mobile apps (McLean *et al*., 2018; McLean and Wilson, 2019; Rauschnabel *et al*., 2019; Wang, 2020), location-based apps/marketing (Kang *et al*., 2015; Banerjee *et al*., 2021), and mobile social networking (Bata *et al*., 2018). However, digital marketing indicates that contemporary customer journeys include multiple marketing channels, such as social media, email, and websites (Li *et al*., 2015; Zhang *et al*., 2017; Potdar *et al*., 2018; Majid *et al*., 2019; Patten *et al*., 2020a). Wang's (2020) work does not consider the role of mobile communications in customers' perceptions of marketing channels. This is despite the scholarly recognition that marketing communications mediate customers' evaluations of retailers' messaging (Gao *et al*., 2013; Cian *et al*., 2020). Therefore, Wang's (2020) study offers limited theoretical insights into the mobile marketing journey, specifically luxury customers' journey and Generation Z; this is understandable in view of the early stage of development of the field of study.

Understanding mobile marketing from a multichannel perspective is important for a broader understanding of the development of customers' engagement and customer acquisition during their navigation from one mobile channel to another channel. Furthermore, acknowledging the role of mobile communications in customers' perceptions of mobile marketing across channels is necessary to comprehend the alignment of mobile messages and mobile channels. To address these theoretical gaps, the present study asks the following research questions: *How do customers' perceptions of mobile communications develop throughout their mobile marketing journey? In what way does mobile multichannel marketing mediate customers' perceptions of mobile communications? And how does mobile marketing lead to customer engagement and acquisition?*

Therefore, building on Wang's (2020) work, the current study acknowledges mobile marketing as a function of multiple communications and channels; specifically, this study aims to investigate customers' perceptions across multiple communications and channels. The study draws on the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). ELM, a theory of persuasion introduced by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), is an attempt to "account for the differential persistence of communication-induced attitude change" (p. 125). It consists of two dimensions that drive attitude change: central and peripheral cues. A central cue implies that persuasion/attitude changes develop "from a person's careful and thoughtful consideration of the true merits of the information" (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, p. 125). A peripheral cue refers to "induced change without necessitating scrutiny of the true merits of the information presented" (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, p. 125). For the present study, this approach helps to illuminate changes in emotional and cognitive perceptions and attitudes among online customers upon exposure to a source (i.e., a mobile marketing communication and/or channel), from no action to engagement to purchasing. The assessment of

emotions and cognition as conjoint strands of customers' perceptual constructs might be significant for customers' attitudes toward mobile marketing.

Recent studies have recognized the need for a multi-approach to marketing, particularly for fashion e-commerce, which consists of diverse online customers (Patten *et al*., 2020a). This means that a single mobile marketing channel and/or mobile marketing communications approach could lead to missed engagement and acquisition. Engagement and acquisition are particularly important for luxury fashion. "Luxury purchases are not frequent, unlike fast-moving consumer goods, including what is called fast fashion" (Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau, 2020, p. 35). As such, the present study explores mobile marketing from the perspective of luxury fashion customers. It focuses specifically on the Gen Z cohort of customers. The study employs Rahilly's definition of Gen Z: customers born from 1996 onward, who are 24 years of age or less (Rahilly, 2020). Other definitions of Gen Z associate the cohort with a narrower age timeframe, increasing the potential to erroneously exclude Gen Z luxury fashion customers (e.g., Lamb *et al*., 2019). The perceptions of Gen Z luxury fashion customers are largely unexplored. The millennial age group remains the main focus of the literature on luxury customers (Kim, 2019; Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau, 2020; Ozuem *et al*., 2021c). Recently, Bakir *et al*. (2020) proposed that multiple "mechanisms" such as "self-worth" and "social approval and family support" drive Gen Z's purchasing of luxury products (p. 9). This reveals that Gen Z's decision making is more complex than previously thought. Further, Gen Z's interest in luxury products seems to be increasing, which situates them as an upcoming target group for luxury fashion. Recent findings by Adobe Advertising Cloud implied that Gen Z customers are about 25% more inclined than millennials to continue purchasing luxury products, regardless of the recent uncertainty caused by COVID-19 (TFL, 2020).

The paper is organized into eight sections. Section 2 summarizes the theoretical background: an overview of the gradual development of the mobile marketing literature is presented, which reveals gaps in the literature; the selection of ELM to address the gaps is explained; and, the application of a social constructivist approach to the study is justified. Section 3 discusses the methodology, and discloses the data collection perspective and research setting. The fourth section describes the thematic analysis of the data and presents the findings. The fifth section presents discussion of the emergent knowledge. Section 6 explains the theoretical contributions and managerial implications. Conclusions are summarized in Section 7; the limitations of the study are summarized and future research topics and directions that could further strengthen the mobile multichannel marketing literature are outlined in Section 8.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Mobile marketing: conceptual explorations of mobile marketing communications, engagement and acquisition, and mobile marketing channels

The literature on mobile marketing has grown quite voluminous, yet, analysis of customers' perceptions of mobile marketing, specifically in the luxury fashion industry, is under-developed and inconclusive. The existing research on mobile marketing spans three major themes: mobile marketing communications (Gkiouzepas and Hogg, 2011; Gao *et al*., 2013; Cian *et al*., 2020), customer engagement and acquisition (Zubcsek *et al*., 2017; Bata *et al*., 2018; Jang *et al*., 2018), and mobile marketing channels (Guido *et al*., 2016; McLean and Wilson, 2019; Ho and Chung, 2020). The first theme (mobile marketing communications) developed from the marketing literature, which acknowledged that both message content and visuals affect the success of mobile

marketing (An, 2007; Ha and Lennon, 2010; Xue, 2014; Gkiouzepas and Hogg, 2011; Cian *et al*., 2020). For example, Ketelaar *et al*. (2018) claimed that advertisements with content that does not hinder customers' interpretations of the product might be better accepted. Qiu and Zhao (2019) suggested that coupon content affects coupon redemption; that is, "framing coupon savings as a direct deduction or freebie" leads to more coupon redemption than "imposing a minimum consumption request" (p. 169). It was previously revealed that the location of the customer determines their response to coupons (Zubcsek *et al*., 2017). Recently, Banerjee *et al*. (2021) explored the effective usage of location-based marketing across two types of marketing messages, namely outbound marketing and inbound marketing. They associated outbound marketing with "location-aware notifications" sent out to customers when they were at a specific location (p. 401) and inbound marketing with "in-store features, which range from loyalty based mobile coupons" (p. 401). Their findings showed an increase in mobile sales when notifications rather than coupons were sent to customers who utilized "Apple tablets" and sales were higher when coupons rather than notifications were sent to "Apple phone users and Android tablet users" (Banerjee *et al*., 2021, p. 402). Earlier, a study by Gao *et al*. (2013) implied that the success of a marketing communication can be determined by how companies seek permission from customers to send out messages. This marketing approach seems to impact on "attitudes to mobile marketing" that favor the company (Gao *et al*., 2013, p. 2543).

The second theme in the mobile literature explored the potential that mobile marketing has for customer engagement and acquisition. However, scholars either considered customer engagement and customer acquisition in isolation or they used the two terms interchangeably (Zubcsek *et al*., 2017; Bata *et al*., 2018; Jang *et al*., 2018). For example, Pantano and Priporas (2016) examined

mobile customer acquisition and revealed "utilitarian value" ("expressed in terms of saving money") (p. 552) and "lifestyles" (p. 553) to be the key driving forces of customer purchasing. Goebert and Greenhalgh (2020) explored augmented reality (AR) as a form of customer engagement. They argued for AR inclusion as a "complementary technology" rather than one that presents the actual product (Goebert and Greenhalgh, 2020, p. 9).

The third theme of research on mobile marketing explored the conceptual grounds of mobile marketing channels (Guido *et al*., 2016; Ho and Chung, 2020). This was a response to the digital marketing literature that invites e-retailers to self-display and communicate with customers through multiple marketing means (Patten *et al*., 2020a). However, the research focused on specific marketing channels (Sung, 2021). In this context, a group of scholars provided a foundation based on apps as a marketing method to optimize e-retailing experiences (Ho and Chung, 2020). For example, Kang *et al*. (2015) suggested assembling location-based apps that generate affective involvement (i.e., the customers' "perceived emotional feelings") (p. 212). McLean *et al*. (2018) proposed that apps should meet the expectations of customers in relation to the utilitarian factors of technology: "ease of use, convenience and the ability to customize the experience" (p. 322). McLean and Wilson (2019) explored AR mobile apps; they suggested that a novel, interactive, and vivid AR experience supports the "ease of use" of an app, and it "may reduce the cognitive processing required by consumers while shopping" (p. 219). Gokgoz *et al*. (2021) invited companies to construct apps that elicit word of mouth as a mechanism for increasing usage rates. Recently, Wang (2020) explored the complementary support of multiple marketing channels, namely mobile branded apps, mobile websites, PC websites, and email promotions. Wang (2020) observed an increase in engagement with mobile websites and PC websites among

those who utilized mobile branded apps. The impact seemed to be "most obvious for low-tier customers" (p. 10) (i.e., customers with a light purchasing history). In addition, branded apps increased customer spending by "28.66%" (Wang, 2020, p. 8). Although the focus of Wang's (2020) study was not solely on mobile channels, it underscored that marketing is a compound discipline of multiple channels. Further, Wang's (2020) study revealed that customer engagement and acquisition are two separate, yet complementary outcomes of marketing channels in mobile retailing. This is in line with the marketing literature that indicates that customer engagement activities, such as online browsing, lead to purchasing (Ha and Lennon, 2010; Wu *et al.*, 2016). The latter departs from additional engagement actions, such as customer complaints (Azemi *et al.*, 2019). Wang (2020) utilized the context complementarity hypothesis, which outlines how customers' usage rate of existing channels changes once they begin to utilize new channels. Wang's (2020) study "suggests that when consumers use a new engagement platform (e.g., a branded app), if the context that shapes their engagement intent is different from that of older platforms (e.g., PC and mobile websites), their uses of the older platforms will not decrease but rather increase" (p. 2). However, Wang's (2020) study did not decipher the reasoning behind customers' attitudinal change across the channels.

Wang (2020) seems to have assumed that customers were used to and comfortable with old known platforms (e.g., PC and mobile websites). Existing literature presents that customers' limited knowledge mediates their skepticism toward retailers' new offerings (e.g., Azemi *et al.*, 2019). In this situation, a customer does not seem to critically evaluate the new offer (i.e., the central cue of the ELM), but, instead, interprets the new experience on an emotional basis (i.e., the peripheral cue of the ELM). Wang's (2000) study "suggest that releasing a well-designed branded app and

encouraging its utilization is an essential strategy' (p. 2). However, if a customer's lack of effort to understand a well-designed branded app persists, it is unclear whether an increase in the rate of the customer's usage of the new channel would occur. Previous research demonstrates the pluralistic and increased criticality of online customers' evaluative cues (Patten *et al.*, 2020a; Ozuem *et al*. 2021a). This emphasizes the importance for the retailer to undertake practices based on customer expectations for customer engagement and acquisition to occur. This invites understanding that goes beyond the surface of customers' interpretations. Therefore, understanding of the perceptual constructs of mobile customers and their attitudes toward mobile purchasing will remain limited unless their central and peripheral cues (on the grounds of ELM theory) are explored. This points to the importance of understanding customers' emotion-based and cognition-based perceptions of engagement and customer acquisition throughout their journey across marketing channels for the effective usage of mobile marketing.

2.2 ELM: conceptualizing luxury fashion customers' emotional and cognitive perception of mobile marketing

Online marketing scholars have utilized multiple theories at a multidisciplinary intersection to optimize understanding of retail customers' perceptions. For example, social impact theory was applied to describe the impact of the social influence of peers on customers' purchasing decisions (Appiah *et al.*, 2019), and stress coping theory was pivotal for the outlining of the stressful experience of a customer's exposure to mobile marketing activities (Chen *et al.*, 2019). The focus of these theories is mostly on either the cognitive or the emotional cues of the perceptual construct of customers. Hence, research has, to a great extent, disregarded the intersection of the two in customer decision making. Recently, Li *et al.*'s (2019) study seems to have addressed this. They

examined the impact of a company's apology and reputation on social media customer behavior while considering the online interactivity as a mediator. Li *et al*. (2019) utilized Petty and Cacioppo's ELM for the exploration. The ELM accounts for "relatively temporary," "susceptible," and "unpredictive" actions driven by peripheral cues, as well as actions rooted in "relatively enduring" and "resistant" central cues (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, p. 126). In the central route to persuasion, individuals closely analyze the message, whereas in the peripheral route to persuasion, individuals are persuaded by cues other than the strength of argument or idea (Li *et al*., 2019). Therefore, the central route seems related to an individual's cognition, and the peripheral route to an individual's emotions. Li *et al*. (2019) associated the company's apology with a central cue, whereas they associated the company's reputation with a peripheral cue. They implied that customers critically view the company's apologetic message, whereas they emotionally comprehend the reputation of the company. Li *et al*. (2019) conducted an online experiment that utilized a car recall scenario. Based on existing research, they associated apology with casual words "offering an account or apology" and insight words "that indicate sincerity on the part of the apology maker" (p. 811); they indicated reputation with a company's "high sales volume and high profits" and "listed in the top 2000 global companies published by Forbes" (p. 811). They associated online interactivity primarily with the ability of customers to interact online with the company. Their findings revealed that apologies had a greater impact on customer behavior when the company provided an opportunity for customers to interact; the reputation of the company had less of impact on customer behavior when the company provided an opportunity for the customer to interact (Li *et al*., 2019).

Past and contemporary literature on customers' perceptions reveal conflicting results, specifically among luxury fashion customers. Earlier research suggested that luxury fashion customers are driven mostly by emotional cues (Penz and Stöttinger, 2012; So *et al*., 2013; Choi *et al*., 2016; Kim *et al*., 2016). Recent studies suggest the existence of cognition-driven customers (e.g., Azemi *et al*., 2020a). Based on social impact theory and income level theory, Patten *et al*. (2020a) revealed four types of fashion customers: phlegmatic, connoisseur, smart shopper, and hedonist. Phlegmatic shoppers and connoisseurs have a greater income; phlegmatic shoppers are influenced more by social forces than connoisseurs are. Smart shoppers and hedonists have a lower income; the latter are influenced more by social forces than the former (Patten *et al*., 2020a). Patten *et al*. (2020a) proposed that connoisseurs are customers with "a clear idea of what they want" (p. 1343). Hedonists are presented as the opposite of connoisseurs, and they are described as able to make quick and "emotive" decisions (Patten *et al*., 2020a, p. 1343). Acknowledging luxury as a subset of the fashion industry (Merk and Michel, 2019; Azemi *et al*., 2020a), Patten *et al*.'s (2020a) study implies an increased urgency for the luxury fashion industry (which has a demanding customer pool) to utilize marketing communications across multiple channels. Patten *et al*. (2020a) focused on multiple marketing activities across traditional and digital means. They did not decipher luxury fashion customers' perceptions of mobile marketing. However, their study implies that the acquisition of customers begins with multiple engagement activities for first-time users, and follows with multiple engagement activities for re-acquisition to occur. Thus, multiple marketing touchpoints control a customer's propensity to disregard the company (Desmichel and Kocher, 2020). The next section discusses the conceptual landscape of social constructivism and luxury customers' perceptions of mobile marketing.

2.3 Social constructivism and luxury customers' perceptions of mobile marketing

Drawing on the ELM, multiple marketing touchpoints imply potential shifts in customers' emotional and cognitive perceptions and experiences as they navigate across the marketing touchpoints. This is in line with the social constructivists ideology that experiences are not isolated, instead, they are pluridimensional in nature; the experiences of a social actor evolve as the social actor interprets them (Azemi *et al.*, 2019; Naeem and Ozuem, 2021b). Therefore, the social constructivist approach and ELM theory can be applied to decipher the emotional and cognitive nature of luxury fashion customers' perceptions as they progress across multiple marketing channels and messages. Social constructivism considers the origin and idiosyncrasies associated with each of a customer's interpretations, and approaches interpretations as an outcome of an individual's emotions, cognizance, and outer circumstances (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The outer environment influences an individual's construct of experiences as their social world consists of multiple individuals and experiences that are personal yet share some similarities with other individuals' experiences (Lucas, 2014). It is crucial to apply a socially constructed approach to examining Gen Z customers' perceptions and attitudes because they, in comparison to other age cohorts, "avoid labels" and approach "consumption as a matter of ethical concern" (Francis and Hoefel, 2018). Therefore, their interpretations are distinct yet similar as they are influenced by others and the system and processes that foreground their experiences. Therefore, social constructivism enables understandings of customers that "go further than surface meanings or presumed meanings" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 525). This is unlike the existing research into mobile commerce that is mainly based on positivist ontologies that generate insights but ignore the holistic reality of customers' perceptions (Kang *et al.*, 2015; McLean and Wilson, 2019).

3. Methodology

An epistemological approach based on social constructivism, instead of contemporary interpretivist refinements, was selected. Social constructivism refines "complex" and "multidimensional phenomena" (Patten *et al*., 2020a, p. 1333). Such an approach invites participants to disclose their subjective selves (Ozuem *et al*., 2021c). This results in the "multiple constructed realities" that one experiences (Sobh and Perry, 2006, p. 1199). In the present study, this approach was useful for recognizing the perceptual shifts of customers across central/cognitive and peripheral/emotional cues upon being switched from one mobile marketing channel and/or communication message to another. Further, social constructivism views experiences as "entirely socially constructed" (Mortimer and Laurie, 2017, p. 516). This acknowledges the influence that surrounding social actors have on an individual's perceptions. The impact that others have on one's online presence is widely acknowledged. As such, social constructivism is not about "marginalizing the consumer as an object of research," which is the common approach in customer–company branding literature (Roper *et al*., 2013, p. 378), but is instead a recognized paradigm that "attaches supreme importance to the views of those who are affected" (Naeem and Ozuem, 2021a, p. 428). Further, social constructivism acknowledges the impact that the researcher has on participants' views. Social constructivism does not empower a researcher to direct the way participants view the world. Rather, participants are asked to recall their experiences from a holistic perspective, "revealing deeper meaning" around the researched phenomena (Helal *et al*., 2018, p. 983).

The present study utilized semi-structured in-depth interviews to collect data (Pandey and Chawla, 2016). The selection of in-depth interviews was primarily influenced by the early stage of

development of the field of mobile marketing communications and channels. It is common for researchers to choose interviews as their data collection method for exploratory studies of phenomena (Azemi *et al*., 2020b; Patten *et al*., 2020b; Naeem and Ozuem, 2021b). In contrast to other qualitative data collection methods, such as focus groups, in-depth interviews permit conceptualization in greater depth and breadth (Guest *et al*., 2017). In-depth interviews decipher "deep-rooted" and "detail relating" information (Stokes and Bergin, 2006, p. 34). This approach was vital in the present study to comprehend customers' emotional and cognitive fluctuations as they moved from one message/channel to another. In-depth interviews acknowledge the voice of every participant, unlike in focus groups where "group pressure" could lead to modified interpretations (Stokes and Bergin, 2006, p. 35), which would obstruct understanding of individuals' authentic thoughts and experiences. In such situations only partial understanding is reached (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Each participant's experience originates in a unique context, and only when equal attention is given to each participant can the researcher reach a higher order understanding of the researched phenomenon.

The interviews began with 13 pre-established interview questions (sample size, selection criteria, and sampling methods are described in the next paragraph), which triggered an initial conversation with participants. To control for diversity among participants, the first three questions elicited information about demographics (see Table I) (Odekerken-Schröder *et al*., 2010). The remaining questions were semi-structured, which allowed the researchers to ask new or rephrased questions. The validity of the new questions was secured on multiple grounds, including triangulation with existing literature (Akter *et al*., 2020). Hence, data collection took place after a "systematic literature review" by the researchers (Akter *et al*., 2020, p. 180). The researchers also applied

reflexivity and reciprocity in the interviews (McNair *et al*., 2008). The researcher "respond[ed] to direct personal questions from interviewees at times, realizing that reciprocity could enhance rapport" (McNair *et al*., 2008, p. 5). In the present study, reciprocity occurred when participants asked questions such as "*How do you define luxury product?*". The researchers' language reflected the language used by participants (McNair *et al*., 2008). Therefore, the language was "non-intrusive and non-directive," ensuring participants revealed authentic insights (von Wallpach *et al*., 2020, p. 493). Social constructivists have a working knowledge of, and experience with, the researched phenomena/setting (e.g., Patten *et al*., 2020a). This helps to achieve language reflexivity. The researchers collected data from customers of luxury US fashion brands. The selection of US brands for this study is supported by several arguments. For example, a recently published report by Statista revealed the USA to be the "leading personal luxury goods market worldwide in 2019" with a market value of €75 billion, which is larger than other countries' markets, including China (€30 billion), Japan (€24 billion), and Italy (€19 billion) (Sabanoglu, 2020a). Recently, in a McKinsey & Company podcast, Finneman, in the context of US retail, noted that Gen Z are "the core influencers today that have a really big impact on both millennials and Gen Xers in terms of what they buy" (Rahilly, 2020). The McKinsey & Company research project also found that "America's Gen Zers are accelerating a number of trends that millennials started, such as social-media engagement and the desire for authenticity" and "at the same time, they are establishing their own niche" (Bhargava *et al*., 2020). Hence, customers of US brands seem to dictate a rapid shift in luxury fashion business practices. As such, a sample of Gen Z luxury fashion customers of US brands was selected to facilitate an improved understanding of customers' perceptions of mobile marketing in the luxury fashion industry.

Data were collected from 37 Gen Z luxury fashion customers, which is a sample size confirmed to reach a data saturation point (Pantano and Priporas, 2016; Filieri *et al*., 2017; Athwal *et al*., 2019; Akter *et al*., 2020). Two criteria were utilized to select participants: (1) customers should have purchased at least one luxury fashion product from a US brand via a mobile; and, (2) the purchase should have occurred within a year prior to data collection. A snowballing technique was utilized to identify participants (Rodrìguez-Ardura and Meseguer-Artola, 2019; Akter *et al*., 2020). This resulted in the recruitment of 27 women and 10 men. Out of the sample of 37 participants, 22 declared their occupation, whereas 15 participants were unemployed (their purchasing of luxury products was financially supported by their family). This is unsurprising given the young age of Gen Z individuals and their early stage of self-development. As revealed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "youth employment was unusually low due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic"; however, the number of employed is increasing (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). Therefore, collecting data from Gen Z participants with different occupation statuses, sources of income, and range of earnings was important to expand understanding of the breadth and width of luxury customers' perceptions. Multiple email exchanges occurred before an interview took place (von Wallpach *et al*., 2020). The first email took the form of an interview invitation with a research information sheet attached. Other emails confirmed the interview timing and provided additional information on the research project upon request. Multiple pre-interview conversations with participants helped in terms of developing a rapport between the participants and the researchers. This made the participants more comfortable in the interview setting, which is recognized as a condition that supports data validity (Azemi *et al*., 2019). The interviews took place via Zoom. The data were collected between November 2020 and April 2021. Recent research from CBRE revealed that a "surge in online spending" occurs in Q4, and luxury products lead the

customers' lists of products bought (CBRE, 2020, p. 5). Hence, the Q4 period best contextualizes luxury experiences and sparks customers' key perceptual stimuli of luxury product purchasing. Von Wallpach *et al*. (2020) suggested that real "moments of luxury" help participants to reveal their perceptions about luxury that integrate the "present and past" and "meaning, feelings, and symbolism" (p. 493). Therefore, the data collection period was extended to April to cover luxury product deliveries ordered at the end of Q4 2020. This ensured that the entire customer purchasing experience was covered.

The 37 interviews with the participants were recorded. Two of the authors transcribed the interviews to the point where the data saturation point was reached. The authors reviewed each interview multiple times. The iterative process helped researchers to detect the data saturation point and acquaint themselves with the participants' language and deepen their understanding of the meaning conveyed while considering, and recording notes on the transcriptions, the participants' tone of voice and facial expressions. Facial expressions were recorded in situations when participants decided to turn the Zoom camera on during the interview. As implied in social constructivism studies, tone and gestures expand insight into the connotations of words (e.g., Naeem and Ozuem, 2021b).

The authors analyzed the data manually using a traditional thematic analysis approach (Ozuem *et al*., 2008; Athwal *et al*., 2019; Bandara *et al*., 2020; Namvar *et al*., 2021; Ozuem *et al*., 2021b). A thematic analysis method involves the systematic process of developing and eliciting themes (Glavas *et al*., 2020, p. 4). The themes that emerge are based on the most repeated and/or key concepts from the interviews pertinent to the studied phenomena. In the present study, the

development of themes followed a two-level process. First, the word patterns and concepts from the interviews were coded into sub-themes, which were then categorized into themes (e.g., Naeem and Ozuem, 2021a). This approach is utilized in a growing body of online customer behavior studies, which implies that sub-themes ensure inclusion of all the important data (e.g., Azemi *et al*., 2019). Given that this requires researchers' self-engagement in the data interpretation, the data in the present study were analyzed manually instead of using qualitative data analytic tools, such as NVivo, in line with the majority of social constructivist research (Azemi *et al*., 2020b; Ozuem *et al*., 2021a).

Table I: Participants' demographics

No.	Gender	Age	Occupation	Salary range
1	F	24	Assistant Manager (Hospitality)	$20K–$40K
2	F	24	Retail Sales Associate	$20K–$40K
3	F	22	Business Student	Not applicable[1]
4	F	22	Sales Consultant	$20K–$40K
5	F	20	Business Student	Not applicable[1]
6	F	24	Physical Therapy Student	Not applicable[1]
7	F	22	Graphic Design Intern	$20K–$40K
8	M	22	Content Specialist	$20K–$40K
9	F	22	Development Assistant	$20K–$40K
10	F	22	Contact Tracer	$40K–$60K

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[1] Students were unemployed and their purchasing of luxury products was financially supported by their family

11	M	21	Delivery Driver	<$20K
12	M	22	Business Graduate	Not applicable[1]
13	F	20	Cosmetologist	$20K–$40K
14	F	24	Medical Student	Not applicable[1]
15	M	24	Medical Assistant	<$20K
16	F	22	Hair Apprentice	<$20K
17	M	23	Computer Science Student	Not applicable[1]
18	F	23	Conservation Architect	<$20K
19	M	24	Finance MSc Student	Not applicable[1]
20	F	24	Medical Student	Not applicable[1]
21	F	23	Dentistry Student	Not applicable[1]
22	F	22	Customer Service Advisor	<$20K
23	F	21	Customer Service Advisor	<$20K
24	F	20	Intern Marketing	<$20K
25	F	25	Sales Manager	>$60K
26	F	18	Tennis Trainer	>$60K
27	M	21	Business Student	Not applicable[1]
28	F	22	Heritage Student	Not applicable[1]
29	M	24	Architect	<$20K
30	M	24	Heritage Student	Not applicable[1]
31	F	23	Environmental Governance Student	Not applicable[1]

32	F	18	Waitress	<$20K
33	F	24	Senior Legal Officer	<$20K
34	M	24	Architect	$40K–$60K
35	F	24	Retail Salesperson	<$20K
36	F	24	Architecture Student	Not applicable[1]
37	F	23	Business Student	Not applicable[1]

4. Data analysis and findings

Two of the authors iteratively went over the transcribed data and, guided by an abductive reasoning approach, they selected the key concepts/words that were fundamental to, and represented, the participants' responses. Therefore, the selected words were either the most repeated words in the interviews or "pertain to the specific situation" of a participant (Kovács and Spens, 2005, p. 138). This ensured that the researchers acknowledged each participant's experience of a luxury fashion product (Roper *et al*., 2013). The researchers' intuition guided the selection of the words (Kovács and Spens, 2005). Their intuition arose from their knowledge and experience of the phenomenon, which is in line with the constructivist epistemological approach. These words were then coded into groups according to semantic similarity; each group was then assigned a theme (Athwal *et al*., 2019). Following the approach of Guest *et al*. (2017), inter-coder agreement was utilized to check for and address potential variety among the codes. Each of the two authors identified two themes. This produced four themes: (1) *relatable,* (2) *attainable,* (3) *socially effectual*, and (4) *presence* (Table II). The first three themes reveal how customers' perceptions of mobile marketing communications are developed. The last theme aids conceptualization of customers' perceptions

of the multiple mobile marketing channels and the frequency of the exposure of a company's mobile marketing messages per channel. This reveals the mobile multichannel journey that leads to engagement and acquisition (Figure 1 presents this visually). To ensure validity, authors utilized a two-step procedure. First, they coded into sub-themes the concepts/words from the interviews, and then categorized them into themes (e.g., Naeem and Ozuem, 2021a). A gradual analysis of the data ensured that all important insights were acknowledged. Second, new data at both the individual and overall interview level were triangulated with the existing literature (Akter *et al.*, 2020). Three of the authors met to reflect on the coding of the themes to ensure that they were linked with the existing literature.

Table II: Themes: relatable, attainable, socially effectual, and presence

THEMES	Definition of the theme	Sub-themes	Participants' key words (concepts)
RELATABLE	A mobile marketing multichannel experience that is congenial to a customer's personality (i.e., sub-theme "self") and that has content and visuals that suit a customer's preference (i.e., sub-theme "appearance")	Self; Appearance	Trust, social status, healthiest product, personal change, familiar with, influencer, credible, benefits of the product, to feel more familiar, excitement, testimonial, parts that look good, reviews, picture, video, eye catching, someone who looks like me, actual people
ATTAINABLE	Mobile marketing messages that reveal accessibility in terms of the product price (sub-theme "affordable") and support (i.e., sub-theme "accessible")	Affordable; Accessible	Conscious buyer, sale, good deal, discount, free product/no additional cost, clearance, being able to have personal contact
SOCIALLY EFFECTUAL	Gen Z customers expect mobile marketing messages to reveal the positive authentic social impact of the company (i.e., sub-	Organizational level; Individual level	Shop ethically, support smaller businesses, social inequality, what the company stands

	theme "organizational level"), so as to align with Gen Z customers' intent to support the community (i.e., sub-theme "individual level")		for, better for environment, charity/donations, help the world
PRESENCE	A company's frequency of mobile marketing messages exposure per weekly timeframe (i.e., sub-theme "frequency"), and the channels utilized to target customers (i.e., sub-theme "medium")	Frequency; Medium	Contemplate three, four weeks, couple a week, frustrating, repetitive, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, email

4.1 Relatable

Customers explained that a *relatable* mobile marketing experience with a marketing message is an experience that is congenial to their personality (i.e., sub-theme "self"), and the content and visuals meet their preferences (i.e., sub-theme "appearance") (Gkiouzepas and Hogg, 2011; Xue, 2014; Guido *et al*., 2016). The findings revealed that Gen Z are an age category with a personal need for trust building. It appears that physical similarity between the communicator of the company's message and the receiver facilitates trust. For example, a 24-year-old woman stated:

actual people who are actually modeling their clothing; so, if I don't completely trust the company, if I looked at their ad and I see someone who especially looks like me, similar to me.

Further, Gen Z's trust seems to be enhanced by messages that appear familiar. In this context, a 22-year-old woman stated:

I think something that you are familiar with does help.

For Gen Z, luxury products seem to be more of a need than a want, instigated by social pressure. Gen Z seem to explain their purchasing as a way to meet their social status goal: to be self-achievers. Hence, they expect to see mobile marketing messages that transmit such a feeling. This is captured neatly in the following statement by a 21-year-old man:

I definitely would say it has a lot to do with social status … So, I feel like that creates … more of a need for a luxury product because it gives them that sense of "if this person can do it, I can do it as well."

Gen Z customers also associate luxury products with personal enhancement. For example, a 22-year-old woman stated:

I want to get myself the healthiest products ... It was just like a personal change I wanted to make in my own life you know.

The "self" sub-theme seems to be explained by the central/cognitive cues of ELM. The development of a customer's perception of a message seems to follow a predeveloped and well-thought through expectation of the company's message. For example, the following participant (a 22-year-old woman) reflected on her stance before being exposed to a company's message:

It was just like a personal change I wanted to make in my own life, you know, and then, from that personal choice, I went and did my own research.

Gen Z highlighted that videos or multiple pictures optimize the appearance of a message. For example, a 22-year-old woman stated:

just a pic is only so much, but if you show people a video, you show people getting excited over a product.

This implies that video can extend the depth of message communication. A 24-year-old woman explained the usage of multiple pictures:

multiple images you can swipe through within the ad itself and the images will have a description of the item and the price.

Single pictures seem to work only when the message is eye catching, both through the caption and visually. The former is captured in the following statement of a 22-year-old woman:

... a caption that tells [you] what the [product] can do for you specifically or what the benefits of it are.

This highlights the power that product benefits have for Gen Z customers. Their preference for visuals seems to be influenced by product presentation and the ad colors. The type of product, as summarized by a 22-year-old man, should determine the color choice for an ad:

I kind of like black and white color I guess, but I do not mind, like, vibrant colors, because I like the appeal of being different.

Complementing the luxury product with (for example) other fashion items to aid the customer's understanding of the product supports the visual content of the ad, as stated by a 22-year-old woman:

if it's like clothing or something, then, or just to sell a pair of pants, then someone wearing those pants that look good with a certain top or certain shoe, they make the whole idea look really good.

Regardless of the mode utilized to communicate the message, Gen Z seek out information on which they can base their decisions. Decisions are reached if the message transmits authenticity, which is indicated by the natural setting of the ad. The inclusion of influencers in the ad seems to support this, as shown by a 22-year-old woman's statement:

the ad that has an influencer, rather than one that is very staged or scripted.

However, the influencer in the ad should be genuine, as summarized in the following statement.

It just really depends on the type of the influencer. For me, if I see someone who is not really credible and they [only] *care about the money and not the product, I am not going to buy it* (22-year-old woman).

Gen Z's engagement with an ad leads to further data collection to find out more about the ad or the company. The following participants' statements illustrate the former and the latter, respectively:

I would say an ad that involves a person … I click on that person's profile and see if they are using the product a lot (22-year-old man);

I look up the reviews online (21-year-old man).

The "appearance" sub-theme appears to represent the peripheral/emotional cue of ELM. Although there is some emphasis on the functionality of the product, the appeal of the message appears to dominate the customers' language, as shown in the following participant's statement:

the color and effects [of the ad,] it just gives me more of a luxury vibe – they definitely promote the product great. You *need to see the product in use as well* (20-year-old woman).

This resonates with the ELM that suggests "an attractive source" overcomes "the true merits of the information" (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, p. 125); hence, the attractiveness of the message seems to be more important than how the functionality is presented.

4.2 Attainable

The theme *attainable* refers to mobile marketing messages that reveal accessibility in terms of product price (sub-theme "affordable") and support (i.e., sub-theme "accessible") (Huang *et al.,* 2019; Banerjee *et al*., 2021). Gen Z see themselves as price conscious. This is highlighted in the following statement from a 24-year-old woman:

I am typically a conscious buyer when it comes to pricing.

Here, price consciousness could be explained by apparent limited purchasing power. The demographics of the present study reveal that more than 70% of participants either have an annual salary of less than $20,000 or their purchasing of luxury products is financially supported by their family. Hence, Gen Z customers are moved by ads that highlight any monetary benefit, such as sales/discounts, clearance, and free products/shipping. This is highlighted by the following participants:

if a product is on sale ... I would purchase products that I feel have a good deal compared to [the] regular price (22-year-old man);

always discounts, free shipping, I know some companies take 10 percent off your first order and that intrigues me to buy the product (20-year-old woman).

Price consciousness triggers customers to cross-evaluate companies and seek products that are on clearance, as highlighted by the following participant:

some companies have the exact same shoes but one [has them] on clearance … I always cross-reference between companies to make sure that I get the best price for the set of items (21-year-old man).

Further, customers expect the company to be prepared to support their experience. They revealed that they prefer brand ambassadors as contact points, since they provide a personalized experience, as stated by the following 22-year-old woman:

all companies should use brand ambassadors to help push their products … being able to have personal contact with [them] could help me make a decision.

Customers who delay their purchases until there is a promotional sale tend to carefully consider their purchasing decisions, which situates their perceptional construct as a central cue of ELM. Further, customer expectations around support detach customers from any emotional presence.

4.3 Socially effectual

Socially effectual refers to Gen Z customers' expectation that mobile marketing messages will reveal the positive authentic social impact of the company (i.e., sub-theme "organizational level"), so as to align with their intention to support the community (i.e., sub-theme "individual level") (Heo and Muralidharan, 2019; Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau, 2020). Gen Z customers appear to make luxury fashion purchases that meet their ethical criteria, defined by their support for luxury fashion start-ups for example, as stated by the following participant:

when I shop luxury brands, I tend to shop ethically… I just don't want to support certain luxury brands… I know better about supporting a smaller luxury brand rather than a billion dollar corporation (22-year-old woman).

Further, Gen Z's engagement and purchasing seem to be stimulated if the company helps society, which is described in different forms, such as supporting charities and making donations, as highlighted in the following statement:

I would compare the companies… I would look for what they stand for. If there are, like, two amazing products but one gives a portion to some charity or they donated … I would choose that one over the other one (20-year-old woman).

Furthermore, Gen Z expects a company to highlight its approach to equality and a safe environment in its mobile ads, as illustrated by the following statements:

The best ad that I have seen is going … [to have] literally like … things that are … better for the environment (20-year-old woman);

for example, right now a lot of companies really show who is for and against racial inequality, I look into that (22-year-old woman).

While it might be considered that a customer's perception of a message in the context of its social impact might have been previously structured in their cognition, the customers' perceptions at both the organizational and the individual level seem to originate from their emotional cues (i.e., peripheral cues of ELM). This is underscored by the following participant, who aligns with socially effectual perception on the grounds of ethnicity:

I am Black and I do not find that many of the luxury brands cater to [me] (22-year-old woman).

4.4 Presence

Presence refers to the channels utilized to target the customer (i.e., sub-theme "medium") and the frequency of the exposure of a company's mobile marketing messages per weekly timeframe (i.e., sub-theme "frequency") across all mobile marketing channels (Azemi *et al*., 2020b; Wang, 2020). Gen Z seem to engage with companies several times before making a purchasing decision. The timeframe from the first interaction with an ad to the purchasing decision seems to take up to a month, as noted by a 23-year-old woman:

The first time ... I click on [the ad] ... after that, it takes a couple of weeks, usually for me it takes 3 to 4 weeks for me to make a final decision whether to buy the product or just let the product pass.

The effectiveness of mobile marketing messages seems to be modulated by the medium utilized to communicate the message. Instagram is seen as the core medium used by Gen Z luxury fashion customers, and serves as the medium of their first engagement (i.e., call for engagement messages), and last engagement (call for action messages) that leads to customer acquisition. This is confirmed by the following participant:

I will see [the ad] on Instagram ... from there I will click on it ... typically most [companies] convince me through Instagram (24-year-old woman).

Gen Z customers opt in for email communication on their first engagement instance. They communicate frustration if exposed to the same ads, as highlighted in the following participants' statements:

it is like a little bit frustrating just to be constantly bombarded by ads (22-year-old woman);

the ads get repetitive after a while – If you see an ad so many times you do not want to click on them anymore (21-year-old man).

This implies that a single product should be presented across multiple targeted ads. Gen Z seem to be happy with thrice weekly exposure, as stated in the following:
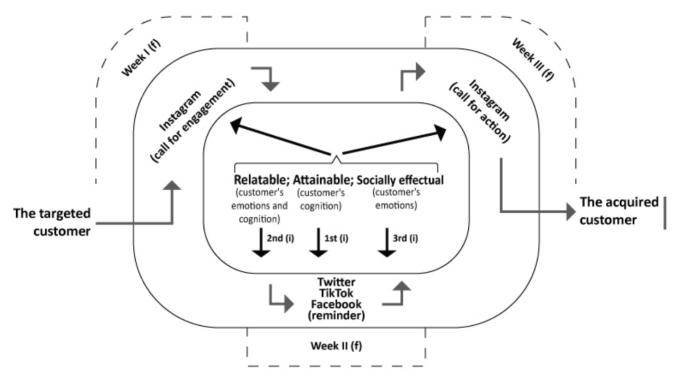
I feel like if I see the ad every day I will get tired of it. I think three times a week should be the max (22-year-old woman).

Furthermore, customers seem to consider ads on several mobile platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and Facebook, as stated by the following participant:

My generation I would say [prefers] Instagram…[followed] by Twitter, … TikTok, and the last Facebook (22-year-old woman).

On these platforms, ads seem to serve as a reminder to the customer, with the first ad indicating attainability, followed by an ad indicating relatability, and an ad having social effectuality.

Fig 1. The mobile marketing journey for engagement and acquisition of Gen Z luxury fashion customers

Abbreviations:
f – the frequency of the mobile marketing message weekly exposure
i – the ranking of customers' perceptions of reminding messages

5. Discussion

The four emergent themes reveal a mobile marketing journey that supports the engagement and acquisition of Gen Z luxury fashion customers (Fig. 1). The journey begins with a call for engagement, and concludes with a call for action. This is followed up with actual purchasing. The findings reveal three instances of mobile message reminders in between calls for engagement and

acquisition. Mobile marketing scholars note that mobile apps are a core mobile channel (McLean and Wilson, 2019; Wang, 2020). The emergent journey indicates that social media steers customer engagement. An established body of digital marketing research acknowledges that social media is a powerful tool for customer communication/engagement (Floreddu and Cabiddu, 2016; Pongpaew *et al*., 2017). Instagram is the go-to channel for broadcasting mobile marketing messages that call for engagement and later call for action. Twitter, TikTok, and Facebook are the key channels used to remind customers about products. Many scholars have accredited multiple marketing channels as indicative of a successful customer relationship (Patten *et al*., 2020a; Patten *et al*., 2020b; Wang, 2020). The journey exhibits an engagement timeframe of three weeks before acquisition occurs. It involves two Instagram messages being sent out to customers: one during the first week (i.e., the call for engagement message) and one during the third week (the call for action message); whereas three reminder messages are sent through Twitter, TikTok, and Facebook, respectively, during the second week of the journey. This timeframe means that the company meets the expected number of messages that customers want to be exposed to, and it accords well with exposure timing. The importance of meeting the expectations of online customers is well recognized in the digital marketing literature (Weitzl and Hutzinger, 2019; Azemi *et al*., 2020b). Mobile messages should align with the expectations of customers in terms of cognition and/or emotions across the three elements of perception (i.e., relatability, attainability, and social effectuality). A comprehensive review of the marketing literature shows that cognition and/or emotions affect customers' perception of online experiences (Li *et al*., 2019; Ye *et al.,* 2020). Drawing on the ELM, the journey reveals relatability to be a construct of customers' emotions and cognition. On the other hand, attainability is dominated by cognition, whereas social effectuality is dominated by emotions. Although the first and last (Instagram) messages should reflect these

three elements of customers' perceptions, the first reminder message should reflect attainability, the second message should strive for relatability, and the third message should highlight social effectuality.

6. Contributions and implications

6.1 Theoretical contributions

The present study makes several theoretical contributions to the mobile marketing literature. First, the study expands the understanding of luxury fashion mobile marketing from a multichannel and communications perspective. To date, mobile marketing researchers have documented insights into mobile marketing communications, such as message content and visuals, and how particular marketing channels are utilized to broadcast messages (Gao *et al*., 2013; Kang *et al*., 2015; Okazaki *et al*., 2017; Banerjee *et al*., 2021; Gokgoz *et al*., 2021). Acknowledging prolonged customer decision making due to increased competition, online customers' marketing journeys consist of more than a single channel of interaction (Patten *et al*., 2020a). Also, the success of the marketing channel lies in the message communications (Zubcsek *et al*., 2017; Banerjee *et al*., 2021). In the present study, mobile communications and channels are captured through four themes for mobile marketing, which are *relatable*, *attainable*, *socially effectual* (i.e., mobile communications) and *presence* (i.e., mobile channel). Therefore, investigation of marketing channels and communications as standalone factors leads to only a partial theoretical understanding of mobile marketing.

Second, the present study reveals how customers' perceptions develop throughout the mobile marketing journey as they move from one mobile marketing channel/communication to another.

This exposes the stages in the mobile marketing journey where engagement and acquisition occur. Mobile marketing scholars document engagement and acquisition as isolated events, rather than being mutually supportive (e.g., Nasco and Bruner II, 2008), even though the digital marketing literature acknowledges that engagement leads to acquisition followed by post-purchase engagement (e.g., Azemi *et al*., 2019). For a higher order understanding of customer engagement and acquisition, the study utilizes the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), which considers changes in customers' emotion and cognition as they navigate through mobile marketing channels and communications. To our knowledge, the present study introduces ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) to the mobile marketing literature, complementing existing studies of online customers' perceptions that are based on theories (e.g., social impact theory) with either an emotional or cognitive focus (Appiah *et al*., 2019).

Finally, the study expands the conceptualization of luxury fashion mobile marketing through the lens of a Gen Z cohort, built on the literature on luxury commerce, which centers on millennials (Kim, 2019; Ozuem *et al*., 2021c). The theoretical contribution from this perspective is important, as Gen Z seems to be one of the current core interest customer groups of the luxury fashion industry. Findings from past research on millennials might not necessarily reflect Gen Z's perceptions of luxury purchasing. In this context, this study deciphers idiosyncrasies in Gen Z luxury fashion customers' perceptions; this complements the mobile marketing literature and opens new research frontiers based on the Gen Z cohort. Lastly, the views of Gen Z mobile customers will aid understanding of the evolution of perceptions of mobile marketing across generations, which should inform successful mobile marketing practices.

6.2 Managerial implications

The mobile marketing journey for engagement and acquisition of Gen Z luxury fashion customers model provides a support package to luxury fashion companies that integrates digital marketing, marketing communications, and data analysis. First, it provides guidelines for digital marketing managers on the channels that the company should utilize to reach out to customers, revealing those that should be utilized to call for engagement, for reminders, and to call for action. This ensures that the message reaches the customer on the appropriate channel, and that the timing optimizes the customer's intention to engage and purchase from the company. Customers get irritated if exposed to promotional messages on unexpected channels or too frequently. Therefore, recognizing the setting on which communication should occur controls for customer dissatisfaction. In turn, this ensures customer engagement and acquisition.

Second, the model provides guidelines to communications managers as to the appearance of the message, including content and visuals, so as to speak to the emotional and cognitive stances of customers. Directions as to the emotional and/or cognitive dominance of the message relative to the marketing channel are also given. This guides communications managers' amendment of messages as a customer's perceptions shift from being emotionally based to cognitively based and vice versa. This is a powerful approach to initiating customer engagement with the communication and facilitating product purchasing.

Finally, the model can be used as a plan of action for the managers of data marketing analysts to track customer engagement and purchasing throughout their mobile multichannel journey. This introduces appropriate intervention actions in situations of customer outliers. Data generated from

customer tracking could contribute to databases and data mining on the behavioral changes of repeat customers throughout their multichannel journeys. Considering the importance of customer loyalty, this should inform amendments of mobile marketing communications and channels accordingly.

7. Conclusions

To conclude, the study makes important contributions to research and has implications for practitioners of mobile marketing in the luxury industry. These are summarized in the mobile marketing model (see Figure 1). Unlike existing studies (Kang *et al*., 2015; Gokgoz *et al*., 2021), this study demonstrates that the Gen Z mobile marketing journey is a route of multiple communications and channels. It reveals that Gen Z's perceptions shift from being emotionally based to cognitively based and vice versa throughout their mobile marketing journey; past research acknowledges that luxury fashion customers are driven mostly by emotional cues (Choi *et al*., 2016; Kim *et al*., 2016). This study also reveals the prolonged decision making of a Gen Z customer (i.e., three weeks) and provides guidelines on the selection of social media and communications that secure customer acquisition after a process of engagement interaction and multiple reminders.

8. Limitations and future research

The present study has several limitations that call for future research. The cross-sectional nature of the present study limits understanding of the mobile marketing journey to what customers' can recall of their experiences. This invites ethnographical longitudinal research, which would uncover the real contexts of customers' perceptions of engagement and purchasing of luxury products. The present study did not aim for generalizability. Empirical research that tests the emergent mobile

marketing model across different settings would improve the generalizability of the data. Furthermore, applied research that examines the applicability of the mobile marketing model in an organizational setting would support the validity of the emergent insights. Finally, the present study did not consider the influence of other marketing channels, such as store-based and television ads, on customers' perceptions of mobile marketing. Customers' perceptions of marketing are often not exclusively based on mobile marketing (Kowatsch and Maass, 2010; Fang *et al*., 2021); therefore, exploring mobile marketing as an integrative tool for offline and online marketing should expand understanding of mobile customers' perceptions.

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