

HOW DO LATER MILLENNIAL WOMEN IN THE UK MAKE SENSE OF AFFORDABLE LUXURY FASHION IN DAILY LIFE, AND HOW DOES AGEING, LIFE STAGE AND THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS INFLUENCE THEIR FASHION CHOICES?

Abstract: This academic poster explores how later millennial women in the UK engage and interact with affordable luxury fashion brands whilst experiencing life stage transitions and economic pressures. Self-Determination Theory and Brand Identity Prism frameworks provide a conceptual lens for the research aims, objectives and analysis. Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed using advanced thematic analysis. The research findings reveal that Later Millennial women show selective attention to brands, in opposition to traditional loyalty. This demographic prioritises self competence (quality, fit, functionality) over status signalling. Other significant findings include participants' explicit distinction between youth focussed fashion and age appropriate styling, in addition to clear evidence of brand-consumer misalignment across multiple BIP facets. The study challenges existing assumptions about millennial consumer behaviours and highlights the commercial significance of this underserved demographic.



CONSUMER PROFILE:

LATER MILLENNIAL WOMEN

36-44 YEARS OLD

MANY LATER MILLENNIAL WOMEN ARE NAVIGATING A COMPLEX LIFE STAGE- OFTEN BALANCING MULTIPLE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES SUCH AS CARING FOR RELATIVES, MOTHERHOOD, MARRIAGE AND CAREER DEMANDS.

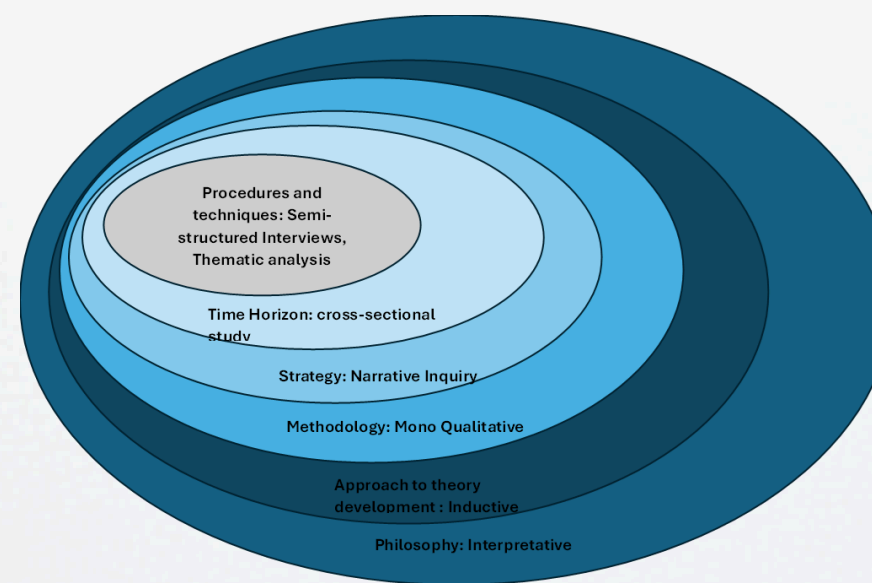
THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS IS RESHAPING CONSUMER PRIORITIES, HOWEVER THERE IS LIMITED RESEARCH EXPLORING ITS INFLUENCE ON LATER MILLENNIAL WOMEN'S FASHION CHOICES AND IDENTITY.

FAMOUS LATER MILLENNIAL WOMEN



METHODOLOGY:

8 SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
 GROUNDED IN HERMENEUTIC INTERPRETIVISM, WITH A RELATIVIST/CONSTRUCTIVIST ONTOLOGY
 QUALITATIVE DESIGN, GUIDED BY NARRATIVE INQUIRY
 DATA ANALYSED USING PRINCIPLES OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS (BRAUN & CLARKE, 2013)



ADAPTED RESEARCH ONION SAUNDERS ET AL. (2023)

THEORETICAL LENSES: SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY (SDT) AND BRAND IDENTITY PRISM (BIP).

KEY THEMES:

Self Competence = fit, quality & design:

"COMFORT FIRST. I WANT TO FEEL PUT-TOGETHER, CLASSY, NEAT, AND PRESENTABLE, NOT A MESS. FIT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME." - P5

Perceived value, brand connections and relationships:

"FOR ME, AFFORDABLE LUXURY IS STILL LUXURY, IT'S NOT EVERYDAY WEAR. IT'S SOMETHING I'LL CHERISH, WITH BETTER QUALITY AND LONGEVITY." - P2

Life stage, ageing and self-perception:

"(SOCIETY) MAKES OUT LIKE YOU'RE CONSTANTLY EXPIRING. LIKE YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME AND THERE'S ALWAYS A NEWER, YOUNGER MODEL AVAILABLE." P3

Self Projection:

"MY INNER SELF AND OUTER SELF DON'T FEEL ALIGNED... INSIDE I WANT TO BE GLAMOROUS, BUT I DRESS MORE BASIC, MORE 'MUMSY.'" P6

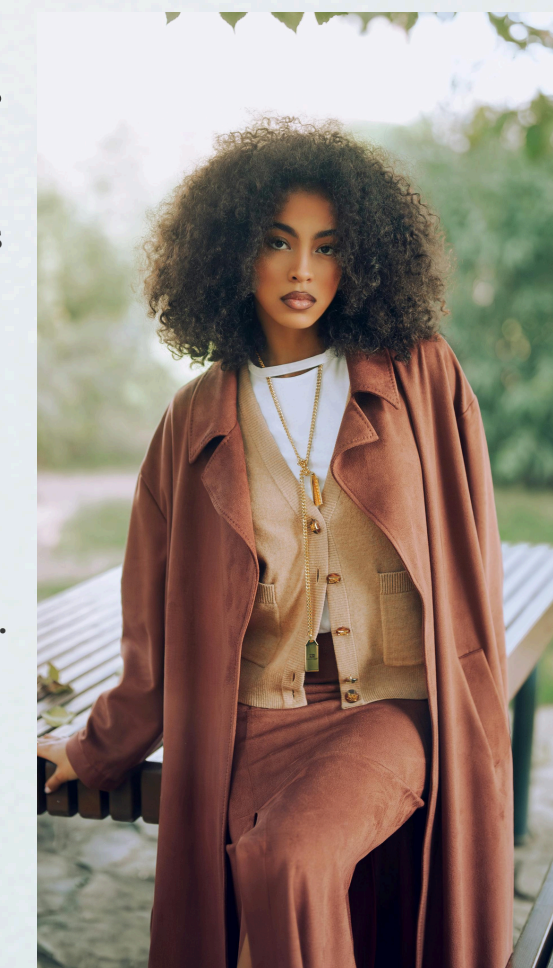
Consumer choice and shopping preferences:

"AFFORDABLE LUXURY IS SOMETHING MIDDLE-CLASS PEOPLE CAN AFFORD WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK, BUT NOT SOMETHING YOU BUY OFTEN - MAYBE TWO OR THREE TIMES A YEAR." - P7

FINDINGS: The study challenges existing assumptions about Later millennial consumer behaviours and highlights the commercial significance of this underserved demographic.

Later Millennial women value fashion as a means of autonomous self-expression and identity signalling. Many participants described themselves as being in a transitional life stage, and discussed a tension between their inner and outer selves. These women show selective attention to brands, engaging with them when products support feelings of self competence through fit, design, and quality, rather than displaying blind brand loyalty.

Other significant findings include participants' explicit distinction between youth-focussed fashion and age-appropriate styling, in addition to clear evidence of fashion brand-consumer misalignment across multiple BIP facets.



RECCOMENDATIONS:

- Later millennial women prioritise quality, longevity, and comfort over fashion trends. Brands should avoid youthful designs and fit that risk alienation.
- Brands must address ageing and body changes by improving fit, sizing, and inclusive design that balances style with comfort.
- Time constraints and lifestyle demands mean that Later Millennial Women expect smooth omnichannel experiences, easy and accessible information and smooth online/offline integration are essential.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS:

- Lack of a universal definition of affordable luxury limits comparability across studies.
- Small, UK-based sample means findings are not statistically generalisable, however, the study still offers rich qualitative insight.
- Further research should explore cross cultural differences in ageing, identity, and fashion consumption.