

Maison Margiela's Brand Positioning and Market Influences in
the Luxury Fashion Sector:
Strategic Recommendations for Gen Z Consumers

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I confirm that this assignment is entirely my own work and that any sources used have been properly referenced in accordance with UAL's academic integrity guidelines.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Modern digital trends combined with shifting consumer needs and growing demands for authenticity are transforming the worldwide luxury fashion industry. Generation Z who were born after 1996 now lead the luxury market shift since their numbers as luxury consumers continue to grow (Guilbault, 2020; Vogue Business, 2025). Gen Z consumers define luxury through personal expression and digital connections and individuality rather than traditional brand prestige or monetary value (Spagnuolo & Finneman, 2020). The members of this generation easily move between shopping online and visiting pop-up events while entering physical stores because they seek memorable brand encounters above basic acquisitions. These consumers prefer brands that deliver original designs combined with premium quality and opportunities for self-expression.

The competition within the luxury market sector has experienced a rise in intensity. The ultra-luxury market sector shows continuous growth while mid-tier luxury markets have reached saturation levels which pushes both established brands and new entrants to compete aggressively for the attention of Gen Z consumers (McKinsey & Company, 2025). Digital natives Gen Z consumers excel at interacting with online content and brand engagement through digital platforms (Marian, 2018). Luxury brands now use influencer marketing combined with short-form videos and interactive storytelling to build emotional bonds with Gen Z and deliver exclusive experiences because of increasing market competition (Vogue Business, 2023).

The fashion industry has undergone significant changes yet Maison Margiela maintains its individual position in this market environment. Martin Margiela established the fashion brand in 1988 with its conceptual and deconstructivist design philosophy which constantly pushes against established fashion standards. The brand signals its identity through a blank label that is held by four white stitches instead of using celebrity endorsements or visible branding (Bellini, 2025; Cook, 2012). Margiela demonstrates its anti-fashion identity through unconventional shows in empty buildings and dining tables while using oversized designs and experimental materials ("Maison Margiela Documentary," 2020). The OTB Group acquisition in 2002 did not alter the brand's avant-garde heritage or team-based design method. The deliberate media distance approach of Margiela in today's digital storytelling era creates doubts about how accessible and relatable the brand appears to Gen Z consumers. Gen Z consumers according to McKinsey research demonstrate highest brand loyalty when brands show authentic action instead of perfect yet meaningless rhetoric (Alldredge, Jacobs & Teichner, 2021).

The transformation of consumer behavior requires an evaluation of how Margiela stands in the luxury market and its capacity to reach Gen Z consumers. The research investigates the external market environment and internal brand identity alongside consumer perception to develop strategic plans that enhance Margiela's Gen Z consumer relationships.

1.2 Research Gap

The luxury fashion industry and consumer behavior have received extensive research but Generation Z's interaction with luxury brands remains understudied. The existing research investigates general generational patterns and major worldwide luxury brands without examining niche concept-driven labels including Maison Margiela. The current research lacks thorough analysis of Gen Z's views and preferences regarding avant-garde brands.

Research has not studied how Generation Z understands the unique brand identity and unconventional design approach and restricted digital footprint of Maison Margiela. The research aims to study Gen Z consumers' perceptions of Maison Margiela in the luxury market while evaluating how the brand matches their expectations and consumption patterns.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

Research Aim

This study aims to investigate how Maison Margiela’s brand positioning and external market environment influence Generation Z consumers in the luxury fashion industry. By employing a qualitative research approach, the study seeks to uncover consumer perceptions and provide strategic recommendations to enhance the brand’s relevance among younger audiences.

Objectives

- To examine Maison Margiela’s brand identity, philosophy, and current market positioning through SWOT analysis
- To assess key external market factors using a PESTLE framework
- To explore Generation Z’s values, behaviors, and perceptions related to luxury consumption
- To collect and analyze consumer insights through interviews with Gen Z luxury consumers
- To propose strategic recommendations that align Margiela’s brand positioning with Gen Z expectations

2. Literature Review

2.1 External Analysis

The external market environment affecting Maison Margiela’s positioning is analyzed through the PESTLE framework in this section. The analysis focuses on economic social and technological elements which influence luxury consumer behavior and brand competitiveness throughout the worldwide fashion industry.

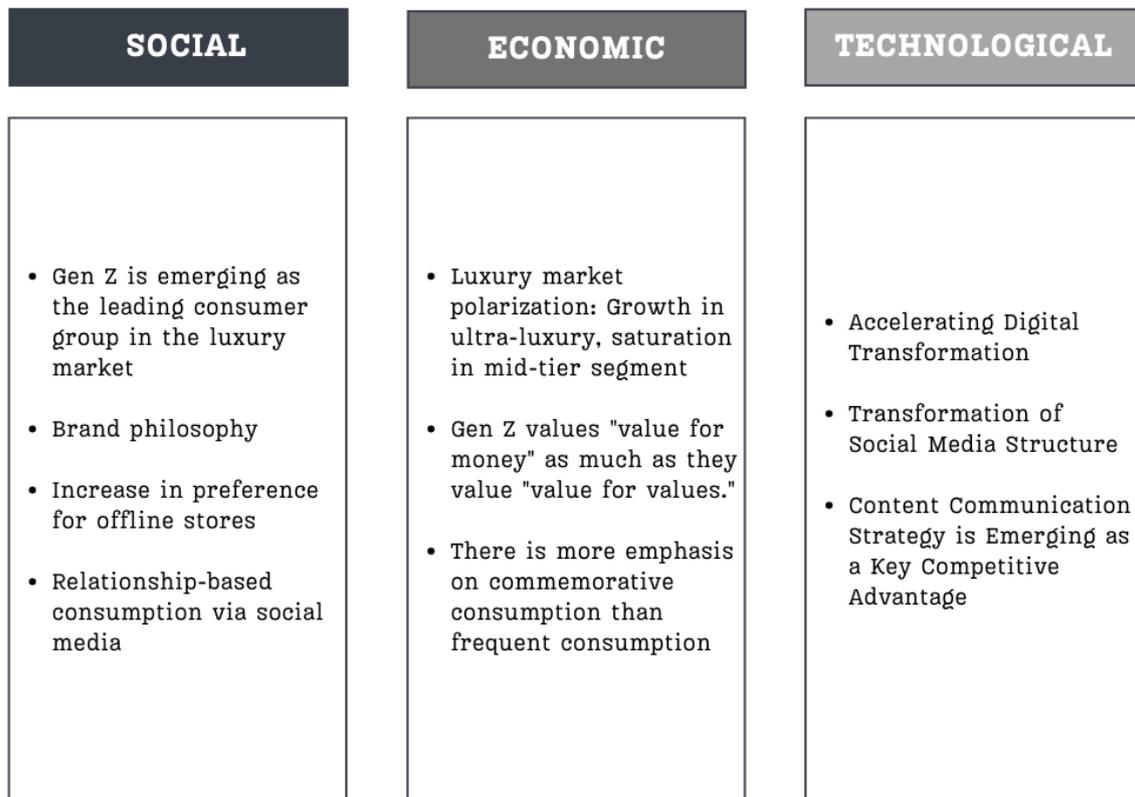


Figure 1. Key external factors influencing Gen Z luxury consumption. (Source: Author’s summary)

2.1.1 PESTLE Analysis

The external environment affecting Maison Margiela receives analysis through the PESTLE framework which examines social economic and technological aspects (see Figure 1). The three essential dimensions of social economic and technological factors play a vital role in determining Generation Z consumer behavior and luxury brand positioning in the competitive digitalized global market.

2.1.1.1 Social Factors

This section analyzes how Generation Z's social values and behavioral patterns influence luxury brand strategies and consumption culture, without focusing on individual consumer actions. Social factors increasingly impact the luxury market, with the shifting values of younger consumers becoming critical in brand development.

Generation Z has emerged as the dominant consumer demographic in luxury fashion, traditionally led by older consumers. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z begins luxury consumption at younger ages (Finneman, 2020). Mintel (2024) reports that Gen Z shows the greatest interest in luxury brands, with rapidly growing purchasing power. Vogue Business (2025) estimates that Gen Z spends \$360 billion annually in the U.S., projected to account for 25–30% of all luxury purchases by 2030. Additionally, 89% of Gen Z shoppers dedicate around 20% of their free time to shopping, often purchasing fashion items weekly.

Globally, this trend is reflected as well. SCMP (2023) forecasts that by 2030, luxury consumers worldwide will reach 500 million, with younger consumers making up over 80% of purchases. Gen Z is reshaping luxury market structures by showing active interest beyond mere buying. Their digital shopping behaviors and focus on brand values are transforming brand strategies.

For Gen Z, a brand is more than products or logos; they evaluate brands practically and analytically, considering both functional value and social significance (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). They show greater loyalty to brands aligned with their moral standards and social views. Sustainability, social justice, and corporate transparency are expected beyond marketing rhetoric (NielsenIQ, 2024). Discrepancies between a brand's statements and actions lead Gen Z to reject it. Spagnuolo and Finneman (2020) note that Gen Z thoroughly researches brand histories and boycotts those with inauthentic marketing or unethical practices.

Brand philosophy serves as a proven standard of authenticity. Emotional bonds between brands and consumers are highly important to Gen Z (Vogue Business, 2025). Brands that evoke "brand love" foster long-term loyalty and shared identity.

Gen Z's shopping combines online and offline channels. They research online but often visit physical stores to experience products before purchasing via mobile devices or social media (Spagnuolo & Finneman, 2020). Feng et al. (2022) found 56% of Gen Z prefer offline shopping for personal style and fit verification. Offline stores thus remain vital for authentic brand experiences.

Gen Z consumers seek real connection and interactive communication from brands, favoring responses to comments and user-generated content over traditional advertising (Schaefer, 2025). They avoid brands with excessive commercialization and mindless trend-following.

NielsenIQ (2024) highlights that Gen Z uses visually driven platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to discover products and make purchase decisions, relying heavily on authentic influencer content. Brands must shift from visibility to trust-based, ongoing engagement.

Spagnuolo and Finneman (2020) emphasize social media's role in fostering emotional trust and sustaining brand relationships.

Ultimately, Gen Z's purchasing is driven by identity alignment, emotional connection, and long-term brand relationships. Luxury brands aiming for sustainability in the modern market must prioritize these social factors.

2.1.1.2 Economic Factors

The global luxury market's economic conditions directly shape how Generation Z consumers behave as well as other emerging consumer groups. The market has become polarized while value systems shift and consumer behavior patterns change which forces brands to adjust their positioning strategies to stay competitive.

The luxury fashion industry maintains a distinct separation between its high-end and mid-level brands that results in an intensified market fragmentation. The luxury industry leader LVMH has achieved exceptional growth through its premium customer segment which brought in three times more revenue since 2019 (McKinsey & Company, 2025). The mid-tier luxury segment experiences stagnation because of market saturation along with pricing limitations which combine with decreasing consumer interest from key markets especially China where the middle-class consumer is losing interest (Statista, 2024). Young consumers from Millennials and Gen Z demographics have become the central focus of the luxury market despite the current market trends. The mid-tier brands use "accessible luxury" approaches that include partnerships and restricted editions and influencer promotions to draw in younger consumers. The competitive environment between brands shows no signs of decreasing (Mintel, 2024). The expansion of mid-tier brands has led to a decrease in brand scarcity that weakens consumer loyalty (Shoib, 2025). The excessive marketing and advertising tactics found in modern branding make Gen Z consumers feel overwhelmed since 80% of them seek "real brands." According to Maguire (2024) Gen Z defines "real" brands through their alignment with personal values and their ability to establish emotional connections with consumers.

Price remains only one factor for Gen Z consumers because they value the total worth of a product equally to its monetary cost. A 2023 survey conducted among American Gen Z luxury consumers revealed product quality at 56% and reasonable pricing at 55.6% as the top decision factors when making a purchase (Statista, 2025). NielsenIQ (2024) reports that Gen Z consumers will invest extra money for items that match their standards regarding quality and ethics yet they remain highly cost-conscious.

Gen Z defines value through criteria that extend beyond product excellence. Fashion items function as personal expression tools and Gen Z consumers will sometimes make "splurge" purchases according to Balchandani and D'Auria (2025). Gen Z consumers want to understand the reasons behind a brand's existence which includes its mission alongside its purpose and social impact (Finneman, 2020).

The modern consumer demands more than basic product delivery. People choose brands that merge excellent quality with compelling narratives and ethical standards and complete transparency and cultural awareness to demonstrate authentic value. The present economic environment shows a significant difference between high-end brands and mid-tier brands regarding their performance level and market perception.

Mid-tier brands now face an essential decision point. The evolving market demands that mid-tier brands create new brand definitions and implement strategic approaches which match the changing consumer expectations of this value-driven generation.

2.1.1.3 Technological Factors

The luxury industry experiences fundamental changes in both customer interactions and brand planning due to Generation Z's digital habits. Digital natives that Gen Z represents maintain constant online connectivity and require technology-based interactions during their entire brand discovery and shopping process. Research indicates that 26% of American adults stay connected to the internet throughout the day but Gen Z members show an even greater tendency toward constant online engagement (Marian, 2018). Social media has become a fundamental component for brand discovery since 37% of consumers find brands through this platform (Vogue Business, 2025).

Modern consumers now expect standard features like voice assistants and visual search alongside natural language interactions from brands to deliver humanized digital experiences that exceed basic product services. Mobile users benefit most from these tools because they provide customized navigation and buying capabilities.

To deliver immersive content luxury brands implement AR (Augmented Reality) and MR (Mixed Reality) together with high-definition video technologies. The fashion brand Balenciaga created an Apple Vision Pro fashion show application that allows users to experience runway shows through high-definition stereoscopic video (McDowell, 2024) and Dior and Cartier use AR technology to enable virtual product trials and brand heritage explorations (Vogue Business, 2023).

A survey of UK luxury consumers shows that 72% anticipate AR technology will establish its central role in shopping experiences between 1–3 years (Vogue Business, 2023). The technological advancements create more than convenient features because they form the basis of Gen Z's values and their expectations toward brands and their relationships with brands. Modern luxury customers require digital experiences to form an essential part of their buying habits.

Social media platforms continue to transform their structures which modifies the ways brands connect with their audiences. Brand engagement now uses short-form videos and virtual try-on features alongside AR filters to deliver immersive sensory interactions beyond traditional static image platforms. The research conducted by Vogue Business in 2025 shows that 58% of Gen Z consumers demand technological experiences from luxury brands and 55% would use an AR lens offered by these brands. Luxury consumers actively engage with social media platforms each month by both creating content and sharing it with others according to research by Remy et al. (2015). Brand-consumer interactions have evolved into more dynamic experiences because user-generated content (UGC) exceeds official brand accounts in their ability to influence customers.

Digital transformation has accelerated to the point where content communication strategy stands as a fundamental element that enables companies to gain competitive advantage. The information-seeking and decision-making phase of Gen Z consumers requires authentic brand messaging that reflects their identity more than generic product descriptions. The research from Vogue Business (2025) indicates that 46% of Gen Z users found product customization features and personalization tools to be useful because they seek individualized brand interactions.

The expectation of personalization continues to influence how brands establish trust with their customers. According to a joint WGSN and Edelman Trust Barometer study (2018) consumers have lost trust in brands while simultaneously requiring brands to establish trust through their actions. Modern consumers no longer rely solely on heritage and reputation because they look for brands that deliver genuine value in a society filled with conflicting messages. The growing misinformation regarding sustainability and ethical consumption makes it increasingly difficult for consumers to identify genuine sustainability efforts from superficial marketing claims.

The digital era demands human-centered communication as a vital factor which separates businesses from each other. Research by PwC (2018) revealed that U.S. consumers want more human interaction in their customer experiences because 82% of them feel this way while 59% believe companies have lost the personal element in their customer service. The data suggests brands should develop trust through emotional communication approaches instead of using technology solely for efficiency purposes. Brands need to focus on delivering genuine personal experiences instead of just providing personalized interactions because excessive automation in personalization harms the development of genuine human connections.

The combination of social factors together with economic elements and technological developments helps explain how Gen Z consumers behave when purchasing luxury goods while directly affecting brand development. Experimental and philosophy-driven brands including Maison Margiela need to handle changing consumer demands with great care.

The next section provides an in-depth examination of the actual consumer group Maison Margiela encounters which consists of Generation Z luxury consumers to analyze their fundamental characteristics and behavioral tendencies.

2.1.2 Consumer Analysis

2.1.2.1 Consumer Profile: Generation Z

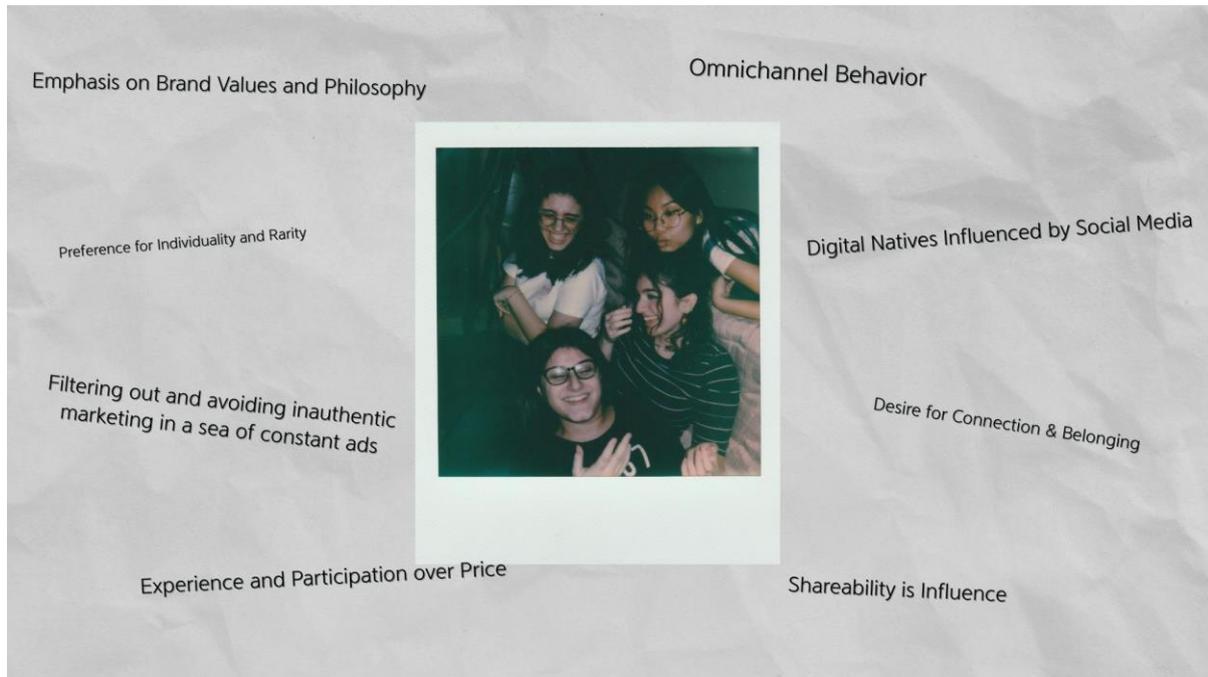


Figure 2. Visual summary of key behavioral traits and values among Generation Z luxury consumers.
(Source: Author's visual compilation)

Gen Z members who were born between 1995 and 2010 live their entire lives through online platforms because they conduct every daily activity from shopping to communication to content viewing and news search and leisure activities (McKinsey & Company, 2024). Gen Z consumers demonstrate brand loyalty through their support for companies which express values and narratives that align with their personal beliefs. Modern brands function as collaborative partners who join consumers to develop identities rather than serving as one-way message deliverers (Finneman, 2020).

The core focus of Gen Z lies in building genuine connections while maintaining authentic experiences. A brand builds trust through sincere storytelling and ethical conduct which goes beyond its commercial interests. Gen Z consumers want to experience events that foster empathy alongside personal connections instead of focusing on sales promotions (Sara Radin, 2024). Small interactions including comment responses and user content sharing create genuine human connections according to Gen Z (Schaefer, 2025).

The behavior patterns of Gen Z show direct connections to their content preferences both as consumers and content creators. Gen Z uses Instagram and TikTok and YouTube to discover brands before participating in micro-influencer communities to form opinions and share content. The trust Gen Z places in UGC exceeds their trust in official brand channels while content shareability works as a powerful force to boost brand influence (Remy et al., 2015). The natural expression of identity by Gen Z emerges when they find brands that match their personality because they will organically promote these brands to their social networks.

The shopping behavior of Gen Z combines online search with offline exploration and mobile-based purchasing in an integrated way (Spagnuolo & Finneman, 2020). Although they demonstrate exceptional digital skills they also seek physical stores to experience products through touch and emotional connections. The majority of luxury consumers continue to conduct their purchasing activities through offline channels according to Alldredge et al. (2021). The way Gen Z consumes shows preference for building relationships and sensory interactions rather than easy access which makes brands need to develop genuine cohesive retail environments.

The emotional connection of Gen Z consumers emerges from brands that match their personal beliefs and create community spaces. Luxury products serve as a dual purpose for Gen Z since they represent both personal rewards and meaningful membership (Sarah Owen, 2018). A brand needs to provide more than products because it must share meaningful stories alongside its purpose while developing interactive structures for consumer participation. The loyalty of Gen Z members develops from shared identity rather than regular purchasing because they express their loyalty through non-commercial activities such as social media following and brand discussions with friends (Vogue Business, 2024). The consumer base of Generation Z consists of well-informed individuals who base their choices on values and show complex emotional responses. Brand philosophy together with actions and communication style deeply affect the purchasing behavior of Gen Z consumers. Brands need to build empathetic brand relationships through experiences that allow shareability and community building because this approach creates meaningful connections with consumers instead of solely focusing on product transactions.

2.1.2.2 Interview Overview

The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with three luxury fashion consumers who either bought luxury products or expressed interest in them to gain better insights into Generation Z luxury consumers. The research examined their purchasing reasons together with their media habits and their views about brands and their encounters with both physical and digital brand interactions. The following section presents the interview results through thematic organization with direct quotes and analysis (see Figure 3).

Theme	Sub-theme	Research Objective	Interview Question
Shopping Preferences	Design-driven choices, brand loyalty	To explore the key factors driving Gen Z's luxury purchase decisions.	Q1) Which luxury brands do you primarily consume and why?
Brand Perception	Niche vs fashion-forward brands	To understand how Gen Z consumers perceive Maison Margiela in relation to other luxury brands.	Q3) What do you think about Maison Margiela? Would you describe it as fashion-forward or niche?
Social Media Influence	Platform usage, influencer impact	To investigate how digital platforms and influencers affect brand engagement among Gen Z.	Q4) Which channels do you usually use to learn about luxury brands? Q6) Have you ever interacted with brands due to their marketing?
Offline Experience	Sensory impression, service experience	To examine how physical store environments shape luxury brand experience for Gen Z.	Q7) Have you had any memorable experiences at luxury brand stores?
Marketing Strategies	Ambassador marketing, ad receptivity	To analyze Gen Z's responses to current luxury brand marketing strategies.	Q5) What marketing strategies do you think brands use today? Q6) Have they influenced your purchase decisions?

Figure 3. Interview Guide Table

Shopping Preferences

“Balenciaga’s weird shoe designs really grab my attention.”

– Interviewee 1

“I don’t really care about the brand name. If I like the design, I buy it.”

– Interviewee 3

“It wasn’t the brand I liked. It was just the T-shirt that caught my eye.”

– Interviewee 2

Interpretation and Analysis:

The three respondents chose to buy products based on their personal design preferences instead of brand reputation. The first luxury purchase made by Respondent 2 was driven by their attraction to the clothing design rather than the brand name. According to Respondent 3 they evaluate products through design elements rather than brand names. Respondent 1 was drawn to the experimental designs of Balenciaga. Generation Z values design along with creativity and product functionality for self-expression more than brand loyalty according to their purchasing behavior.

Offline Store Experience

“The scent and interior really elevate the sense of luxury in the store.”

– Interviewee 1

“The LV store in Korea was calm and welcoming, unlike stores in New York.”

– Interviewee 3

“The staff didn’t pressure me; they gave me space to choose. It felt very different from fast fashion.”

– Interviewee 2

Interpretation and Analysis:

Offline stores function beyond their role as sales spaces because they create emotional and sensory brand touchpoints for Generation Z customers. The luxury atmosphere of the store was enhanced by the scents and interior design according to Respondent 1. The customer service at this store impressed Respondent 2 because it was both relaxed and non-pushy. The Korean store environment with its peaceful and respectful atmosphere received a higher evaluation from Respondent 3 than the U.S. store environment. The consumption experience of Gen Z includes service ambiance together with spatial experience and sensory elements according to their perception.

Brand Identity & Maison Margiela

“It’s definitely unique. Maybe not for everyone, but it’s got a solid fan base.”

– Interviewee 3

“People know the Tabi shoes, but not the brand itself.”

– Interviewee 1

“The logo design is very simple but stands out. That’s what I like.”

– Interviewee 2

Interpretation and Analysis:

Maison Margiela exists as a brand which maintains its originality while remaining restricted to a specific group of enthusiasts. Respondent 2 praised the distinctive minimalist logo design of the brand but Respondent 1 observed that people mostly recognize individual products instead of the brand name. Respondent 3 admitted that the style does not match their preferences yet they recognize the brand’s distinct identity and dedicated fan base. Gen Z people recognize brands through their distinctive products instead of the complete brand identity because they value unique brand identities but see Margiela as a brand with restricted mass market recognition.

Social Media & Influencer Influence

“I usually get information through Instagram. That’s where I see the latest items.”

– Interviewee 1

“I saw Jennie from BLACKPINK wear it and thought it looked cool.”

– Interviewee 3

“Brands post a lot more on Instagram and TikTok now to reach Gen Z.”

– Interviewee 2

Interpretation and Analysis:

The members of Generation Z base their information exploration and purchase decisions on influencers and celebrities as well as social media content instead of traditional brand channels. Respondent 1

uses Instagram to stay updated on new product releases, while Respondent 3 stated that seeing celebrities wear items directly influences their purchasing decisions. Respondent 2 observed that brands now use social media platforms to expand their marketing reach through visual content which appeals to Gen Z consumers. The structure shows how Gen Z discovers brands through visual and personalized media experiences before building trust with them.

Marketing Strategy Perception

“Coach ads are really visual and memorable. That’s what makes them stand out.”

– Interviewee 2

“I don’t like repetitive ads, but when they’re well made, I’ll watch them.”

– Interviewee 2

“If a celebrity wears it and it goes viral, people want to buy it.”

– Interviewee 3

Interpretation and Analysis:

The members of Generation Z do not naturally avoid advertising since they respond favorably to well-made ads and emotionally powerful content. The Coach advertisement caught Respondent 2’s attention because visual content that shows brand identity works better than repetitive messages. The third respondent acknowledged that public exposure of celebrities directly shapes how brands appear to consumers. The data shows that Gen Z members experience both marketing fatigue and high expectations at the same time while showing interest in storytelling-based marketing approaches that create emotional connections.

Theme	Frequent Words / Phrases	Mention Frequency	Summary Insight
Design-driven Consumption	design, unique, don't care about brand, weird, creative	5	Participants emphasized product design as a key factor in luxury purchases, highlighting their preference for unique, expressive aesthetics rather than conventional brand prestige.
Social Media as Discovery Tool	Instagram, TikTok, explore, visual, feed, post	6	Instagram was consistently mentioned as the main platform for discovering new collections and brands.
Perceived Positioning of Maison Margiela	niche, fashion-forward, fan base, Tabi shoes, identity	7	Maison Margiela was widely recognized for its distinct style, with some perceiving it as niche and others as fashion-forward.
Importance of Offline Experience	service, scent, interior, calm, friendly, different from fast fashion	5	Physical retail spaces left strong sensory impressions, especially through service, ambiance, and store layout.
Celebrity & Influencer Marketing Impact	celebrity, ambassador, Jennie, Blackpink, viral, advertisement	6	Marketing involving celebrities and influencers strongly influenced participants' attention and purchase desire.

Figure 4. Thematic Coding Summary Based on Interview Data

The interview showed that Generation Z luxury consumers seek more than product purchases because they value design aesthetics and offline sensory experiences and social media brand discovery and emotional brand philosophy alignment. The way Generation Z consumers interact with brands depends less on traditional advertising and brand heritage and more on influencer content and user experience and authentic brand communication.

The findings from actual consumers match the key themes found in the literature-based analysis which confirms the unique features of Gen Z luxury consumption.

The interview-based topic coding results (Figure 4) show recurring patterns in Gen Z consumer priorities which strengthens the reliability of qualitative data and provides evidence for future discussions.

The following section will explain the research approach and analytical procedures described in the Methodology section based on the qualitative findings including the interview data.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

The research design employed a mixed-methods approach which integrated secondary data analysis with primary qualitative research methods. The research objective involved both theoretical brand positioning and strategy analysis of Maison Margiela and qualitative exploration of Generation Z's brand perception and interaction. The study evaluated the brand's current status and challenges through both external environmental analysis and consumer interviews which provided a comprehensive multidimensional assessment.

3.2 Secondary Data Analysis: External Environmental Assessment

The PESTLE analysis examined macro-environmental elements which impact Maison Margiela. The analysis used reliable sources including Vogue Business industry reports and McKinsey & Company and Mintel and Bain & Company and Statista reports and official communications from the brand. The analysis concentrated on economic social and technological elements which affect Gen Z consumers the most. The SWOT analysis was initially scheduled for the internal analysis but it was moved to the Findings section to enhance its connection with consumer data and strategy development. The secondary analysis functions as a contextual framework to help explain the primary research findings.

3.3 Primary Data Analysis: Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with three participants aged 20 to 30 who purchased luxury fashion products in the last six months were conducted to capture genuine perceptions of Gen Z consumers. The interviews followed a structured format to explore five essential topics which included brand awareness and product selection criteria and social media influence and marketing perception and offline store experience.

The research participants were chosen through purposive sampling and each interview session on Microsoft Teams lasted about 20 minutes. All participants provided their consent to audio recording before the interviews and their identities remained protected. The semi-structured interview method provided both flexibility and consistency to explore personal experiences deeply. The complete set of interview questions appears in Figure 3.

3.4 Data Analysis Method

The research team conducted Thematic Analysis to analyze the interview data. The audio recordings received transcription followed by coding to identify naturally occurring keywords. The researchers organized the identified codes into major themes which corresponded to the interview structure. The analysis revealed both shared elements and distinct variations between the participants.

The research included representative quotes from Gen Z participants to effectively present their voices in each theme. The analyzed findings appear in section 2.1.2.2 under Interview Overview. The qualitative findings from this section enhance the external analysis by adding emotional and cultural depth to consumer behavior understanding.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The participants received complete information about the research objectives and their freedom to participate voluntarily while maintaining the right to exit the study at any moment. The participants received labels as "Interviewee 1, 2, 3" while their personal information remained anonymous. The audio recordings together with transcripts were stored securely for research use only. The study did not involve sensitive content so the supervising professor provided informal ethical approval.

3.6 Research Limitations

The research provides important findings about Gen Z luxury consumption but contains certain restrictions. The study's findings face limitations because it only interviewed three participants which reduces the ability to generalize the results. The researcher's interpretation of qualitative data introduces personal biases to the analysis. The research relies on secondary sources which study the global luxury market while providing industry context and Gen Z consumer trends that match the study's research goals.

3.7 Summary

The research used a mixed-methodology which combined theoretical analysis of PESTLE with qualitative interviews of Gen Z consumers. The semi-structured interview data underwent Thematic Analysis to produce structured findings about Gen Z consumer expectations and perceptions and behaviors toward the brand. The research methodology functions as a diagnostic tool to measure the difference between Maison Margiela's brand positioning and its target audience perceptions while establishing essential groundwork for upcoming strategic planning.

4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Consumer Insight Synthesis

The study utilized secondary data analysis with qualitative interviews to produce identical findings about Generation Z luxury consumer behaviors and values and expectations. The research findings show how Gen Z connects with brands across digital and physical platforms and these insights enable brands to develop new strategies that meet their complex requirements.

The design-oriented behavior of Gen Z consumers demonstrates that they value appearance more than brand prestige. The buying decisions of Gen Z consumers focus on personal style and creative uniqueness alongside product alignment with their identity instead of brand prestige or logo recognition. The fashion world stands as a self-expression tool rather than a status indicator according to their perspective.

The second characteristic shows that Gen Z consumers remain highly attuned to brand authenticity and philosophical consistency. Gen Z consumers trust brands which share authentic values through transparent actions and immersive storytelling beyond basic slogans and surface-level messages. When brands present excessive marketing or superficial trend-chasing they face customer disengagement yet they succeed when they build emotional relationships through value-based brand connections.

The consumer journey of Gen Z follows an omnichannel experience-based path. The process of brand discovery together with social validation takes place primarily on digital platforms like Instagram TikTok and YouTube but in-store emotional experiences also create substantial value. The luxury experience requires fundamental elements of store ambiance combined with visual presentation and scent and customer service which turn purchases into lasting memories.

Social media serves two functions for Gen Z by helping them discover brands while allowing them to co-create content and engage in dialogue. Gen Z consumers want brands to engage beyond digital presence by actively participating in story development while maintaining narrative continuity. A basic online presence no longer meets consumer expectations because brands need to develop interactive narrative-based experiences which link their digital presence with physical interactions.

Brand strategies need to view digital and physical channels as single unified components which create an integrated consumer experience. As an anti-fashion brand Maison Margiela can strengthen its core philosophy to generate deep emotional connections with Gen Z consumers who match its brand identity. This synthesis establishes a foundation for the strategic analysis and campaign proposals that appear in the following section.

4.2 SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique Brand Identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Deconstructionist Philosophy ◦ Anonymity ◦ Artistry and Experimentalism • Innovative products • Loyal customer base • Highly regarded in the fashion and art world 	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #00BFC4; color: white; padding: 10px;">S</td> <td style="background-color: #00BFC4; color: white; padding: 10px;">W</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #00AEEF; color: white; padding: 10px;">O</td> <td style="background-color: #0072BC; color: white; padding: 10px;">T</td> </tr> </table>	S	W	O	T	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of public awareness • Passive marketing strategy • Limited customer base • Polarizing design
S		W				
O	T					
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening communication with younger consumers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Social media and digital marketing ◦ Expanding online sales channels • Enhancing experience-based marketing 		<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensified competition in the luxury market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Aggressive marketing of competing brands • John Galliano's contract expiration • Difficulties in digital transformation 				

Figure 5: SWOT Analysis

The assessment of Maison Margiela’s internal brand positioning includes a SWOT analysis that presents the brand’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (see Figure 5).

Strengths

The foundation of Maison Margiela rests on its unique brand identity. The brand identity extends past fashion elements because it represents a philosophical approach to deconstruction and anonymity together with artistic experimentation which defines both the aesthetic and ideological aspects of the brand. Riccardo Bellini (2025) describes how Margiela uses deconstruction methods to transform fashion from commercial design into meaningful artistic expression.

The brand foundation rests on the principle of anonymity. The company follows a strategy of designer anonymity by refusing celebrity involvement and using a four-white-thread label instead of interviews to focus on garment quality (Maria Skivko, 2020; Imran Amed, 2011). The second line MM6 maintains its communication strategy by using only clothing while remaining inactive on social media platforms (Lucy Maguire, 2025).

The Tabi Boots represent Maison Margiela's most well-known product line. These traditional Japanese footwear designs made their runway debut in 1988 before the brand started reinterpreting them into the iconic symbols they are today (Daniel Rodgers, 2023). The Tabi Boots have gained popularity after Zendaya and filmmaker Greta Gerwig wore them which solidified their position as both fashionable and artistic statement pieces.

The brand maintains widespread understanding among both fashion and artistic communities. The brand pushed fashion-art boundaries in 1997 by presenting a performance where designers used agar to grow mold in their garments (Anna Roos van Wijngaarden, 2024). Through this performance the fashion world saw a revolutionary critique of fashion's fleeting nature and market-driven aspects which strengthened Margiela's position as an artist.

The brand maintains an unwavering dedication from its consumer base. The brand's conceptual approach along with its anti-commercial philosophy attracts fashion scholars as well as art world consumers. The H&M partnership was viewed by the public as an artistic effort to bring the brand's creative ideas to new audiences rather than a conventional commercial venture (Colleen Kelsey, 2012).

Weaknesses

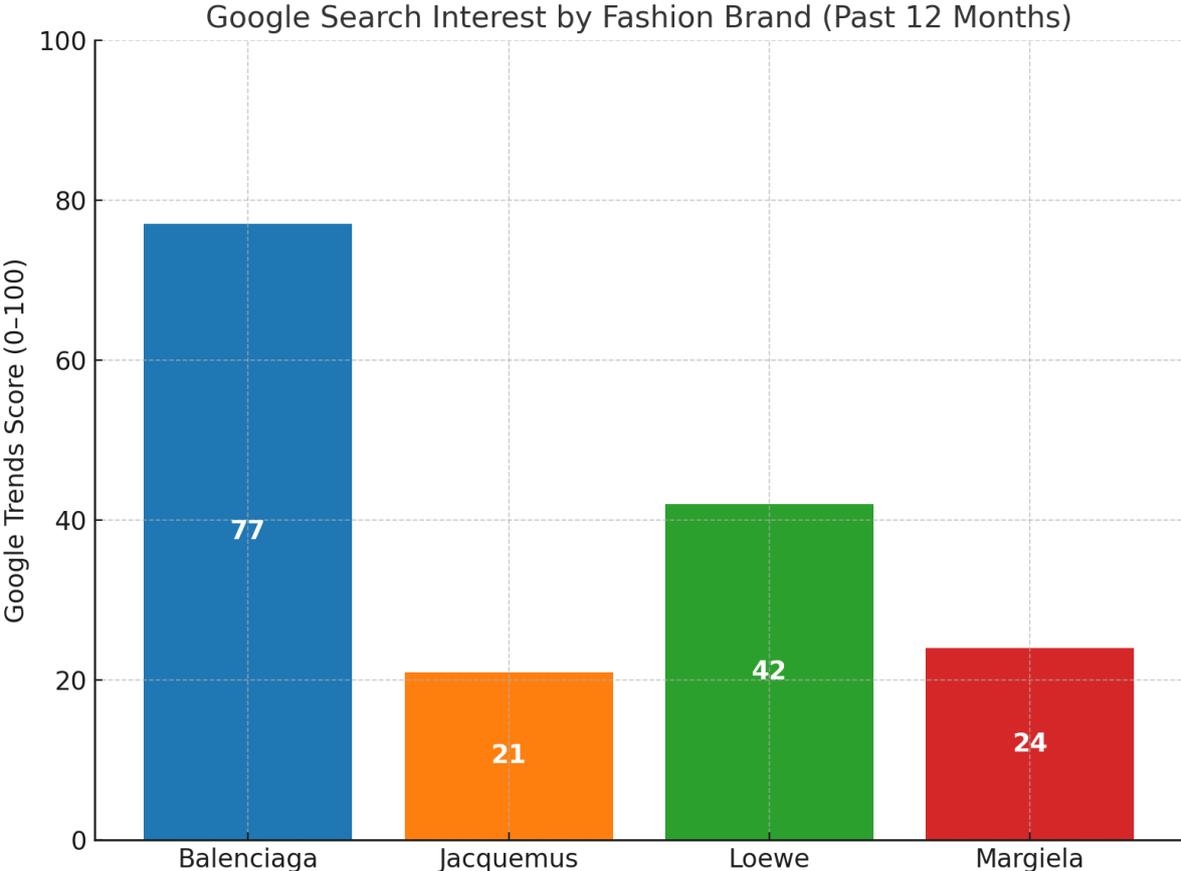


Figure 6. Google Search Interest Comparison Among Experimental Luxury Brands (Past 12 Months) (Source: Google Trends, 2025)

The digital presence of Maison Margiela remains minimal while social media engagement is limited which creates a major obstacle for expanding brand recognition. The search score of Margiela stands at 24 according to Google Trends data during the past 12 months (Figure 6) while other luxury brands with artistic and experimental approaches have achieved better digital visibility through their active social media and marketing efforts. Balenciaga achieved a search score of 77 and Loewe reached 42 which demonstrates their stronger digital presence compared to Margiela despite sharing similar creative approaches.

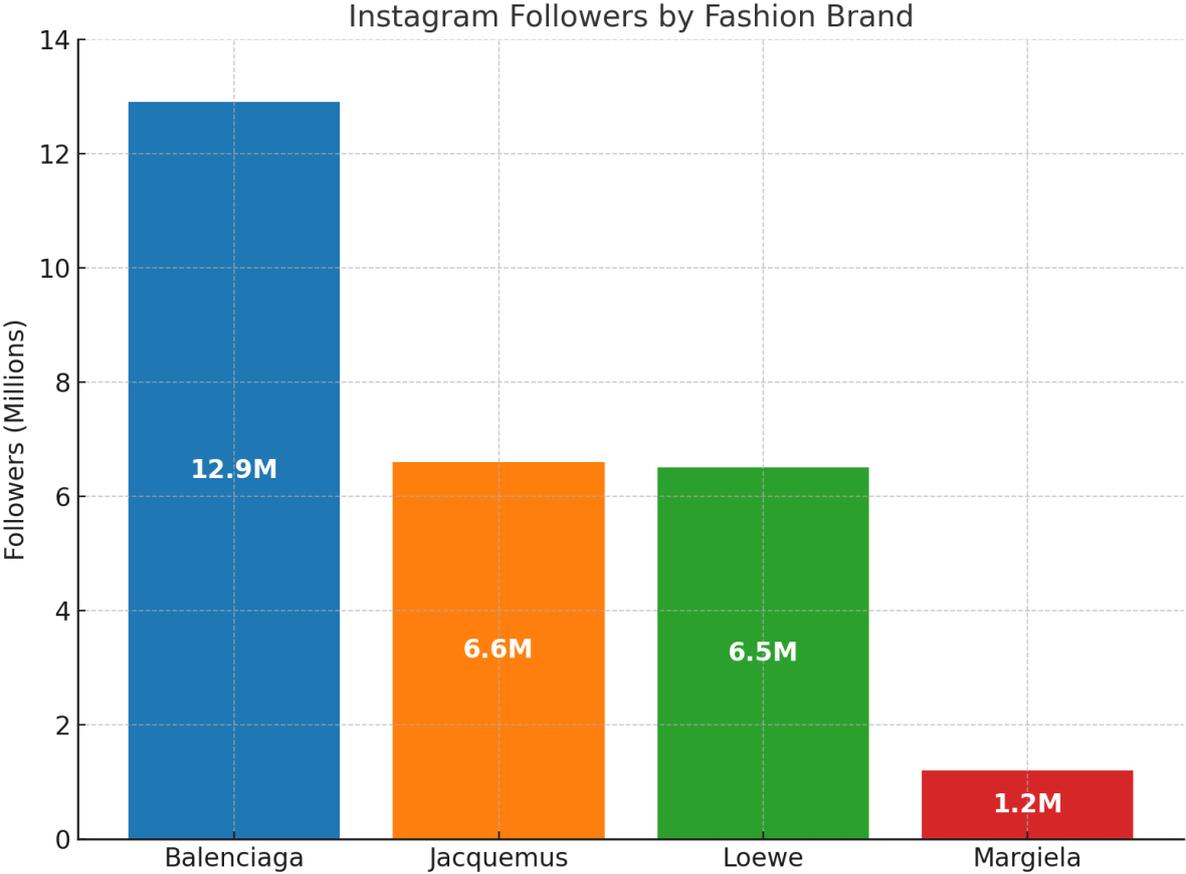


Figure 7. Instagram Followers of Experimental Luxury Brands with Artistic Positioning
(Source: Author's visualisation using Instagram data, 2025)

The Instagram follower comparison in Figure 7 demonstrates the existing gap between Margiela and other brands. The official Instagram account of Margiela has 1.2 million followers but Jacquemus has 6.6 million followers and Loewe has 6.5 million followers and Balenciaga has 12.9 million followers which allows them to spread their brand messages extensively. The large difference in followers indicates that Margiela faces challenges in reaching Generation Z consumers who were born into the digital age.



Figure 8: Visual Examples of Aggressive Celebrity and Campaign-Based Marketing by Competing Luxury Brands
(Source: Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci, 2025)

The company maintains its passive marketing approach as part of its ongoing business strategy. The brands Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Chanel build emotional bonds with their customers through celebrity endorsements and extensive visual promotions and strategic partnerships and collaborative projects. The brand maintains its focus on artistic minimalism through communication while avoiding ambassador programs and extensive marketing initiatives. The brand uses its fragrance campaigns to present its philosophy through abstract emotional images yet these campaigns do not include the relatable stories and consumer-focused digital content which appeals to Generation Z.

The Tabi shoes from Margiela serve as a key element for building brand identity through their unconventional design yet they might create difficulties for consumers regarding fashion choices and accessibility. The product gained popularity through celebrity endorsements and social media exposure (Miller, 2023) yet the brand's design language remains unfamiliar to most consumers.

The observations indicate that Margiela requires more digital consumer touchpoints and a specific brand communication approach.

Opportunities

Generation Z cares intensely about brand philosophies and attitudes since they value identity and values more than the products they purchase. The current generation expresses brand loyalty by liking the brand and following it on social media as well as discussing it with their friends according to Vogue Business (2023). Gen Z establishes profound emotional bonds with brands that demonstrate authenticity during their communication. Emotional connection-based long-term relationship strategies prove highly successful. The essential nature of emotional resonance in communication strategies emerges because Gen Z responds better to brand philosophies and relatable stories than commercial messages.

Gen Z represents the main luxury market consumers according to SCMP (2023) thus brands that adopt trust-based engagement strategies can achieve sustainable growth according to WGSN (2018). Gen Z consumers who experience authentic brand relationships will transform into voluntary brand advocates when brands meet their expectations through genuine connections.

Social media plays a central role in the daily life of 98% of Gen Z people (Mintel, 2025) while 71% remain open to discovering new brands. The trust that Gen Z places in algorithm-recommended content is high

and they actively respond to content from influencers according to Archrival (2024). The experimental and artistic essence of Maison Margiela provides digital platforms an excellent opportunity to enhance its emotional and visual storytelling through expanded digital content.

Social media platforms have evolved into complete transaction systems which provide instant purchasing opportunities while surpassing basic information sharing. According to Mintel (2023) social platform direct purchases have become common among 27% of Gen Z users who search and buy products on TikTok and Instagram without delay. A brand's online channels must act as platforms which support all customer interactions throughout their purchasing journey.

Brand loyalty development relies heavily on experience-based marketing strategies. Experiential marketing spending rose by more than 10% annually according to Statista (2024) and Gen Z consumers actively seek sensory retail experiences in physical store settings. Offline retail experiences through pop-up stores and community events serve as effective methods to develop genuine brand connections and emotional brand immersion with customers.

Threats

Luxury markets worldwide face escalating levels of market competition. Nielsen Ad Intel reports luxury advertisers in major Asian territories spent 12% more during the initial part of 2024 compared to the second half of 2023 indicating rising competitive market conditions (Chapman, 2024). Digital distribution platforms including Amazon–Saks enhance market share competition because they enable consumers to perform more intuitive comparisons across multiple brands (Milnes, 2025). Maison Margiela faces growing market difficulties due to its experimental brand approach.

More brands are also adopting aggressive marketing strategies. Gucci together with Prada and Hugo Boss are expanding their brand presence through influencer collaborations and TikTok trends and customization services which attract younger consumers according to Vogue Business (2023) and Mintel (2024). The philosophical approach of Maison Margiela leads the brand to avoid big-scale advertising and ambassador-based marketing which results in less consumer engagement opportunities.

The departure of John Galliano and the appointment of a new creative director may also present a moment of uncertainty. Glenn Martens took over as creative director of Margiela in 2024 after John Galliano's departure which attracted significant consumer and industry attention regarding the brand's upcoming direction and identity (Maguire & Leitch, 2025). The future direction of Margiela's artistic legacy and experimental spirit under Martens' leadership remains unclear since he has achieved success at Diesel.

A luxury brand must implement an integrated omnichannel strategy that connects digital platforms with offline stores to deliver a complete consumer experience. Briedis et al. (2019) found that omnichannel shoppers make 70% more purchases and spend 34% more annually than customers who shop offline only. The passive marketing approach and restricted digital communication of Margiela's brand philosophy creates disadvantages when trying to develop complex consumer touchpoints as described by Mintel (2024).

4.3 Synthesising SWOT and Consumer Voice

The integrated findings between the SWOT analysis (see Figure 5) and interviews with existing consumers demonstrate that Maison Margiela maintains its distinctive identity and visual elements as successful brand differentiators. Maison Margiela established its distinct brand identity through philosophical concepts of deconstruction and anonymity and artistic expression by launching innovative items including the Tabi Boots. The brand's distinctive elements go past basic design principles because they present consumers with emotional and aesthetic experiences.

The interview participants displayed solid awareness of Margiela's visual symbols despite their minimal knowledge about the brand's philosophical and historical aspects. Margiela uses design as a method to let consumers experience its philosophy without direct statements which proves highly successful.

Through sensory immersion and design consumers learned brand values in a way that produced brand identity and empathy without needing textual learning.

The customers of Maison Margiela expressed their worry that the brand might lose its unique character by becoming too popular. The brand should keep its status as a niche experimental artistic brand. Brand marketing strategies need to achieve equilibrium by building touchpoints while preserving philosophical identity instead of focusing on market expansion or increased accessibility.

The SWOT analysis revealed that Margiela's passive marketing approach combined with low digital visibility restrict its ability to develop stronger consumer relationships. The brand maintains its minimalistic approach to communication yet needs a more interactive and emotionally engaging digital strategy to reach digital native Generation Z. The digital natives of Generation Z find meaning through visual symbols which represent values but they require brands to show more activity while maintaining genuine authenticity.

Future brand strategy must maintain Margiela's fundamental philosophy and identity through the integration of storytelling communication methods that unite digital experiences with emotional engagement. The main obstacle will be developing a platform that enables consumers to experience and embody the philosophy through smooth offline sensory interactions that link with meaningful digital content.

4.4 Strategic Summary and Implications

The previous section revealed that Maison Margiela established strong brand differentiation through its distinctive design approach and deconstructivity philosophy. The company faces three main challenges because of its restricted digital communication channels and its low social media presence and its struggle to balance its niche identity with mainstream appeal.

The Gen Z audience requires brands to deliver emotional brand philosophy connections while demanding active digital and offline touchpoints which Margiela's minimalist approach cannot fulfill.

The current situation indicates that the brand needs a strategic modification to enhance consumer interaction without damaging its fundamental identity. The following section will introduce a creative yet practical campaign strategy to enhance Margiela's connection with Gen Z consumers while maintaining the brand's fundamental philosophy.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The research examined Maison Margiela's present position in worldwide luxury market with specific focus on Generation Z consumers. The research combined PESTLE and SWOT analyses with primary semi-structured interview data to study Gen Z consumers' perceptions and interactions with the brand and their emotional bond to it.

The research findings showed that Margiela possesses three major strengths including its deep philosophical nature along with its avant-garde designs and artistic authenticity dedication. The Tabi boots along with the four white stitches and anonymous design approach maintain their strong appeal to the dedicated consumer segment of the brand. The brand faces limited social media presence and ambassador-free marketing combined with low consumer understanding of its deeper philosophy which hinders its digital growth potential.

The brand's consumers during interviews revealed they did not understand the philosophical aspects of the brand but they interpreted the message through visual elements such as four stitches and number labels. The approach of conveying values through design rather than explicit explanation makes Margiela's brand strategy successful.

The luxury market competition intensifies daily so Margiela needs to reinterpret its current philosophy in a manner that creates emotional connections with consumers. The brand needs to create meaningful immersive experiences that will let consumers both understand and emotionally connect with the brand philosophy.

The brand needs to evolve its historically nonactive communication approach which stems from its philosophical foundation. The brand needs an innovative marketing strategy that uses visual storytelling and emotional narratives to present its artistic essence and philosophical message while maintaining authentic branding.

The subsequent chapter presents a marketing approach which aligns with this strategic framework to help the brand engage Gen Z consumers while maintaining its core identity.

5.2 Recommendations

Campaign Title: Fragments of Margiela

The Fragments of Margiela campaign functions as a creative solution to unite Maison Margiela's philosophical essence with the emotional needs of Generation Z. The campaign works to build emotional bonds with Gen Z while boosting digital presence and creating a brand experience that connects both physical and digital spaces without altering Margiela's fundamental principles of deconstruction and experimentation and anonymity.

The SWOT analysis and consumer interview results showed that customers want to understand the brand philosophy through design elements and visual representations instead of receiving direct explanations. The campaign uses this understanding to provide consumers with an unobtrusive yet deep Margiela ethos experience.

1. Installations Inside Offline Stores



Figure 9: In-store artistic installations expressing Maison Margiela's philosophy of deconstruction and anonymity (created by the author)

- Symbolic sculptures or installation art pieces representing the brand's philosophy will be exhibited in key national and global Maison Margiela stores.
- For example, deconstructed mannequins or fabric draped over robotic arms will serve as symbolic representations of the brand's core values—deconstruction, identity, and anonymity.

- Each artwork will take on a unique form, creating a distinct emotional atmosphere and symbolic message in every store.

2. QR Code-Linked Digital Content

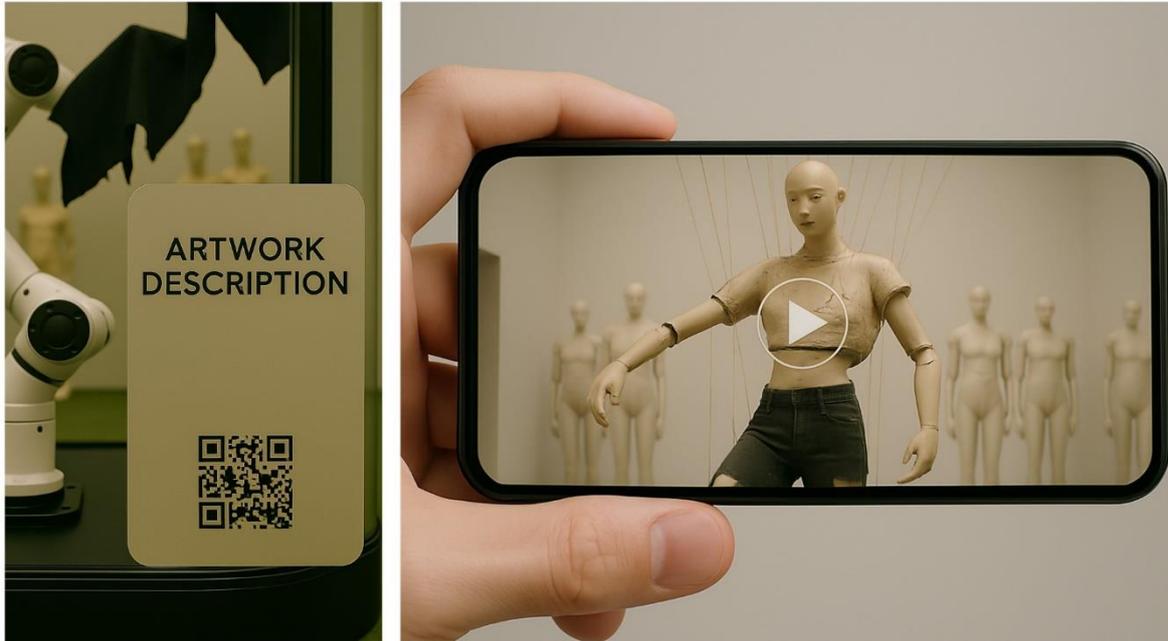


Figure 10: QR-linked digital interaction that connects in-store artistic installations with online storytelling (Created by the author)

- QR codes will be placed next to the installations, allowing consumers to access video content via mobile devices that explains the philosophy behind each artwork.
- This encourages a natural flow toward the brand's website and social media platforms, seamlessly connecting the offline experience to the online realm.

3. Social Media Amplification Strategy

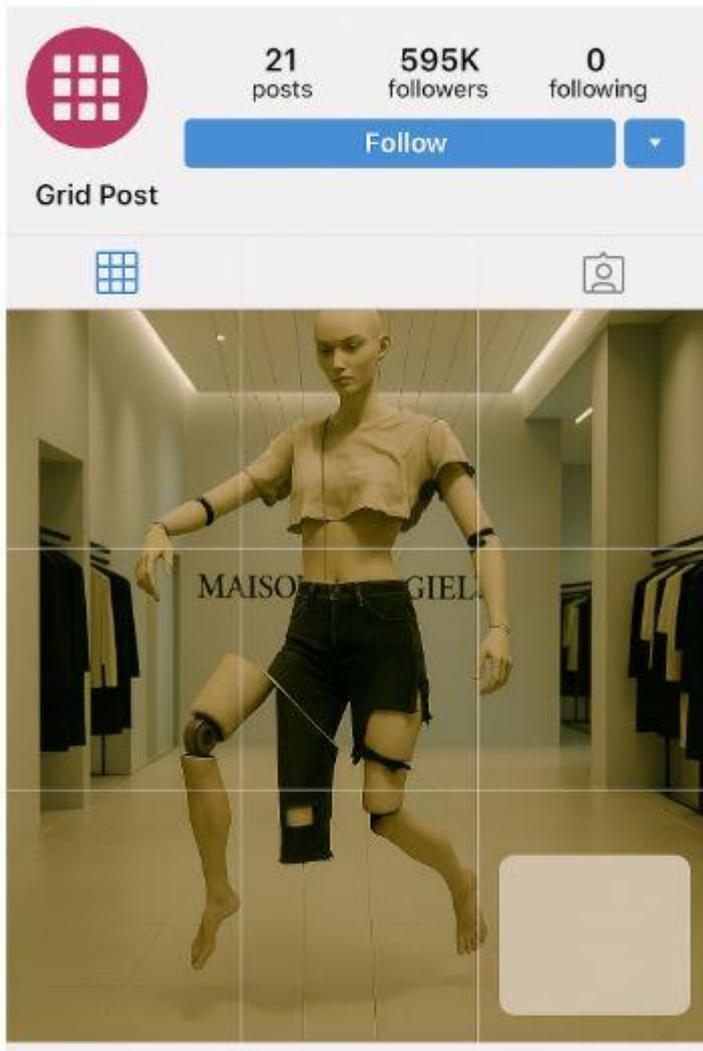


Figure 11: Example of Instagram grid strategy

- Create visually striking short videos featuring objects from the in-store art installations as the main subjects, and upload them to the brand’s social media accounts.
- Utilize a fragmented image layout (Instagram Grid) that reflects Margiela’s deconstructivity philosophy, delivering visual impact while experimenting beyond conventional social media posting formats.
- These posts will visually express the brand’s universe while sparking consumer curiosity and a desire to interpret the underlying meanings.

4. Minimalist Continuation of Brand Philosophy

- The entire campaign follows an experience-centered design approach rather than an explanation-based one.
- Consumers interpret the brand’s message sensorially—not by reading about its philosophy, but by viewing the installations, scanning QR codes, and exploring social media content.
- This approach reflects the expectations expressed by existing consumers—preserving Margiela’s experimental and artistic spirit without becoming overly mainstream.

Summary

Fragments of Margiela represents a strategic approach which creates empathetic brand experiences for Generation Z consumers while preserving both artistic and philosophical elements of the brand. The

campaign uses sculptural art and digital content and a social media grid strategy based on Margiela's emotional language to let consumers experience the brand philosophy instead of buying products. The experience functions as an open-ended dialogue which allows consumers to join the conversation and create their own interpretations. The initiative aims to build stronger emotional connections with the brand while increasing its presence across both digital and physical platforms through unified marketing efforts.

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7. Appendices

POLITICAL	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many European-based luxury brands secure political stability • Risks exist in certain regions (e.g., China, Russia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luxury market polarization: Growth in ultra-luxury, saturation in mid-tier segment • Gen Z values "value for money" as much as they value "value for values." • There is more emphasis on commemorative consumption than frequent consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gen Z is emerging as the leading consumer group in the luxury market • Brand philosophy • Increase in preference for offline stores • Relationship-based consumption via social media
TECHNOLOGICAL	LEGAL	ENVIRONMENTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerating Digital Transformation • Transformation of Social Media Structure • Content Communication Strategy is Emerging as a Key Competitive Advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased importance of protecting brand assets • Issues related to digital image theft and counterfeit goods • Expansion of ESG disclosures and labor/environmental regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable fashion is a necessity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Increase in demand for eco-friendly materials and transparency in production and distribution ◦ Waste reduction and resource recycling ◦ Carbon emission reduction and climate change response

Figure 1. Key external factors influencing Gen Z luxury consumption. (Source: Author's summary)

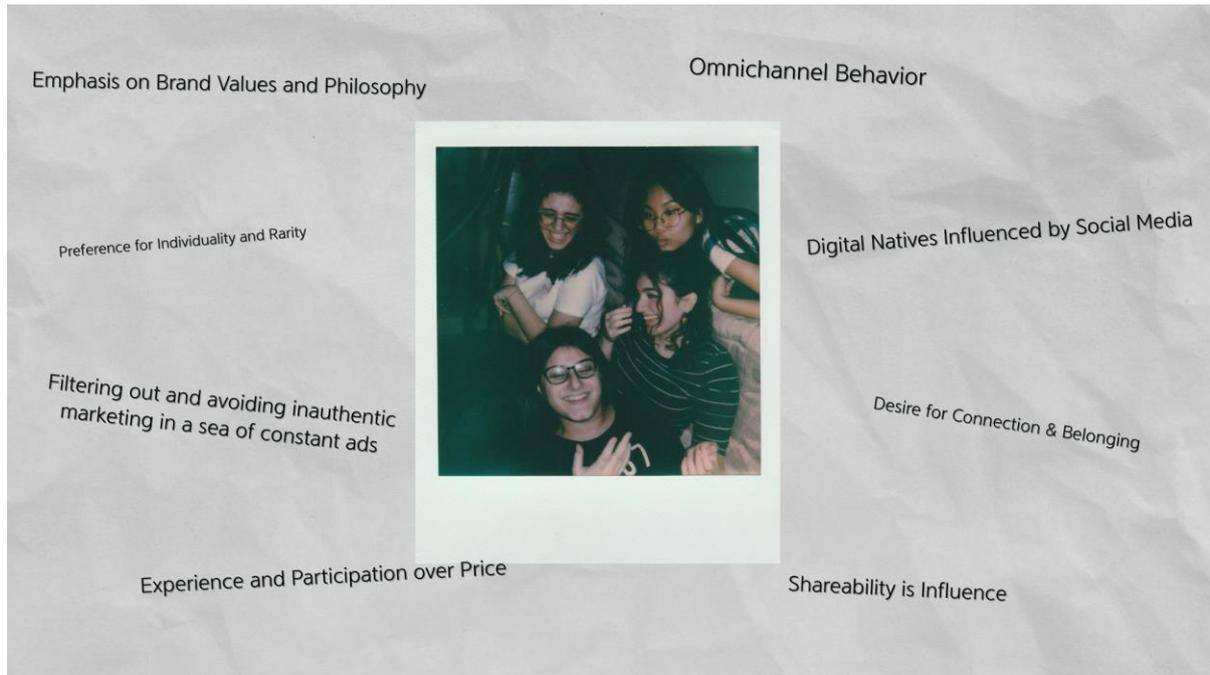


Figure 2. Visual summary of key behavioral traits and values among Generation Z luxury consumers. (Source: Author’s visual compilation)

Theme	Sub-theme	Research Objective	Interview Question
Shopping Preferences	Design-driven choices, brand loyalty	To explore the key factors driving Gen Z’s luxury purchase decisions.	Q1) Which luxury brands do you primarily consume and why?
Brand Perception	Niche vs fashion-forward brands	To understand how Gen Z consumers perceive Maison Margiela in relation to other luxury brands.	Q3) What do you think about Maison Margiela? Would you describe it as fashion-forward or niche?
Social Media Influence	Platform usage, influencer impact	To investigate how digital platforms and influencers affect brand engagement among Gen Z.	Q4) Which channels do you usually use to learn about luxury brands? Q6) Have you ever interacted with brands due to their marketing?
Offline Experience	Sensory impression, service experience	To examine how physical store environments shape luxury brand experience for Gen Z.	Q7) Have you had any memorable experiences at luxury brand stores?
Marketing Strategies	Ambassador marketing, ad receptivity	To analyze Gen Z’s responses to current luxury brand marketing strategies.	Q5) What marketing strategies do you think brands use today? Q6) Have they influenced your purchase decisions?

Figure 3. Interview Guide Table

Theme	Frequent Words / Phrases	Mention Frequency	Summary Insight
Design-driven Consumption	design, unique, don’t care about brand, weird, creative	5	Participants emphasized product design as a key factor in luxury purchases, highlighting their preference for unique, expressive aesthetics rather than conventional brand prestige.
Social Media as Discovery Tool	Instagram, TikTok, explore, visual, feed, post	6	Instagram was consistently mentioned as the main platform for discovering new collections and brands.
Perceived Positioning of Maison Margiela	niche, fashion-forward, fan base, Tabi shoes, identity	7	Maison Margiela was widely recognized for its distinct style, with some perceiving it as niche and others as fashion-forward.
Importance of Offline Experience	service, scent, interior, calm, friendly, different from fast fashion	5	Physical retail spaces left strong sensory impressions, especially through service, ambiance, and store layout.
Celebrity & Influencer Marketing Impact	celebrity, ambassador, Jennie, Blackpink, viral, advertisement	6	Marketing involving celebrities and influencers strongly influenced participants’ attention and purchase desire.

Figure 4. Thematic Coding Summary Based on Interview Data

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique Brand Identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Deconstructionist Philosophy ◦ Anonymity ◦ Artistry and Experimentalism • Innovative products • Loyal customer base • Highly regarded in the fashion and art world 	<p>S</p> <p>W</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of public awareness • Passive marketing strategy • Limited customer base • Polarizing design
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening communication with younger consumers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Social media and digital marketing ◦ Expanding online sales channels • Enhancing experience-based marketing 		<p>O</p> <p>T</p>

Figure 5: SWOT Analysis

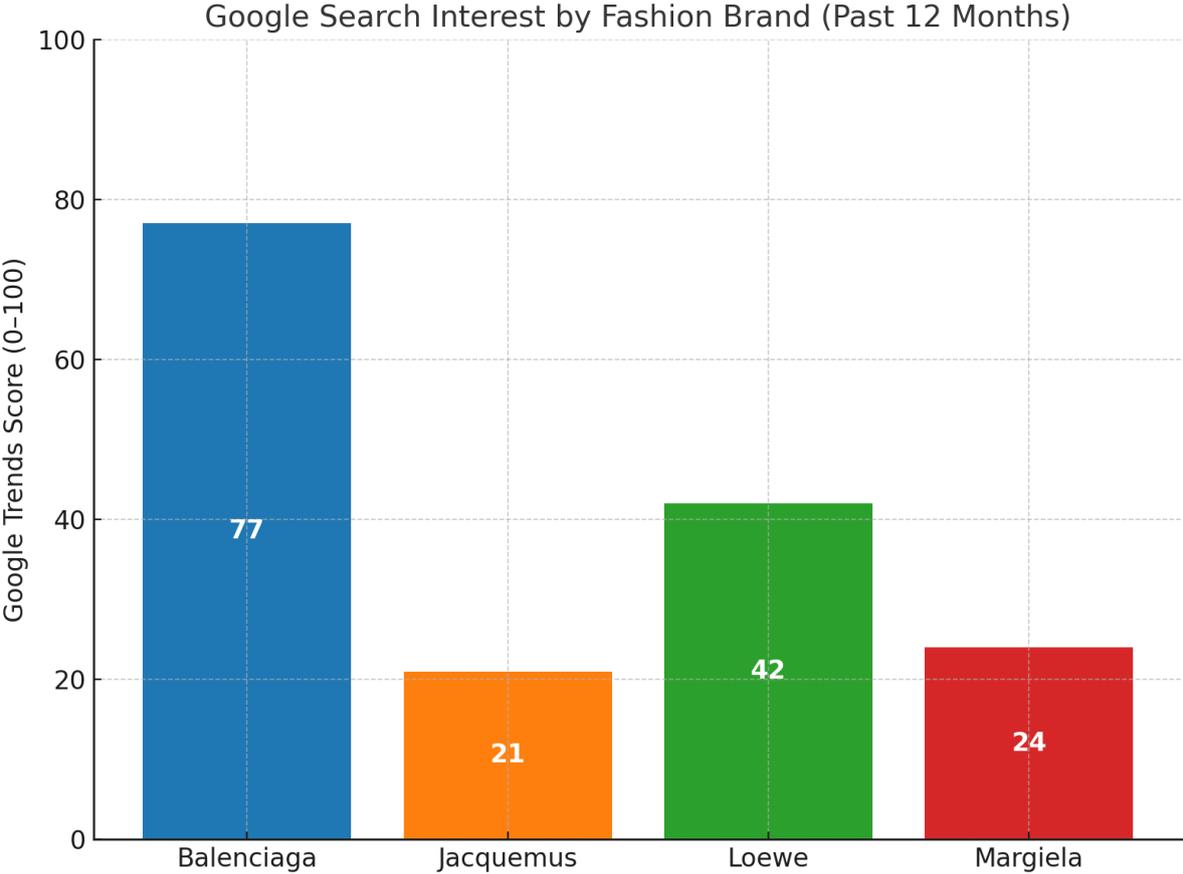


Figure 6. Google Search Interest Comparison Among Experimental Luxury Brands (Past 12 Months) (Source: Google Trends, 2025)

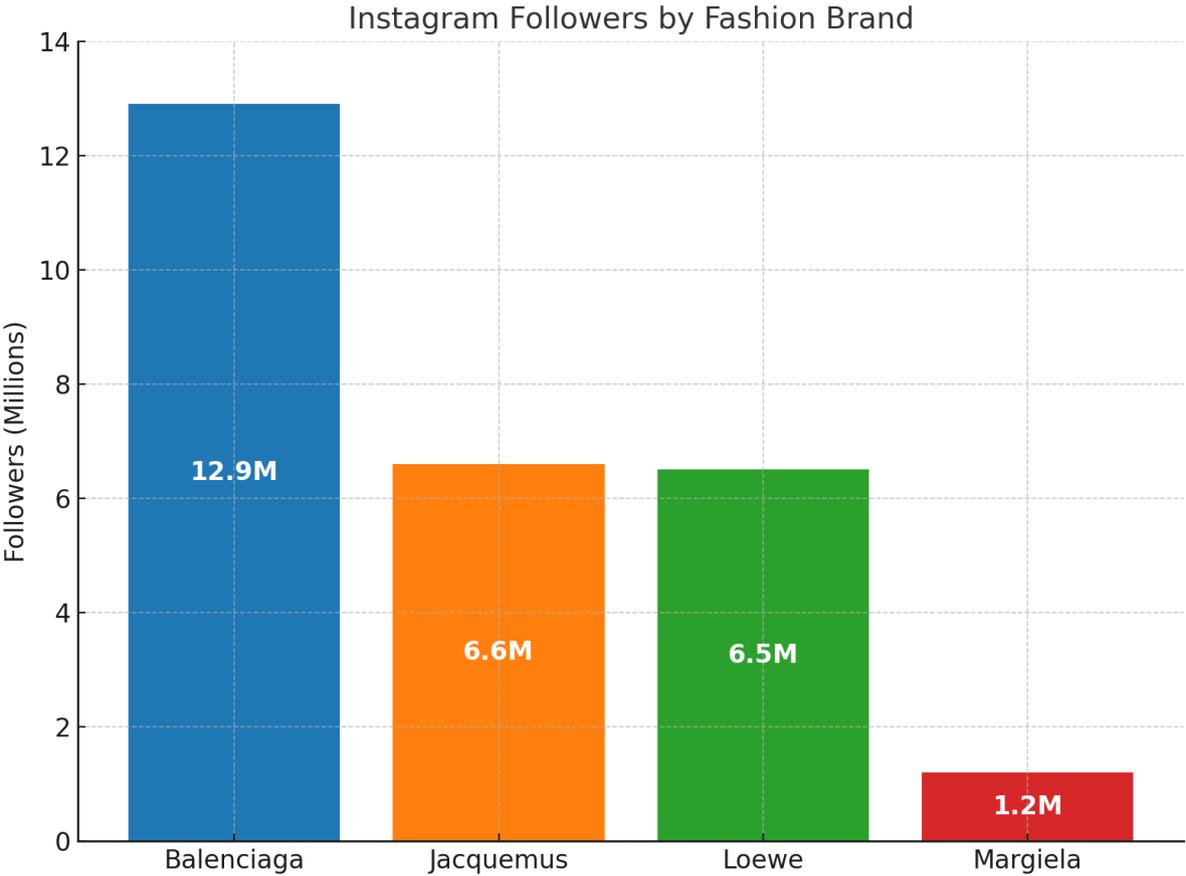


Figure 7. Instagram Followers of Experimental Luxury Brands with Artistic Positioning (Source: Author’s visualisation using Instagram data, 2025)



Figure 8: Visual Examples of Aggressive Celebrity and Campaign-Based Marketing by Competing Luxury Brands (Source: Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci, 2025)



Figure 9: In-store artistic installations expressing Maison Margiela’s philosophy of deconstruction and anonymity (created by the author)

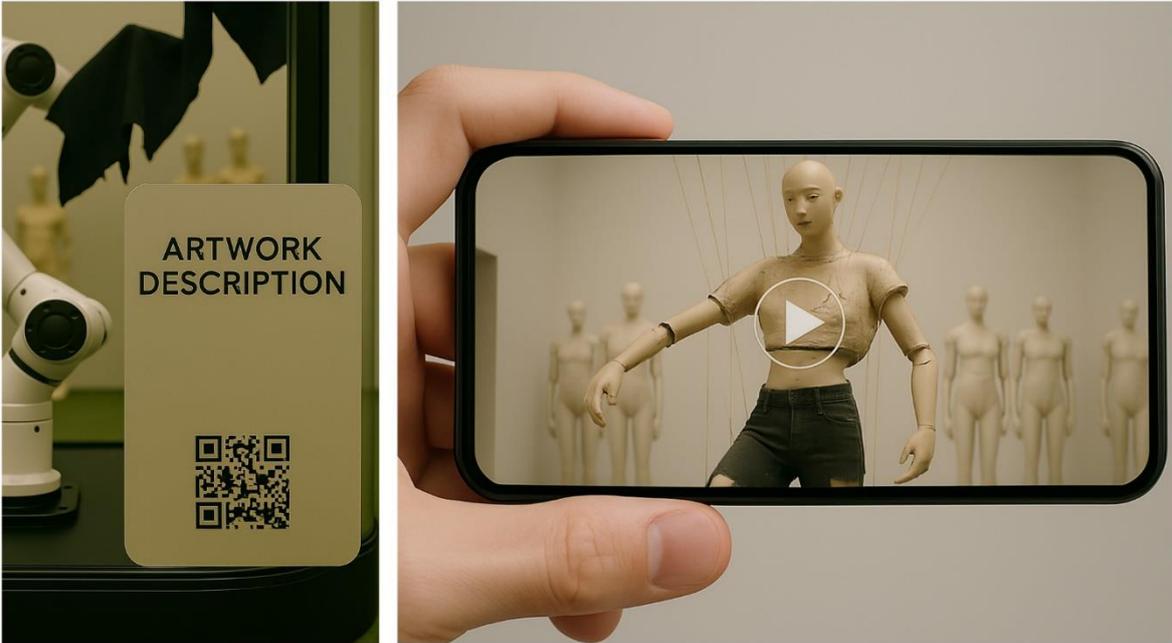


Figure 10: QR-linked digital interaction that connects in-store artistic installations with online storytelling (Created by the author)

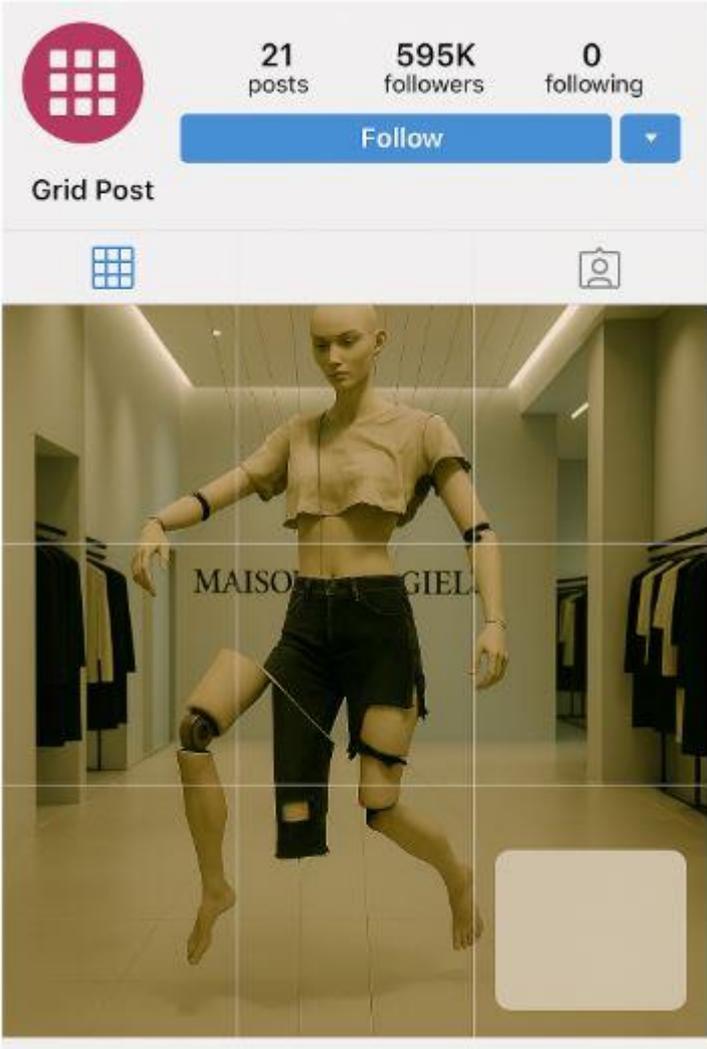


Figure 11: Example of Instagram grid strategy

Interview transcript

Interviewee 1

Me: Hello, my name is Seungtae Kim, and I am currently studying graduate Diploma Fashion Management course at LCF in the UK. For my graduation project I am working on a topic related to luxury fashion and part of the process involves gathering a consumer opinions. That's why I am requesting this interview. First of all, thank you very much for agreeing to participate. Please note that this interview will be recorded as proof for my school that I conducted it myself. I hope that's OK with you. Do you consent to being recorded?

Respondee: Yes

1.

ME: What luxury brands do you usually consume? And why?

Respondee: I mainly purchase from Balenciaga and Dior. The reason I'm drawn to Balenciaga is because of its unique designs, like the "ugly shoes" trend—they really catch my eye and make me want to buy more. As for Dior, I think it's currently one of the hottest brands among young men in Korea. It has a sleek, refined look that appeals to me and makes me want to invest in their products.

2.

ME: What do you think is the most popular luxury brand these days?

Respondee: I'd say Balenciaga, Louis Vuitton, and Dior.

ME: Why do you think so?

Respondee: Because I believe these three brands have the largest consumer base, which makes them the most popular.

3.

ME: Have you ever heard of the brand Maison Margiela?

Respondee: Yes

ME: What do you think about the brand Maison Margiela?

Respondee: I think Maison Margiela is known for its clean designs and signature exposed stitching. It also presents artistic pieces like the Tabi shoes, which really stand out.

4.

ME: Do you think Maison Margiela is a trend-leading brand, or more of a niche brand?

Respondee: I wouldn't say it leads fashion trends. I think it's more of a brand with a loyal niche following.

ME: Why do you think so?

Respondee: First, I don't think it's widely recognized by the general public. Even if people have heard of it, they usually only know specific items like the Tabi shoes or the exposed-stitch clothing. The brand itself isn't as well known beyond those key products.

5.

ME: Now moving on from Maison Margiela—when it comes to luxury brands these days, what kind of media do you usually use to get information?

Respondee: I usually get most of my information through Instagram. Especially when new collections are launched each season, I check out the latest products there. Based on that, I decide which items interest me and end up purchasing the ones that catch my eye.

6.

ME: What kind of marketing strategies do you think fashion brands are using these days, and what's your opinion on them?

Respondee: I think the biggest marketing strategy luxury brands are using right now is having famous singers or actors as brand ambassadors. This really helps increase brand awareness and promote their image. I believe it's the most effective strategy at the moment.

7.

ME: Has this kind of marketing strategy influenced your purchasing decisions?

Respondee: Yes, I think so. If a celebrity or singer who's working as an ambassador wears something that I find stylish or attractive, it often makes me want to buy it too.

8.

ME: Is there anything memorable from your recent visit to an offline luxury store?

Respondee: Yes, whenever I visit a luxury store, the signature fragrance of the brand really stands out to me. It enhances the sense of luxury and leaves a lasting impression.

9.

ME: Compared to other luxury brands, how would you describe Maison Margiela's market positioning?

Respondee: As I mentioned earlier, I think Maison Margiela isn't widely known among the general public. Its main consumer base seems to be brand enthusiasts or niche followers. Even among people who know the brand, most are only familiar with items like the Tabi shoes or the exposed-stitch logo pieces.

Interviewee 2

Me: Hello, my name is Seungtae Kim, and I am currently studying graduate Diploma Fashion Management course at LCF in the UK. For my graduation project I am working on a topic related to luxury fashion and part of the process involves gathering a consumer opinions. That's why I am requesting this interview. First of all, thank you very much for agreeing to participate. Please note that this interview will be recorded as proof for my school that I conducted it myself. I hope that's OK with you. Do you consent to being recorded?

Respondee: Yes

1.

Me : OK. Then, first question. Now, which luxury brands do you primarily consume and why?

Respondee: you mean, the first luxury brand I consumed? The first one

Me: yes

Respondee: That might be acne studio.

Me: Why you decided to consume?

Respondee: It was not the brand I'd liked a lot.

I think it was at shirt that I liked and then I was just went for the T-shirt, not for the brand to be honest, yeah.

2.

Me: The next question, which luxury brands do you think are the most popular recently and why?

Respondee: The most popular.

The brand that I've noticed that shows up a lot on social media.

I think it's coach because they have a very interesting advertisements going on, but I don't really think there's a most popular brand.

A lot of them are very popular yet, but coach really stands out because of that advertisement, I would say.

3.

Me: OK. And 3rd question, have you heard of the Mason Margela brands?

If so, what do you think about it and would you describe it as a fashion forward or niche brand and why?

Respondee:

I did heard of Maison Margiela.

I have a very good impression on this brand because they have a very unique design of their logo. Like very simple one. I don't think I would describe it as a fashion forward brand, but I would also not say it's a niche brand.

Because a lot of people know it. But. comparing to other luxury brands like.

For example, Prada or Louis Vuitton, I would say it's a niche brand. Because if I ask my parents about it, maybe they wouldn't know Prada.

They wouldn't know Gucci, but I wouldn't say they know Mason Margiela.

4.

Me: And which channels do you usually use to keep up with or learn more about luxury brands these days?

Respondee: I use Farfetch. In essence the most. Like not only you can shop on it, you can also like know a lot of fashion news. Yeah, about luxury brands, yeah.

5.

Me: What kinds of marketing strategies do you think luxury fashion brands are using these days?

Respondee: Most of them are likely focused on online marketing and promotions because brands need to connect with Gen Z consumers, who use social media a lot. As a result, they tend to post their marketing campaigns and advertisements on platforms like Instagram and TikTok much more than before.

6.

Me: Have you ever experienced or interacted with brands because of their marketing strategies?

Respondee: I don't interact with many brands because of their marketing strategies. Sometimes, I feel it's a bit overwhelming when there are too many advertisements showing up on my social media. It can feel very noisy.

However, if they post really good advertisements, like the one Coach made, I wouldn't mind.

7.

Me: And next question, have you had any memorable experiences at the luxury brand store recently?

Respondee: I usually shop online, but the Acne Studios experience was particularly memorable because the in-store decoration was really beautiful, and you could clearly see the difference between the service at a luxury brand store and a fast fashion store.

Fast fashion brands usually focus on quantity. They aim to sell as much as possible and often provide a lot of recommendations for different pieces of clothing that might suit you.

However, at the Acne Studios store, I didn't feel that way. They gave me the freedom to choose what I wanted. They don't focus on quantity but rather prioritize quality.

8.

Me: Last question compared to other luxury brands, how do you perceive Maison Margiela's positioning in the market?

Respondee: That's a very big question. I'll try to answer that. Maison Margiela.

So first of all, it's a luxury brand, it's pretty expensive. And then it has.

They're very unique brand, I mean design.

Like as compared to those very, very, very famous luxury brands, they have a more.

Unique design I would say like.

They have this thing on their logo that they have a lot of numbers on it that yeah and then they circle the product line. Yeah. And then I think it makes Maison Margiela stand out from all the luxury brands and make themselves unique

Me: Thank you for answer the all of the question and this is the end of my interview. Thank you for participate in my interview. Thank you.

Interviewee 3

Me: Hello, my name is Seungtae Kim, and I am currently studying graduate Diploma Fashion Management course at LCF in the UK. For my graduation project I am working on a topic related to luxury fashion and part of the process involves gathering a consumer opinions. That's why I am requesting this interview. First of all, thank you very much for agreeing to participate. Please note that this interview will be recorded as proof for my school that I conducted it myself. I hope that's OK with you. Do you consent to being recorded?

Respondee: Yes

1.

Me: OK. Then, first question. Now, which luxury brands do you primarily consume and why?

Respondee: I think it really depends on which products I'm looking at.

For example, if I ever want to buy purses or bags, I really like the designs of Dior.

But it usually comes down to whether I like the design or not — I don't specifically look for certain brand names.

If I like the design, then I think I'd purchase it.

It doesn't have to be Dior; it could be any brand.

I mainly focus on the design.

In terms of clothing, I would say I like Maje — that's how it's written in English, but I'm not sure how it's pronounced in French.

I really like that brand.

I like Dior shoes.

And for handbags, I usually go for LV or other brands.

I like Delvaux too — their bags are very simple and elegant.

2.

Me: OK. Then second question.

Which luxury brands do you think are the most popular recently and why?

Respondee: I think the classic lines like LV, Chanel, Hermès — not Dior so much lately because of the issue — well, not really an issue, but you know, something that came up about Dior, like, oh, their products are manufactured in China, blah blah blah. Because of that, I don't think Dior [is as popular now].

Oh, I know The Row is really popular among the younger generation, I know, but I haven't really looked into it yet.

I think the brands that are kind of mid-range price-wise are really popular these days — not necessarily like Hermès or Chanel — but some other brands. I can't really name them right now, but because younger people are consuming more and more luxury brands per se, I would say yes — brands that are geared towards younger people.

3.

Me: Third one, have you heard of the Maison Margiela brand? If so, what do you think about it? And would you describe it as a fashion forward or Niche brand and why?

Respondee: Yes, I know the brand. And I would say it is very fashion-forward.

I know their perfumes are really good too. I've seen them a lot. I don't think I've ever purchased one, but yeah. I've seen a lot of their products, like their accessories — like rings. I know what it looks like. And then I've seen a lot of shirts, like clothing, and then their bags as well.

Yeah, there was this bag that was really — I almost got it because it was really cute.

It was kind of different from the other products — like other classic products of Margiela.

So yeah. But I would say it is very fashion-forward.

It's very popular among the younger people again, yeah.

4.

Me: And next one, which channels do you usually use to keep up with or learn more about luxury brands these days?

Respondee: Instagram only. I think I do get a lot of emails from different brands, and I get magazines — or more like ads — from brands like Chanel or Hermès.

I don't really look through them, but I think I just go on Instagram, and that's usually the main channel I use.

I just look at different pictures, different ads, different videos or photos of celebrities wearing different stuff.

5.

Me: And next one and what kinds of marketing strategies do you think luxury brands are using these days? And how do you feel about them?

Respondee: I think a lot of brands are using celebrities and different influencers to promote their products.

I think that's one of the main strategies — or at least that's what I see a lot.

Yeah, for example, Jennie from BLACKPINK.

I know she's the ambassador of Chanel, and there are others for different brands.

I can't really think of them right now, but you know, like if a celebrity wears something in public and it goes viral, that's how the brands kind of boost their sales.

6.

Me: Okay, next one. Have you had any memorable experiences at luxury brand store recently?

If so, what was it?

Respondee: So I was in Korea recently — actually, up until about two weeks ago. I went to one of the LV stores in Seoul.

What I noticed was that one of the things that felt very different from American boutiques or stores was the level of hospitality — not just from the workers, but the overall atmosphere.

I would say it was very welcoming, much more so than the stores I've been to in the U.S.

In America, especially in places like New York, stores are usually really crowded and packed. It's hard to get someone to help you, and getting the attention you need can be very difficult.

But at the LV store in Korea that I visited, it was very quiet — not empty, but calm — and I was able to get assistance right away.

It was a really nice experience.

7.

Me: And last question.

Compared to other luxury brands, how do you perceive maison margiela's positioning in the market?

Respondee: It is definitely unique. I would say it has its own style. Well, it might not be for everybody. To be completely honest, I don't really own anything from that brand — not because I don't like it, but because it's just a different style. It's very street, very... I don't know how to explain it exactly, but it's just not my personal taste. That said, I do think it's a really nice brand. In terms of its positioning, I'd say it's very loved by many people, especially the younger generation. It has a strong fan base — a lot of people really love it for what it is and for its style. So overall, I think its positioning among luxury brands is very solid. Also, it feels more approachable than some other luxury brands, and I think that's a really good thing about Margiela.

Me: OK, thank you for all the wonderful answers. This is end of my interview. Thank you very much to participate in my interview

Margiela Interviewee 1

Me: Hello, my name is Seungtae Kim, and I am currently studying graduate Diploma Fashion Management course at LCF in the UK. For my graduation project I am working on a topic related to luxury fashion and part of the process involves gathering a consumer opinions. That's why I am requesting this interview. First of all, thank you very much for agreeing to participate. Please note that this interview will be recorded as proof for my school that I conducted it myself. I hope that's OK with you. Do you consent to being recorded?

Respondee: Yes

1.

Me: OK, then let's start it.

The first question when did you first know about Maison Margiela and what aspect of the brand attracted you?

Respondee: Yeah. Whenever I am a high school student I hear it from my brother.

About Maison Margiela

And yeah, I went to the shop and yeah, it was a very interesting display and mood so.

The yeah creative aspects are very attractive to me, I think.

2.

Me: And the next question, are you familiar with brand stories like history or philosophy?

Respondee: I'm not quite familiar with the brand story, but I know Margiela is a mysterious person.

So yeah, that's an interesting aspect.

3.

Me: does that thing influence your purchasing decisions of the Margiela?

Respondee: Not much, but as I said before.

brand image or whatever is really influencing my decision.

4.

Me: Have you ever encountered margela's marketing activities like advertisement or collaborations things?

Respondee: Yeah, I have. mostly in, mostly on Instagram.

Me: What was it?

Respondee: Many collaborations or the news launching new corrections.

Yeah, and oh, youtube also, because I often see fashion shows.

5.

Me: Then next question, how would you describe the appeal of Maison Margiela product compared to other brands?

Respondee: Margiela's designs are minimal and deconstructive, and the four-stitches label is a subtle, understated alternative to a bold logo.

6.

Me: Do you frequently purchase Maison Margiela's products?

Respondee: No, I think

7.

Me: How do your frequently of your purchases compare to other brands?

Respondee: Not like mix styling with other brands. So maybe the frequency the less than other brands. But like fragrances, so sometimes I. My yeah, my choice

8.

Me: What areas do you think Margiela needs to improve?

Respondee: Since John Galliano left, the position has now been vacant. I think they need to appoint another famous creative director, because Galliano was quite influential.

9.

Me: OK. And next question, in which direction do you hope to see Margiela evolve in the future?

Respondee: I hope the brand continues in an avant-garde direction, keeping Margiela's DNA and aesthetic, while also blending it with the vision of other creative directors.

10.

Me: Do you feel that Margiela has become more mainstream, or does it still feel like a niche brand?

Respondee: I feel it's become mainstream. As far as we know.

Me: This is the end of my interview. Thank you for participating in and answering all the questions. Yeah, thank you.

Respondee: Thank you.

Margiela Interviewee 2

Me: Hello, my name is Seungtae Kim, and I am currently studying graduate Diploma Fashion Management course at LCF in the UK. For my graduation project I am working on a topic related to luxury fashion and part of the process involves gathering a consumer opinions. That's why I am requesting this interview. First of all, thank you very much for agreeing to participate. Please note that this interview will be recorded as proof for my school that I conducted it myself. I hope that's OK with you. Do you consent to being recorded?

Respondee: Yes

1.

Me: When did you first discover Maison Margiela, and what aspects of the brand attracted you to it?

Respondee: It was around 6 or 7 years ago. I saw some people wearing what looked like gowns in a department store on the internet, and I got curious. When I looked it up, I found out it was Margiela. So I got curious and decided to visit the department store in person. That's how I came to know more about the brand by visiting the Margiela store myself.

2.

Me: Are you familiar with the brand's story — its history or philosophy, for example? Do these elements influence your purchasing decisions?

Respondee: No, I do know about the brand's history and philosophy, but I don't think those things really influence my purchasing decisions.

As a consumer, I think factors like design and price have a much bigger impact on what I choose to buy.

3.

Me: Have you ever come across Margiela's activities such as their advertisements, social media, or collaborations? If so, where did you see them?

Respondee: I've seen them a lot.

Mostly on Margiela's official Instagram, and also on the Instagram accounts of the brands they collaborate with.

4.

Me: How would you describe the appeal of Margiela's products compared to other brands?

Respondee: Margiela doesn't seem to follow trends. In my opinion, they focus on their own unique identity when designing and launching products, and I think that's their biggest appeal. Also, the distinctive numbering system and stitching that Margiela is known for are major attractive points. I'd say these elements give customers a sense of belonging.

5.

Me: The next question is: Do you purchase Margiela products often? Compared to other luxury brands, how frequently do you buy from Margiela

Respondee: Most of my clothes are purchased from Margiela. Whenever I need to buy clothes, it's definitely the first place I visit. Compared to other luxury brands, I think Margiela is more affordable, so I buy from them more often.

6.

Me: May I ask if there are any areas where you think Maison Margiela could improve?

Respondee: Since Margiela's concept and philosophy are quite strong and distinctive, sometimes it feels a bit difficult for consumers to approach. I think it would be good if they could soften that a little and make it easier for more people to connect with the brand.

7.

Me: May I ask, what direction would you like to see Margiela develop in the future?

Respondee: I hope Margiela doesn't become too commercialized. Many luxury brands tend to become overly mainstream as they focus on sales, and I hope Margiela doesn't go down that path.

In the past, it was more of a niche, cult brand, but these days it feels like too many people are wearing it as it's becoming more popular. I'd like it to maintain that niche brand feeling.

Me: This is the end of my interview. Thank you for participating in my interview

Respondee: Thank you