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An Exploratory Study on the Dimensions that Motivate the Attitudes of Young Consumers to the Consumption of Luxury Products

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Abstract

Given the global economic context, most luxury brands are investing on the growth of so-called "emerging markets", such as Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRICs), so that new metropolitan areas emerge as recognized centers of luxury consumption. In this perspective, the term consumption not only means a relationship of exchange, but also a system of communicating power and lifestyles, where young consumers are fundamental agents in the promotion of luxury products and services that fascinate and awaken desires. Therefore, the aim of the present research was to identify the dimensions that motivate the consumers' attitudes in relation to the acquisition of luxury products. To verify the proposed objective, a quantitative exploratory research was carried out by means of a survey with a sample of 304 respondents collected through a direct approach in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In the process of data processing, the Structural Equations Modeling with the Partial Least Square (PLS) method was used for it. As a result, it was possible to observe that the attitudes are oriented by aspects related to quality and desire, generating, thus, the consumption motivation that was formed by the pleasure of the purchase, by the happiness provided by the product and by the social influence.

Keywords: Luxury Retail; Young Consumer; Attitude; Consumer behavior.

1. Introduction

The deep social and economic changes, which have intensified since the 1990s, have also transformed the attitudes and perceptions about consumption of individuals in society, including young consumers, who have become the target of various luxury brands, in the most varied segments of the economy, from clothing to entertainment.

Aiming to broaden the understanding on this issue, several national and international scholarly researches, encouraged mainly by the publication of Veblen & Banta work's (2009) in the early twentieth century, have been carried out. These include the works of Vigneron & Johnson (1999), Allérès (2000), Dubois & Paternault (1995), D'angelo (2004), Lipovestky (2002), Salinas et al. (2014), Strehlau (2004), Souza (2010), Souza & Rech (2012), Martins (2013), among others.

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Although there is no conceptual uniformity about the term luxury, it is observed that the literature presents some contributions, as can be seen in the work of Dubois & Paternault (1995), who advocate that luxury goods are characterized by their exclusivity, excellence in quality, high durability, status, refinement, strong aesthetic appeal, historical tradition and high price. According to Allérès (2000), a luxury product has as main attributes a selective distribution, but especially with regard to brands of universal notoriety.

From the perspective of marketing, in the current context, luxury has been conceived as symbols of consumers' dreams and desires that go beyond their functional aspect, according to Lipovestky (2002). According to Li, Li & Gamble (2012), the term "luxury" represents the top category of prestigious brands. In fact, to distinguish themselves, people use imposing products, through their symbols, brilliance, influence and uniqueness, such as crowns, coats, rings, and so on. (Diniz, 2012).

Freitas Jr. (2012) reports that in the last decades, the world market for luxury has grown considerably, due to two main factors: (1) the increasing internationalization of large companies, with important advances on emerging economies such as China and Brazil; (2) segmentation of the market into a mass luxury market and a high standard luxury market. A survey carried out in 2011 by MCF consultancy, in partnership with GFK Brasil, shows that the turnover of 230 companies operating in the Brazilian luxury market reached 11.8 billion dollars in 2011, 33% more than in 2010.

It is believed that the purpose of the proposed research is to generate a better comprehension and understanding not only about the dynamics of the contemporary luxury market, but also about the dimensions that affect consumers' attitudes towards these products. The attitude, according to Shiffman & Kanuk (2000) and Blackwell, Miniard & Engel (2008), can be defined as a predisposition (to be learned) to behave in a constantly favorable or unfavorable way towards a given object.

These concepts allow us to affirm that attitude can be considered as a general evaluation (favorable or not), that individuals have about a certain object, structured by beliefs and opinions about this subject, causing them to act according to the evaluation they have about it. In Ajzen's (1991) assessment, attitudes are developed on the basis of people's beliefs about a particular object.

According to Karsaklian (2008), the analysis of attitudes and preferences is a primary objective for the understanding of buying behavior. In this way, the reason for the proposed research constitutes an academic contribution, given to the development of a conceptual framework that serves as inspiration for the implementation of future research on the subject. In parallel, the results found and the discussions about the dimensions that affect the attitudes of the consumers can serve as insights that generate managerial actions by the marketers. The research issue is presented in the next section.

Considering the contextualization presented here, the following research question was formulated: What are the dimensions that motivate the consumers' attitudes in relation to the consumption of luxury products? Thus, the main objective of the study was to identify the dimensions that motivate consumers' attitudes in relation to the consumption of luxury products. The motivation to study the luxury sector derives from its economic importance at world level, including in Brazil, whose market is growing more and more. According to a research by FGV - EAESP, between 2013 and 2017, the segment should grow up to 25% in Brazil. Classes A and B are expected to grow 29% to a total of 29 million people, while classes D and E are expected to fall from 73 to 43 million people (FGV, 2013). Curiosity and personal interest in understanding better the factors that affect the attitude of young people in relation to the consumption of luxury products are also some aspects that motivated the implementation of the proposed research.

For a better understanding of the study, we tried to structure the text based on five sections: the first one is the introduction, composed by the contextualization of the theme, the problem, the research and objectives, as well as the justification for its doing. The next section addresses the theoretical framework. The methodology is discussed in the third section. The fourth and fifth sections in turn will consist of presentation of the results and the final considerations of the study. The following section presents the theoretical framework, as proposed in this structure.

2. Luxury Products: Concept, Evolution and Trends

From the conceptual point of view, D'Angelo (2004) argues that the concepts and meanings of luxury can vary, since the understanding of both elements pervades the question of individual perception and also the cultural aspect. In general, it is broad and associated with the consumption of products that symbolize prestige for the consumer. According to Kapferer (2003), the term "luxury" is very complex because it is a concept (category), a subjective feeling and a contestation in the moral scope. In analyzing this subject, Castarède (2005) states that the term "luxury" has already been associated with two Latin terms: 1) lux, which means light and could bring shine to things; 2) lust, which would be a sin associated with extravagant pleasure.

Table 1:	Luxury se	ectors
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Typologies	Description
Personal Luxuries	Perfumes, cosmetics from other beauty products, fashion (couture and prêt-à-porter), accessories and leather products (handbags, shoes, wallets, belts), jewelry, watches, fur, beverages and food, tobacco, writing, stationery, musical instruments, personal electronics (cell phones, cameras).
Special Services	Tourism and leisure, entertainment, gastronomy, restaurants, sports, personal services (spas, beauty treatments, massage services, plastic surgeries, medical services), clubs and other associations.
Luxuries for Home	Furniture, textiles, silverware, crystals, fine chinaware, decorative objects, building materials, household goods, electronics, art and antiques, real estate, specialized services (cleaning and organization, decoration, gardening and landscaping, party organization).
Transport	Cars, yachts, boats, airplanes, motorcycles, air, sea, land or space services.
Other Luxuries	Products and services for pets, edition of books and specialized magazines.

Source: Elaborated by the author, based on Galhanone (2008).

According to Lipovetsky & Roux (2005, p. 117), "the nineteenth century, with its industrial development and its increasing mechanization, will make reproducible products in series and therefore more accessible to a greater number of people." Thus, from the perspective of marketing, in the current context, luxury has been conceived as symbols of consumers' dreams and desires that go beyond their functional aspect, according to Lipovestky (2002), Atwal & Williams (2009). According to Li, Li & Gamble (2012), the term "luxury" represents the top category of prestigious brands. Luxury presents different sectors, according to Chart 1.

Luxury objects, according to Lipovestky (2002) correspond to the expression of real human desires and emotions. In this sense, Li, Li & Kambele (2011) point out that luxury objects provide pleasure and, for this reason, are related to desires, comfort and extravagant life. For D'Angelo (2004), the values associated with luxury consumption in Brazil are: quality, appearance, hedonism, distinction, personal valuation and sophistication.

According to Marins (2010), the behavior of the luxury consumer has changed after a while. The author points out that this behavior has been going through a revolution. If, before, luxury was tied to ostentation and excess, nowadays it is more conscious and totally connected to sensations and experiences. The contemporary consumer, in the context of the new luxury, is more concerned with his/her well-being, without much ostentation.

3. Consumer's Attitude and Behavior Toward Luxury

The relationship between attitudes and behaviors has long been studied by several researchers, such as Ajzen & Fishbein (2004), who state that intention is a relevant predictor of people's behavior. For Shiffma & Kanuk (2000), attitude can be defined as a predisposition (to be learned) to behave in a constantly favorable or unfavorable way towards a given object. Karsaklian (2008) also states that the analysis of attitudes and preferences is a primary objective for the understanding of

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buying behavior. As supported by Blackwell, Miniard & Engel (2008), attitudes constitute a general assessment of something.

For Junior, Merlo & Silva (2016), all individuals have attitudes that result in tendencies to respond positively or negatively to another person, group, and object, situation that comprises objects and people or even an idea. Hence, often, the attitude of an individual predisposes him to reason in a specific way. For Mittal & Newman (2001), the study of consumer behavior corresponds to the study of how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on items related to consumption. According to these authors, customer behavior is defined as the physical and mental activities performed by customers of consumer and industrial goods that result in decisions and actions, not only as buying and using products and services, but also paying to acquire them.

It is considered a key theme for the support of all the marketing activities carried out with the purpose of developing, promoting and selling products and services. It shows the importance of trying to understand how consumers make their decisions to acquire or use the products (Stefano et al, 2008). According to Karsaklian (2000), throughout the buying process, the consumer is influenced by behaviors that lead him to choose product A instead of B in a certain place. This same author warns that, however much one seeks to know the consumer, it is difficult to know what behaviors he will adopt in relation to facts that occur during his life.

In modern society, consumer profiles do not only reflect socio-economic variables, since cultural and psychological components are also involved in consumption, including luxury products, whose motivations that lead people to purchase such products and services vary from person to person. According to Santos (2006), consumers of luxury products are more focused on the psychic question of the value of the good, since their acquisition is based more on satisfaction than on necessity. But in general, it is observed that the income factor is closely related to the consumption of superfluous. A study by Dubois & Duquesne (1993) found that income accounts for about 50% of purchases of high-level goods and services, while cultural factors account for about a third.

Another factor to be considered is that at present, the relationship of young people with luxury takes place in several ways, permeating from going to restaurants and bars considered trendy until the consuming articles that differentiate them from the others. According to Castro (2006), luxury for the young is associated with something which goes beyond what is considered basic or normal, so that entry into the universe of luxury occurs when they consume something they do not need, especially at higher prices. For this author, contemporary youth seeks within society and its social circles to evidence their status through the consumption of luxury products, so that their image is tied to the concepts of power and wealth when they are within a social environment, aiming so the recognition among those around them. Thus, luxury items are items that differentiate and rank young people in a particular niche.

For Rocha & Pereira (2009), luxury for young people cannot be understood with the same prerogatives of economic logic, since they seek mainly to cause an effect to others' belongings, much more than evidence that they use something with high prices. The authors also state that in adolescence, the need for social inclusion, belonging, and gregariousness is always implicit. In this sense and in line with the theoretical framework presented, the following hypothesis is formulated for this study:

H1. The attitude of the young consumer is positively related to the factors of consumer motivation

4. Methodological Aspects of Research

To verify the objective proposed by this study, a quantitative exploratory study was carried out by means of a survey with a sample of 304 respondents collected through a direct approach in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Regarding the justification of the method used, the exploratory research, with a nonprobabilistic sampling, for convenience and quantitative nature, is characterized by a field approach seeking the situational characteristics presented by the interviewees to generate quantitative measures of the attributes observed by them (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2004).

In this research, the questions used to measure attitude were inspired by the study of Sujan (1985). The measurement of the other constructs presented in the research was inspired by the

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dimensions contemplated in Vigeron & Johnson's proposal (1999) and Wiedmann et al. (2007). The universe of the study was made up of university students - students of a public university and also a private college, and the data collection was carried out by the researchers themselves. Such choice is justified by the ease of access to potential survey respondents.

The research instrument was composed of the variables related to attitudes, supported by of Sujan's model (1985). The variables related to consumption motivations were inspired and adapted from the research of Wiedmann, Hennigs & Siebels (2007). Thus, the research instrument is divided into two parts: the first one brings the issues related to the object of study. The second part seeks to characterize the profile of respondents such as gender, age, civil status, etc., according to Table 2.

Table 2: Scale used forresearch

Construct	Label	Item
	AT_1CP	Luxury products are products that are more expensive than they usually are.
	AT_2_CP	Luxury products are products I would like to buy.
e	AT_3CP	Luxury products are products that I would be proud to use.
Attitude	AT_4_CP	Luxury products are products that people would like to buy.
ttit	AT_1CC	People who buy luxury products are making an excellent choice.
▼	AT_2_CC	People who buy luxury products like to be in evidence.
	AT_3CC	People who buy luxury products are people who seek higher quality.
	AT_4_CC	People who buy luxury products are snobbish people.
		It pays to spend my money on luxury products.
	MC_2	Buying luxury products is a way of showing that you can buy more expensive products
	MC_3	Considering the prices involved, I am afraid of regretting the purchase of luxury products.
	MC_4	Using luxury products is something that is worth a lot to me.
	MC_5	Using luxury products is something I consider necessary.
	MC_6	Using luxury products is something pleasant.
	MC_7	For me, luxury products give more meaning to life.
	MC_8	Luxury products are long lasting.
	MC_9	The main reason for buying luxury products is quality.
	MC_10	The high price of luxury products is due to their quality.
	MC_11	I buy a brand of luxury products to meet my personal needs.
su	MC_12	People who buy luxury products try to be different from others.
Consumption Motivations		I like to have things that others do not have.
va		Luxury products that everyone can afford for them are less valuable.
oti	MC_15	Luxury product brands have an effect on my self-confidence.
N N	MC_16	I always consult my friends to choose the best alternative of luxury products.
ior	MC_17	I tend to use the luxury products that rich or famous people use.
pt.	MC_18	Buying luxury products can impress other persons.
un	MC_19	Consuming luxury products makes me happy.
su		Self-realization is an important motivator for my consumption of luxury products.
ပိ	MC_21	Buying luxury products gives me great pleasure.
	MC_22	I would be happier if I could buy all the things I wanted.
	MC_23	I would be happier if I could buy more things.
	MC_24	Buying expensive products makes people feel fulfilled.
	MC_25	Consuming luxury products catches people's attention.
	MC_26	Buying luxury products indicates the social position of people.
	MC_27	I like people to know the price of the products I buy.
	MC_28	I like to show others the products I buy.
		I like to know which luxury brands impress people.
		Before shopping I think it is important to know what types of people buy certain brands or products.
		Social position is an important motivator for the consumption of luxury products.
	MC_32	I would buy the luxury products my friends buy.

Source: Adapted by the authors, based on Sujan (1985), Vigeron & Johnson (1999) and Wiedmann et al. (2007).

Following the recommendations of Ringle, Silva & Bido (2014) to justify the sample of 304 respondents, G*Power 3.1.7 software with the specifications of Hair Jr., Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt (2013) was used, that is, Mean Effect Size (0.15), and Test Power of 0.80 have been found to be necessary for a scale as used in the research. A sample of at least 55 respondents would already be sufficient to detect the effects of the Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Square (PLS) Method.

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In the application, a form with closed guidelines was used using Likert scale with seven points of agreement and disagreement where 1 meant total disagreement and 7 meant total agreement. The SPSS 22.0 software was used for frequency analysis and SmatPLS 2.0 - M3 was used to evaluate Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Ringle, Wende & Will, 2005).

The Modeling of Structural Equations with the Partial Least Square (PLS) method was an adequate possibility for the data analysis, since it is a quality alternative proven by the international research community in several areas of knowledge (Ringle, Wende & Will, 2005), with great flexibility in data analysis. Another important point is that this research does not intend to generalize the results but rather to analyze the attitude and motivations of consumption of luxury products.

According to Mueller (1996) the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is based on the premise that the observed variables are imperfect indicators of certain latent constructs. Thus, if more than one indicator is used to measure a particular construct, the CFA allows the researcher to group such indicators in pre-specified ways, in order to assess to what extent a given set of data apparently confirms the predicted structure. For this, the Modeling of Structural Equations is used, in which the relations between observed variables and factors are modeled in a series of linear regressions, using an array of covariance or correlations. The next section refers to the presentation and discussion of results.

5. Presentation and Discussion of Results

As discussed, the data analysis was performed with the software SmartPLS 2.0 M3. Based on the model created from the hypothesis generation where Attitude presents a positive relationship with the consumption motivation in the luxury market. The model was tested and corrected by removing items that did not have factorial loads above 0.50 (Hair et al, 2014) as we looked for attending the criterion for Convergent Validity - Average Variance Extracted (AVE) or Fornell and Larcker criterion (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009), being, AVE > 0.50.

The variables eliminated from the model showed, in a descriptive analysis, that they had little variation and ended up proving to be "common sense" among the survey respondents. In the sequence of the analyses, the R^2 (part of the variables explaining the constructs and indicating the quality of the adjustment model) were evaluated. In the area of social and behavioral sciences, Cohen (1988) suggests that $R^2 = 2\%$ be classified as a small effect; $R^2 = 13\%$ as a medium effect and $R^2 = 26\%$ as a large effect. Also, Cronbrach's alpha (internal consistency) and Composite Reliability are used to assess whether the sample is free from bias, or whether the responses as a whole are reliable.

The size of the Effect or Cohen indicator (f^2) evaluates how each construct is "useful" for model adjustment. Values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are considered small, medium and large, respectively. The predictive validity (Q^2) or Stone-Geisse indicator evaluates the accuracy of the fit model. The evaluation criteria are values greater than zero (Hair et al., 2014). The mentioned quality indicators are expressed in Table 3. It presents the specification of the SEM - Values of the average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability, R^2 and Cronbach's Alpha, Commonalities, Redundancies of the Constructs.

Table 3: Quality criteria of the adjustments of the Model without Moderation.

Attitude 0,5593 0,8337 0,7386 0,2836 Motive Consumption 0.5154 0.9136 0.3628 0.8950 0.4095	
Motive Consumption 0.5154 0.0136 0.3628 0.8950 0.4005	0,2836
Wolive_Consumption 0,3134 0,3130 0,0020 0,0330 0,4033	0,1727
Reference Values >0,50 >0,70 Entry 1 >0,60 Positive	Entry 2

Entry 1: Reference values for R^2 for social and behavioral sciences: $R^2 = 2\%$ is classified as small, $R^2 = 13\%$ as average and $R^2 = 26\%$ as large (Cohen, 1998).

Entry 2: Values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are considered small, medium and large, respectively (HAIR et al., 2014).

Source: Field survey data.

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The analysis of Table 3 clearly indicates that the model can be considered adjusted as a whole, because after the elimination of variables that are not adherent to it, we obtained indicators that meet the adjustment requirements. In addition to the quality of the fit of the model, the discriminant validity must be analyzed, since the constructs must relate, but be independent (HAIR et al., 2014). Fornell and Larcker' criterion (1981) is used for it and the square root of the AVE values are compared for each construct with the correlation (Pearson) between the constructs (or latent variables). The square roots of the AVE should be larger than the correlation between the constructs is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Assessment of Discriminant Validity

	Attitude	Motiva_Consumption
Attitude	0,7478	
Motiva_Consumption	0,6023	0,7180

Source: Field survey data.

The analysis of Table 4 shows that the square roots of the AVE are larger, in all cases, than the correlations between the constructs. This fact shows that the model has discriminant validity and can be interpreted. Finally, in order to evaluate the overall quality of the model, the GoF (Goodness-of-Fit) indicator, given by the geometric average of the average R^2 and weighted average AVE (Ringle, Wende & Will, 2005). The calculated value was 0.4415 and indicated that the model can be considered as well adjusted, since values above 0.36 are considered good for areas such as social and behavioral sciences (Wetzels, Odekerken-Schröder & Oppen, 2009). After finding that the model had a proper adjustment, one can analyze the hypothesis created from the theory (Figure 1).

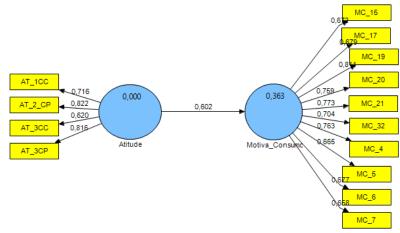


Figure 1 - Adjusted research model. **Source:** Field survey data.

After confirming the adjustments and quality indicators of the model, from the results it was possible to make inferences about the path coefficients and the p-value of the causal relationship, indicated in Figure 1, as being the adjusted model. These values can be used to evaluate the research hypothesis, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Hypothesis Evaluation

	Load (β)	p-value	Conclusion
Attitude =>Motiva_Consumptiom	0,602	0,0329	Supported
Reference Values	Positive	p<0,05	

Note: Significance was estimated by the bootstrapping method with n = 50, 500 repetitions and a significance level of 5% (as suggested by Ringle, Wende & Will, 2005)

With regard to the Attitude construct, the results presented here are in line with the observations of Blackwell, Miniard & Engel (2008), where it is stated that attitudes represent what the individual likes and dislikes. According to the model, which had an appropriate adjustment, one can analyze the hypothesis of the constructs created, so that the selected variables were supported by Lipovestky (2002), which states that luxury has been conceived as symbols of consumers' dreams and desires, which go beyond its functional aspect from the perspective of marketing, in the current context, considering the items AT_2_CP and AT_3CP that deal with this issue.

Another aspect that forms the attitude of the young consumer is related to the perception of quality of the product, since items AT_1CC and AT_3CC are related to this aspect. Thus, it can be affirmed that the respondents in this research, perceive the quality in the products of this market.

As for the consumer motivations that have been adjusted in the model, the items linked to the purchase pleasure (MC_4, MC_5, MC_6, MC_7), the happiness that the products provide (MC_15, MC_19, MC_20, MC_21) and the social influence (MC_17, MC_32), which presented a remarkable statistical validity among the other variables, reflect the theory in Rocha & Pereira (2009), where young people seek above all to cause an effect to others, much more than evidence that they use something with high prices, showing that there is the need for social inclusion of belonging. In this sense, Li, Li & Kambele (2011), point out that luxury objects provide pleasure and, for this reason, are related to desires, comfort and extravagant life.

6. Final Considerations

With the growth of the luxury products market and a notable participation of young people in the consumption of such items, the main objective of this study was the search for the dimensions that affect the attitudes of consumers in relation to the consumption of luxury products, as well as we also consider marginal objectives to clarify the opportunities and trends of the luxury sector in Brazil, identify the specificities of the Brazilian consumer of luxury goods, search in the literature the concepts of consumer attitude and better understand how the attitudes are developed and how they can affect the consumer's purchasing decisions.

The results presented in this research served as a basis for the full achievement of the objectives pursued, so that, according to the data obtained, attitudes and motivations of consumption are predominant factors in the way young people act or behave. Thus, Castro's theory (2006) is affirmed once it exposes that contemporary youth seeks within society and its social circles to evidence its status through the consumption of luxury products. Thus, it is noticeable that the desire to buy products belonging to the luxury segment is something plural, and that the act of consuming them is related to happiness.

In this way, one can infer that the consumption of luxury products is something recurrent and labeling among young people of the contemporary world, since they use such objects to produce status, differentiation, and pleasure effects. This is due to the need for affirmation within a social circle, which occurs with the supposed imposition that the luxury products, which according to Dubois & Paternault (1995) show refinement, strong aesthetic appeal, exclusiveness and high price, provoking the sense of power and a false hierarchy among its members.

Regarding the limitations of the project, it was identified as a restriction the low number of studies that investigate the mode of consumption of young people, especially university students. There is little research aimed at the impact of youth in the market, especially in the luxury product market, which is a strong trend due to the intense search for status. It was also observed as an obstacle the resignation of some respondents who answered the questions incompletely, making

such questionnaires void.

Given the lack of studies on this topic, it is interesting that future research seeks to deepen the purchasing behavior of young people, especially with regard to the motivational factors that influence them, once the current youth increasingly tie the meaning of consumption to the word "power" more than to a real matter of necessity. It is also suggested that future studies seek to identify and analyze the market actions promoted by brands in general that focus on the public studied here.

This research has brought important contributions regarding the luxury products market and the dimensions that affect the attitudes of youthful consumers, both in academic and managerial aspects. In academic terms, we analyzed the current luxury retail in the world context and its prospects; furthermore, the variables about consumer attitudes and motivations that promote the consumer's behavior were developed. In managerial terms, it is expected that the discussions presented here may help marketers in adopting actions that aim to better serve the young consumers of the luxury segment.

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