

# Bringing luxury service to your screen:

An exploratory study on how AI virtual assistants can help luxury fashion brands elevate and improve customer engagement on their e-commerce platforms amongst the Gen Z of UK.

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## Declaration Page

*I declare that no portion of the work referred to in this project has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification at this or any other university or institution of learning. In the preparation of this project, I have received guidance solely through academic supervision from Shushan Karapetyan.*

*I, Yaana Siroya, certify that this dissertation is my original work. I have duly acknowledged all sources and references used. No part of this MA project has been plagiarised or submitted elsewhere.*

## Generative AI Acknowledgement Statement

*I acknowledge the use of OpenAI's ChatGPT used periodically between June–September 2025, in the developmental stages of this dissertation. I did not use generative AI to produce unaltered content submitted as my own. Instead, I used it as a writing and structuring aid to: (a) paraphrase dense passages for concision, (b) reduce word count while preserving meaning and academic tone, (c) suggest synonyms/terminology and resolve repetition, (d) check logical flow and coherence against my conceptual framework, (e) distil long sections into short, poster-ready text blocks, (f) format Harvard references consistently, (g) transform narrative recommendations into tables/figures, and (h) refine clarity and readability for a mixed academic/managerial audience.*

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# **Abstract**

## **Research Context:**

This study investigates the intersection of luxury fashion retail, artificial intelligence (AI), and Generation Z consumer behaviour within the UK context. Luxury fashion, traditionally defined by exclusivity, craftsmanship, and in-store intimacy, faces increasing pressure to translate these values into digital environments. With AI emerging as a transformative force in e-commerce, AI-powered virtual assistants (AIVAs) present new opportunities to replicate and enhance luxury experiences online. However, limited research exists on how these tools can bridge the gap between luxury's symbolic and emotional dimensions and the efficiency-driven nature of digital retail.

## **Purpose:**

The purpose of this research is threefold: first, to investigate how AIVAs can influence consumer engagement across cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions; second, to identify the most effective features and potential challenges in luxury adoption; and third, to explore the future role of AIVAs in augmenting, human-centred luxury experiences.

## **Design/Methodology/Approach:**

Adopting an interpretivist, qualitative, and inductive research design, the study employed a multi-method approach consisting of semi-structured interviews with Gen Z consumers, AI technological industry insiders, and a luxury brand professional, complemented by a focus group. Data were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's framework, with theoretical grounding in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory.

## **Findings:**

The study reveals that Gen Z consumers value AIVAs not only for efficiency and convenience but also for their ability to deliver emotional resonance, aesthetic alignment, and symbolic value. Key features influencing adoption include anthropomorphism, brand-aligned tone of voice, hyper-personalisation, and transparency in data usage. AIVAs were found to enhance cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement, reinforcing luxury's exclusivity in a digital environment. However, concerns remain regarding authenticity, trust, and the potential erosion of in-store intimacy.

**Originality and Value:**

This research contributes to academic discourse by extending TAM with symbolic and affective constructs from U&G, offering a holistic framework for AI adoption in luxury fashion. Managerially, it provides actionable insights for luxury brands on designing AI touchpoints that balance technological innovation with heritage-driven exclusivity. The findings highlight how AIVAs can serve as digital brand ambassadors, fostering trust, loyalty, and identity expression among Gen Z consumers while redefining the future of luxury e-commerce.

**Keywords:**

Luxury fashion, AI virtual assistants, Generation Z, customer engagement, personalisation, Technology Acceptance Model, Uses and Gratifications theory, digital exclusivity

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AI: Artificial Intelligence

VA: Virtual Assistants

U&G: User & Gratifications

TAM: Technology Acceptance Model

PU: Perceived Usefulness

PEOU: Perceived Ease of Use

FCP: Focus Group Consumer Participant

CP: Consumer Participant

IP: Industry Participant

TIP: Technology Industry Participant

*Chapter 1*

*Introduction*

## 1.1 Background and Context

Globalisation and the ongoing transformation of economies and societies towards new organisational models have significantly influenced academic discourse and reshaped numerous industries. Among them, the fashion sector has been particularly impacted by digital transformation, which has altered both market structures and consumer behaviour (Andò et al., 2019).

Bertola and Teunissen (2018) argue, fashion represents a highly relevant context for analysing the implications of Industry 4.0 defined as the fourth industrial revolution marked by the integration of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and automation into production and service systems. Crucially, fashion should not be viewed as a passive recipient of these technological shifts, rather, it is a dynamic, forward-moving industry that not only adapts to but also actively shapes digital innovation and influences the daily lives of individuals.

Despite the rapid acceleration of digitalisation, many luxury brands have yet to fully adapt into the digital environment. Historically, luxury brands have approached digital channels with caution, driven by concerns that online exposure could erode their aura of exclusivity (Kapferer, 2014; Okonkwo, 2007). Traditionally, luxury has been anchored in delivering highly personalised, in-store experiences that reflect a brand's unique identity and craftsmanship (Kapferer, 1997). However, the narrative has now evolved, instead of questioning whether to go online, luxury brands are now asking how to enter the digital space strategically and how best to leverage digital tools without compromising brand values.

While the momentum towards digital transformation in the luxury sector is evident, empirical academic research in this area remains limited. Most existing studies focus on the typology and design of luxury websites (Geerts, 2013; Dall'Olmo Riley & Lacroix, 2003; Seringhaus, 2005) or on consumer engagement with luxury brands via social media (Phan, 2011). What

remains underexplored is how digital platforms can be enhanced to replicate the emotional depth, sense of exclusivity, and personalisation that define the in-store luxury experience.

In this increasingly competitive environment, AI has emerged as a critical enabler of innovation, offering advanced tools for marketing, operations, and customer experience enhancement (Brock, 2021; Haleem et al., 2022; West et al., 2018). The fashion industry now applies AI to consumer-facing services that influence engagement and brand perception (Guo et al., 2023; Liang et al., 2020; Pereira et al., 2022; Sohn et al., 2020).

One notable development is the use of AI virtual assistants, intelligent systems capable of simulating human dialogue and providing real-time, personalised conversational support (Noskova, 2022). When embedded with anthropomorphic (human-like) features, these assistants go beyond task automation to foster deeper emotional and cognitive engagement, enhancing their problem-solving capacity and ability to create value in digital brand interactions (Heidersbach, 2022).

Table 1 - Overview of Key AI Virtual Assistant Types in Fashion E-Commerce

Type	Description	Example in Luxury Fashion
Rule-Based Chatbot	Operates on scripted logic and predefined flows.	FAQ bots on Burberry's site
Conversational AI	Context-aware with limited natural language understanding.	Product queries and appointment scheduling
Generative AI Virtual Assistant	Uses machine learning to generate human-like responses dynamically.	Farfetch iFetch style assistant

Author's Own

For luxury fashion brands, AI virtual assistants offer a strategic advantage by enabling personalised shopping experiences, predictive styling, and refined consumer insights all of which are highly valued by Generation Z, a digitally native and hyper-connected demographic (Akram et al., 2022; Shirkhani et al., 2023; Silva et al., 2020; Xue et al., 2023).

Retailers have adopted these AI-driven assistants to perform roles traditionally held by human sales staff (Huang & Rust, 2018). Far from simply replacing human service, these systems are reshaping how luxury brands can interact with their audiences, offering more intuitive, responsive, and emotionally intelligent forms of digital engagement (Moussawi et al., 2021; Salem et al., 2013). For Gen Z consumers, who expect immersive, value-aligned, and interactive experiences, virtual assistants represent a new frontier in how relationships with luxury brands are formed and maintained (van Doorn et al., 2017).

## **1.2 Rationale**

This study is justified on three key grounds: the pressing relevance of the topic in today's context, the limited existing academic research in this area, and the need for a comprehensive understanding across the luxury fashion sector.

### ***1.2.1 Market Relevance and Timeliness***

The luxury fashion industry is entering a transformative era, driven by the rapid rise of Generation Z and the growing demand for digital integration (Donvito et al., 2024). By 2035, Gen Z is expected to account for 40% of global luxury purchases (Bain & Company, 2020), reshaping how brands must engage with their audiences. Moreover, limited research has explored the underlying motivations driving Gen Z consumers to engage in luxury purchases (Ceballos & Bejarano, 2018; Pasricha et al., 2020). It is said that this demographic is digitally native, socially conscious, and emotionally driven, expecting immersive, personalised, and ethically aligned brand interactions (Grewal, Mehta, & Kardes, 2004).

The global luxury customer base is projected to grow to 450 million by 2025, fuelled largely by the expanding younger generations (Bain & Company, 2020). These shifts create an urgent need for luxury brands to rethink their strategies, particularly in how they use digital tools to deliver meaningful and exclusive experiences (Chung et al., 2020; Batley, 2021). AI-

powered virtual assistants are emerging as a key solution, offering brands a way to meet Gen Z's expectations for both convenience and emotional engagement in an increasingly competitive market.

### ***1.2.2 Emerging Academic Inquiry***

While the adoption of AI in customer service and e-commerce has gained substantial attention in business and technology research (Lee & Li, 2023), its specific application within the luxury fashion sector particularly in relation to user engagement and emotional experience remains underexplored (Ranjan and Upadhyay, 2024). Existing literature has primarily concentrated on the functional and operational benefits of AI, such as automation, efficiency, and basic customer support (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). However, these utilitarian perspectives often neglect the symbolic, affective, and experiential elements that are central to luxury consumption (Eastman et al., 2018).

There is a lack of research examining how AI virtual assistants can move beyond transactional interactions to create relational value and emotional resonance (Yoon, Choi and Lee, 2025), factors that are increasingly important for Gen Z consumers. By integrating TAM with the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory, this study addresses a gap in current literature, offering a more comprehensive view of how AI virtual assistants can influence both functional and emotional aspects of consumer engagement in luxury fashion.

### ***1.2.3 Holistic Sector Scope***

Given the fast-evolving nature of both consumer expectations and technological capabilities, there is a need for a comprehensive, industry-specific analysis that captures the full scope of transformation within the luxury fashion sector. While operational uses of AI are well-documented (Guo et al., 2023; Liang et al., 2020), the application of AI in customer-facing roles remains underexplored, especially in the context of luxury.

This study takes a holistic view by not only examining the technological functionality of AI virtual assistants but also evaluating their ability to deliver on core luxury values such as exclusivity, personalisation, and emotional depth. By focusing specifically on Generation Z consumers in the UK, the research offers targeted insights into how AI can be leveraged to bridge the gap between high-tech innovation and high-touch luxury service, making it relevant for both academic inquiry and managerial application.

### **1.3 Overarching Research Question**

What are the expectations of Gen Z in the UK regarding luxury fashion e-commerce, and how can AI virtual assistants enhance these platforms to improve engagement and personalisation among this demographic?

### **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

#### **1.4.1 Aim**

This study aims to investigate how AI virtual assistants can enhance the online shopping experience of Gen Z luxury consumers in the UK by improving personalisation and customer engagement and explore how this technology can enable luxury brands to offer more exclusive services through their e-commerce platforms.

#### **1.4.2 Objectives**

1. To critically analyse existing literature on AI-driven e-commerce, AI chatbots, virtual assistants, consumer behaviour in luxury fashion, and Gen Z shopping preferences to establish a theoretical foundation.
2. To explore Gen Z consumers' perceptions and expectations of AI-powered features in luxury fashion e-commerce through qualitative primary research.
3. To understand the role of AI virtual assistants in facilitating personalised interactions and enhancing customer experience in luxury fashion e-commerce.

- To provide managerial insights for luxury fashion brands on using AI virtual assistants to enhance e-commerce platforms, boost engagement and personalisation among Gen Z in the UK and differentiate their market position through luxurious experience.

Working Venn Diagram - Illustrating the overlap between Gen Z luxury consumers, AI technology and AI Virtual Assistants

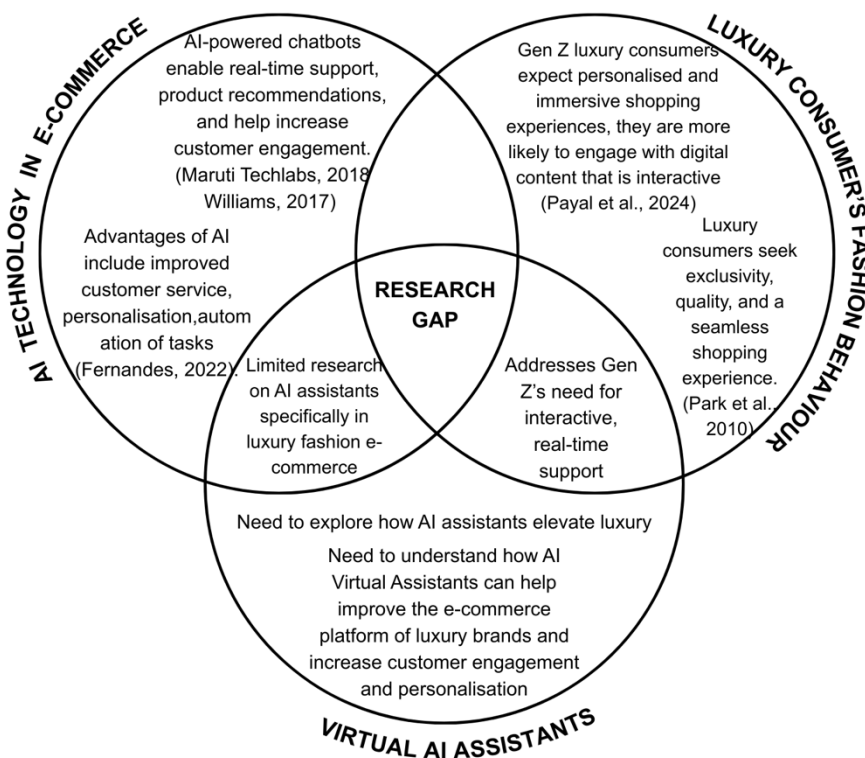


Figure 1.1 The Venn Diagram  
 Adapted from John Venn, (1880)

## **1.5 Theoretical and Managerial Contributions**

### ***1.5.1 Theoretical Contribution***

This study contributes to academic literature by expanding the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) through the integration of affective and symbolic constructs drawn from the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory. While TAM has been widely applied to understand technology adoption, it is often limited to utilitarian constructs such as perceived usefulness and ease of use.

In the context of luxury fashion and Gen Z consumers, this framework alone is insufficient. By combining TAM with U&G, this research proposes a more holistic theoretical model that captures emotional engagement, identity reinforcement, and aesthetic appeal factors highly influential in digitally mediated luxury experiences. This integrated approach not only addresses a current gap in theory but also adapts classical adoption models to a new generation of consumers and a digitally transformed luxury landscape.

### ***1.5.2 Managerial Contribution***

From a practical standpoint, this research offers strategic insights for luxury fashion brands navigating digital transformation. As Gen Z consumers continue to grow in number and purchasing power, understanding their preferences, behaviours, and expectations has become essential for long-term brand success. AI-powered virtual assistants offer a promising channel for meaningful engagement.

This study identifies key features and interaction styles that resonate with Gen Z, helping brands tailor AI experiences that uphold the exclusivity and intimacy traditionally associated with luxury. Managers can use these findings to design AI virtual assistants with touchpoints that do more than transactional functions, enabling more personalised, emotionally engaging, and brand-aligned experiences for Gen Z consumers.

## **1.6 Overview of proposed research design**

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretivist research design to examine how AI virtual assistants influence engagement and personalisation among Gen Z consumers in the UK luxury fashion market. Drawing on Saunders et al.'s (2019) Research Onion framework, the research is grounded in an interpretivist epistemology, the research acknowledges that luxury consumption is shaped by subjective meanings, emotions, and digital behaviour.

A qualitative and inductive approach is most appropriate, as it allows for deeper exploration of Gen Z's motivations, particularly those tied to identity, emotional connection, and symbolic value. The study will employ 4–6 semi-structured interviews and 1 focus group (6-8 participants) to gather both individual and collective insights. Participants will be selected using purposive sampling, targeting luxury insiders and Gen Z consumers (aged 18–27) with prior experience in luxury fashion e-commerce

Data will be analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, enabling patterns to be identified across constructs drawn from both the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory. This method is particularly relevant as it supports a richer understanding of both the functional and emotional aspects of AI use in luxury settings. All ethical considerations, including informed consent and data confidentiality, will be carefully observed.

## 1.7 Chapter Outline

Table 1.2 An overview of the papers structure is conveyed in the table below, outlining each chapter and its contents

Chapter	Title	Contents
Chapter 1	Introduction	This chapter outlines the background of the study, the rationale for exploring AI virtual assistants in luxury fashion, and the growing influence of Gen Z consumers. It introduces the research aim, objectives, and research question, while also highlighting the theoretical and managerial contributions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research design and structure of the dissertation.
Chapter 2	Literature Review	This chapter critically reviews existing literature on luxury fashion digitalisation, Gen Z consumer traits, AI technology in retail, and key theoretical models including TAM and U&G. It identifies current research gaps, develops the conceptual foundation for the study, and justifies the need for further investigation.
Chapter 3	Methodology	Chapter 3 details the philosophical stance and methodological approach guiding the research. It explains the choice of qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups, outlines the sampling technique, and discusses ethical procedures. Thematic analysis is introduced as the selected method for data interpretation.

Chapter	Title	Contents
Chapter 4	Findings & Discussion	This chapter presents the primary findings from the qualitative research, organised into key themes. It interprets these findings through the lens of TAM and U&G, linking them to Gen Z's expectations of AI and digital luxury experiences.
Chapter 5	Conclusion & Recommendations	The final chapter summarises the key insights in relation to the research aim and objectives. It outlines theoretical and managerial implications, addresses limitations, and provides recommendations for future research and practical applications in the luxury retail sector.

Author's own

## **Chapter 2**

### ***Literature Review***

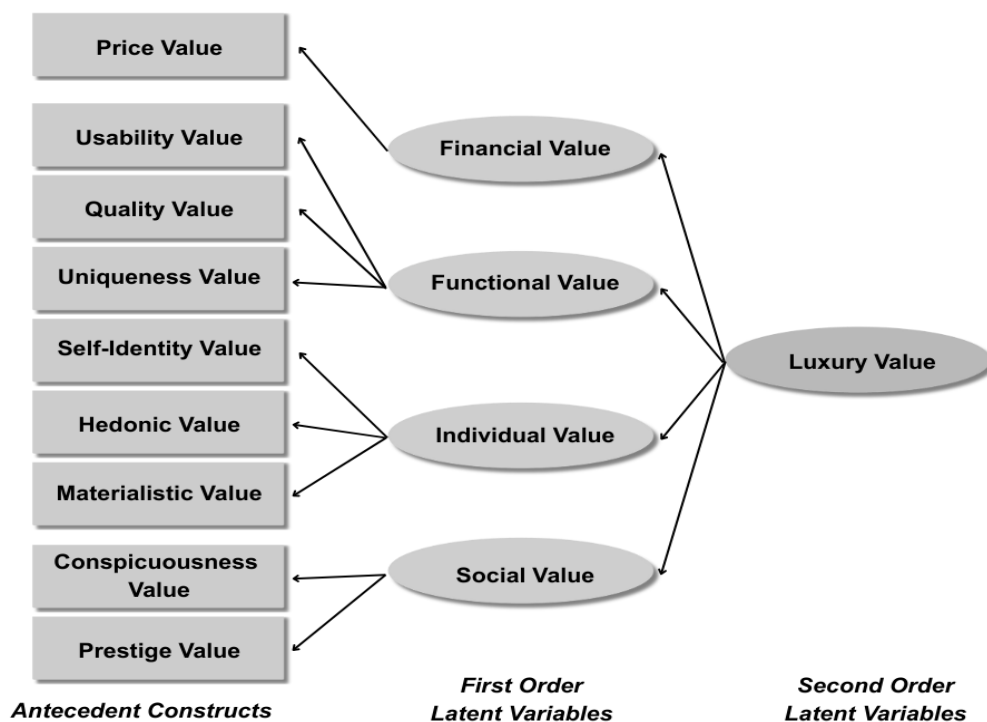
## 2.1 Introduction

The literature is reviewed thematically, beginning with the digital transformation of luxury retail and the behavioural traits of Gen Z. This is followed by an overview of AI virtual assistants in fashion e-commerce and an evaluation of theoretical frameworks. Supporting perspectives on customer engagement, personalisation, and anthropomorphism are also discussed. The chapter concludes by identifying key gaps in current scholarship, particularly around the role of AI virtual assistants in luxury contexts and offers a conceptual framework that forms the foundation for the qualitative research and research questions that follow.

### 2.1.1 Traditional Luxury Perception

Luxury fashion was traditionally defined by exclusivity (Stathopoulou & Balabanis, 2019), premium craftsmanship (Arrigo, 2018; Bhaduri & Stanforth, 2016), and high symbolic value (Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2019; Roux et al., 2017). To better understand consumer behaviour in luxury contexts, Wiedmann, Hennigs, and Siebels (2009) developed a comprehensive multidimensional model of luxury value perception, which serves as a theoretical framework for this study. According to their model, luxury value comprises four dimensions: financial, functional, individual, and social.

Figure 2.1 Traditionally Perceived Luxury Value



Source - Wiedmann, Hennigs, and Siebels (2009)

- The **financial dimension** refers to the monetary aspects of luxury consumption, such as high price, investment value, and exclusivity signalled by cost.
- The **functional dimension** encompasses product-related attributes such as quality, durability, usability, and uniqueness, core aspects that differentiate luxury items from non-luxury goods.
- The **individual dimension** is shaped by personal psychological drivers like hedonism (the pursuit of pleasure), self-identity (how consumption reflects one's sense of self), and materialism.
- The **social dimension** includes external motivations such as conspicuous consumption and prestige.

These four dimensions are influenced by antecedent constructs such as perceived price, uniqueness, usability, and self-congruity, all of which impact a consumer's overall perception of a brand's luxury value. The model allows for segmentation based on consumers' value-driven motivations, offering insight into why different individuals might perceive the same luxury brand in vastly different ways.

However, it is important to note that this model was developed in 2009, prior to the digital transformation that has reshaped the luxury landscape. Traditional pillars of luxury are now increasingly mediated by digital channels, immersive technologies, and AI-driven services (Gutsatz and Heine 2018; Lopez 2020).

In today's context, luxury consumption is not only about physical products and in-store experiences but also about the digital interfaces, personalisation, and emotional engagement delivered through online platforms (Bilgihan, Kandampully, and Zhang 2016). This evolution calls for an updated perspective on how luxury value is perceived and delivered, especially among digitally native consumers such as Generation Z (Lemon and Verhoef 2016). This chapter explores how AI virtual assistants can bridge the gap between digital innovation and luxury service expectations, particularly for Gen Z consumers in the UK.

***Key Takeaway from Traditional Luxury Perception (Section 2.1)***

Traditional luxury has been shaped by exclusivity, craftsmanship, and symbolic value, as explained by Wiedmann et al.'s (2007) model. However, with digital transformation reshaping consumer expectations, especially among Gen Z, there is a need to reassess how luxury value is defined and delivered in online contexts.

## 2.2 Understanding Luxury Fashion in the Digital Era

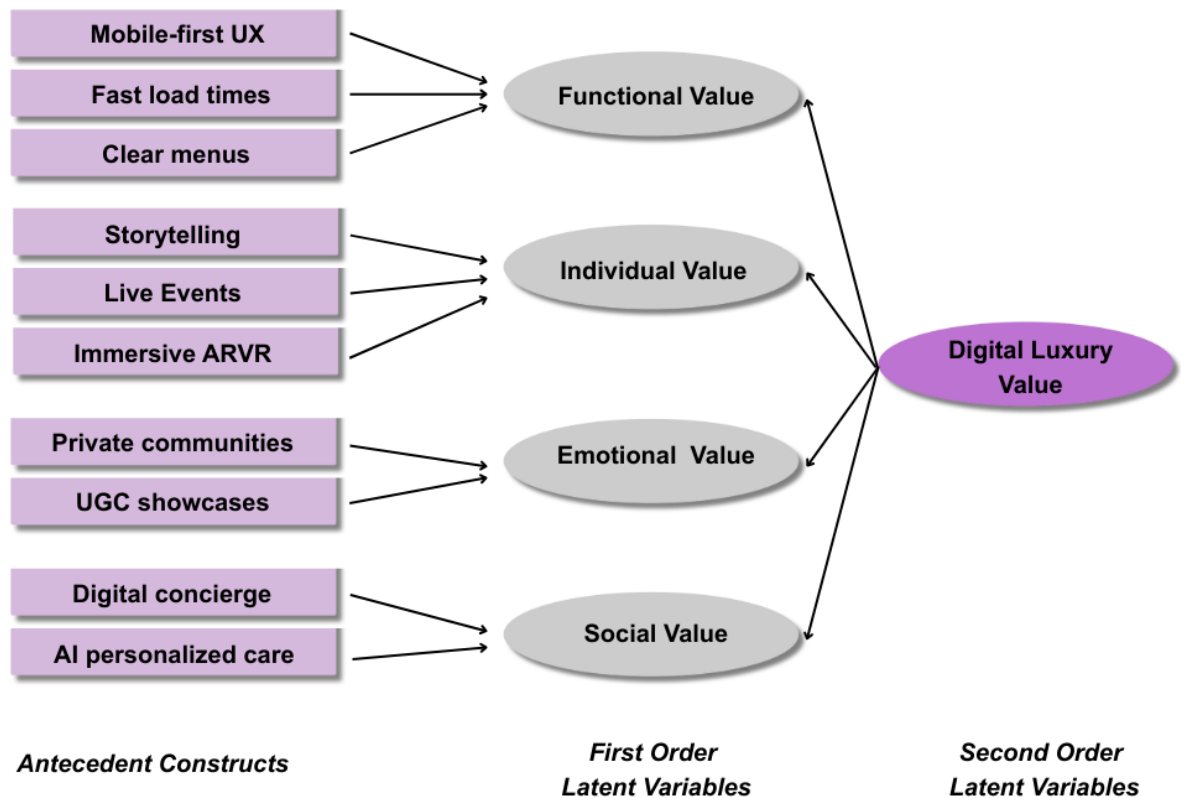
In recent years, the luxury sector has become increasingly digitized (Alexander, Jaakkola, and Hollebeek 2018). Therefore, to remain competitive, luxury brands are increasingly striving to translate the “human touch” traditionally associated with in-store experiences into digital channels, aiming to deliver immersive and personalised experiences (Heine and Berghaus, 2014).

At the same time, Generation Z is emerging as a pivotal segment within the luxury consumer base, increasingly shaping the market through their engagement with digitally mediated, multi-actor interactions (Holmqvist, Wirtz, and Fritze 2020). This digital era has compelled luxury fashion brands to reassess how their core values of exclusivity, heritage, and craftsmanship are expressed across virtual platforms (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, and Stephen 2020).

Initially, digitalisation was perceived as a threat to the traditional codes of luxury (Kapferer, 2014; Okonkwo, 2007). However, the rapid acceleration of digital adoption worldwide, alongside the growing demand for luxury in digitally savvy markets has driven a significant strategic shift (Guercini & Runfola, 2015). Brands now increasingly view digital channels not as a compromise, but as a critical extension of their luxury narrative (Okonkwo, 2009).

This shift marks a transition from questioning the legitimacy of digital strategies in luxury to focusing on how these technologies can be implemented without eroding brand prestige (Nyeck, 2004; Kapferer, 2014). The focus has moved from preservation to innovation, finding new ways to deliver emotionally rich, personalised and exclusive experiences within digital environments (Yeoman, 2011). For today’s digitally native consumers, particularly Generation Z, the expectation is not whether luxury brands are online, but how seamlessly and meaningfully they can deliver value through those online interactions (G and Co, 2021). Therefore, building upon the foundational model proposed by Wiedmann, Hennigs, and Siebels (2007), an adapted framework is proposed to better reflect the evolving dimensions of digital luxury customer experience.

Figure 2.2 Digital Luxury Value



Author's Own

Adapted From Wiedmann, Hennigs, and Siebels (2007)

### 2.2.1 From Exclusivity to Accessibility

Luxury has traditionally been associated with scarcity and rarity (Heine 2009). However, digital technologies have changed how consumers behave, leading brands like Gucci and Louis Vuitton to embrace digitisation (Wided Batat, 2019) (refer Table, 2.1). This challenges the old idea of exclusivity by trying to balance it with wider digital access (Kim, 2019). Maintaining exclusivity online is difficult, which is why some brands, like Chanel, avoided selling luxury products online until recently (Holmqvist, Wirtz, and Fritze, 2020). Still, most major luxury brands use websites and social media to promote their products and build brand value (Appel et al., 2020).

By using customer data to personalize interactions, they can keep a sense of exclusivity while reaching more consumers. This balance is especially important as young consumers, such as Gen Z, expect both authenticity and quick access (Geerts, 2013). At the same time,

customer experience has become a key focus in luxury retail, with direct and indirect interactions helping build emotional connections, particularly among younger buyers (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Eastman, Shin, and Ruhland, 2020). By adopting smart digital strategies, luxury brands create personalized experiences that protect their exclusive image while expanding their reach (Das, Shamindra Nath Sanyal and Mazumder, 2023).

### **2.2.2 Digital Transformation Post-COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated digital adoption across sectors, and luxury fashion was no exception (Batley, 2021). Brands that once resisted e-commerce embraced virtual platforms, livestream shopping, and AI tools almost overnight (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2020). The necessity of reaching consumers remotely spurred innovation, leading to the emergence of virtual stylists, 3D product visualisation, and AI-driven customer support systems (Thomassey and Zeng 2018).

This shift aligns with Gen Z's digital preferences, unlike older cohorts, Gen Z was already accustomed to virtual experiences, through gaming platforms (Nassereddine, Ramadan, & Farah, 2025; Patruți, Zbucnea, & Pînzaru, 2023). Thus, luxury brands are now in a position where embracing AI is not merely about efficiency, it is about remaining culturally and generationally relevant (Thach et al., 2021).

### **2.2.3 Luxury and Emotional Intimacy**

Luxury goods, especially status-oriented ones, are often seen as items that convey prestige to their owners through their brand and visibility, regardless of their practical function (Dubois & Czellar, 2002). Emotional intimacy is a defining aspect of luxury consumption. As argued by Stathopoulou and Balabanis (2019), luxury is not just a product category, it's a psychological experience. High-end purchases are often driven by status elevation (Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2019; Roux et al., 2017), socio-psychological benefits (Stathopoulou & Balabanis, 2019), emotional value (Saran et al., 2016), and a way to express identity (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2018). When brands move to digital platforms, especially those driven by AI, the fear is that these rich emotional experiences could be lost or diluted (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012).

Voice assistants, often seen as autonomous agents due to their ability to carry out tasks independently and communicate naturally (Wooldridge, 1999), are becoming increasingly important in fashion retail. Their hands-free functionality, ability to handle multitasking conversations, and personalised recommendations enhance the shopping experience by

combining convenience with user engagement (Maruti Techlabs, 2018; Williams, 2017). Taking this further, AI-powered virtual assistants will emerge as a bridge between digital efficiency and emotional connection in luxury fashion. Their ability to remember past interactions, offer personalised style suggestions, and hold human-like conversations adds a layer of emotional resonance to the digital journey (Russo et al., 2023).

#### **2.2.4 AI as a Value Driver in Luxury E-Commerce**



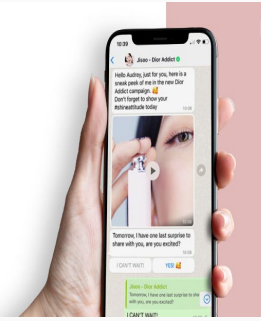
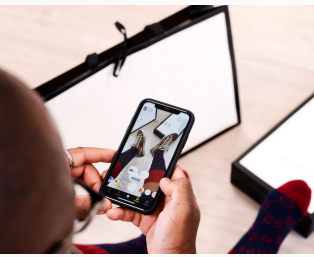
A growing number of both luxury and fast-fashion, fashion brands, including Gucci, Dior, Balenciaga, Louis Vuitton, Zara and H&M have ventured into AI technologies, aiming to expand their digital presence and create immersive brand experiences (SanMiguel, Sádaba, & Sayeed, 2024). Collaborations with tech and gaming companies have enabled these brands to offer sensory-rich, interactive experiences that go beyond the limitations of traditional digital interfaces (Moorhouse, Tom Dieck, & Jung, 2018).



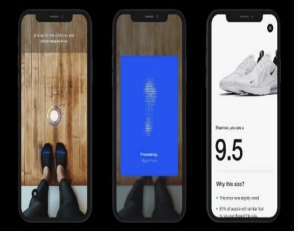

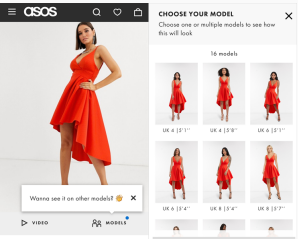
As information technology continues to evolve in both speed and capability, it has encouraged organisations to adopt strategic IT frameworks that not only help control operational costs but also enhance data sharing and global connectivity (Chen, Tu, & Lin, 2002; Venkatraman, 1997). Within this digital shift, artificial intelligence (AI) is emerging as a key value driver particularly in customer-facing roles (Helo & Hao, 2021). While AI is already widely used in backend operations like inventory and logistics, its real potential in luxury e-commerce lies in enhancing customer experience (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014).

#### ***Key Takeaway from Luxury Fashion in Digital Era (Section 2.2)***

The digital era has transformed luxury from resisting online presence to embracing it as essential for relevance. AI and virtual assistants now act as value drivers, balancing exclusivity with accessibility while offering emotional intimacy and personalised experiences, particularly suited to Gen Z's digital-first mindset.

Table 2.1 Digital Initiatives carried out by fashion brands (2020-2025)

Brand	Fashion Sector	Digital Initiative	Pictorial Representation	Year	Region	Supporting References
Louis Vuitton	Luxury Apparel, Leather Goods	“LV Virtual Advisor” chatbot on Messenger offering real-time, personalized help		2023	Global	(Arthur, 2023)
Burberry	Luxury Apparel	Burberry x Blankos Block Party NFT collection + creation of bespoke virtual social space (“The Oasis”)		2022	Global (in-game worldwide)	(Burberry, 2022)
Dior	Luxury Apparel, Leather Goods	“Dior Insider” chatbot + Astra AI platform for customer behavior & personalization		2023	Global (online)	(Dany Kitishian, 2025)
Gucci	Luxury Apparel, Leather Goods	AR try-ons via Snapchat		2022–24	Global (digital focus)	(Nast, 2022)

Brand	Fashion Sector	Digital Initiative	Pictorial Representation	Year	Region	Supporting References
H&M	Fast Fashion Apparel	AI-powered smart fitting rooms, and trend forecasting tools		2020–23	USA	(H&M group, 2022)
Zara	Fast Fashion Apparel	Smart mirrors using RFID		2021–24	Europe, US	Inditex Reports; McKinsey (2022)
Nike	Athletic Apparel and Shoes	“Nike Fit” app for foot sizing using AI		2019–22	US, UK, China	Vogue; (Cheng, 2019)
Adidas	Athletic Apparel and Shoes	NFT Virtual wearables		2020–23	Global (select lines)	Adidas Creators Club; Retail Dive (2018)
ASOS	Multi-Brand Apparel	“See My Fit” virtual try-on feature + AI chatbot for product guidance		2020–22	Global (online)	(ASOS, 2019)

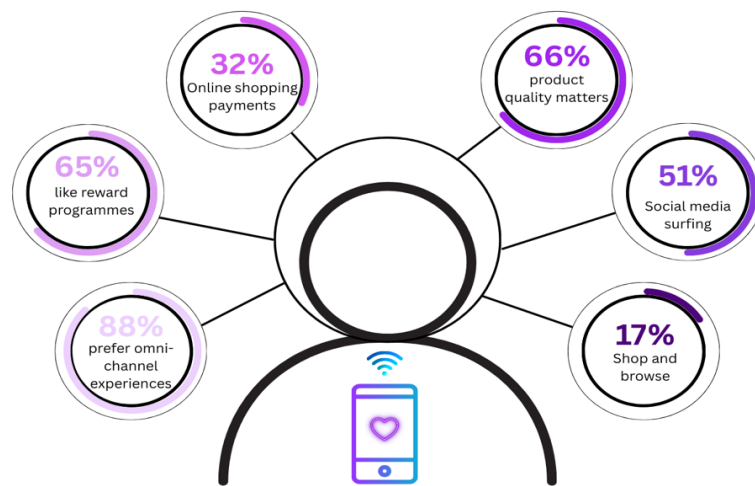
Author's Own

### 2.3 Gen Z as Luxury Consumers in the Digital Age

The luxury fashion industry is undergoing a profound transformation as younger generations, particularly Generation Z (born between 1995–2010), become the dominant consumer group driving growth and innovation (Bain & Company, 2020). Millennials and Gen Z together are projected to account for nearly 55% of global luxury consumption by 2025 (D'Arpizio et al., 2020).

While scholarship on millennials' luxury motivations is well-established (Giovannini et al., 2015; Kapferer & Laurent, 2016), Gen Z remains under-researched despite their unique digital-first habits, value-driven attitudes, and appetite for technological mediation. Unlike previous cohorts, Gen Z are digital natives who have grown up immersed in smartphones, social media, and AI-driven platforms, making their expectations of luxury fashion e-commerce deeply intertwined with digital fluency and mediated interactions (Han, Nunes & Drèze, 2010; Segran, 2019).

Figure 2.3 Digital Behaviour of Gen Z



Author's Own

Adapted from: Institute of Business Management

At the same time, the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) framework provides a useful theoretical lens for interrogating how Gen Z engages with AI-powered brand interfaces. Originating in media studies (Herzog, 1944; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974), U&G theory asserts that

individuals are not passive recipients of content but active agents who use media to satisfy specific psychological and social needs (Rubin, 1994). This functionalist perspective emphasises gratifications such as information-seeking, identity formation, social interaction, entertainment, and escapism (McGuire, 1974; Eighmey & McCord, 1998).

In digital contexts, the framework has been extended to highlight how interactive technologies, including AI systems, are evaluated based on their ability to deliver hedonic enjoyment, informational efficiency, and emotional resonance (Chen & Wells, 1999; Cho, Kim-Vick & Yu, 2021).

Bringing Gen Z luxury consumption research into dialogue with U&G theory offers an innovative conceptualisation of how AI virtual assistants can shape luxury e-commerce experiences. The intersection highlights not only functional gratifications (speed, convenience, accuracy) but also symbolic, affective, and identity-driven gratifications central to luxury consumption.

### ***2.3.1 Digital Behaviour and Shopping Preferences***

Gen Z's consumption patterns are profoundly influenced by digital media ecosystems (Cho, Kim-Vick and Yu, 2021). Unlike baby boomers or Generation X, this cohort's first exposure to brands is often mediated through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube, rather than through traditional retail advertising (Han, Nunes & Drèze, 2010; Rothman, Kim & Moody, 2025). This shapes their purchasing journeys, which begins not with rational product comparison but with affective triggers such as influencer endorsements, peer-generated content, or immersive brand storytelling.

From a U&G perspective, this reflects the gratification of surveillance (information-seeking) and entertainment. Luxury brands that deploy AI virtual assistants on their platforms can build on these expectations by curating product recommendations in ways that feel entertaining and personalised rather than transactional.

Furthermore, Gen Z expects convenience, speed, and fluidity in online shopping. AI assistants can offer real-time assistance, seamless checkout, and customised advice aligns with their demand for efficiency (Agarwal, 2019). Yet unlike mainstream retail consumers, Gen Z luxury shoppers seek more than speed, they expect digital touchpoints to reflect exclusivity, heritage, and brand storytelling (Cho, Kim-Vick and Yu, 2021). This illustrates the adaptation of U&G to luxury contexts, where gratifications include not only utilitarian satisfaction but also symbolic reinforcement of identity and social belonging (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2018).

Table 2.2: Mapping Gen Z Luxury Needs in U&G Categories

Gen Z Luxury Need	U&G Category	Role of AI Virtual Assistants
Speed and Convenience	Information seeking	Real-time answers, instant recommendations
Emotional Engagement	Hedonic/Entertainment	Playful, immersive interaction
Authenticity and Inclusivity	Identity/Value expressive	Recognises individuality, inclusive tone, sustainable choices
Social belonging and approval	Social Integration	Peer-informed suggestions, exclusivity features
Trust and transparency	Credibility/Control	Clear data use, empathetic responses

Author's Own

### **2.3.2 Values: Authenticity, Personalisation, Inclusivity**

A defining characteristic of Gen Z luxury consumers is their demand for authenticity and personalisation (Mpinganjira, 2014). In contrast to earlier generations who often purchased luxury for conspicuous display (Veblen, 1934; Han et al., 2010), Gen Z seek brands that resonate with their personal values and identity (Uzgoren & Guney, 2012). This includes commitments to inclusivity, sustainability, and diversity, which they view as non-negotiable markers of authenticity (Deloitte, 2022).

In U&G terms, this demonstrates the identity gratification function. Gen Z actively selects brand interactions including AI-mediated ones that reflect and reinforce their sense of individuality. For instance, a virtual stylist that remembers their past purchases, offers sustainable alternatives, or uses inclusive language fosters a sense of recognition and personal alignment (Cho, Kim-Vick & Yu, 2021).

Personalisation plays a dual role. On the one hand, it fulfils utilitarian gratifications by making product discovery and decision-making easier. On the other hand, it delivers effective gratifications by making consumers feel seen and valued as unique individuals within the

luxury brand community (Brown and Thompson 2023; Dong et al. 2024; Kietzmann, Paschen, and Treen 2018). In this way, Gen Z's pursuit of authenticity and personalisation illustrates how gratifications in luxury contexts extend beyond functional to symbolic and experiential domains.

### ***2.3.3 Social Identity, Status, and Symbolic Consumption***

Luxury consumption has always been linked to symbolic meanings of status, belonging, and identity signalling (Bourdieu, 1984; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). For Gen Z, these dynamics are intensified by social media visibility, where brand choices are not merely private acts but public performances of taste and identity (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). Research suggests the 'bandwagon effect' purchasing popular luxury brands to gain peer approval exerts a stronger influence on Gen Z than the need for uniqueness, though both forces coexist (Cho, Kim-Vick & Yu, 2021).

In U&G terms, this maps onto the social integration gratification. Gen Z uses AI-mediated luxury interactions not only for information but also to manage social identity (Sussman, Bright, and Wilcox 2023). For instance, a chatbot that provides personalised product recommendations can serve as a backstage companion, equipping the consumer with knowledge and confidence before making public-facing consumption choices (McMillan & Hwang, 2002; Romiszowski & Mason, 2013). Similarly, AI assistants that deliver exclusivity, such as invitations to virtual shows or early product access enhance symbolic gratifications of status and belonging (Schade et al., 2016).

At the same time, Gen Z's consumption reflects a paradox, they seek both differentiation (uniqueness) and conformity (belonging). AI assistants that can balance these opposing gratifications for example, by suggesting niche products that are still recognisably "luxury" are more likely to resonate with this demographic (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2021)

### ***2.3.4 Expectations from AI-powered Brand Interfaces***

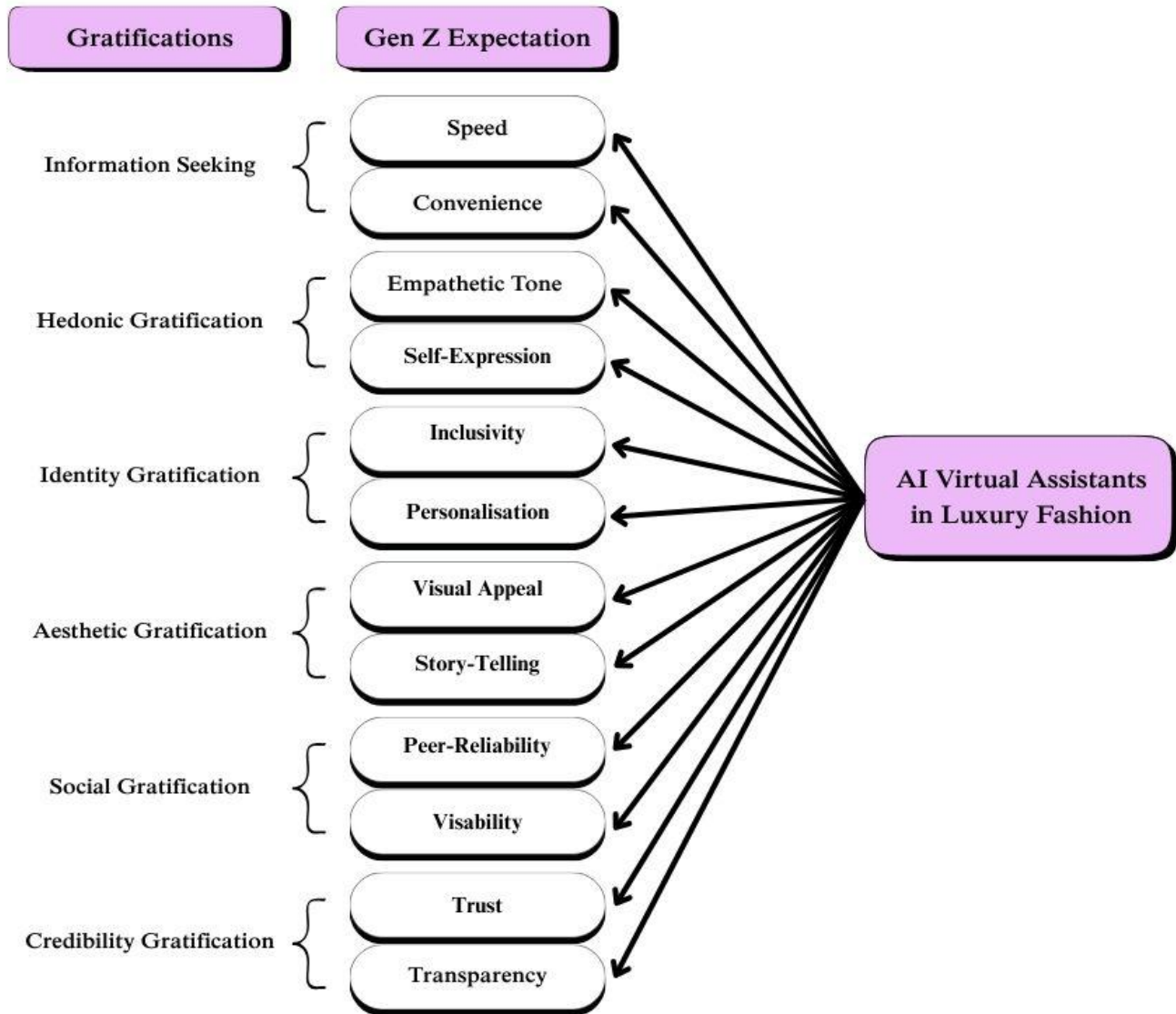
Finally, integrating U&G with Gen Z research reveals their heightened expectations from AI-mediated brand interfaces. Beyond efficiency, Gen Z demands emotional engagement, aesthetic pleasure, and trust. Hedonic gratifications are central, they expect AI interactions to be intuitive, playful, and even entertaining, (Schade et al., 2016). Value-expressive gratifications also shape their expectations, AI systems must affirm their identity and values through tone, personalisation, and inclusivity (Ho & Ko, 2008).

Trust and transparency represent another dimension of gratification for Gen Z, who are more sceptical of data usage than older cohorts (Bandara et al., 2020). For AI assistants, this means that clear communication of data practices, coupled with empathetic, human-like interactions, are crucial to fostering authenticity and credibility (Schlögl et al., 2019).

Thus, Gen Z's expectations extend U&G theory in three ways:

1. They elevate aesthetics and emotionality as core gratifications, not peripheral ones.
2. They incorporate identity and ethical alignment as essential gratifications.
3. They link trust and transparency directly to engagement, making them key determinants of satisfaction in AI interaction.

Figure 2.4 Integrated U&G Map of Gen-Z Expectations for Luxury AI Virtual Assistants



Adapted from Herzog 1994

Author's Own

### ***Key Takeaway from Gen Z as a Luxury Consumer in Digital Age (Section 2.3)***

Gen Z's luxury consumption is shaped by digital nativity, value-driven attitudes, and social identity needs. When interpreted through the Uses and Gratifications framework, their engagement with AI virtual assistants extends beyond functional benefits to include hedonic enjoyment, identity expression, and social validation. This highlights how luxury e-commerce must balance efficiency with authenticity, inclusivity, and trust to resonate with this cohort.

## **2.4 AI Virtual Assistants in Luxury Fashion**

### ***2.4.1 Redefining Digital Luxury through AI***

The digitisation of luxury fashion has shifted intimate, in-store experiences into curated online environments where AI-powered virtual assistants (VAs) play a central role (Qin et al., 2023). Functioning as digital stylists or concierges, these assistants embody luxury values of exclusivity, personalisation, and emotional resonance (Arrigo, 2018).

Within this context, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) offers a useful framework for understanding the adoption of AI virtual assistants in luxury e-commerce. TAM highlights Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) as drivers of behavioural intention for use of virtual assistants (Davis, 1989), however Gen Z's engagement with AI VAs extends beyond efficiency. Their adoption is shaped by hedonic, aesthetic, and symbolic gratifications, requiring a blend of TAM with U&G which will incorporate emotional resonance, brand alignment, and social influence (Alalwan et al., 2018; Tho To & Minh Trinh, 2021).

### ***2.4.2 AI as Digital Stylists: Perceived Usefulness***

AI VAs translate luxury service into digital form by providing hyper-personalised recommendations using browsing history, contextual cues, and consumer profiles (Shin et al. 2020). This level of individualisation resonates strongly with Gen Z, a consumer segment known for seeking authenticity, self-expression, and digital co-creation (Bjørlo, Moen, and Pasquine 2021; Gao, Liu, and Wu 2010). For them, AI assistants are not just functional, they're stylish, responsive brand extensions that must reflect tone, values, and aesthetics (Gil de Zúñiga, Goyanes, and Durotoye 2024; Lee 2018).

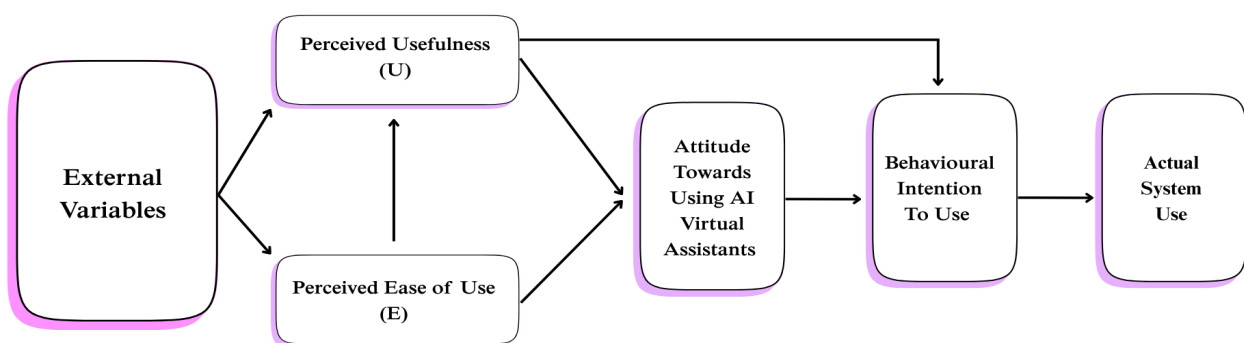
Example: A virtual stylist suggests weather-appropriate outfits based on the user's city while also reflecting their Instagram-tracked style preferences.

### 2.4.3 Anthropomorphism: Enhancing Ease of Use

A defining feature of AI VAs in the luxury context is their anthropomorphic design which is the study of examining the human-like traits of chatbots such as voice, language, and appearance which increase Perceived Ease of Use by making AI assistants intuitive and familiar (Lee & Nass, 2003). This helps foster a sense of intimacy and trust, which are essential in high-end fashion transactions (Ramjattan et al., 2021). The assistant's ability to "remember" previous interactions, greet users by name, or mirror conversational tone enhances perceived emotional intelligence and builds relational depth (Aggarwal & McGill, 2012; Lim et al., 2022).

Example: A virtual stylist on a luxury app remembers a user's preferred colour palette and suggests matching pieces in real-time, addressing the user by name and offering stylistic compliments, mirroring the personalized attention of an in-store luxury stylist and reinforcing the sense of exclusivity and sophistication.

Figure 2.5 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)



Source: (Davis 1986)

#### **2.4.4 Tone of Voice and Emotional Sensitivity: Integrate TAM with hedonic gratification**

Tone of voice is central to how luxury brands differentiate themselves, and this extends to their AI touchpoints (Darling, 2017). Whether the brand's tone is minimalist and refined (e.g., Chanel), edgy and youthful (e.g., Balenciaga), or romantic and aspirational (e.g., Dior), the VA must embody it through linguistic choices, pacing, and tone adaptation. However, TAM's cognitive lens underplays the importance of this effect. (Beuscher et al., 2017).

Example: When a user expresses uncertainty, the assistant may respond with a reassuring phrase like "I've got you, let's find something you'll love," enhancing emotional connection.

#### **2.4.5 Personalisation as a Driver of Relevance: Integrate TAM with identity gratification**

One of the strongest use cases for VAs in luxury e-commerce is hyper-personalisation. While TAM frames usefulness as efficiency, in luxury fashion it also relates to emotional and symbolic relevance. Hyper-personalisation fosters engagement by aligning product suggestions with self-expression and identity (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016). For Gen Z, who expect brands to recognise and adapt to their identity, this kind of relevance-driven interaction fosters cognitive and emotional engagement.

Example: An AI assistant suggests outfits tailored to an upcoming event, blending practical assistance with self-image reinforcement.

#### **2.4.6 Visual and Aesthetic Alignment: Integrate TAM with aesthetic gratification**

Luxury is inherently visual, and Gen Z derives aesthetic gratification from AI interactions that feel curated and aspirational. Here, ease of use blends with visual pleasure, seamless UI design, lookbook displays, and mood-board formats signal authenticity and brand value.

Example: An AI stylist integrated into a mobile app presents recommendations in a lookbook format, complete with luxury visuals and mood boards tailored to the user's taste.

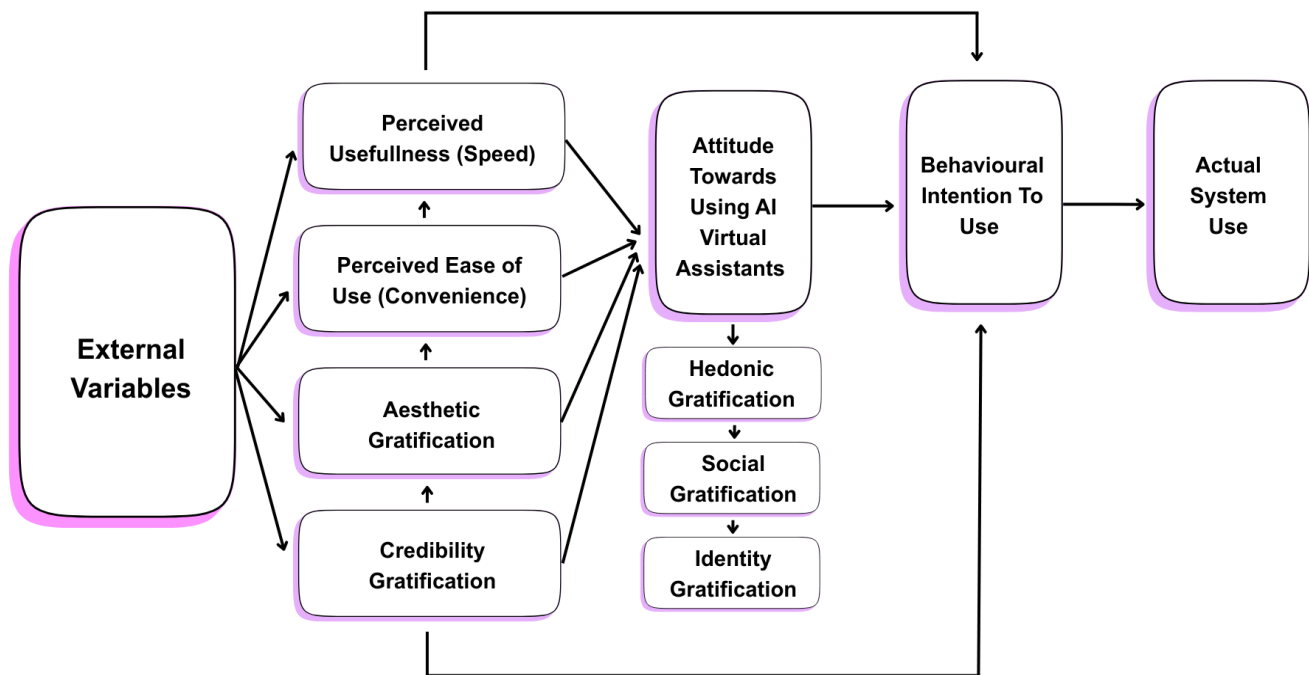
#### **2.4.7 Symbolic and Social Value: Integrate TAM with social gratification**

In luxury retail, AI assistants fulfil more than just functional tasks. They also carry symbolic and social significance (Cho, Kim-Vick & Yu, 2021). Gen Z's engagement with AI VAs is driven by the bandwagon effect and status alignment. Unlike TAM's individual-level model,

luxury adoption is socially constructed, AI use itself becomes a form of symbolic consumption.

Example - A Gen Z influencer shares a video wearing an AI-recommended outfit from a luxury brand's virtual assistant, tagging the brand and captioning it "Styled by my digital stylist". The post sparks comments from followers asking how to access the feature, reinforcing the AI assistant as both a status symbol and a trending social experience.

Figure 2.6 Integrated TAM and U&G Framework with AI adoption for Gen Z



Source: (Davis 1986)

Author's Own

Table 2.3 Integrating the revised model with Gen Z traits and AI virtual assistants' application

Construct	Definition	Relevance to Gen Z Behaviour	Virtual AI Assistant Application	Behavioural Outcome	Authors
Perceived Usefulness	Belief that using the technology enhances performance	Seeks efficiency, relevant information, real-time advice	Personalized product suggestions, efficient browsing, time-saving assistance	Increased intention to use AI during purchase journey	Davis (1989); Marikyan, Papagiannidis, and Alamanos (2019)
Perceived Ease of Use	Belief that using the system requires minimal effort	Expects seamless UX/UI, minimal learning curve	Simple navigation, conversational interfaces, mobile optimization	Lower dropout rates, increased repeat interaction	Davis (1989); Venkatesh & Davis (2000)
Aesthetic Gratification	Visual and sensory attractiveness aligned with brand identity	Responds to visual storytelling, premium aesthetics	Luxury-themed design, consistent tone, curated visuals	Higher emotional resonance, perceived brand congruence	Schade et al. (2016); Kapferer & Bastien (2012)
Credibility Gratification	Confidence in the system's reliability, privacy, and intent	Concerned about authenticity and data use	Transparency in recommendations, ethical messaging, secure platforms	Reduced resistance to AI, increased openness to automation	Gefen et al. (2003); Ho & Ko (2008)
Hedonic Gratification	The pleasure derived from using the system	Enjoys playful, gamified, engaging digital experiences	Interactive avatars, gamified try-ons, style quizzes	Longer engagement duration, positive emotional association	Venkatesh & Bala (2008); Cho et al. (2021)

Construct	Definition	Relevance to Gen Z Behaviour	Virtual AI Assistant Application	Behavioural Outcome	Authors
Social Gratification	Belief that the system enhances status or group belonging	Uses luxury to signal group belonging and uniqueness	AI recommending influencer or niche luxury brands, trend alerts	Public display of AI-assisted purchases, brand advocacy	Kastanakis & Balabanis (2012); Han et al. (2010)
Identity Gratification	Perception that system adapts to user identity and preferences	Desires customisation, recognition, relevance	AI remembers preferences, body data, purchase history	Feelings of connection, trust, repeat usage	Bian & Forsythe (2012);
Behavioural Intention (BI)	Motivation to continue using or recommend the system	Forms intention based on enjoyment, identity alignment, ease, and trust	Seen in return visits, brand loyalty, peer sharing	Core predictor of sustained AI integration	Davis (1989); Venkatesh & Bala (2008)

Author's Own

***Key Takeaway from AI Virtual Assistants in Luxury Fashion (Section 2.4)***

AI virtual assistants in luxury fashion go beyond TAM's traditional focus on usefulness and ease of use by integrating hedonic, aesthetic, identity, and social gratifications central to Gen Z's expectations. The revised TAM-U&G model (Figure 2.X) highlights how adoption is shaped not only by speed and convenience but also by emotional resonance, visual alignment, and symbolic value. This blended framework reflects how AI assistants function as digital stylists and brand extensions, merging efficiency with exclusivity, aesthetics, and status-driven engagement.

## **2.5 Customer Engagement in AI-Driven Luxury Fashion E-Commerce**

In today's evolving digital retail landscape, particularly in the luxury fashion sector, customer engagement has become a cornerstone of competitive differentiation and long-term brand loyalty (Kumar, Petersen, & Leone, 2010; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Unlike traditional marketing paradigms that relied heavily on one-way communication, modern customer engagement is built on interactive, co-creative, and emotionally resonant experiences (Brodie et al., 2011). This is especially true when engaging the Gen Z demographic, who are not only digital natives but also more likely to seek experiences that are personalised, emotionally satisfying, and socially validated (Marbach et al., 2016). AI-powered virtual assistants (VAs) can emerge as transformative touchpoints for luxury brands aiming to engage Gen Z consumers through immersive, intelligent, and intuitive interactions.

Customer engagement is a multidimensional construct, defined by Brodie et al. (2011) as a psychological state that results from interactive, co-creative brand experiences. This framework outlines three core dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement. These dimensions are especially relevant when examining how users engage with AI-powered systems in the context of luxury fashion e-commerce, where experiences must balance digital innovation with heritage-driven brand values (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012).

### ***2.5.1 Cognitive Engagement: Focused Attention and Value Appraisal***

Cognitive engagement refers to the mental investment and attention a user dedicates to interacting with a brand (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 14). In AI-driven luxury platforms, cognitive engagement can be triggered by features that stimulate curiosity, offer novelty, or support exploratory behaviour. Marbach et al. (2016) note that consumers high in the need for

learning are more likely to engage with brand content that offers informational depth, tutorials, or product background which are factors common in luxury fashion where craftsmanship and story-telling are key.

The perceived usefulness of an AI assistant, a core component of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), strongly influences cognitive engagement. If users believe the assistant enhances decision-making or simplifies product discovery, they are more likely to remain mentally invested (Davis, 1989; Marbach et al., 2016). However, cognitive engagement also demands aesthetic excellence, a feature unique to the luxury sector. The interface's elegance, tone of voice, and ability to deliver content aligned with the brand's visual language all contribute to maintaining Gen Z's attention.

### ***2.5.2 Emotional Engagement: Identity Expression and Experiential Delight***

Emotional engagement reflects the affective bond a consumer develops with a brand (Marbach et al, 2016). This type of engagement is particularly relevant in the luxury context, where symbolism, status, and sensory pleasure are central to brand value (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016). AI virtual assistants, when designed with human-like traits (anthropomorphism), foster emotional intimacy and responsiveness, allowing users to feel seen and understood (Rapp et al., 2021; Roesler et al., 2021). Luxury consumers, particularly from Gen Z, often engage with brands that allow them to express their identity, seek pleasure in discovery, and enjoy a sense of exclusivity. If AI assistants can reflect the user's mood, preferences, or aspirations through emotionally intelligent dialogue and customised experiences, emotional engagement deepens significantly.

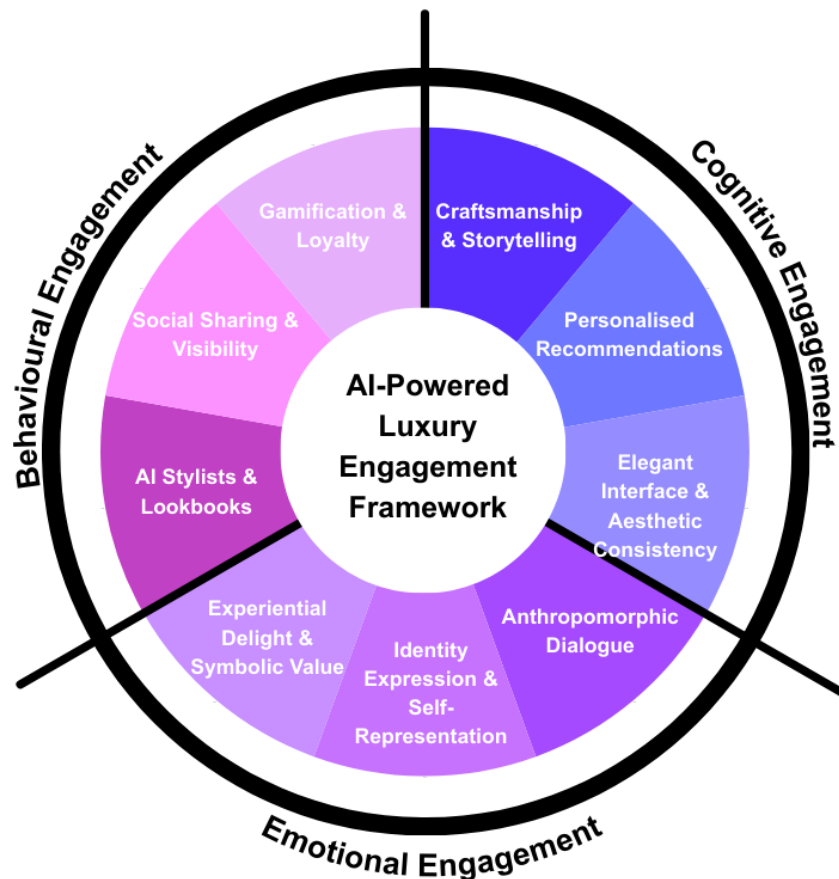
### ***2.5.3 Behavioural Engagement: Active Participation and Social Contribution***

Behavioural engagement is the observable manifestation of user involvement which includes clicks, purchases, time spent, reviews written, or content shared (Kumar, Petersen, et al., 2010; Sawhney, Verona, & Prandelli, 2005) In the context of luxury fashion, this can include interacting with an AI stylist, revisiting curated lookbooks, or using sharing features to post outfits on social platforms. As Marbach et al. (2016) explain, users high in traits like extroversion, need for activity, and need for arousal are more likely to engage behaviourally. These individuals do not merely consume passively; they contribute to the brand's ecosystem by co-creating value, amplifying messaging, and enhancing visibility among peer networks.

AI virtual assistants that integrate gamified features, social prompts, or loyalty incentives tend to increase behavioural engagement. Moreover, behavioural engagement in the luxury

sector is often about symbolic display, users engage because it enhances their personal brand, aligning with Brodie et al. 's (2011) assertion that engagement is both self-referential and socially performative.

Figure 2.7 AI Engagement Framework Tailored to Gen Z Traits



Adapted from Brodie et al. (2011)

Author's Own

**Key Takeaway from Customer Engagement in AI-driven e-commerce (Section 2.5)**

Customer engagement in AI-driven luxury fashion is multidimensional, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. For Gen Z, engagement extends beyond functionality to include aesthetic excellence, identity expression, and symbolic participation. The AI-Powered Luxury Engagement Framework (Figure 2.6) highlights how virtual assistants act as digital touchpoints that combine craftsmanship, emotional

resonance, and social visibility, reinforcing luxury's blend of heritage and innovation in digital spaces.

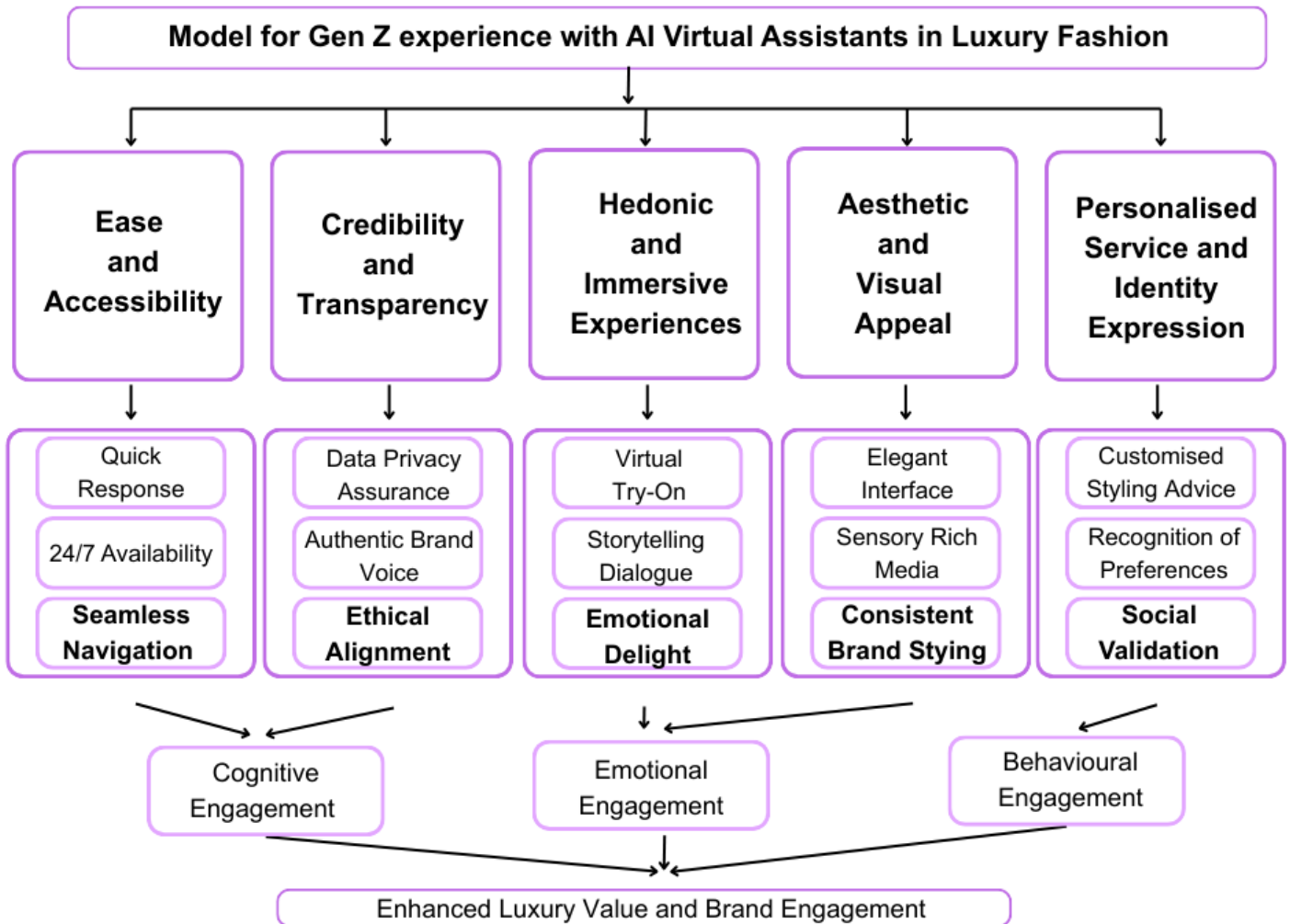
## 2.6 Summary

This chapter critically explores the intersection of digital transformation, luxury fashion, AI virtual assistants, and Gen Z consumer behaviour. It begins by establishing that luxury fashion is rooted in exclusivity, craftsmanship, and symbolic value is being reshaped by rapid digitalisation. As brands move online, the challenge lies in preserving luxury's emotional intimacy and personalised service in virtual contexts. Generation Z, with their digital fluency and demand for authenticity and co-creation, has become a key demographic driving these changes. AI virtual assistants (VAs) emerge as a promising tool for luxury e-commerce, serving both functional and experiential roles. Unlike traditional chatbots, these VAs deliver personalised, emotionally intelligent, and aesthetically aligned interactions. They help translate luxury values of exclusivity, emotional resonance, and personalisation into scalable online experiences. The chapter incorporates two core theoretical frameworks: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Uses & Gratifications Theory (UGT). TAM is extended to account for Gen Z's experiential and symbolic expectations, while UGT highlights how emotional, informational, and aesthetic gratifications drive AI engagement. These are tied together by the concept of customer engagement, divided into cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions, all of which are relevant in understanding how Gen Z connects with AI-powered brand touchpoints in luxury fashion.

Ultimately, the literature highlights a clear gap: while AI is widely adopted in luxury e-commerce, there is limited understanding of how Gen Z emotionally and behaviourally engages with AI assistants in these contexts. This chapter therefore sets the foundation for investigating how such tools can be designed to meet both brand aspirations and Gen Z's digital desires.

## 2.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.8 Framework for AI virtual assistants in luxury fashion integrating TAM and UGT



Author's own

## 2.8 Research Questions

Table 2.4 Research and Sub Research Questions

Research Questions	Sub-Research Questions
<p>RQ1: How does existing literature inform the role of AI in luxury fashion e-commerce and Gen Z behaviour?</p>	<p>A) What are the dominant theoretical frameworks used to analyse AI-driven consumer interactions in luxury retail?</p> <p>B) What insights exist on Gen Z's digital behaviour, values, and expectations in luxury e-commerce?</p> <p>C) What gaps exist in literature regarding emotional engagement, anthropomorphism, and symbolic consumption in AI-mediated luxury retail?</p>
<p>RQ2: How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?</p>	<p>A) How do Gen Z consumers describe their emotional and cognitive responses to AI-powered assistants?</p> <p>B) What features of AI (e.g. tone, personalisation, aesthetic) matter most to Gen Z in luxury interactions?</p> <p>C) How does Gen Z's perception of trust and authenticity shape their use of AI in luxury shopping?</p>
<p>RQ3: What role do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury e-commerce?</p>	<p>A) How do AI assistants influence the perceived value and enjoyment of the online luxury shopping journey?</p> <p>B) To what extent does personalisation enhance user satisfaction and loyalty among Gen Z?</p>
<p>RQ4: How can luxury fashion brands optimise AI virtual assistants to enhance market positioning and engagement with Gen Z?</p>	<p>A) What strategic elements make AI assistants feel 'luxurious' in tone, interface, and user experience?</p> <p>C) How can luxury brands use AI assistants to reinforce emotional exclusivity and long-term engagement?</p>

Author's Own

## **Chapter 3**

# ***Research Design & Methodology***

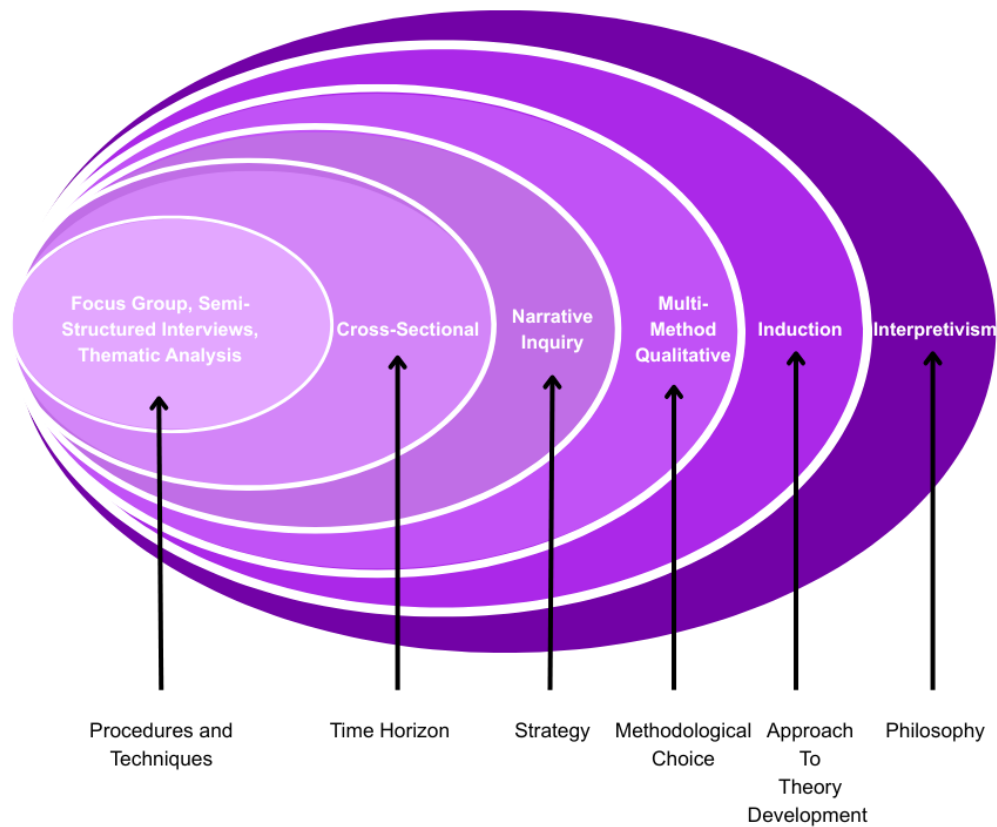
### **3.1 Introduction**

Building upon the preceding literature review, Chapter three articulates and substantiates the research design and methodological stance underpinning this investigation. Anchored in Saunders et al. (2019) research design framework (Figure 3.1), the chapter systematically explores the philosophical positioning of the study, followed by its research approach, methodological choice, strategic orientation, and time horizon. It then critically examines the data collection methods and procedures used to address the central question:

“What expectations Gen Z consumers in the UK hold for luxury fashion e-commerce and how AI virtual assistants can better support engagement and personalisation.”

In alignment with the interpretivist, qualitative, inductive, and triangulated nature of the design, data were collected through methodological triangulation comprising (i) five semi-structured interviews (ii) one focus group. Subsequent sections walk through each layer of Saunders et al.'s (2019) Research Onion, discussing sampling techniques, procedures for data analysis, and safeguards undertaken to enhance trustworthiness, whilst reflecting on ethical considerations and limitations inherent in the research design.

Figure 3.1 Overview of Study's Research Design



Adapted from Saunders et al (2019)

**Key Takeaway for Research Methodology (Section 3.1)**

The study adopts an interpretivist, qualitative, and inductive design guided by Saunders et al.'s (2019) Research Onion. Using five semi-structured interviews and one focus group, it explores Gen Z expectations of luxury e-commerce and the role of AI virtual assistants, supported by triangulation, thematic analysis, and strong ethical safeguards.

## **3.2 Research Design**

### ***3.2.1 Research Philosophy: Interpretivism***

This study was grounded in an interpretivist research philosophy, as it sought to understand how Gen Z consumers interpret, experience, and emotionally attach meaning to AI-driven virtual assistants within the context of luxury fashion e-commerce (Boland, 1985, 1991). Interpretivism rejects the existence of a single objective truth, arguing instead that reality is socially constructed and contextually situated (Saunders et al., 2019).

This stance recognises that the perception of luxury is fluid and symbolic, varying according to everyone's cultural background, lifestyle, and value system (Boland, 1985). The use of AI-mediated communication adds further subjectivity, as some consumers may view these technologies as innovative and personalised, while others may perceive them as invasive or inauthentic. By adopting an interpretivist worldview, the study valued participants' own voices and stories as sources of valid knowledge (Goldkuhl, 2012). Rather than quantifying luxury engagement or imposing pre-existing categories, the research explored how emotions such as trust, exclusivity, and identity-expression are narrated through consumers lived experiences.

This philosophy was particularly important given the symbolic and intangible nature of "luxury service," which extends beyond functionality to heritage, personalisation, and emotional resonance (Walsham, 1993). Consequently, the findings were interpreted as multiple truths, guided by context and shaped by interactions between consumers, brands, and technologies, thereby prioritising depth of understanding over generalisability.

### ***3.2.2 Research Approach: Inductive***

Whilst extant luxury service and digital engagement literature remains predominantly rooted in positivist enquiry (Grewal et al., 2017; Landim et al., 2021; Moriuchi et al., 2020), frequently seeking to measure constructs such as trust, personalisation, convenience and purchase intention through structured scales and behavioural proxies, such techniques often struggle to unpack how and why these outcomes take shape (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016; Rees-Roberts, 2020). Quantitative studies, by virtue of their deductive framing, typically condense rich experiential phenomena such as emotional exclusivity, symbolic consumption and digital intimacy into decontextualised indicators, limiting understanding of what catalyses engagement (Zhang & Phang, 2024). Responding to calls from luxury and service

experience scholars for deeper interpretive interrogation (Russo et al., 2023), this study adopted an inductive research approach.

Induction enabled concepts to emerge organically from participants lived experiences, rather than forcing them to align with predetermined theoretical categories (Saunders et al., 2019). This approach was particularly apt given the nascent and rapidly evolving nature of AI deployment in luxury fashion e-commerce, where Gen Z interpretations, expectations, and emotional responses remain theoretically under-developed (Easterby-smith et al, 2008).

Allowing meaning to emerge through open-ended questioning aligned with the study's commitment both to capture the authentic voice of the consumer and to understand luxury insiders' strategic interests and technological considerations, thereby yielding novel insights into how digital technologies intersect with notions of luxury, identity, and personalised engagement. In doing so, the research approach created space for unexpected dimensions such as aesthetics, tone, or perceived "humanness" (anthropomorphism) of AI assistants, to surface, providing theoretical richness that might remain obscured under a deductive paradigm.

### ***3.2.3 Methodological Choice: Qualitative Multi-Method***

A qualitative methodological choice was made to deeply explore the meanings, motives, and emotional responses that Gen Z consumers form around AI virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce. Qualitative approaches are well suited to contexts where symbolic, affective, and experiential dimensions are important (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research drew upon two complementary qualitative data collection techniques forming a "triangulation" with semi-structured interviews and a focus group. Semi-structured interviews enabled an intensive, individualised exploration of participants' personal experiences with AI tools, allowing the researcher to probe issues of trust, luxury cues, authenticity, and emotional connection on a case-by-case basis.

Conversely, the focus group provided insight into how perceptions are shaped collectively and socially, reflecting the peer-influenced nature of Gen Z consumption. Combining these methods allowed the study to balance introspective depth with interpersonal dynamics. This enriched the data and enhanced trustworthiness, as themes recurring across both sets of methods could be treated as stronger and more robust. Ultimately, the qualitative, multi-method stance aligned with the study's ontological assumptions and gave voice to nuanced consumer experiences beyond what structured surveys could capture.

### **3.2.4 Strategy of Inquiry**

The strategy of inquiry selected for this research was narrative inquiry, which positions participants' stories and experiences at the centre of knowledge construction (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative approaches recognise that individuals make sense of their world by constructing stories that link together memories, feelings, and events over time (Polkinghorne, 1995). This was especially pertinent to the study's aim of understanding how Gen Z consumers engage with AI virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce, why these interactions shape their perceptions of luxury brands, and how those perceptions in turn influence emotional and behavioural outcomes such as loyalty, trust, and engagement. Narrative inquiry allowed the researcher to invite detailed accounts of participants' journeys, for example, asking them to recall a first or most memorable experience with a luxury AI chatbot and to reflect on its emotional impact.

These stories revealed not only evaluative judgements but also underlying values concerning status, exclusivity, convenience, and digital human-likeness (Savin-Baden and Niekerk, 2007). This strategy went beyond surface statements and facilitated insight into how participants interpret events and assign meaning across time, rendering it a particularly suitable inquiry approach for capturing the complexity of luxury service experiences in the digital age.

### **3.2.5 Phenomenological Bracketing**

To preserve the descriptive fidelity of participants' accounts, I adopted a phenomenological–psychological reduction and undertook author bracketing (epoché) prior to analysis (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Bracketing here means making explicit and then suspending my **pre-understandings** about luxury service (e.g., primacy of human touch), AI capability (e.g., “accuracy before personality”), and Gen-Z preferences (e.g., pragmatism toward utility and privacy), as well as my prior encounters with retail chatbots, VTO/3D tools and in-store clientele.

This reflexive stance was operationalised through positionality statements, analytic memos, and a documented decision trail, alongside periodic peer debriefs **and** negative case checks to challenge theme boundaries (Tufford & Newman, 2010, p. 84; Dörfler and Stierand, 2020). Methodologically, I separated description → reduction → interpretation and anchored coding with in-vivo labels to limit theory-led imposition. The purpose is not to claim neutrality, but to render the influence of the researcher inspectable and minimised, so that the resulting structure reflects participants lived experience of AI virtual assistants in luxury e-commerce rather than my expectations. The following **Author Bracketing** (Table 3.1) sets out the

phenomenon definition, pre-assumptions to be bracketed, and prior experiences, together with the safeguards employed to maintain rigor.

Table 3.1 – Author Bracketing (Phenomenological Psychological Reduction)

Section	Item	Statement
<b>A) Defining the Phenomenon</b>		
	Phenomenon	A luxury e-commerce service episode where an AIVA assists Gen-Z customers in decision-making while preserving brand authenticity and trust.
	Working definition	A digitally mediated, brand-congruent interaction delivering accurate utility (fit, findability, risk reduction), personalised continuity (consented memory/curation), and assurance (explainability, privacy controls), with optional human concierge escalation for high-stakes choices.
<b>B) Assumptions / Pre-Understanding (to be bracketed)</b>		
	Luxury & service	Luxury value rests on human touch, tactility, and heritage; AI should augment, not replace, in-store standards.
	Usefulness vs. theatrics	Accuracy/utility (fit advice, reliable info) will matter more to Gen-Z than chatty personality or heavy anthropomorphism.
	Visualisation	VTO/3D/360 and authentic imagery will reduce perceived risk and improve confidence (especially for fit/finish).
	Personalisation	Longitudinal memory (being remembered across time/channels) will drive loyalty more than session-level relevance.
	Trust & privacy	Gen-Z practice a privacy calculus: willingness to share rises with explainability ('why this'), clear consent, and visible control (pause/forget).
	Advisor vs. seller	Advisor-like, brand-true tone will increase credibility; overt sales push will reduce it.
	Bundle effects	Value will arise from feature bundles (e.g., fit × VTO; accuracy × brand-true tone), not single features alone.
	Omnichannel	Human-in-the-escalation and clientele hand-off are essential to preserve luxury standards in high-stakes decisions.

	Gen-Z stance	Gen-Z will be pragmatic: welcoming AI when it saves effort/reduces risk; rejecting it when generic, rigid, or inaccurate.
<b>C) Bracketing Previous Experiences (researcher reflexivity)</b>		
	Retail chatbots/AIVAs	Prior exposure to assistants on luxury or premium fashion sites.
	VTO/3D tools	Personal use of virtual try-ons or 3D/360 product viewers in shopping apps.
	Luxury in-store clientele	Experience with stylist consultations/appointments that may predispose views on 'human touch'.
	General AI tools	Use of general conversational AI which may shape expectations about speed/accuracy.
	Theoretical familiarity	Prior knowledge of TAM, U&G, social presence possibly biasing toward 'usefulness first' interpretations.
	Privacy/ethics interest	Existing sensitivity to consent/transparency issues that could influence coding emphasis.
<b>D) Reflexive Safeguards Used</b>		
	Reflexive memos	Maintained positionality statements and analytic memos throughout data collection and coding.
	Decision audit-trail	Logged coding decisions and theme revisions to keep interpretation inspectable.
	In-vivo anchors	Used verbatim participant phrasing to ground codes and reduce theory-led imposition.
	Negative-case checks	Actively sought disconfirming evidence to challenge emerging themes.
	Peer debriefs	Periodic peer review of code boundaries and theme coherence.
	Process separation	Separated description → reduction → interpretation stages prior to model building.

Author's Own

### 3.2.6 Time Horizon

A cross-sectional time horizon was applied in the design of this research meaning that data were gathered at a single point in time rather than longitudinally (Saunders et al., 2019). This was appropriate due to practical constraints associated with university project timeframes and participant availability, as well as the exploratory nature of the study (Setia, 2016). The

primary objective was to generate a snapshot of current expectations, attitudes, and experiences among UK Gen Z consumers and relevant industry stakeholders regarding AI-based luxury fashion e-commerce. While consumer perceptions may evolve over time as technologies mature, the cross-sectional approach provided valuable insight into contemporary sentiments during a period of rapid digital innovation in luxury retail (Jin and Youn, 2022). Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that this approach limits observations of changes over time. Future research could build on these findings using longitudinal or repeated-cross-sectional designs to explore how Gen Z perceptions of AI evolve as they age or as technologies become more sophisticated.

***Key Takeaway for Research Design (Section 3.2)***

The study adopts an interpretivist, inductive, qualitative design, combining semi-structured interviews and a focus group within a narrative inquiry to surface Gen-Z's lived meanings around luxury AIVAs. Reflexive phenomenological bracketing was used to minimise researcher bias, with analysis grounded in in-vivo coding. Data were collected cross-sectionally, offering a rigorous snapshot of current expectations while recognising that perceptions may evolve over time.

### **3.3 Research Method**

#### ***3.3.1 Research Techniques and Data Collection***

Building upon the interpretivist philosophy (Section 3.2.1), inductive approach (Section 3.2.2), and qualitative multi-method design (Section 3.2.3), varying research techniques were employed in alignment with the study's objectives (Table 3.1). Secondary research, in the form of a comprehensive literature review (Chapter 2), was conducted to critically analyse existing scholarship and industry sources, contextualising the role of AI virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce and Gen Z consumer behaviour. Complementing this, primary research was undertaken for empirical exploration, adopting a focus group with luxury consumers to capture collective perceptions and expectations, and a series of semi-structured interviews with Gen Z consumers, technology insiders, and a luxury brand communication director. The focus group enabled exploration of how peer-influenced dynamics shape Gen Z attitudes towards AI virtual assistants, while the interviews provided individualised depth on themes of trust, authenticity, and personalisation. This triangulated

design aligned with the strategy of narrative inquiry (Section 3.2.4), as it foregrounded participants lived stories and experiences to construct meaning around AI in luxury contexts. The study was further defined by a cross-sectional time horizon (Section 3.2.5), offering a timely snapshot of evolving consumer and industry perspectives during a period of rapid digital innovation in luxury fashion. Table 3.2 presents the correlation between the study's objectives, research questions, and the adopted research techniques.

**Key Takeaway Research Methods & Data Collection (Section. 3.3)**

This study combines a critical literature review with triangulated primary data: one Gen-Z focus group to surface peer-shaped meanings and semi-structured interviews with Gen-Z consumers, technology insiders, and a luxury brand communicator for depth. Guided by narrative inquiry and an interpretivist–inductive stance, the cross-sectional design provides a timely snapshot of how AI virtual assistants are understood in luxury fashion, directly mapping techniques to the objectives and research questions.

Table 3.2 Research Question and Techniques towards Study Objectives

Objectives of Study	Research Questions	Research Techniques
<p>To critically analyse existing literature on AI-driven e-commerce, AI chatbots, virtual assistants, consumer behaviour in luxury fashion, and Gen Z shopping preferences to establish a theoretical foundation.</p>	<p>RQ1: How does existing literature inform the role of AI in luxury fashion e-commerce and Gen Z behaviour?</p> <p>RQ2: How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?</p>	<p>Secondary research:</p> <p>Comprehensive literature review of academic journals, books, and industry reports.</p>
<p>To explore Gen Z consumers' perceptions and expectations of AI-powered features in luxury fashion e-commerce through qualitative primary research.</p>	<p>RQ2: How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?</p> <p>RQ3: What role do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury e-commerce?</p>	<p>Primary research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus group with luxury consumers.</li> <li>● Semi-structured interviews with Gen Z consumers.</li> </ul>

Objectives of Study	Research Questions	Research Techniques
<p>To understand the role of AI virtual assistants in facilitating personalised interactions and enhancing customer experience in luxury fashion e-commerce.</p>	<p>RQ2: How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?</p> <p>RQ3: What role do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury e-commerce?</p> <p>RQ4: How can luxury fashion brands optimise AI virtual assistants to enhance market positioning and engagement with Gen Z</p>	<p>Primary research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-structured interviews with two technology industry insiders.</li> <li>• Semi-structured interview with a luxury brand communication director.</li> </ul>
<p>To provide managerial insights for luxury fashion brands on using AI virtual assistants to enhance e-commerce platforms, boost engagement and personalisation among Gen Z in the UK and differentiate their market position through luxurious experience.</p>	<p>RQ3: What role do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury e-commerce?</p> <p>RQ4: How can luxury fashion brands optimise AI virtual assistants to enhance market positioning and engagement with Gen Z?</p>	<p>Triangulated analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration of literature review, consumer focus group, and semi-structured interviews with Gen Z consumers, technology experts, and luxury brand professionals to generate managerial recommendations.</li> </ul>

Author's Own

### **3.4 Primary Research - Focus Group Interview**

#### **3.4.1 Research Technique**

A focus group was employed as a research technique to capture collective perceptions, negotiations, and shared meanings among Gen Z luxury consumers regarding AI virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce (Morgan, 1997; Bryman, 2016). Unlike one-to-one interviews, focus groups allow participants to articulate their views in dialogue with peers, creating a dynamic interaction where opinions are shaped, reinforced, or contested in real time (Kitzinger, 1995; Wilkinson, 1998). This method is particularly effective for exploring how social influence, peer validation, and generational identity impact consumer attitudes toward digital technologies in luxury contexts (Saunders et al., 2019).

In this study, a single focus group consisting of six Gen Z luxury consumers was conducted via Microsoft Teams. This group interaction fostered a collaborative environment, enabling participants to build on or challenge each other's narratives, thereby revealing collective patterns of meaning-making and points of divergence (Barbour, 2014).

The flexibility of the focus group guide allowed the moderator to maintain consistency across themes while probing emergent discussions on unexpected areas, such as aesthetic preferences for AI interfaces, privacy concerns, and the importance of exclusivity in digital luxury. This balance between structure and spontaneity ensured both comparability and richness of data (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

From a positional standpoint, the researcher adopted the role of a neutral facilitator, ensuring that no single participant dominated the discussion and that a diversity of voices was heard. This aligned with the study's interpretivist orientation, prioritising the co-construction of knowledge through interaction (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). The group format not only enhanced the ecological validity of the findings but also allowed for triangulation with interview data, thereby strengthening the overall trustworthiness of the study (Denzin, 2012).

#### **3.4.2 Sampling Strategy**

To select participants for the focus group, the study employed a non-probability, homogenous purposive sampling strategy (Robinson, 2013; Saunders et al., 2019). This approach enabled the researcher to deliberately gather individuals who identified as luxury consumers within the Gen Z demographic (Table 3.2). Participants were drawn from a variety of professional and educational backgrounds, ensuring that their contributions reflected a broad, consumer-oriented perspective. Importantly, no criteria related to digital

expertise or familiarity with AI were applied during recruitment, to capture the most authentic, organic responses to the research prompts.

The final group consisted of six UK-based Gen Z luxury consumers, among whom two participants were studying or working in fashion-related subjects. Their inclusion added valuable insider perspectives, while the remaining participants represented consumers from non-fashion disciplines, thereby reducing the risk of pre-existing biases and allowing the discussion to remain firmly grounded in lived consumer experience. Recruitment was conducted through personal and academic networks, with the aim of ensuring participants were regular luxury shoppers and therefore able to engage meaningfully in conversations about trust, exclusivity, and brand interaction in relation to AI-powered virtual assistants.

**Key Takeaway for Focus Group Sampling (Section 3.4)**

A single focus group of six UK Gen-Z luxury consumers (homogeneous purposive sample) was run on Microsoft Teams to capture peer-shaped, collective meanings around luxury AIVAs. A neutral, structured-but-flexible moderation surfaced themes on interface aesthetics, privacy, and digital exclusivity, complementing interview data and strengthening triangulated trustworthiness.

Table 3.3 Focus Group Interview Participant Summary

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Occupation
CP - A	F	25	Intern at Christian DIOR + Fashion Student
CP - B	M	21	Fashion Student
CP - C	M	23	Finance Analyst
CP - D	F	20	Medical Student
CP - E	M	19	Entrepreneur Student
CP - F	F	24	Psychologist

CP = Consumer Participant

Author's Own

### **3.4.3 Data Collection Procedure**

The focus group was conducted online via Microsoft Teams due to limited researcher - participant proximity and time availability (Bryman & Bell, 2015). While hosting the discussion in a virtual setting may have reduced opportunities for natural rapport and spontaneous group dynamics compared to an in-person session (Lefever, Dal and Matthíasdóttir, 2006), it ensured accessibility for participants from different locations and maintained data security (Saunders et al., 2019). The session lasted approximately 90 minutes, deemed an appropriate length to generate detailed dialogue and cover all core themes without overextending participants' time (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Data collection followed the focus group interview framework (Table 3.3), which was developed around the study's objectives and research questions. The framework combined core themes with open-ended prompts to sustain discussion, while allowing the moderator flexibility to probe issues raised by participants. To ensure clarity and effectiveness, the instrument was piloted with two Gen Z consumers prior to the main session, confirming that no significant revisions were necessary.

The focus group was audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim in accordance with SAGE research transcription standards (Gubrium et al., 2001), ensuring accuracy and fidelity to participant voices. This process not only safeguarded data integrity but also provided a reliable foundation for subsequent thematic analysis, capturing both individual perspectives and the collective negotiation of meanings within the group.

#### ***Key Takeaway for Data Collection Procedure (Section 3.4)***

A 90-minute focus group was run on Microsoft Teams, trading some in-person spontaneity for accessibility and secure participation, using a piloted guide of open-ended prompts aligned to the RQs. The session was audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim, providing an accurate, trustworthy corpus for subsequent thematic analysis of both individual views and collective meaning-making.

Table 3.4 Focus Group Interview Framework for Gen Z Luxury Consumer

Research Question and Sub-Research question	Sub-Research Question	Theme	Main Question	Sub-Question (If Applicable)	Theoretical Basis
Opening the Interview			I) Thank the participant for their time II) Confirm they are comfortable with the session being recorded III) Let me assure you that everything shared here will stay confidential and anonymous IV) Check if they have any questions or queries before we start? V) State the date, participant number and retailer name for the recording and contextual information.		
<b>RQ 1. How does existing literature inform the role of AI in luxury fashion e-commerce and Gen Z behaviour?</b>					
RQ1 A What are the dominant theoretical frameworks used to analyse AI-driven consumer interactions in luxury retail?	RQ1A+C	AI Integration & Communication	1) Can you describe how luxury brands you engage with are currently using AI in digital communication?	1a) What are your expectations when you see AI being used in luxury brand communication?	Hong et al., 2025
RQ1 B What insights exist on Gen Z's digital behaviour,	RQ1B	Gen Z Digital Expectations	2) Do you personally prefer shopping for luxury fashion online or in-store?		Agarwal, 2019

values, and expectations in luxury e-commerce?			3) What are your typical behaviours and expectations when shopping for luxury fashion online?	3a) How do AI virtual assistants meet or impact your shopping experience?	
RQ1 C What gaps exist in literature regarding emotional engagement, anthropomorphism, and symbolic consumption in AI-mediated luxury retail?	RQ1C	Emotional Engagement & Brand Experience	4) In your opinion, how does AI impact emotional engagement when you interact with luxury brands online?	4a) Can you recall a time where AI made a luxury shopping experience feel genuine?	Chung et al., 2020 Landim et al., 2022 Murtarelli et al., 2022
<b>RQ 2. How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?</b>					
RQ2 A How do Gen Z consumers describe their emotional and cognitive responses to AI-powered assistants?	RQ2A	Digital Behaviour and Shopping Preferences	4) How do you usually feel when interacting with AI assistants on luxury brand platforms?	4a) What makes the experience enjoyable or frustrating?	Prodanova et al., 2023 Um et al., 2024

<p>RQ2 B</p> <p>What features of AI (e.g. tone, personalisation, aesthetic) matter most to Gen Z in luxury interactions?</p>	<p>RQ2A+B+C</p>	<p>Cognitive and Emotional Response</p>	<p>5) What features of AI assistants matter the most to you when interacting with luxury brands? (e.g., tone, personalisation, aesthetic)</p> <p>6) How often do you engage with AI features (chatbots, virtual stylists) while shopping?</p>		<p>Heidersbach, 2022</p> <p>Qin et al., 2023</p>
<p>RQ2 C</p> <p>How does Gen Z's perception of trust and authenticity shape their use of AI in luxury shopping?</p>	<p>RQ2C</p>	<p>Perceived Trust and Authenticity</p>	<p>7) How important is trust and data privacy when using AI assistants with luxury brands?</p> <p>8) Do you think AI assistants feel authentic, or do they come across as robotic?</p>	<p>7a) What makes you trust or distrust an AI assistant in this context?</p> <p>8a) What makes you say this, can you give us an example?</p>	<p>Schlögl et al., 2019</p> <p>Bandara et al., 2020</p>

RQ 3. What role do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury e-commerce?					
RQ3 A How do AI assistants influence the perceived value and enjoyment of the online luxury shopping journey?	RQ3A+B	Enhanced Journey & Loyalty	9) Can you walk me through how AI assistants can influence your luxury shopping journey?	9a) What have been the biggest challenges for you, prompt (technical, organizational, or cultural) while using an AI virtual assistant?	Grewal et al., 2017 Sapna et al., 2019 Liao et al., 2018
RQ3 B To what extent does personalisation enhance user satisfaction and loyalty among Gen Z?	RQ3A+ B	Engagement Metrics	10) How does your AI interaction differ from human sales advisors in luxury stores?  11) How well do you think AI assistants personalise recommendations for you?	10a) How important is it to you that AI assistants offer tailored style advice like an in-store stylist and any recommendations that would help them achieve this?  11a) Do you revisit brands that provide personalised AI suggestions?	Landim et al., 2021 Moriuchi et al., 2020

RQ 4. How can luxury fashion brands optimise AI virtual assistants to enhance market positioning and engagement with Gen Z?					
RQ4 A What strategic elements make AI assistants feel 'luxurious' in tone, interface, and user experience?	RQ4A+B	Strategic Use of AI	12) Can you share any memorable AI-assisted luxury shopping experience you've had? 13) How would you feel about an AI assistant that remembers your style - journey or celebrates milestones?	13a) How would that change your perception of AI virtual assistants?	Cho, Kim-Vick & Yu, 2021  Bian & Forsythe, 2012
RQ4 B How can luxury brands use AI assistants to reinforce emotional exclusivity and long-term engagement?	RQ4B	Market Differentiation	14) In your view, what features of AI VA's can help a luxury brand stand out? 15) In what ways do you think AI in luxury should evolve to match your expectations? 16) How would you describe the ideal interaction with an AI assistant from your favourite luxury brand?	14a) What features are most valued by you?	Zhang & Zhao, 2019  Eighmey & McCord, 1998

### **3.5 Primary Research - Semi-Structured Interviews**

#### **3.5.1 Research Technique**

Semi-structured interviews were employed as a primary research technique to explore the nuanced perceptions, expectations, and experiences surrounding AI virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce (Schultze & Avital, 2011; Schwandt, 2001). This method balances pre-designed thematic prompts with open-ended flexibility, enabling participants to narrate their individual experiences while allowing the researcher to adapt questions to emergent themes (Saunders et al., 2019; Silverman, 2017).

The interviews were conducted sequentially across three participant groups: Gen Z luxury consumers, AI technologists in the luxury fashion industry, and a luxury brand communication director. This design facilitated triangulation by capturing the phenomenon from consumer, technological, and managerial perspectives, thereby enriching the data and offering a multi-layered understanding of how AI intersects with luxury e-commerce (Denzin, 2012).

The core framework ensured comparability across participants, the flexibility to probe important moments enabled deeper insights into symbolic and affective dimensions of AI use, such as emotional engagement, exclusivity, and digital intimacy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This adaptability was crucial for surfacing unexpected themes.

From a positional standpoint, the researcher adopted an empathetic but critically interpretive stance, aligning with the study's interpretivist philosophy (Goldkuhl, 2012). By engaging participants in reflective dialogue and maintaining transparency about the role of the interviewer, the process enhanced both credibility and trustworthiness (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

#### **3.5.2 Sampling Strategy**

To select participants for the semi-structured interviews, the study employed a non-probability, homogenous purposive sampling strategy (Robinson, 2013; Saunders et al., 2019). This technique allowed the researcher's subjective judgement to deliberately target individuals whose expertise or experiences were directly relevant to the research question (Forster, 2001). While this approach omits broader socio-demographic representation, it was chosen because it enables the researcher to capture a unified experiential essence without dilution from variables outside the study's scope (Silverman, 2017).

Participants were deliberately narrowed to two distinct yet complementary groups: Gen Z luxury consumers and industry professionals. On the consumer side, individuals aged 18–27 were selected, reflecting the demographic most engaged with digital luxury retail and most likely to interact with AI-powered e-commerce platforms. This choice aligns with recent evidence suggesting that Gen Z are both drivers of digital adoption and highly discerning about personalisation, authenticity, and brand values in their online experiences (Deloitte, 2022).

On the professional side, individuals occupying roles in technology development and luxury brand communication were chosen due to their first-hand knowledge of AI implementation and strategic integration, providing an insider view on both opportunities and barriers. Recruitment was conducted through the researcher’s academic and professional networks, supported by outreach on LinkedIn. The final sample comprised five participants (Table 3.3).

Table 3.5 - Semi-Structured Interview Participants Summary

Participant ID	Gender	Occupation	Relevance to the study
IP - A	M	Communication’s Director at Luxury Brand	Provides an insider perspective on how luxury brands manage AI communication and consumer engagement.
TIP - A	M	Digital Anthropologist and Co-founder of Luxury Experiential Studio	Offers expertise on cultural/behavioural dimensions of luxury experiences and digital transformation.
TIP - B	F	Chief Strategist at AI Styled Fashion Company	Contributes specialist knowledge on AI applications in fashion styling and retail innovation.
CP - A	F	Fashion Student + Luxury Consumer (Gen Z)	Represents Gen Z’s dual lens as both an emerging professional and active luxury consumer.
CP - B	F	Entrepreneur + Luxury Consumer (Gen Z)	Provides entrepreneurial insights into consumer trends alongside personal Gen Z shopping experiences.

IP = Industry Participant, TIP = Technology Industry Participant

Author’s Own

### **3.5.3 Data Collection Procedure**

Semi-structured interview data was collected sequentially using the interview frameworks developed for luxury brand professionals (Table 3.5) technology industry insiders (Table 3.6), and Gen Z consumers (Table 3.7). Interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams, this format ensured accessibility for participants across different locations while maintaining professional standards and data security. Each interview lasted approximately 30–40 minutes and was consensually audio-recorded using the built-in Microsoft Teams recording function, with explicit permission granted by participants beforehand. The recordings were later transcribed verbatim in accordance with SAGE research transcription criteria (Gubrium, 2001), ensuring accuracy and fidelity to participant responses.

#### ***Key Takeaway for Semi-Structured Interview (Section 3.5)***

Semi-structured interviews with Gen Z consumers and industry professionals offered rich, multi-layered insights into AI in luxury e-commerce, balancing structured comparability with open-ended depth. Conducted via Microsoft Teams, the interviews (30–40 mins) were purposively sampled, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim, ensuring accessibility, accuracy, and credibility while capturing both consumer perspectives and insider expertise.

Table 3.6: Semi-Structured Interview Framework for Luxury Industry Insider

Research Question and Sub-Research question	Sub-Research Question	Theme	Main Question	Sub-Question (If Applicable)	Theoretical Basis
Opening the Interview			I) Thank the participant for their time II) Confirm they are comfortable with the session being recorded III) Let me assure you that everything shared here will stay confidential and anonymous IV) Check if they have any questions or queries before we start? V) State the date, participant number and retailer name for the recording and contextual information.		
<b>RQ 1. How does existing literature inform the role of AI in luxury fashion e-commerce and Gen Z behaviour?</b>					
RQ1 A What are the dominant theoretical frameworks used to analyse AI-driven consumer interactions in luxury retail?	RQ1A+C	AI Integration & Communication	1) Can you describe how your brand currently uses or is exploring AI tools in digital communication? 2) In your opinion, are AI tools currently being used to handle customer queries or service-related communication?	1a) What goals or motivations drive that integration? 1b) If so, in what capacity are they being used and what problems do they solve?	Hong et al., 2025, Chun & Ha, 2006

<p>RQ1 B</p> <p>What insights exist on Gen Z's digital behaviour, values, and expectations in luxury e-commerce?</p>	<p>RQ1B</p>	<p>Gen Z Digital Expectations</p>	<p>3) What have you observed about Gen Z's digital behaviour and expectations when shopping luxury online?</p>	<p>3a) How has this influenced your team's communication strategy, if at all?</p>	<p>Bunea et al., 2024</p>
<p>RQ1 C</p> <p>What gaps exist in literature regarding emotional engagement, anthropomorphism, and symbolic consumption in AI-mediated luxury retail?</p>	<p>RQ1C</p>	<p>Emotional Engagement &amp; Brand Experience</p>	<p>4) Have you encountered any challenges or insights regarding Gen Z's emotional connection to AI-powered features?</p>	<p>4a) What are the common gaps or disconnects you've noticed in the interaction design?</p>	<p>Chandler and Owen, 2002</p>

RQ 2. How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?					
RQ2 A How do Gen Z consumers describe their emotional and cognitive responses to AI-powered assistants?	RQ2A+B	Personalisation & Trust	5) In your experience, do consumers respond to the tone and personalisation features of your AI assistants? If so, then can you share a specific example?	5a) What elements (e.g., voice, interface) seem to resonate or deter engagement?	Zhang et al., 2024 Brodie et al. 2011
RQ2 B What features of AI (e.g. tone, personalisation, aesthetic) matter most to Gen Z in luxury interactions?	RQ2A+B	Cognitive and Emotional Response	6) Based on Gen Z's expectations around responsiveness, tone, and platform choice, are they taken into consideration in the way you design customer communication?		Zhang et al., 2024 Grönroos & Voima, 2013
RQ2 C How does Gen Z's perception of trust and authenticity shape their use of AI in luxury shopping?	RQ2C	Perceived Trust and Authenticity	7) What types of data protection measures does your brand take to ensure customer information is kept confidential and not misused?		Schlögl et al., 2019 Bandara et al., 2020

RQ 3. What role do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury 3e-commerce?					
RQ3 A How do AI assistants influence the perceived value and enjoyment of the online luxury shopping journey?	RQ3A+B	Enhanced Journey & Loyalty	8) Can you walk me through how AI assistants can influence the luxury shopping journey?  9) How do you try to reflect luxury and brand values in digital AI assistants?	8a) What have been the biggest challenges, prompt (technical, organizational, or cultural) in deploying an AI virtual assistant?	Grewal et al., 2017 Sapna et al., 2019 Liao et al., 2018
RQ3 B To what extent does personalisation enhance user satisfaction and loyalty among Gen Z?	RQ3A+ B	Engagement Metrics	10) Are you currently tracking how Gen Z engages with AI tools (e.g., CTRs, dwell time)?  11) What impact, if any, have you observed of AI virtual assistants having on engagement and personalization on e-commerce platforms?	10a) Could you share any trends or success indicators you've seen?	Landim et al., 2021 Moriuchi et al., 2020

RQ 4. How can luxury fashion brands optimise AI virtual assistants to enhance market positioning and engagement with Gen Z?					
RQ4 A What strategic elements make AI assistants feel 'luxurious' in tone, interface, and user experience?	RQ4A+B	Strategic Use of AI	12) What role do AI VAs play in your brand's future strategy for Gen Z engagement?  13) How do you ensure your AI assistant aligns with your brand's values on inclusivity and sustainability, and have you faced any ethical dilemmas?	12a) Is there a roadmap or vision for how they will evolve?	Bian & Forsythe, 2012
RQ4 B How can luxury brands use AI assistants to reinforce emotional exclusivity and long-term engagement?	RQ4B	Market Differentiation	14) In your view, how do AI VA's features help your brand stand out in the digital luxury space?  15) Looking ahead, what new AI features or capabilities are you most excited to develop for your Gen Z customers?	13a) What features are most valued by your Gen Z customers?	Zhang & Zhao, 2019

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Table 3.7: Semi-structured Interview Framework for Luxury Technology Insiders

Research Question and Sub-Research question	Sub-Research Question	Theme	Main Question	Sub-Question (If Applicable)	Theoretical Basis
Opening the Interview			I) Thank the participant for their time II) Confirm they are comfortable with the session being recorded III) Let me assure you that everything shared here will stay confidential and anonymous IV) Check if they have any questions or queries before we start? V) State the date, participant number and retailer name for the recording and contextual information.		
<b>RQ 1. How does existing literature inform the role of AI in luxury fashion e-commerce and Gen Z behaviour?</b>					
RQ1 A What are the dominant theoretical frameworks used to analyse AI-driven consumer interactions in luxury retail?	RQ1A+C	AI Integration & Communication	1) Can you describe how your brand currently uses or is exploring AI tools in digital communication?  2) In your opinion, are AI tools currently being used to handle customer queries or service-related communication?	1a) What goals or motivations drive that integration?  1b) If so, in what capacity are they being used and what problems do they solve?	Hong et al., 2025, Chun & Ha, 2006

<p>RQ1 B</p> <p>What insights exist on Gen Z's digital behaviour, values, and expectations in luxury e-commerce?</p>	<p>RQ1B</p>	<p>Gen Z Digital Expectations</p>	<p>3) While working with so many luxury brands as your clients, what have you observed about Gen Z's digital behaviour and expectations when shopping luxury online?</p>	<p>3a) How has this influenced your team's communication planning strategy, if at all?</p>	<p>Bunea et al., 2024</p>
<p>RQ1 C</p> <p>What gaps exist in literature regarding emotional engagement, anthropomorphism, and symbolic consumption in AI-mediated luxury retail?</p>	<p>RQ1C</p>	<p>Emotional Engagement &amp; Brand Experience</p>	<p>4) Have you encountered any challenges or insights regarding Gen Z's emotional connection to AI-powered features?</p>	<p>4a) What are the common gaps or disconnects you've noticed in the interaction design?</p>	<p>Chandler and Owen, 2002</p>

RQ 2. How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?					
RQ2 A How do Gen Z consumers describe their emotional and cognitive responses to AI-powered assistants?	RQ2A+B	Personalisation & Trust	5) In your experience, do consumers respond to the tone and personalisation features of your AI assistants? If so, then can you share a specific example?	5a) What elements (e.g., voice, interface) seem to resonate or deter engagement?	Zhang et al., 2024 Brodie et al. 2011
RQ2 B What features of AI (e.g. tone, personalisation, aesthetic) matter most to Gen Z in luxury interactions?	RQ2A+B	Cognitive and Emotional Response	6) Based on Gen Z's expectations around responsiveness, tone, and platform choice, are they taken into consideration in the way you design customer communication?		Zhang et al., 2024 Grönroos & Voima, 2013

RQ2 C How does Gen Z's perception of trust and authenticity shape their use of AI in luxury shopping?	RQ2C	Perceived Trust and Authenticity	7) What types of data protection measures does your brand take to ensure customer information is kept confidential and not misused?		Schlögl et al., 2019 Bandara et al., 2020
<b>RQ 3. What role do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury e-commerce?</b>					
RQ3 A How do AI assistants influence the perceived value and enjoyment of the online luxury shopping journey?	RQ3A+B	Enhanced Journey & Loyalty	8) Can you walk me through how AI assistants can influence the luxury shopping journey? 9) How do you try to reflect luxury and brand values in digital AI assistants? 10) In your design work, how do you ensure the AI interface reflects luxury cues in aesthetics, mood, and interaction?	8a) What have been the biggest challenges, prompt (technical, organizational, or cultural) in deploying an AI virtual assistant?	Grewal et al., 2017 Sapna et al., 2019 Liao et al., 2018

RQ3 B To what extent does personalisation enhance user satisfaction and loyalty among Gen Z?	RQ3A+ B	Engagement Metrics	11) Are you currently tracking how Gen Z engages with AI tools (e.g., CTRs, dwell time)? 12) What impact, if any, have you observed of AI virtual assistants having on engagement and personalization on e-commerce platforms?	10a) Could you share any trends or success indicators you've seen?	Landim et al., 2021 Moriuchi et al., 2020
<b>RQ 4. How can luxury fashion brands optimise AI virtual assistants to enhance market positioning and engagement with Gen Z?</b>					
RQ4 A What strategic elements make AI assistants feel 'luxurious' in tone, interface, and user experience?	RQ4A+B	Strategic Use of AI	13) What role do AI VAs play in the future strategy of luxury brands for Gen Z engagement? 14) How do you ensure that an AI assistant aligns with the brand's values on inclusivity and sustainability, and have you faced any ethical dilemmas?	12a) Is there a roadmap or vision for how they will evolve?	Bian & Forsythe, 2012

<p>RQ4 B</p> <p>How can luxury brands use AI assistants to reinforce emotional exclusivity and long-term engagement?</p>	<p>RQ4B</p>	<p>Market Differentiation</p>	<p>15) In your view, how do AI VA's features help a luxury brand stand out in the digital luxury space?</p> <p>16) Looking ahead, what new AI features or capabilities are you most excited to develop for your Gen Z customers?</p>	<p>13a) What features are most valued by your Gen Z customers?</p>	<p>Zhang &amp; Zhao, 2019</p> <p>Eighmey &amp; McCord, 1998</p>
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Author's Own

Table 3.8: Semi-Structured Interview Framework for Luxury Consumer

Research Question and Sub-Research question	Sub-Research Question	Theme	Main Question	Sub-Question (If Applicable)	Theoretical Basis
Opening the Interview			I) Thank the participant for their time II) Confirm they are comfortable with the session being recorded III) Let me assure you that everything shared here will stay confidential and anonymous IV) Check if they have any questions or queries before we start? V) State the date, participant number and retailer name for the recording and contextual information.		
<b>RQ 1. How does existing literature inform the role of AI in luxury fashion e-commerce and Gen Z behaviour?</b>					
RQ1 A What are the dominant theoretical frameworks used to analyse AI-driven consumer interactions in luxury retail?	RQ1A+C	AI Integration & Communication	1) What's your general impression of how AI is integrated into the luxury fashion space?		Santos et al., 2021
RQ1 B What insights exist on Gen Z's digital behaviour, values, and expectations in luxury e-commerce?	RQ1B	Gen Z Digital Expectations	2) What do you expect from luxury brands e-commerce platforms in terms of experience or interaction?	2a) Do you think they have been successful in providing that?	Agarwal, 2019

RQ1 C What gaps exist in literature regarding emotional engagement, anthropomorphism, and symbolic consumption in AI-mediated luxury retail?	RQ1C	Emotional Engagement & Brand Experience	3) How would you describe your emotional experience when interacting with AI assistants (like chatbots) on luxury brand platforms?	3a) Can you share an example of one of these instances if possible?	Chung et al., 2020 Landim et al., 2022 Murtarelli et al., 2022
<b>RQ 2. How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?</b>					
RQ2 A How do Gen Z consumers describe their emotional and cognitive responses to AI-powered assistants?	RQ2A	Digital Behaviour and Shopping Preferences	4) Can you share an instance where AI made your shopping easier or more enjoyable?  5) On the contrary, have there been times where the AI assistant didn't meet your expectations?  6) Do you personally prefer shopping for luxury fashion online?	4a) Could you describe the experience?  5a) Could you describe the experience?  6a) Is there a particular reason behind this?	Lee & Kim, 2023 Prodanova et al., 2023 Um et al., 2024

RQ2 B What features of AI (e.g. tone, personalisation, aesthetic) matter most to Gen Z in luxury interactions?	RQ2A+B+C	Cognitive and Emotional Response	7) In what ways do tone, visual presentation, or human-like traits in virtual assistants affect your AI experience? 8) How often do you engage with AI features (chatbots, virtual stylists) while shopping?		Chuttur M, 2021
RQ2 C How does Gen Z's perception of trust and authenticity shape their use of AI in luxury shopping?	RQ2C	Perceived Trust and Authenticity	9) How much do you trust AI assistants in terms of data privacy and personalised suggestions? 10) In your opinion, do you think AI assistants feel authentic, or do they come across as robotic?	9a) What type of solutions do you think would be helpful to make these technologies more trustworthy?  10a) What makes you say this, can you give us an example?	Schlögl et al., 2019 Bandara et al., 2020
<b>RQ 3. What role do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury e-commerce?</b>					
RQ3 A How do AI assistants influence the perceived value and enjoyment of the online luxury shopping journey?	RQ3A+B	Enhanced Journey & Loyalty	11) Can you walk me through how AI assistants can influence your luxury shopping journey?	11a) What have been the biggest challenges for you, prompt (technical, organizational, or cultural) while using an AI virtual assistant?	Grewal et al., 2017 Sapna et al., 2019 Liao et al., 2018

<p>RQ3 B</p> <p>To what extent does personalisation enhance user satisfaction and loyalty among Gen Z?</p>	<p>RQ3A+ B</p>	<p>Engagement Metrics</p>	<p>12) How does your AI interaction differ from human sales advisors in luxury stores?</p> <p>13) How well do you think AI assistants personalise recommendations for you?</p>	<p>12a) How important is it to you that AI assistants offer tailored style advice like an in-store stylist?</p> <p>13a) Do you revisit brands that provide personalised AI suggestions?</p>	<p>Landim et al., 2021</p> <p>Moriuchi et al., 2020</p>
<p><b>RQ 4. How can luxury fashion brands optimise AI virtual assistants to enhance market positioning and engagement with Gen Z?</b></p>					
<p>RQ4 A</p> <p>What strategic elements make AI assistants feel 'luxurious' in tone, interface, and user experience?</p>	<p>RQ4A+B</p>	<p>Strategic Use of AI</p>	<p>14) When interacting with an AI assistant from a luxury fashion brand, what features would make it feel more luxurious to you?</p> <p>15) How would you feel about an AI assistant that remembers your style - journey or celebrates milestones?</p>	<p>15a) How would that change your perception of AI virtual assistants?</p>	<p>Rothman, Kim and Moody, 2025</p> <p>Bian &amp; Forsythe, 2012</p>

<p>RQ4 B</p> <p>How can luxury brands use AI assistants to reinforce emotional exclusivity and long-term engagement?</p>	<p>RQ4B</p>	<p>Market Differentiation</p>	<p>16) In your view, how do AI VA's features help a luxury brand stand out in the digital luxury space?</p> <p>17) In what ways do you think AI in luxury should evolve to match your expectations?</p> <p>18) How would you describe the ideal interaction with an AI assistant from your favourite luxury brand?</p>	<p>16a) What features are most valued by your Gen Z customers like yourself?</p>	<p>Zhang &amp; Zhao, 2019</p> <p>Eighmey &amp; McCord, 1998</p>
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### 3.6 Data Analysis

Once data collection was complete, the study employed thematic analysis as the principal technique for analysing qualitative data through cyclical coding iterations, ascertaining patterns, categories, and themes (Saunders et al., 2019). This method was selected due to its flexibility and strong alignment with an inductive approach, enabling themes to emerge organically from participant narratives while also offering a systematic framework for identifying patterns, categories, and meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saunders et al., 2019). While inductive coding remained the primary focus, the analysis also incorporated elements of deductive coding. This was guided by insights drawn from the conceptual framework established in Chapter 2, which developed a revised model integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory (Figure 2.8). As such, codes were not only generated from raw data but also examined in relation to existing constructs such as trust, personalisation, perceived usefulness, exclusivity, and digital intimacy (King, 2004). This dual process ensured the findings both contributed novel insights and extended established theory (Saldaña, 2021).

- First-cycle coding utilised an eclectic combination of methods:
  - In vivo coding preserved participants' own words, ensuring the authentic voice of Gen Z consumers and professionals was retained (Saldaña, 2021).
  - Emotion coding captured the affective responses participants articulated when describing their experiences of AI in luxury e-commerce, such as feelings of trust, scepticism, or exclusivity (Lustick, 2021).
  - Initial coding allowed for open interpretation of complex narratives, providing breadth and inclusivity to emerging ideas (Saldaña, 2021).
  - Causation coding was applied where participants explicitly linked technological features to behavioural or emotional outcomes, for example, AI-driven recommendations influencing perceptions of brand authenticity (Bradley, Curry & Devers, 2007).
  
- Second-cycle coding was conducted using axial and pattern coding to refine the initial codes into broader categories and overarching themes (Saldaña, 2021). This stage facilitated the identification of dominant patterns across the dataset and allowed comparison of perspectives between Gen Z consumers, technology insiders, and luxury professionals. Attribute coding was further employed to track similarities and differences across participant groups, strengthening the robustness of findings.

Throughout the process, the researcher maintained reflexive memos, documenting interpretive decisions and emerging insights to ensure transparency and critical awareness (Tracy, 2010). The iterative nature of coding allowed for ongoing refinement, ensuring the final themes accurately represented participant experiences while also speaking to the study's conceptual framework.

***Key Takeaway for Data Analysis (Section 3.6)***

The study used thematic analysis with an inductive core and light deductive checking against the TAM × U&G framework. First-cycle coding combined in-vivo, emotion, initial, and causation techniques; second-cycle axial/pattern coding consolidated categories into themes, with attribute coding comparing consumer vs. insider views. Iterative refinement ensured themes faithfully represented participants' experiences and aligned with the conceptual model.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness and Authenticity**

The study evaluated rigour using the Four-Dimensions Criteria (FDC) proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1985). These consist of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability, and are widely adopted in qualitative research as markers of trustworthiness and authenticity (Nowell et al., 2017; Forero et al., 2018).

Credibility - represents the naturalistic substitute for internal validity, reflecting the truthfulness of findings (Nowell et al., 2017). To strengthen credibility, transcripts from both semi-structured interviews and the focus group were returned to participants for member checking, enabling them to verify the accuracy of their accounts and interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). While interpretivist ontology acknowledges that no singular "objective truth" can be established (Caretta & Pérez, 2019), engaging participants in this process ensured their voices remained central to the construction of meaning. Where participants requested clarifications or amendments, these were discussed and noted in the researcher's reflexive log, thereby reinforcing transparency and authenticity.

Transferability - was addressed by eliciting thick descriptions of both participant contexts and their lived experiences with AI-powered interactions in luxury e-commerce (Geertz, 1973). This included detailed accounts of consumer expectations, emotional responses, and

symbolic interpretations, as well as contextual insights from industry professionals. Such depth enables readers to assess the relevance of findings to other settings, academic contexts, or future applications in digital retail and luxury branding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Moreover, the inclusion of a focus group of Gen Z consumers provided insight into the socially constructed and peer-influenced dimension of luxury engagement, further enriching the descriptive base for transferability.

Confirmability - was assured by demonstrating that interpretations were grounded in empirical data rather than personal bias or prior assumptions (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Korstjens & Moser, 2018)

Dependability - concerns the stability and consistency of the research process over time (Sinkovics et al., 2018). Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that credibility and dependability are closely interrelated, such that demonstrating the former largely supports the latter (Shenton, 2004). Nevertheless, this study maximised dependability by providing a detailed account of all methodological steps, from research design through data collection and analysis, ensuring transparency for replication or evaluation.

***Key Takeaway for Trustworthiness & Authenticity (Section 3.7)***

Rigour was assured via Guba & Lincoln's Four-Dimensions Criteria. Credibility was strengthened through member checking of transcripts; transferability through thick, context-rich descriptions across consumer and industry perspectives; confirmability through a transparent reflexive audit trail (memos, decision logs); and dependability through a fully documented, traceable methodology, together ensuring findings are trustworthy, authentic, and inspectable.

### 3.8 Research Limitations

Although carefully designed, the research is not without limitations. Firstly, the small sample size inherently restricts the extent of transferability to the broader population of UK Gen-Z luxury consumers and brand professionals (Silverman, 2016). This constraint aligns with the study's interpretivist, inductive orientation, which privileges particularity and depth of insight over statistical generalisability (Green & Caracelli, 1997).

Secondly, most Gen-Z participants were students, which may skew perspectives toward tighter budgets, higher digital fluency, and campus-shaped social norms; future work should include employed, non-student Gen-Z to test for cohort–status differences.

Thirdly, the cross-sectional time horizon captured perceptions at a single moment, potentially overlooking how attitudes evolve as AI capabilities and luxury retail practices mature; longitudinal interpretive designs could trace these temporal shifts (Farr & Nizza, 2019). Finally, conducting interviews and the focus group online limited the observation of non-verbal cues; while rapport was maintained digitally and narratives were rich, in-person sessions could enhance contextual sensitivity and triangulation of interactional cues (Irvine et al.)

#### ***Key Takeaway Research Limitation (Section 3.8)***

This exploratory, cross-sectional study uses a small, qualitative sample, mainly London-based Gen-Z (many students), so findings prioritise depth over statistical generalisation and may reflect cohort, place and time. Remote data collection also limited non-verbal observation. Future work should broaden cohorts (incl. employed Gen-Z), run longitudinal designs, and incorporate in-person methods for richer contextual cues.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics concern the principles and standards that underpin responsible scholarship, ensuring fairness, respect, and integrity in the treatment of participants (Saunders et al., 2019). This study was conducted in accordance with the UAL Code of Practice on Research Ethics, along with the signed ethics approval form (Appendix 1), which emphasises respect for persons, justice, and safeguarding participant welfare.

All participants were fully informed of the study's purpose, methods, and their rights before giving voluntary and informed consent. Participation was entirely optional, with the right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Anonymity and confidentiality were preserved by removing identifying details from transcripts, and data were stored securely in line with university requirements.

For the focus group, particular care was taken to remind participants of the collective nature of the setting and the need to respect the privacy of shared views. Overall, the study prioritised transparency, fairness, and accountability, ensuring that both consumer and professional perspectives were represented ethically and without coercion, in line with Guba and Lincoln's (1985) emphasis on authenticity and fairness.

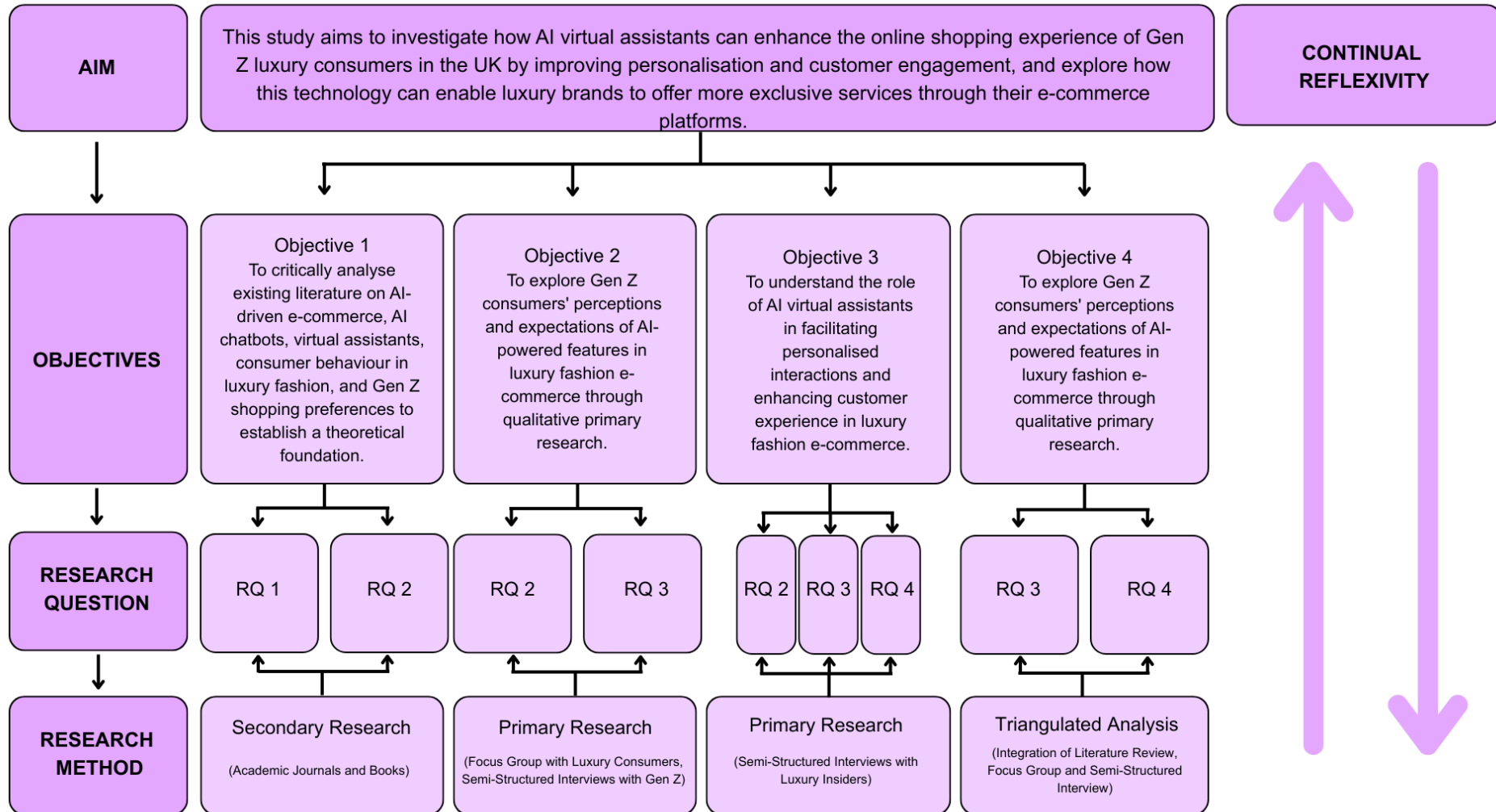
#### ***Key Takeaway for Ethical Consideration (Section 3.9)***

The study followed UAL ethics and Guba & Lincoln's authenticity principles: informed consent, right to withdraw, anonymity/confidentiality, and secure data handling were ensured. Participants were fully briefed. Procedures foregrounded fairness, transparency and respect across both consumer and professional contributions.

### **3.10 Summary**

Chapter three outlined the methodological framework underpinning this study. Guided by Saunders et al.'s (2019) Research Onion, the research adopted an interpretivist philosophy, an inductive approach, and a qualitative multi-method design. The research design and methods are synthesised into a visual framework, presented in (Figure 3.2). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Gen Z consumers, technology experts, and a luxury brand director, alongside a focus group of Gen Z consumers. Narrative inquiry was used to foreground participant stories, while a cross-sectional time horizon captured a timely snapshot of perceptions. Thematic analysis ensured systematic interpretation, and trustworthiness. Ethical considerations and limitations were also acknowledged, ensuring transparency and rigor.

Figure 3.2 Summary Map of Research Design and Methods



Author's Own

**Chapter 4**  
***Research Findings & Analysis***

## 4.1 Introduction

The following chapter outlines and analyses the study's primary findings, employing Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis across a multi-source dataset comprising a Gen-Z consumer focus group, two one-to-one consumer interviews, and three industry insider interviews (technology provider, brand communications lead, and consultant). Patterns in the empirical material are drawn from first-cycle coding (In-Vivo, Emotional, Initial, and Causation) (Appendix 3) and consolidated through second-cycle thematic codebook and codebook developmental process which is displayed using codes, categories and themes (Appendix 5) (Appendix 6)

Research questions (RQ1–RQ4) are addressed sequentially, with triangulation across consumer and insider perspectives and integration with the conceptual frameworks and methodological choices outlined in earlier chapters. Each section embeds source-attributed quotations and is accompanied by visual aids to guide the reader. Summary tables (RQ–finding mapping and final themes) further contextualise the evidence base.

Section 4.2 explores Gen-Z consumers' perceptions, mapping both their valued functional capabilities and perceived limitations of luxury AI assistants against theories of personalisation and consumer technology interaction (RQ2). Section 4.3 investigates the emotional and relational dimensions of adoption, examining how factors like tone, authenticity, and service expectations shape trust in these AI assistants (RQ3). Section 4.4 synthesises consumer and insider perspectives to evaluate strategic opportunities for luxury brands, considering how AI assistants can support their market positioning and engagement with Gen Z consumers.

Section 4.5 integrates the inductively derived insights with the study's conceptual frameworks, reflecting on the dynamic interplay between emergent user needs and established theoretical models. Section 4.6 acknowledges the inherent limitations of the study's scope and methodology, while Section 4.7 will provide a robust discussion of these findings in relation to existing literature (to be developed in Chapter 5), and Section 4.8 concludes by succinctly summarising the key findings and highlighting their practical implications for the luxury retail sector, alongside avenues for promising future research.

### 4.1.1 Research and Coding Context

The thematic analysis combined **inductive** and **deductive** approaches to ensure both grounded insights and theoretical alignment. Inductive coding emerged from close reading of interview transcripts, producing descriptive codes such as “*generic replies*,” “*robotic tone*,”

*“upload my wardrobe,”* and *“privacy notice and tick box.”* These were grouped into categories, sub-categories and then synthesised into higher-order theme. Deductive coding used theoretical frameworks from Chapter 2 such as **personalisation and recommender systems, social presence theory, luxury service design, and privacy calculus**, to interpret and refine these inductive insights.

Appendix (3) provides the full transcripts Appendix (4) provides member-checking, while Appendix (5) presents the thematic codebook. Visual thematic maps (Appendix 6) illustrate how granular codes cluster into sub-themes and themes. This chapter presents the results sequentially, addressing each research question in turn.

#### **4.1.2 A Methodological Note on Research Question 1**

It is imperative to begin with a methodological clarification. Research Question 1, *“How does existing literature inform the role of AI in luxury fashion e-commerce and Gen Z behaviour?”*, is designed to be addressed through a comprehensive review and synthesis of secondary data sources. The primary data collected and analysed within this chapter serves to generate new, original insights from the lived experiences and expert opinions of the participants. Consequently, this chapter will focus exclusively on providing a detailed analysis of the findings as they relate to Research Questions 2, 3, and 4, which are directly informed by the primary research conducted.

#### **4.2 Perception and experience of Gen Z with AI assistants**

*Analysis of RQ (2)- How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?*

The investigation into Gen Z's perceptions of AI in luxury e-commerce revealed a deeply ambivalent and pragmatic relationship. Far from being digital natives who unconditionally embrace all forms of technology, these consumers exhibit a sophisticated and critical perspective. Their experience is defined by a significant gap between the theoretical promise of a seamless, intelligent assistant and the functional reality of current implementations. This disconnect profoundly shapes their emotional responses, their hierarchy of valued AI features, and their fundamental assessments of trust and authenticity in a high-stakes retail environment.

#### **4.2.1 Emotional and Cognitive Responses (RQ2 A)**

A dominant and recurring emotional response across all consumer participants was a palpable sense of frustration with AI limitations. This frustration stemmed not from a *Luddite-esque* (someone who is opposed or resistant to new technologies) resistance to technology, but from a violation of the core principles of a luxury experience of effortless, precision, and superior service.

Participants described interactions with AI chatbots that were unwieldy and ineffective. They were forced to simplify their language, rephrase basic questions, and navigate rigid conversational flows, a process that places a significant cognitive load on the user. While participants approached AI with an expectation of efficiency, their experiences were frequently marred by interactions that were simplistic, repetitive, and ultimately unhelpful. This frustration was not merely about technological failure but about a failure to meet the heightened service expectations associated with luxury.

#### **Participant Voices**

- A Gen Z consumer (CP A), expressed this common sentiment:

*"I can get quite frustrated sometimes... when you're asking it a question that's quite simple, and it's not understanding you, and you keep having to reword it. I just think that they're very basic."*

- This similar feeling was amplified in the focus group, where (FCP C) noted the counterintuitive nature of current AI chatbots, which often create more work for the user:

*"I think it's pretty frustrating... they give me random answers for anything... you have to be very precise... it's not very helpful."*

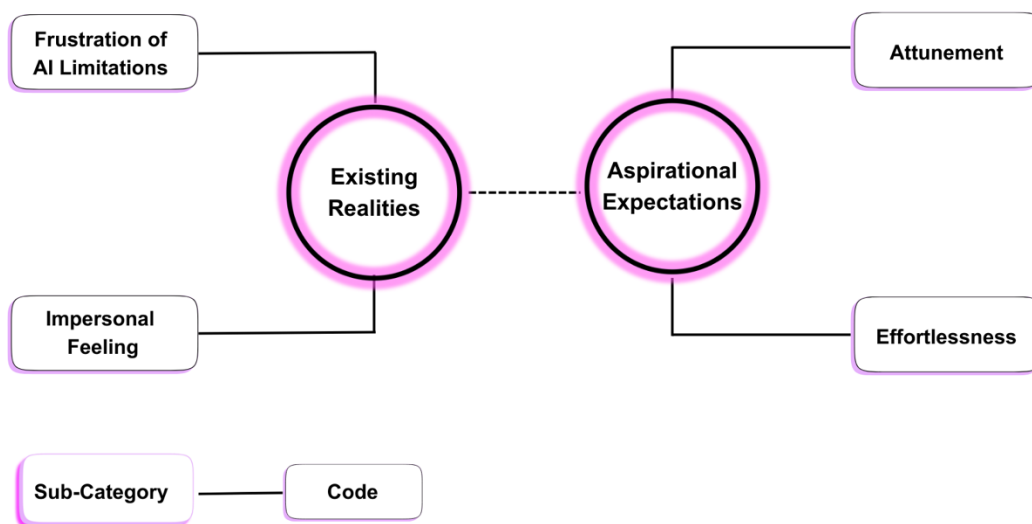
- Industry expert (IPA) confirmed that this experience is a significant barrier to adoption, describing a cyclical, maddening process:

*"you constantly just go round and round in circles with the same question and it gets so frustrating that eventually you just go, you know what, I'll find it myself or I'll find another way of doing this."*

These frustrations illustrate TAM's construct of *perceived ease of use*: when chatbots require users to reword simple questions, the cognitive effort undermines adoption. From a U&G standpoint, this also signals a failure to deliver the gratification of convenience, which Gen Z prioritises in digital shopping experiences. The main source of frustration for participants was the “robotic” feel of current AI interactions. Even with improvements in natural language processing, people were very aware that they were speaking to a programmed system rather than something human-like.

This awareness made it hard for them to see the interaction as personal or immersive. Consumers explained that the answers felt “generic” and not “tailored,” which showed a key weakness. Because of this, the interaction lacked emotional connection, and the AI experience often came across as cold and transactional. This is especially harmful in luxury fashion, where brand value depends on emotion, storytelling, and long-term relationships. Instead of supporting these goals, current AI assistants often reinforce a transactional feel that clashes with luxury brand identity.

Figure 4.1 Visual Map RQ 2(A) - The Experience Gap: Gen Z's Frustrations and Aspirations with AI Virtual Assistants



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#### 4.2.2 Features Valued by Gen Z (RQ2 B)

When evaluating the features of AI that Gen Z find most useful, consumers demonstrated a clear and consistent pragmatism. Their primary interest lies not in conversational sophistication or artificial personalities, but in practical problem solving. AI is valued most when it functions as an efficient and accurate utility, a digital concierge that can swiftly resolve concrete, logistical queries. Participants cited using AI to check stock levels, compare sizing across different brands, track an order's status, or request real-life images of a product to better assess colour and texture (CP B, FCP C, FCP A). In these instances, AI succeeds because it provides an immediate, tangible benefit, saving the user time and effort.

#### Participant Voices

- A focus group participant (FCP C) raised this point, which resonated with all participants:

*"help you decide the right fit for you and your size... compare it to other brands that I already have."*

- Drawing on her experience as a fashion entrepreneur (CP B), remarked that *"I don't think I would be bothered as long as I'm getting the right information back... I don't need it to be overcompensating and be extra polite because it's just an AI."*

- An experienced fashion tech industry participant (TIP B), gave an insight that: *"personalization should be based on the consumer rather than on the transactional data."*

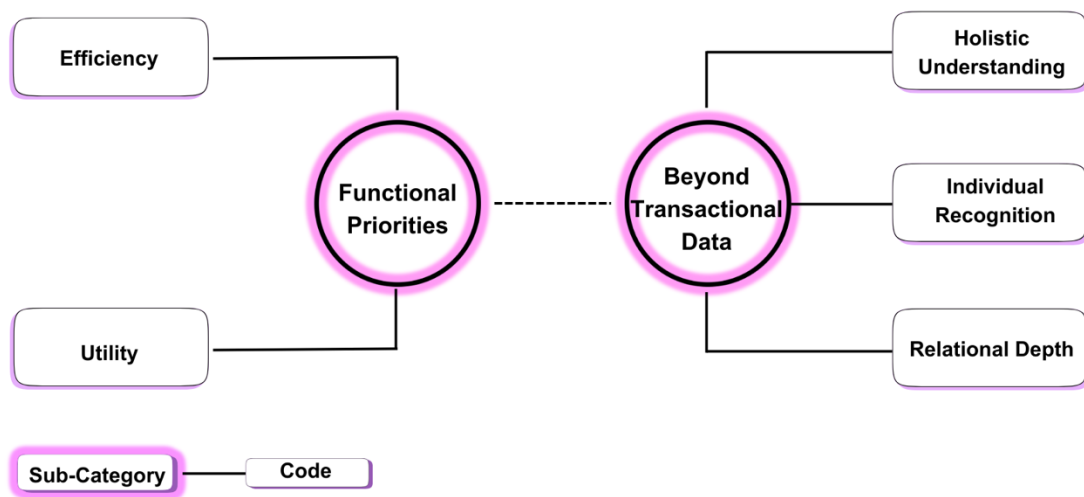
This emphasis on speed, accuracy, and deep personalisation resonates strongly with TAM's *perceived usefulness*; participants were clear that they valued AI only when it made decision-making easier or more accurate. The data suggests that Gen Z consumers are less concerned with an AI's attempts at conversational pleasantries than with its speed and accuracy. This finding indicates that for Gen Z, resources like time and cognitive energy are highly valued. For brands, this implies that the foundation of a successful AI assistant is flawless functionality; without it, a carefully crafted brand voice is merely a superficial layer.

Another notable exception to this rule of pragmatism is in the domain of deep personalization. They expressed a clear desire for recommendations that transcend superficial transactional data, such as recent clicks or viewed items. Instead, they value an AI that demonstrates a holistic understanding of their personal style, informed by their long-

term purchase history and even physical attributes like body type (CP B, FCP A, FCP B, FCP D, FCP F).

This reflects the gratifications of *information-seeking* and *personal identity reinforcement*, since personalised recommendations were seen as most valuable when aligned with their own style and body profile. This represents a desire for an AI that "knows" them, not just "tracks" them. This aspiration for deeper, more meaningful personalisation is where the functional and relational aspects of AI converge, indicating a pathway toward greater consumer satisfaction and engagement.

Figure 4.2 Visual Map RQ 2(B) - Gen Z Valued AI Virtual Assistants Attributes



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#### 4.2.3 Foundational Barriers of Trust and Authenticity (RQ2 C)

The most significant barriers to Gen Z's adoption of AI in luxury shopping stem from issues of trust and authenticity. Participants expressed differing perspectives on AI's commercial motives. Some were highly sceptical, noting that AI is ultimately programmed to serve the brand rather than the consumer, creating a clear conflict of interest. As one industry expert remarked, "Whose side is the AI really on?" From this viewpoint, AI struggles to be seen as a reliable, impartial advisor and instead feels like a sophisticated sales tool. Other participants, however, were less concerned with this bias, suggesting that in today's commercial digital world, some level of brand-driven guidance is inevitable and not necessarily detrimental.

They also discussed data privacy, but again, opinions were divided. Many participants expressed anxiety about sharing personal information, particularly sensitive data such as facial scans or detailed body measurements, fearing it could be misused. Yet others argued that privacy is largely a myth in the modern digital landscape, noting that social media platforms and big tech companies already collect and exploit personal data extensively.

#### **Participant Voices**

- A luxury tech insider (TIP A) rightly pointed out

*"Who does that AI belong to? Who is that AI on the side of?... If it's Burberry... Burberry is going to tell you that you should be buying a Burberry."*

- A focus group participant (FCP E) expressed that:

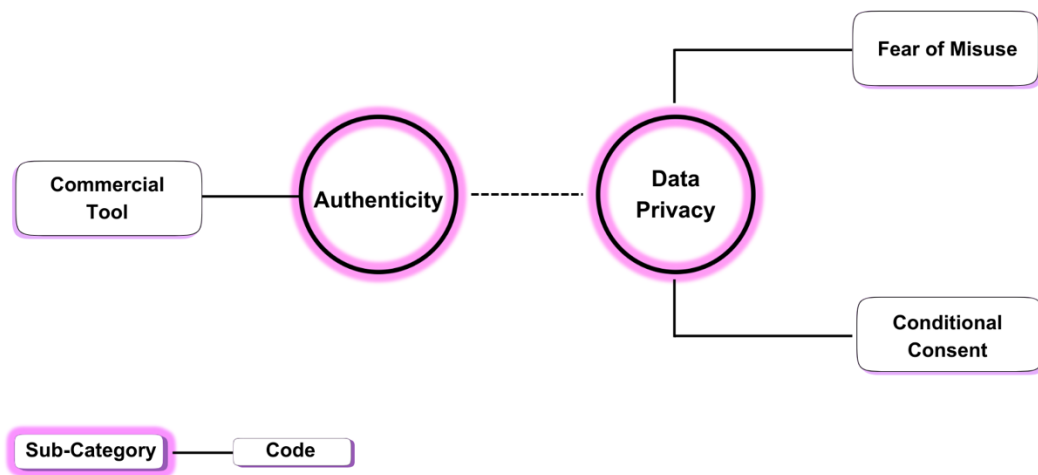
*"For me personally, I like to believe the fact that privacy is a myth in the world we live in right now"*

- A participant (FCP C), gave a contrary view:

*"There's still, like, a fear of my data getting misused... but then again, I do give my data to a lot of big tech companies."*

This created a critical tension, while participants understand that sharing personal information is necessary for online transactions, yet they harbour a residual fear of that data being misused. These anxieties and scepticisms align with TAM's *attitude toward use*, where trust issues can negatively affect behavioural intention. U&G theory further frames this as a breakdown in the gratification of *security* and *credibility*, since users cannot be gratified by AI that feels biased or unsafe, regardless of its functionality. This underlying anxiety means that they may accept data sharing for functional purposes, their comfort levels vary, and hesitation increases when asked for more intimate data (e.g., facial scans for VTO, detailed body measurements) without a clear and compelling value proposition.

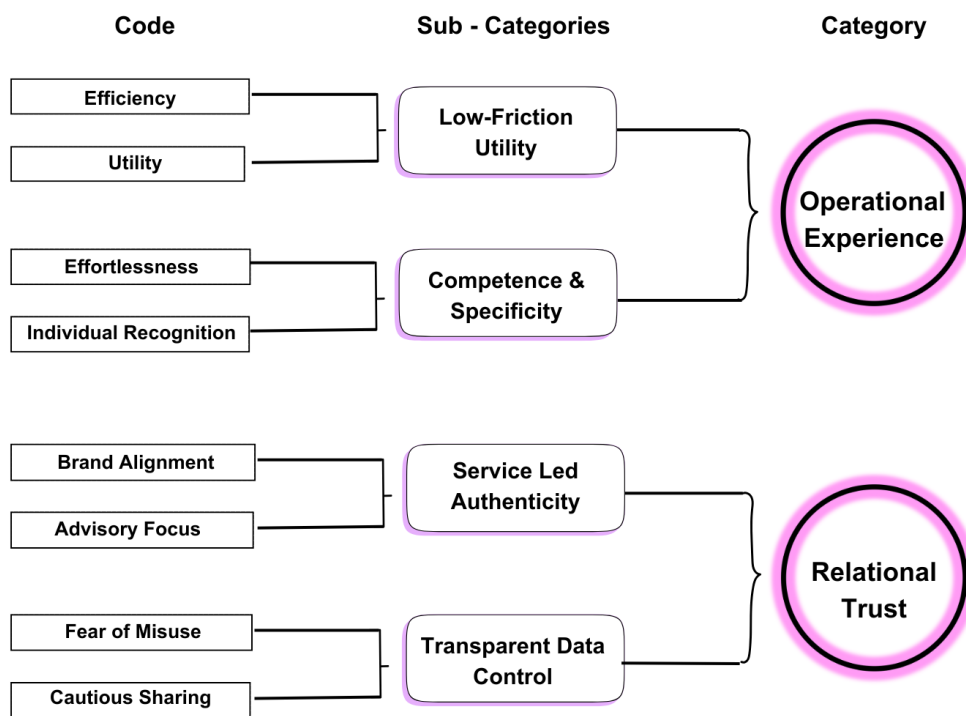
Figure 4.3 Visual Map RQ 2(C) - Trust and Authenticity Barriers for Gen Z AIVA Adoption



Author's Own

#### 4.2.4 Integrated Visual Map for RQ (2) (A+B+C)

Figure 4.4 Gen-Z AIVA Expectations: Low-Friction Utility & Transparent Trust as Dual Pillars



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Table 4.1 Summary of Key Insights from the Integrated Visual Map

Key Insight	Details
Low-Friction Utility	Gen-Z value AIVAs that remove effort and provide fast answers, clean navigation, and direct shortcuts to fit/size, availability, delivery and returns. Speed and clarity outrank small talk.
Competence & Specificity	Precision is non-negotiable. Advice must be brand- and product-specific (e.g., cross-brand sizing maps, real imagery) and recognise the individual (body type, style, past purchases).
Service-Led Authenticity	The assistant should “act like the brand’s advisor,” not a pushy seller, credible tone, on-brand language, and recommendations that feel helpful rather than promotional.
Transparent Data Control	Willingness to share data rises with clear consent scope, simple controls and short “why this” explanations for each recommendation.
Effortlessness as Luxury Cue	Smooth, low-cognitive journeys signal luxury quality; friction (rewording, loops, dead ends) breaks trust and drives abandonment.
Individual Recognition	Remembering preferences across sessions/channels (sizes, aesthetics, sensitivities) is read as care and boosts loyalty, one-off personalisation is insufficient.
Trust Safeguards	Visible guardrails, source hints and confidence thresholds, reassure users that accuracy and safety come before selling.

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### **4.3 Role of AI Virtual Assistants in Enhancing Personalisation**

*Analysis of (RQ 3)- What role do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury e-commerce?*

This section explores the functional and relational impact of AI virtual assistants on the Gen Z customer journey. The findings indicate that AI currently occupies a precarious position, it holds the potential to significantly enhance the online experience by adding tangible value and building confidence, but it can just as easily detract from it when poorly executed. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that effective personalisation is a key driver of engagement and loyalty, but its success hinges on the ability to evolve from superficial pattern matching to a more profound, relationship-oriented understanding of the consumer over time.

#### **4.3.1 Influencing the Online Shopping Journey**

The findings indicate that AI virtual assistants are valued by Gen Z consumers as functional tools for personalisation and engagement, but their impact is inherently limited by the boundaries of digital interaction. Engagement is strongest when AI demonstrates memory and milestone-driven interactions, such as remembering birthdays, or restock alerts. These timely, personalised touches foster trust and commitment, aligning with relationship marketing frameworks (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), and are interpreted by Gen Z as signals of exclusivity and care, reinforcing loyalty. Participants' responses also highlighted the role of anthropomorphism, where assigning human-like qualities to AI such as remembering personal milestones or offering "attentive" suggestions enhanced perceptions of relational authenticity, even if the assistant was ultimately a programmed system.

Equally important is the replication of luxury service norms in digital environments. Participants emphasised that while AI is suitable for routine tasks, high-value purchases still require human judgement. Concierge-style attentiveness and clear escalation pathways to human experts were consistently highlighted as critical for credibility and luxury service principles (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). In this context, AI does not replace the in-store experience but mitigates the compromises inherent in online luxury shopping, bridging the gap between the digital representation of products and their physical reality. AI Virtual Assistants that provide technologies such of Virtual Try-On (VTO) facilities and the provision of real-life product images exemplify AI's ability to reduce perceived risk, support purchase confidence, and enhance the overall online journey.

### Participant Voices

- A Gen Z consumer (CP A), expressed this sentiment which was also seen in focus group participant:

*"(On AI remembering her style) "I think I would view them as... a bit more human and it knows me. I'd maybe trust it a bit more."*

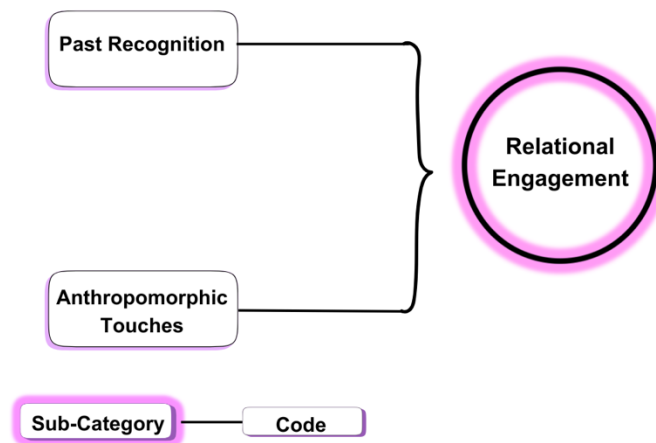
- A luxury insider (IP A) shared his cool experience with virtual try ons

*(On Versace's VTO sunglasses) "Did I go and buy a 200 LB pair of sunglasses after that? Yes, I did."*

However, the benefits of AI are conditional on flawless execution. Participants consistently emphasised that accuracy and functional reliability take precedence over relational warmth; an assistant must reliably recall past purchases, provide correct measurements, and offer relevant suggestions before any emotional or relational features, including anthropomorphised traits, are meaningful.

Conversely, poorly executed AI, such as clunky interfaces, unhelpful chatbots, or irrelevant recommendations, introduces friction and frustration, reinforcing the perception of online shopping as an inferior, compromised experience. These findings underscore that for Gen Z, AI's role in luxury e-commerce is not to replicate the sensory richness of physical stores but to serve as a confidence-building, functional bridge that complements the relational and experiential standards established in earlier chapters of luxury service theory.

Figure 4.5 Visual Map RQ 3(A) – Drivers of Relational Engagement



Author's Own

#### **4.3.2 Personalisation's Path to Relationship Building**

Personalisation emerged as a powerful lever for enhancing user satisfaction and fostering brand loyalty, but the data revealed a clear distinction between two levels of its application. The most common and currently effective form is satisfaction. Consumers feel seen and understood when a brand's AI accurately identifies their established style preferences based on past browsing and purchasing behaviour. This leads to relevant product suggestions that simplify the discovery process. (CP B) confirmed that this level of intelligent curation makes her more likely to return to a brand, demonstrating a direct link between effective, pattern-based personalisation and repeat business.

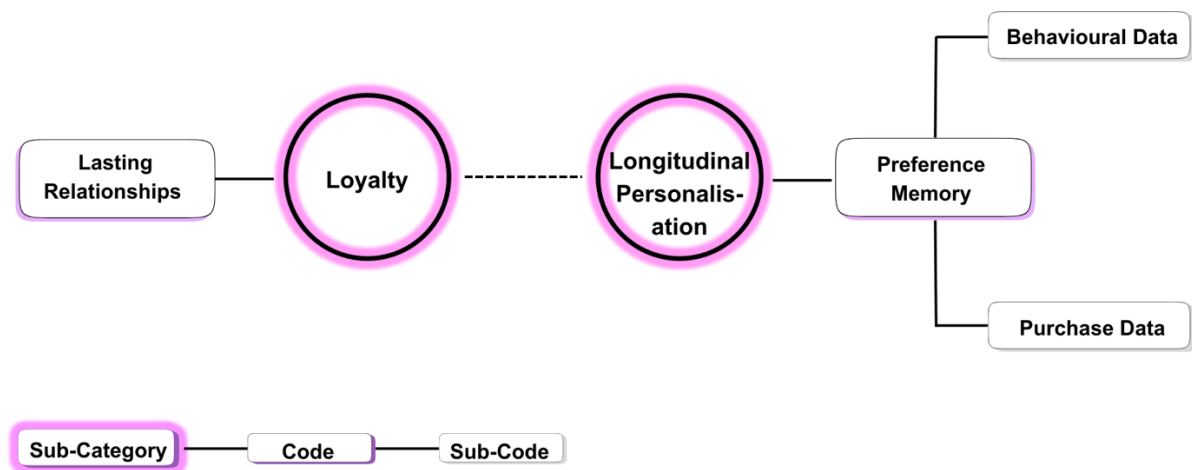
However, to cultivate deeper, more resilient loyalty, brands must aspire to a more sophisticated form of longitudinal personalization. This concept, which emerged from the interviews, describes an AI that possesses a form of institutional memory, building a profile of the customer that evolves over time. Participants envisioned an AI that would remember not just their last purchase, but their style evolution, and past conversations. This idea was strongly supported from an industry perspective, who argued that the future of customer loyalty programmes lies in this exact type of deep personalisation, one that is based on a rich understanding of a customer's lifestyle and values, rather than just their transactional history. Therefore, the strategic path for AI in fostering loyalty involves moving along a

maturity curve: from simple pattern recognition that drives satisfaction, to a more holistic, longitudinal understanding that builds genuine, lasting relationships.

**Participant Voices**

- Focus group participants (FCP F) and (FCP A), expressed her desire:  
*"We all have kind of a fixed style... I feel like it's easier and better if the virtual assistant understood it because it's more pattern based."*
- "Make those recommendations feel more personal and more spot on that it feels like it's tailored for you"*
- Evidence of Industry Insider (TIP B) argued that:  
*"Personalised experience, which they cannot do without AI, they need to apply personalised lifestyle data for the luxury segment."*

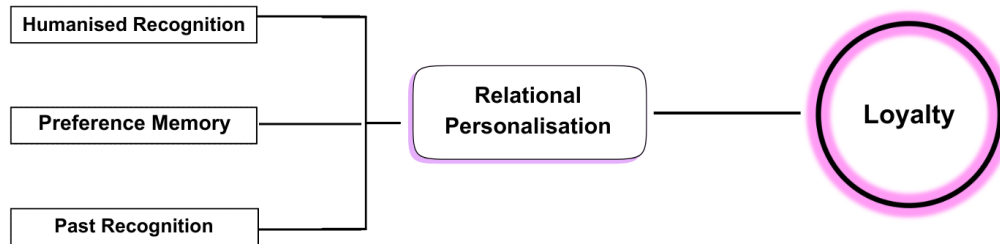
Figure 4.6 Visual Map RQ 3(B) – Longitudinal Personalisation to Loyalty in Luxury E-commerce



Author's Own

### 4.3.3 Integrated Visual Map for RQ (3) (A+B)

Figure 4.7 Building Loyalty through Relational Personalisation



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Table 4.2 Summary of Key Insights from Integrated Visual Map

Key Insight	Details
Humanised Recognition	Adding human-like qualities to AI (e.g., attentive or personalised cues) makes interactions feel more authentic and relatable.
Preference Memory	Remembering style choices, purchase history, and browsing patterns creates continuity and strengthens brand connection.
Past Recognition	Recalling previous interactions (birthdays, product restocks, milestones) signals exclusivity and care, enhancing trust.
Relational Personalisation	The integration of recognition and memory fosters a deeper sense of being understood, beyond transactional exchanges.

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#### **4.4 Strategic Use of AI Virtual Assistants in Luxury Fashion**

*(RQ 4)- How can luxury fashion brands optimise AI virtual assistants to enhance market positioning and engagement with Gen Z?*

This final section addresses the strategic application of AI, synthesising consumer desires and expert insights to provide a roadmap for luxury brands. The findings reveal a central strategic tension: the inherent conflict between the high-touch, human-centric nature of luxury and the scalable, data-driven nature of AI. Optimising AI, therefore, is not about technological supremacy, but about a nuanced and purposeful integration that respects this tension. Brands must use AI to augment, not replace, the core luxury experience, while remaining vigilant of the significant strategic risks involved.

##### **4.4.1 Crafting a 'Luxurious' AI: Bridging the Experiential Gap**

The single greatest challenge for brands in deploying AI virtual assistants is that the in-store experience remains the undisputed gold standard. Throughout the interviews, participants consistently defined luxury through a rich tapestry of sensory, emotional, and human elements. The architectural design of a boutique, the curated scent, the tactile pleasure of handling a beautifully crafted item, and, above all, the attentive, personalised service from a skilled human advisor are what constitute the luxury experience for them (CP B, FCP B, FCP C, TIP A). This creates an incredibly high benchmark that a purely digital, text/conversational based AI assistant struggles to meet.

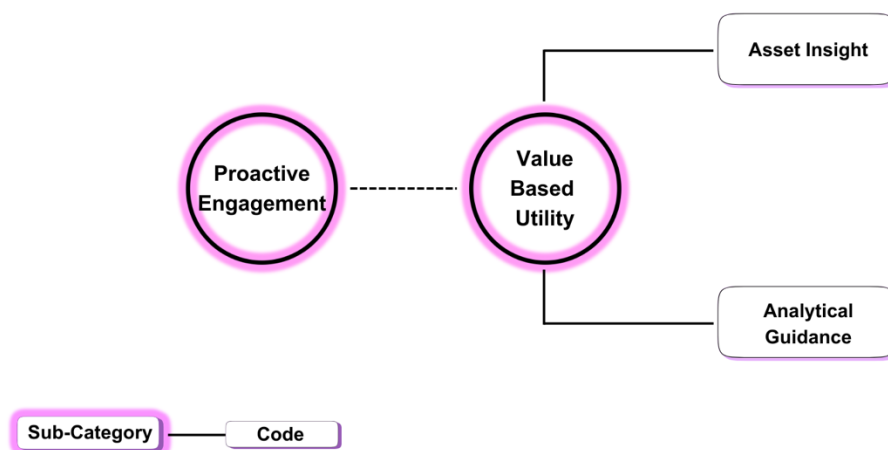
To begin bridging this gap, brands must think beyond the conventional chatbot interface. A compelling strategic suggestion that emerged from the consumer data was the concept of the visual humanization of AI. (CP B) proposed an interface where the user could see the face of a virtual assistant, transforming the interaction from an anonymous text exchange into a simulated face-to-face consultation. This innovative idea speaks to a desire to restore the human element to digital interaction, making it feel more personal, engaging, and aligned with the service model of a physical store. Another pathway to creating a luxurious feel is through a relentless focus on superior service via speed and efficiency. As (IP A) noted, luxury consumers have exceptionally high service expectations. An AI that can deliver instant, accurate, and truly effortless solutions to complex problems can be perceived as a form of luxury service.

### Participant Voices

- A consumer participant (CP B), expressed that:  
*"Maybe if it wasn't like just a chat bot and if it was actually like you could see a virtual assistant... see their face... as if you're actually in a store, but it's just online."*
- A focus group participant (FCP C) stated that:  
*"We buy luxury for heritage and for the the history they have and I'm actually not buying more luxury because of these AI gimmicks."*

However, brands must proceed with caution to avoid the pitfall of AI being perceived as a devaluing gimmick. There is a tangible risk that implementing technology for its own sake can make a brand with a deep heritage feel transient and trendy. One participant expressed a distinct aversion to such "gimmicks," stating that they detract from the core values of heritage and timelessness that he seeks in luxury products (FCP C). This serves as a critical warning, AI implementation must be purposeful, seamlessly integrated, and authentically aligned with the brand's identity. It must solve a real customer problem or enhance the experience in a meaningful way, rather than existing as a superficial technological novelty.

Figure 4.8 Strategic Levers for 'Luxurious' AI Virtual Assistants



#### **4.4.2 Reinforcing Exclusivity and Engagement: The Strategic Application of Intelligent AI**

To successfully leverage AI for long-term engagement with Gen Z, brands must prioritise the development of emotional intelligence within their systems. As expert (IP A) emphasised, this demographic expects emotionally engaging experiences; a purely functional, robotic interaction will fail to capture their loyalty. This means programming AI with a distinct personality, a brand-aligned tone of voice, and the ability to engage in contextually aware, empathetic dialogue.

One of the most powerful strategies for demonstrating this intelligence is through proactive engagement based on lifecycle awareness. Rather than waiting for the customer to initiate a query, a sophisticated AI can use customer data to proactively engage them at key moments. The simple act of sending a personalised message on a customer's birthday was consistently described as a "nice touch" (CP A). This moves the AI's role from a reactive problem-solver to a proactive relationship manager, making the customer feel recognised and valued on a personal level.

Furthermore, AI can be strategically deployed to reinforce an item's intrinsic value, appealing to Gen Z's growing interest in luxury goods as assets. A forward-thinking suggestion from the focus group was for an AI to provide data on an item's investment potential, including its resale value trajectory and rarity (FCP E). This innovative application shifts the conversation from pure aesthetics to long-term value, engaging the consumer on a more analytical level and reinforcing the wisdom of their high-value purchase.

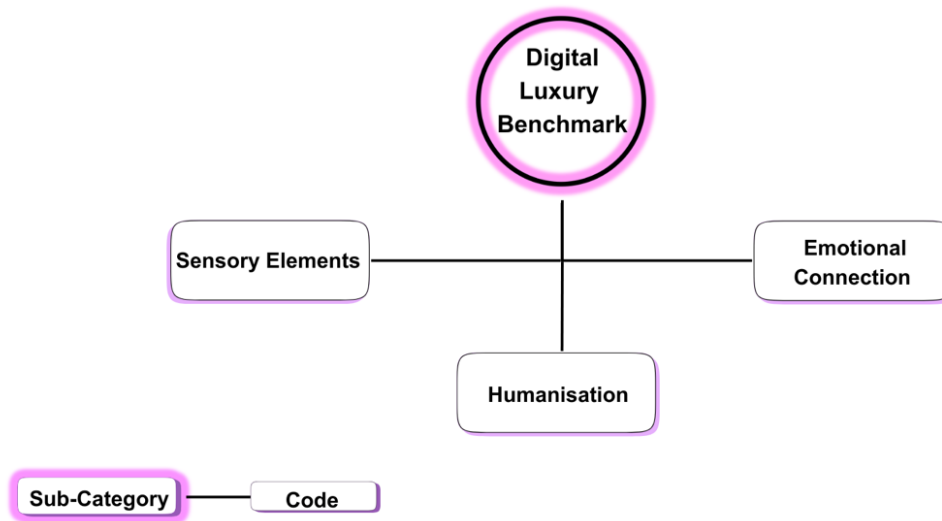
#### **Participant Voices**

- An industry participant (IP A) was straightforward that:  
*"Gen Z expects things that are emotionally engaging... it can't just be a robot because people won't connect to it."*
- A participant (FCP E) was curious to express that:  
*"For me, luxury is more like an investment in myself... [AI could show] how the value of that product has gone up."*

These strategic opportunities must be balanced against a critical and ever-present risk: the cannibalization of the physical retail experience. (CP B) astutely identified the central

paradox for brands, if the online AI-driven experience becomes too convenient, comprehensive, and satisfying, it could disincentivize customers from visiting the physical stores that are the heart of the brand's identity and profitability. This requires a delicate and sophisticated omnichannel strategy, where the goal of AI is not to replace the store, but to enhance it. The aim must be a symbiotic relationship between the digital and physical realms, not a competition.

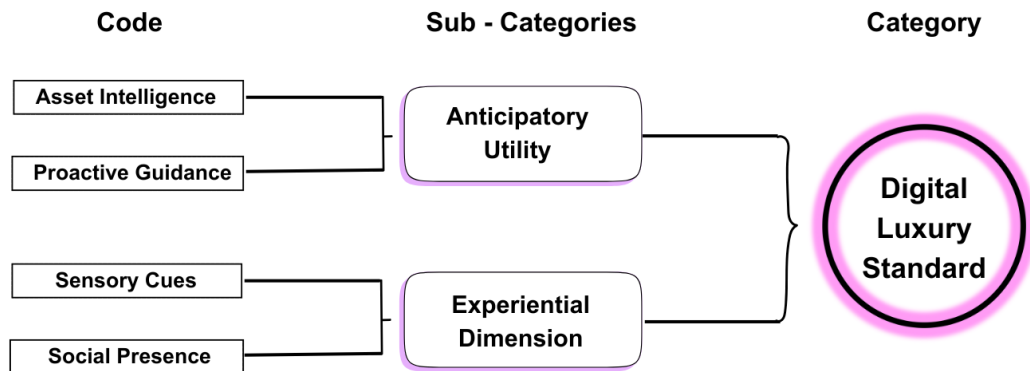
Figure 4.9 Core Dimensions of Digital Luxury Experience



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#### 4.4.3 Integrated Visual Map for RQ (4) (A+B)

Figure 4.10 Integrated Model of Digital Luxury Standards



Author's Own

Table 4.3 Summary of Key Insights from Integrated Visual Map

Key Insight	Details
Asset Intelligence	Gen Z values AI that provides data-driven insights on product value, such as resale potential, rarity, and long-term worth, reinforcing the perception of luxury as both heritage and investment.
Proactive Guidance	AI must anticipate consumer needs by delivering timely, personalised recommendations to enhance convenience and decision confidence.
Sensory Cues	Digital luxury experiences are strengthened when AI mimics sensory richness, reducing the gap between physical and online retail.
Social Presence	Human-like interaction, anthropomorphic touches, and emotionally engaging dialogues help consumers perceive AI as attentive, trustworthy, and aligned with luxury service expectations.
Anticipatory Utility	By combining predictive insights and proactive engagement, AI enhances service efficiency and positions itself as a value-adding digital concierge.
Experiential Dimension	Emotional connection, sensory richness, and humanised interactions collectively elevate digital luxury to approximate the high-touch standards of in-store experiences.

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## **4.5 Interplay of Inductive and Deductive Insights**

The thematic analysis adopted a hybrid approach, combining inductive coding (emergent user needs) with deductive coding (theoretical frameworks from Chapter 2). This synthesis ensured the findings were both grounded in lived experience and theoretically rigorous.

### ***4.5.1 Inductive Findings from Consumer Experience***

Inductive coding surfaced granular usability problems and consumer experiences. For example, users described chatbots as “robotic,” “generic,” and unable to escalate queries when necessary. Participants emphasised the importance of real-life sizing and measurements and human avatar realism for meaningful Virtual Try-On (VTO). Authenticity was framed not just as polite phrasing, but as AI remembering past purchases and milestones. Exclusivity was highlighted as important, indicating that AI must deliver value beyond what is available to the mass market.

These findings revealed gaps in current AI design, including a lack of persistence, insufficient backend connectivity, absence of structured metadata, and limited emotional depth.

### ***4.5.2 Deductive Mapping to Theoretical Frameworks***

The inductive themes were mapped onto established theoretical frameworks to refine their interpretation and implications. Personalisation and recommender system theory (Ricci et al., 2010) clarified why memory and contextualisation are critical for relevance, while TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) underscored how perceived usefulness and ease of use shape adoption, highlighting that AI must deliver tangible, efficient support to be valued. Social presence theory (Kreijns, Xu and Weidlich, 2021) explained why “robotic” assistants fail to build trust, emphasising relational presence, a finding reinforced by U&G theory, which frames users’ need for emotional connection and personalised gratification in digital interactions. Luxury service design models (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012) contextualised the demand for exclusivity, memory, and concierge-style escalation as digital equivalents of in-store luxury service.

Privacy calculus theory (Culnan & Bies, 2003). explained why users are willing to share wardrobe data when benefits outweigh perceived risks, and social proof theory (Cialdini, 2009) illustrated how peer validation enhances AI credibility. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens linking consumer motivations, behavioural intentions, and

experiential expectations in luxury AI adoption. This mapping ensured the themes were both descriptive and analytically anchored, enhancing explanatory power.

#### **4.5.4 Implications of the Interplay**

The combination of inductive and deductive insights generated practical design implications:

- **Data-first approach:** Structured metadata and backend connectivity are critical for personalisation, visualisation, and escalation.
- **Memory-driven engagement:** Milestone touches and personal date remembrance operationalise social presence and luxury service norms.
- **Governance and consent:** Privacy design must be mode-aware to meet user expectations and regulatory obligations.
- **Strategic rollout:** Phased, niche deployments protect credibility while building prestige among Gen Z.

In essence, inductive evidence grounded the research in consumer realities, while deductive mapping embedded findings in frameworks that explain why these experiences matter and how brands can address them strategically.

#### **4.6 Limitations of the Findings**

While the thematic analysis generated rich insights into consumer and industry perceptions of AI-enabled styling assistants, several limitations must be acknowledged.

##### **4.6.1 Methodological Constraints**

The consumer interview sample represented a digitally engaged, fashion-aware demographic, which may not reflect older or less tech-savvy luxury consumers. The study relied on self-reported behaviour, which may overstate frustrations or understate benefits; behavioural tracking would complement these insights. Stakeholder documents provided strategic perspectives, though they may reflect aspirational rhetoric rather than actual practice.

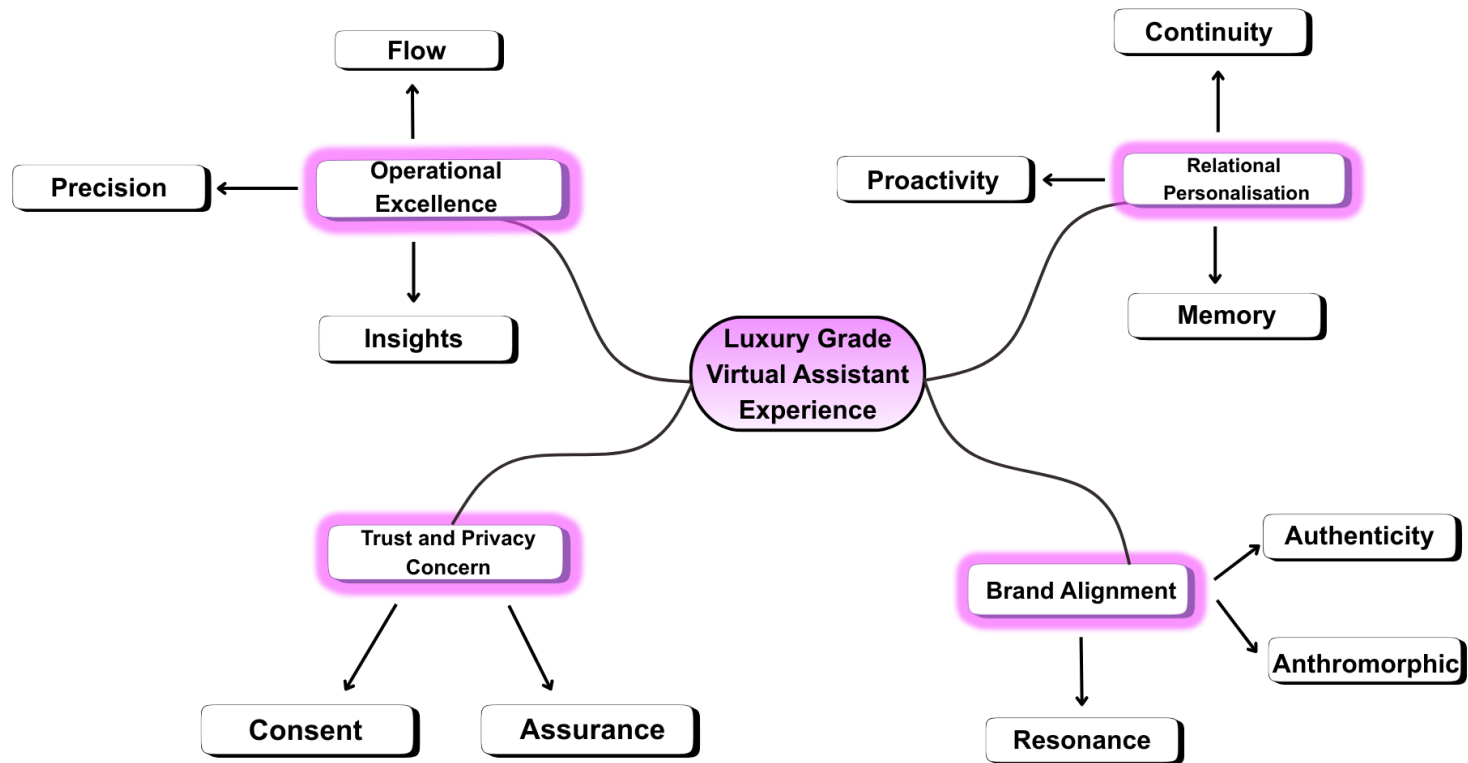
##### **4.6.2 Analytical Constraints**

Inductive coding carries some subjectivity, and some themes may reflect interpretive emphasis rather than universal patterns. Deductive coding risks overfitting experiences into pre-existing models, for example assuming emotional warmth is always desired when participants often prioritise accuracy.

#### **4.6.3 Practical Constraints**

The study captures a snapshot during rapid AI evolution; assistant capabilities are likely to advance, potentially addressing some limitations noted. Luxury retail is heterogeneous: findings for digitally innovative brands like Burberry may not directly apply to heritage-focused houses like Hermès, which may resist digitisation. In summary, these limitations highlight the need for future studies incorporating behavioural data, broader consumer samples, and longitudinal research to validate and extend the findings.

Figure 4.11 Multi - Axial Coding of Prior Considerations



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## 4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented and analysed the findings of the study in relation to Research Questions, drawing on triangulated evidence from consumer focus groups, individual consumer interviews, and insider perspectives. The results reveal a complex and ambivalent stance from Gen Z: while they recognise AI assistants can be functionally useful, frustrations with “robotic” tone, accuracy gaps, and limited personalisation undermine ease of use and trust, resonating strongly with TAM’s constructs of perceived usefulness and ease of use. At the same time, U&G theory illuminates the gratifications Gen Z prioritises such as convenience, information-seeking, and identity reinforcement, which are only partially fulfilled by current AI implementations.

Insights also highlighted that AI’s role in luxury e-commerce extends beyond transactional efficiency to relationship-building, where memory, milestone-driven touches, and concierge-style escalation align more closely with luxury service design and social presence theory. Strategically, the study indicates that AI must be framed as an augmentative rather than substitutive tool, carefully balancing efficiency, exclusivity, and emotional resonance to avoid gimmickry and reinforce brand identity. Collectively, these findings integrate inductive consumer insights with deductive theoretical frameworks, offering a nuanced roadmap (table 4.1) for luxury brands seeking to deploy AI assistants as credible, value-enhancing extensions of their heritage and service ethos.

Table 4.4 Summary Table

Section / RQ	Key Findings	Theoretical Frameworks Applied	Implications / Insights
4.2 Perception & Experience of Gen Z with AI Assistants (RQ2)	Ambivalent relationship: Gen Z appreciates AI utility but is frustrated by limitations and robotic tone.	TAM (perceived ease of use), U&G (gratification of convenience & emotional connection), Social Presence Theory.	Frustration reduces adoption; AI must be easy to use, personalised, and emotionally resonant.
4.2.1 Emotional & Cognitive Responses	High cognitive load due to poorly executed AI; robotic feel undermines trust.	TAM (ease of use, perceived usefulness), U&G (convenience, emotional satisfaction)	AI must minimise user effort and feel relatable; failure leads to disengagement.
4.2.2 Features Valued by Gen Z	Functional problem-solving prioritized over conversational sophistication; deep personalisation desired.	TAM (perceived usefulness), Recommender System Theory, U&G (information-seeking, personal identity reinforcement)	AI must deliver accurate, context-aware, and personalised recommendations for efficiency and style alignment.
4.2.3 Trust & Authenticity Barriers	Concerns over bias, brand motives, and privacy; willingness to share data varies by perceived benefit.	TAM (attitude toward use, behavioural intention), Privacy Calculus Theory, U&G (security, credibility)	Clear value proposition and transparent data practices critical; emotional trust matters alongside functionality.
4.3 Role in Enhancing Personalisation (RQ3)	AI adds functional and relational value; strongest when memory-driven and milestone-aware.	Luxury Service Design Models, Social Presence Theory, U&G (emotional gratification)	AI must replicate luxury norms online, concierge-style service, escalation paths, VTO tech, to enhance trust and engagement.
4.3.1 Influencing the Online Journey	Engagement driven by accuracy, memory, and context; relational features enhance perception but are secondary to function.	TAM (usefulness), Social Presence Theory	Prioritise reliable functionality first, relational/anthropomorphic features second.
4.3.2 Personalisation & Relationship Building	Pattern-based personalization drives satisfaction; longitudinal personalization fosters loyalty.	U&G (identity reinforcement, satisfaction), TAM (perceived usefulness)	Deep, evolving understanding of the customer is key for repeat business and long-term loyalty.
4.4 Strategic Use in Luxury Fashion (RQ4)	Tension between high-touch luxury and scalable AI; AI should augment, not replace, in-store experience.	Luxury Service Design, Social Presence, TAM, U&G	AI implementation must be purposeful, aligned with brand identity, and support omnichannel experience.
4.4.1 Crafting 'Luxurious' AI	Visual humanization and speed/accuracy perceived as luxury service; avoid gimmicks.	Social Presence, Luxury Service Models	Emphasize efficiency, personalised visual interaction, and authenticity.
4.4.2 Reinforcing Exclusivity & Engagement	Emotional intelligence, proactive engagement, and long-term value communication enhance Gen Z engagement.	U&G (emotional & cognitive gratifications), Social Proof, Luxury Service Design	AI must be proactive, informative, and emotionally resonant; supports loyalty and perceived exclusivity.
4.5 Interplay of Inductive & Deductive Insights	Integration of emergent themes with theory highlighted functional gaps, personalization needs, and trust issues.	TAM, U&G, Social Presence, Recommender Systems, Luxury Service Models, Privacy Calculus, Social Proof	Design AI around structured data, milestone memory, privacy governance, and phased rollout to preserve prestige.

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**Chapter 5**  
***Discussion & Conclusion***

## 5.1 Introduction

Building on the empirical findings in Chapter 4, this chapter critically situates the results within the extant literature, highlighting where the evidence **converges** (e.g., the primacy of utility, fit guidance and trust cues) and **diverges** (e.g., limits of anthropomorphism without reliability), and offering reasoned explanations for these patterns in a luxury, Gen-Z context. It then reconnects the analysis to the dissertation's **aim and objectives**, demonstrating how the study fulfils its intended contribution by clarifying when and how AI virtual assistants enhance personalisation and engagement without diluting luxury codes.

This chapter articulates the study's theoretical contribution and extension, refining adoption models by integrating TAM with U&G, social presence and luxury service design and proposes a re-fitted conceptual framework that traces a maturity path from pattern-based to longitudinal personalisation. Finally, the chapter derives managerial implications with actionable recommendations for data, design and governance, acknowledges limitations inherent to the method and context, and identifies directions for future research to test, extend and generalise these insights.

## 5.2 Discussion of literary research

### 5.2.1 *Interrogation of literature*

The first objective was to interrogate and critically examine fields of literature relevant to AI in luxury e-commerce for Gen-Z, integrating Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Uses & Gratifications (U&G), with social presence, recommender systems, privacy calculus, and luxury service design. Chapter 2 argued that TAM alone under-specified luxury's symbolic and affective dimensions, therefore integrating U&G adds identity, aesthetic and emotional gratifications central to luxury consumption. Social presence explains why "robotic" assistants fail to build trust, privacy calculus clarifies conditional data-sharing, luxury service models locate exclusivity, tone and concierge escalation as non-negotiable norms. This study adopted that integrated lens and used it deductively to interpret inductive codes from Chapter 4, generating a refitted conceptual view of how usefulness, ease, identity gratifications and social presence jointly determine Gen-Z receptivity to AIVAs in luxury contexts.

- **Concurrences:** The empirical findings corroborate core TAM expectations: perceived usefulness increases with concrete decision support while perceived ease of use declines when assistants require re-phrasing or return "random" answers.

U&G's convenience and identity gratifications are clearly visible in the desire for tailored, style-consistent recommendations. Social presence is also supported when memory and tone raise perceived "care" *when—and only when—functionality is solid*.

- **Divergences:** The results complicate the common anthropomorphism thesis: human-like cues do not compensate for accuracy gaps, '**credibility precedes charm**'. Participants rank utility above small-talk or personality, suggesting prior work that foregrounds anthropomorphism over reliability requires recalibration for luxury and Gen-Z. The findings also nuance privacy work: acceptance is not blanket "privacy resignation" but a calculus, consumers will share data when value is explicit, transparent and brand congruent.

### **5.2.2 Taxonomy of luxury AI Virtual Assistants**

Synthesising Chapter 2 and the empirical evidence in Chapter 4 yields a concise taxonomy of AI-assistant functions currently visible or desired in UK luxury e-commerce. First, **decision support** anchors adoption by solving high-friction tasks like cross-brand sizing equivalence, stock/returns clarity, and access to authentic, non-studio imagery, thereby reducing cognitive effort and perceived risk.

Second, **visualisation** tools like Virtual Try Ons (VTO, 3D/360 spins) translate the sensory promise of boutiques into digital form, improving fit/finish confidence at the point of choice. Third, **personalised curation** spans individual based relevance through longer-term memory that recalls tastes, events and purchase history to make interactions feel "made-for-me." Fourth, **service enablement** operationalises luxury norms online via concierge escalation, appointment preparation, and stylist look-books, ensuring seamless human hand-offs for high-stakes decisions.

Finally, **trust scaffolding**, transparent "why this" explanations, in-flow privacy notices and granular consent scoping which protects credibility and unlocks willingness to share data for deeper personalisation. Practically, this taxonomy also sequences the implementation path, starting with one hero use case, usually fit advice to prove value. Then add visualisation (VTO/3D) and personalised curation. Next, connect service features like concierge escalation and appointment prep for a smooth omnichannel flow. Throughout, hard-wire assurance and transparency (clear "why this" explanations, privacy notices, consent controls).

## **5.3 Discussion of primary findings**

### **5.3.1 Synthesis of Findings (RQ2–RQ4)**

Across the dataset, respondents take a pragmatic view of AI virtual assistants (AIVAs). They welcome them when the assistant solves real problems, and they switch off when the experience is rigid, generic or error prone. This pragmatism is tightly linked to trust. Participants repeatedly asked, “Is this helping me, or is it just selling to me?”, which means perceived motive matters as much as functionality. Equally important is the data relationship, willingness to share increases when sharing is optional, transparent and clearly worthwhile.

### **5.3.2 The effects of AI Virtual Assistants features**

The findings show that value rarely arises from a single feature in isolation, it comes from combinations. When decision support is paired with visualisation tools shoppers feel more certain about fit and finish, which in turn lifts conversion and reduces returns. Similarly, personalisation is more than a one-off “good recommendation” short-term, pattern-based relevance increases satisfaction, but it is longer-term memory, remembering preferences, occasions, or style evolution that starts to build loyalty because the experience feels continuous rather than reset each session. Finally, utility and social presence reinforce each other when answers are precise and fast, warm, brand-congruent tone reads as care but when answers stumble, the same tone feels performative. Taken together, these patterns explain why specific bundles such as fit guidance plus VTO, relevance plus memory, accuracy plus brand voice altogether work especially well for Gen-Z in luxury.

### **5.3.3 Influences upon adoption and trust**

Adoption is shaped by a set of delivery, design and contextual influences. On the delivery side, sources of friction, rigid flows, repeated misunderstandings, and inconsistent answers raise cognitive effort and quickly erode ease-of-use. By contrast, a visible escalation path to a human expert restores the luxury standard in high-stakes moments, once the assistant’s confidence is low or the stakes are high (limited editions, gifting, tailoring), a one-tap handoff signals care and prevents dead ends.

On the design side, brand voice congruence matters, copy, pacing and visual choices should feel like the house, not a generic bot. Participants were particularly sensitive to gimmicks or “trying too hard,” preferring an authentic presence that mirrors the brand’s heritage. Trust also depends on explainability and consent. Brief “why this” rationales and in-flow privacy

notices convert a vague sales pitch into clear advice, and granular opt-ins let users set boundaries without abandoning the experience.

Finally, context matters. Model capabilities are improving quickly, so some deficits are time-bound, however, the durable differentiator will be data quality and governance. In addition, expectations vary across the category, heritage-first houses may prioritise tone and escalation, while digitally avant-garde brands may move faster on visualisation and memory.

#### **5.3.4 Successful characteristics of “luxurious” AI**

A “luxurious” assistant is defined as much by how it operates as by what it delivers. On the **people** dimension, the system knows when to defer to humans, it offers a clear path to concierge or stylist, passes context so customers are not asked to repeat themselves, and uses memory to signal attentiveness. On the **place** dimension, the digital experience mirrors boutique codes, calm pacing, minimal cognitive load, refined copy and, where appropriate, visual humanisation (e.g., live video consultations) that feels on-brand rather than theatrical.

On the **process** dimension, the work happens behind the scenes, structured product metadata, cross-brand size maps and real-time inventory make accurate answers possible, explanations and privacy-by-design controls make them trustworthy. Put simply, a luxurious AI VA translates concierge norms like precision, care, and discretion into e-commerce form.

#### **5.3.5 Implementing AIVAs in the future**

The evidence suggests a straightforward path to implementation. First, set prior considerations, be explicit that the assistant augments human service, choose a single hero use case to prove value and codify brand voice so outputs always “sound like us.” Next, decide the initial feature stack and combine decision support with VTO/3D and simple explainability before adding longer-term memory or lifecycle touchpoints. Then, design the critical characteristics, fast, accurate responses, account-level memory with clear user controls.

In parallel, mitigate risks and avoid trend-hopping. Surface privacy facts in-flow and instrument the journey so you can track conversion, returns, NPS and repeat engagement. Finally, use the assistant as an omnichannel amplifier, preparing stylists with looks and sizes and recall preferences across channels, enhancing not replacing the theatre and tactility of the store. This sequence respects what your data shows, credibility is earned first through utility, then deepened through memory and human partnership, all within the brand’s own voice.

#### 5.4. Theoretical Contribution

This dissertation advances theory on AI adoption in luxury e-commerce by reframing what “usefulness” and “ease” mean for Gen-Z when symbolic value, heritage and service codes are central to the product. First, it integrates Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with Uses & Gratifications (U&G) and Customer Engagement theory, arguing that perceived usefulness in luxury is not exhausted by functional accuracy, it is co-produced with identity/aesthetic gratifications (fit to one’s style, brand congruence) and relational cues (memory, tone, escalation). This integrated lens resolves tensions in the literature that either over-privilege anthropomorphism or, conversely, reduce adoption to task performance alone. In the data, credibility precedes charm, anthropomorphic or warm signals only yield relational benefits after a non-negotiable baseline of accuracy, speed and context relevance is met.

Second, the study contributes to an empirically grounded taxonomy of AI VA use-cases in the UK luxury context. Decision Support, Visualisation, Personalised Curation, Service Enablement, and Assurance & Transparency and shows that value arises from bundles rather than single features (e.g., cross-brand sizing *with* VTO; relevance *with* longitudinal memory; precise answers *with* brand-true tone). This clarifies *how* assistants translate elements of boutique service into digital touchpoints and specifies design dependencies (e.g., structured product metadata and size graphs as prerequisites for “fit advice”).

Third, the findings articulate a two-stage personalisation maturity curve, from data-based personalisation (short-term relevance) to longitudinal, memory-led personalisation (continuity, milestones, style evolution) linking the former to satisfaction and the latter to loyalty. By distinguishing continuity (being remembered across time and channels) from one-off relevance, the project extends adoption models with a temporal and relational dimension that is critical in luxury.

Fourth, the dissertation advances a privacy-calculus account of trust tailored to luxury. Rather than general “privacy resignation,” willingness to share is conditional, granular and branded, consent is higher when recommendations are explainable (“why this”), when scope and control (pause/forget) are visible, and when the assistant behaves like an advisor rather than a sales tool. This moves trust from a static trait to a designed, inspectable property of the interaction.

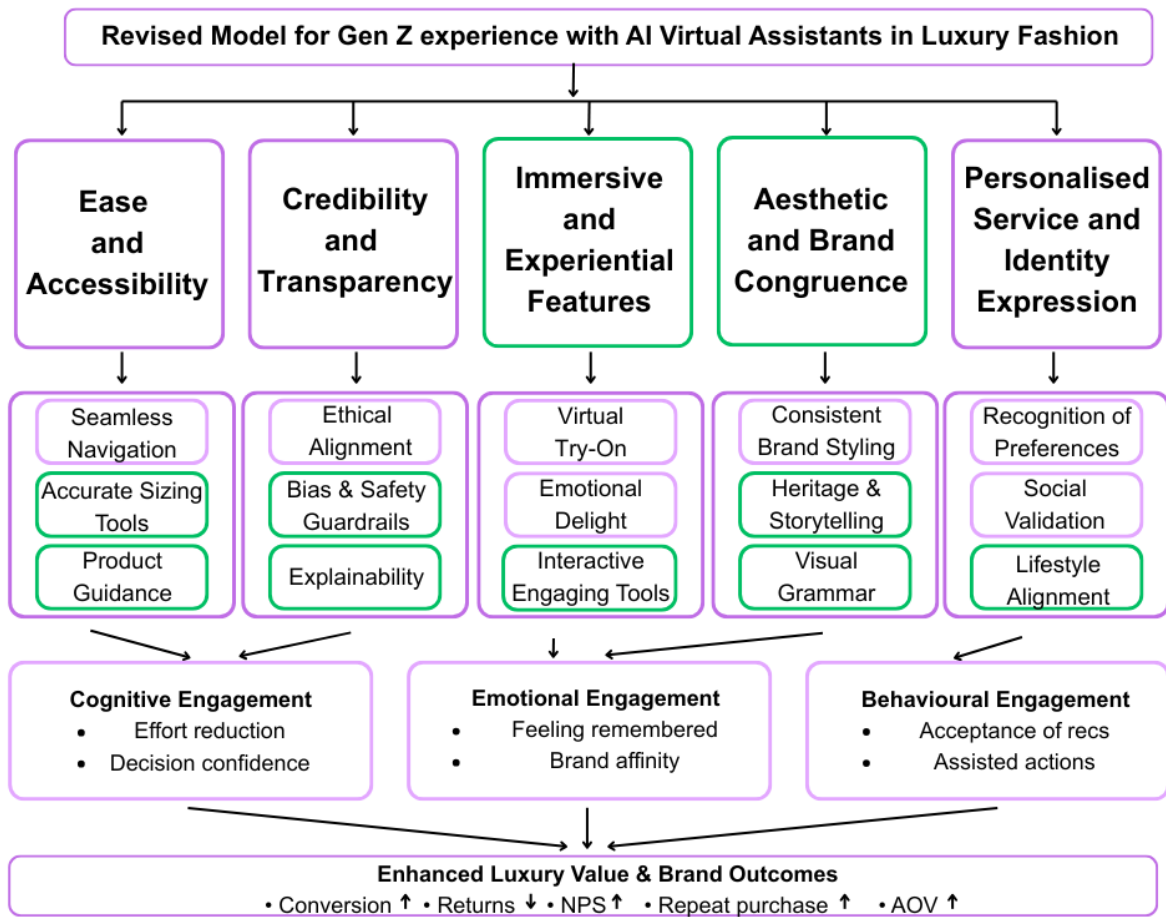
Together these insights are synthesised in the Revised Conceptual Framework (Figure 5.1) Foundations (data, governance, brand value) enable three pillars, Utility & Confidence,

Memory-led Personalisation, Trust & Authenticity and culminating in luxury outcomes. We also offer the following testable propositions for onward scholarship:

- **P1 (Credibility precedence):** In luxury contexts, perceived usefulness is a necessary antecedent to the effect of anthropomorphic cues on relational outcomes.
- **P2 (Bundle effect):** Feature bundles (e.g., sizing × VTO) produce greater confidence than either feature in isolation.
- **P3 (Temporal personalisation):** Longitudinal memory predicts loyalty above and beyond pattern-based relevance.
- **P4 (Designed trust):** Explainability and granular consent mediate the relationship between personalisation depth and willingness to share data.

In sum, the dissertation re-specifies adoption theory for luxury AI, it binds functional reliability to identity and relationship gratifications, treats trust as an engineered property, and positions AI as a concierge amplifier rather than a human substitute.

Figure 5.1 Revised Framework for AI Virtual Assistants in Luxury Fashion



Author's Own

## 5.5 Managerial Contribution

This study converts the multi-axial coding, Operational Excellence, Relational Personalisation, Brand Alignment, and Trust & Privacy Concern into an implementable operating logic for luxury AI virtual assistants (AIVAs). The contribution is explicitly managerial. It specifies the order of investment (credibility before charm), the capability stack required (data, decisioning, brand aesthetics), and the governance needed to keep AI congruent with luxury codes. Managers are encouraged to begin with a single hero use-case because Gen-Z acceptance is contingent on accurate utility, only after that credibility is earned should firms layer memory-led continuity, brand-true dialogue, and controlled proactivity.

Table 5.1 (Recommendations) operationalises this logic into a programme plan. The table is structured by the four themes, with rows that translate each category into: (i) *specific actions* (“what to do”), (ii) *enabling foundations* (data sources, guardrails, team ownership), (iii) *risks and mitigations* (e.g., hallucination thresholds, bias checks, fatigue controls), and (iv) *evidence of value* (KPIs and expected directional change).

Sequencing is built in rows marked Phase 1 secure Operational Excellence, data hygiene, size-equivalence graphs, answer-quality thresholds while Phase 2 rows add Relational Personalisation (consented memory, continuity across sessions and channels). Phase 3 rows encode Brand Alignment (advisor tone, heritage storytelling that aids decisions) and Trust & Privacy (explainability, in-flow notices, granular consent and forget/pause controls). In short, Table 5.1 functions as a living roadmap.

The contribution extends beyond a checklist by codifying governance and measurement as design parameters. Managers are advised to institutionalise *Assurance by Design*, brief “why this” rationales on recommendations, visible scope controls, pre-approved knowledge sources and graceful fallbacks, so trust is engineered rather than assumed. Resource allocation is rebalanced accordingly, budgets should weight delivery and process (data quality, guardrails, staff tools, escalation) above front-end theatrics, humanisation is deployed only when it demonstrably improves decisions. Immediately following, Figure 5.1 visualises how these recommendations cohere. Foundations enable the three value pillars, Utility & Confidence, Memory-led Personalisation, Trust & Authenticity supporting all, culminating in luxury outcomes (conversion $\uparrow$ , returns $\downarrow$ , NPS $\uparrow$ , repeat $\uparrow$ , AOV $\uparrow$ ). Together, the figure and Table 5.1 provide senior management with a defensible, sequenced pathway to scale concierge-grade service online without diluting the brand.

Table 5.1 Recommendations Table and Guide for AI Virtual Assistants

Category (Phase)	Recommendation (What)	Enablers (Foundations)	Risks & Mitigations	Owner	KPIs (Evidence)
Operational Excellence (Phase 1)	Launch a <b>hero use-case</b> , cross-brand <b>fit &amp; sizing</b> with authentic imagery/VTO to prove utility.	Structured product attributes, size-equivalence graphs, real-time inventory, verified content sources.	Inaccurate advice → returns ↑. <b>Mitigate:</b> answer-quality thresholds, human fallback, periodic data audits.	Data Stewardship; Engineering	Conversion ↑; size-related returns ↓; time-to-answer ↓
	Implement <b>Fast Findability</b> , guided search/shortcuts to exact SKU across channels.	Unified catalogue, robust search/index stock APIs.	Dead-ends; OOS frustration. <b>Mitigate:</b> back-in-stock alerts; substitutes.	Engineering; Merchandising	Assisted find rate ↑; OOS misfires ↓; bounce rate ↓
	Set <b>guardrails</b> , confidence thresholds, graceful deflection to humans on low-confidence queries.	Model monitoring, retrieval over approved sources, fallback patterns.	Hallucinations harm credibility. <b>Mitigate:</b> retrieval + citation; suppress low-confidence outputs.	ML Ops; Conversation Design	Error rate ↓; fallback rate (controlled); CSAT ↑

Category (Phase)	Recommendation (What)	Enablers (Foundations)	Risks & Mitigations	Owner	KPIs (Evidence)
Relational Personalisation (Phase 2)	Stand up <b>consented memory</b> with a visible preference centre	Consent UX; profile schema; privacy-by-design storage; audit trails.	Creepiness/fatigue. <b>Mitigate:</b> controls, frequency caps, transparent scope.	Product; Privacy/Legal	Repeat purchase ↑; opt-in rate ↑; complaint rate ↓
	Deliver <b>continuity &amp; proactive moments</b> restock nudges, event dressing	Events engine; segmentation; store calendar integration.	Over-personalisation. <b>Mitigate:</b> user-set frequency, snooze, relevance tests.	CRM; Clientele Ops	Rec acceptance ↑; appointment conversion ↑; session depth ↑
	Enable <b>omnichannel clienteling</b> : pass a context packet (goal, shortlist, sizing, consent flags) to stylists.	Advisor console; POS/CRM integration; staff training.	Context loss at handoff. <b>Mitigate:</b> required fields; packet QA.	Store Ops; Clientele Ops	Time-to-human ↓; first-contact resolution ↑; AOV ↑

Category (Phase)	Recommendation (What)	Enablers (Foundations)	Risks & Mitigations	Owner	KPIs (Evidence)
Brand Alignment (Phase 3)	Codify a <b>brand aesthetic</b> : advisor tone, pacing, visual rules; lint responses for congruence.	Tone guide; response QA; style checker.	Generic/ <b>try-hard</b> voice. <b>Mitigate</b> : examples, tone tests, human review on high-impact flows.	Brand; Conversation Design	Tone CSAT ↑; authenticity comments (qual) → positive shift
	Use <b>on-brand humanisation</b> (live stylist video, curated look-books) only when it improves decisions.	Video consult tooling; styling templates; content governance.	Gimmick risk. <b>Mitigate</b> : A/B on decision quality; kill if no uplift.	Brand; Store Ops	Decision time ↓; conversion ↑ on assisted sessions
	Embed <b>heritage &amp; value storytelling</b> where it helps choice (craftsmanship, care, resale framing).	Content library; PDP/chat snippets; approval workflow.	Over-claiming. <b>Mitigate</b> : fact-checking; scope labels.	Brand; Legal	Content engagement ↑; add-to-bag ↑

Category (Phase)	Recommendation (What)	Enablers (Foundations)	Risks & Mitigations	Owner	KPIs (Evidence)
Trust & Privacy Concern (Phase 3; continuous)	Implement <b>explainability</b> : short “why this” rationales and source hints for key recommendations.	Reason generator; rationale chips; retrieval citations.	Perceived sales bias. <b>Mitigate</b> : alternatives; disclose constraints.	Conversation Design; Legal	Rec acceptance ↑; NPS ↑
	Provide <b>granular consent &amp; control</b> : scope, pause/forget, export; in-flow privacy notices.	Consent service; UI components; policy copy.	Opaque data use. <b>Mitigate</b> : dashboards; periodic reminders.	Privacy/Legal; Product	Opt-in rate ↑; complaints ↓
	Run <b>bias &amp; safety reviews</b> ; define red-lines; monitor outputs; publish guardrails.	Red-team protocols; logging; moderation hooks.	Harmful outputs. <b>Mitigate</b> : monitoring + human review on sensitive intents.	Risk; ML Ops	Incident rate ↓; policy compliance ↑

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## 5.6 Limitations

This study is exploratory, and context bound. Participants were recruited in London and are largely Gen-Z and selected industry insiders, so the findings reflect a specific cultural, retail and digital maturity context that may not transfer to other geographies, age cohorts or market structures. Although the sample achieved near gender parity, which reduces the risk of gender bias, it remains a small, qualitative dataset, insights privilege depth over breadth and cannot be generalised statistically. The design is cross-sectional and relies on self-reported perceptions gathered outside of live purchase moments; as AIVA capabilities, brand data quality and consent norms evolve, attitudes may shift. While we employed systematic, multi-coder thematic procedures, qualitative interpretation inevitably carries analyst subjectivity and mapping inductive themes into the revised conceptual framework risks model over-fit to this corpus. The study did not include behavioural telemetry (clickstreams, add-to-bag, return logs) or field interventions, limiting causal inference about conversion, returns and loyalty. Finally, trust, privacy and safety were examined from a consumer viewpoint rather than via formal algorithmic audits (bias, hallucination rates, guardrails), constraining the granularity of claims about risk management.

## 5.7 Areas for Future Research

Future work should test and extend these findings through multi-method, comparative designs. First, run field experiments/A-B tests that combine the “hero use-case” with explainability to quantify impacts on conversion, size-related returns, AOV, and cost-to-serve. Second, conduct longitudinal studies to examine how long-memory personalisation (continuity across sessions/channels) affects loyalty beyond short-term relevance. Third, pursue cross-cultural and segment comparisons (UK vs. EU/US/Asia; Gen-Z vs. Millennials; men's vs. women's; heritage vs. digitally avant-garde houses) to map boundary conditions for tone, privacy calculus, and escalation norms.

Fourth, run modality experiments (text, avatar, live video) to identify when humanisation is decision-enhancing versus gimmicky, and privacy-design experiments (granular consent, “why-this” rationales, transparency nudges) to estimate their mediating effects on data sharing and recommendation acceptance. Fifth, pair consumer studies with brand-side audits of data quality, guardrails, and bias to link governance to outcomes. Finally, validate and refine the Revised Conceptual Framework as a testable model using Strategic Experiential Modules (SEM) (Schmitt, 1999) or multi-level models that connect **foundations** → **pillars** → **outcomes**, and extend the scope to omnichannel clientele (stylist prep, context transfer) and staff experience impacts in store.

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## **Appendix**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Research Ethics Approval Form**

## Educational Ethics Approval Form

IMPORTANT: UAL staff, please refer to the Educational Ethics Code of Practice and associated flowchart which indicates if the use of this form is required.

Declaration to be completed by the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have read the <b>Educational Ethics Code of Practice</b></li> <li>• I have accessed the <b>Ethics of Making</b> <a href="https://ethics.arts.ac.uk">https://ethics.arts.ac.uk</a> website and applied the learning to my work</li> <li>• I have reviewed the ethics resources on <b>Academic Support Online</b> to help me consider the ethical parameters of the Code of Practice</li> <li>• I have discussed my work with my <b>unit leader</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Please use these resources to inform your answers to questions 1 to 7 in the boxes below.</b></p>	Please tick: <p><b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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<b>Applicant name:</b>	Yaana Siroya
<b>Course Title:</b>	MA Global Fashion Retailing
<b>Unit Title:</b>	MAP – Master’s Project

If you are a tutor applying on behalf of a student or student group, please give your name here:	
<b>Tutor name:</b>	Shushan Karapetyan

<b>1. The code of practice sets out four key areas for ethical consideration.</b> Which one or more of these ethical principles does this application for ethical consideration relate to?	
a. An <b>ethics of care</b> is supported by the Educational Ethics subcommittee as a positive ethic that is the University’s responsibility to foster in relation to students, educational content, educational process including material resources, and in students’ relations with anyone who participates or interacts with their work.	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. The principle of <b>social justice</b> obliges the student to identify the risks and benefits of participation in creative or investigative practice. Any risks to persons participating should be weighed against any potential benefits – to the participants or the student, and also the wider benefits to society of the knowledge gained. As with the principle of respect for	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

persons, there is a need to promote equality and racial justice and protect vulnerable groups.	
c. <b>Respect for persons</b> recognises the capacity and rights of all individuals to make their own choices and decisions. It refers to the autonomy and rights to self-determination of all human beings, acknowledges their equality, dignity, freedom and rights. An important component of this principle is the need to provide special protection to vulnerable persons, both students and in student activity involving others.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. <b>Beneficence</b> is the principle of acting for the good and wellbeing of others. It requires students to serve the interests of others. In so doing, students comply with the principle of neither doing, nor permitting, any foreseeable harm as a consequence of creative or investigative practice. This is the principle of <b>non-maleficence</b> , it is the principle of doing no harm.  The specific duties of promoting equality and good relations are assumed under these principles, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**2. Please provide a 100-word summary of the ethical issues that relate to the work/enquiry that is planned.** Please relate it directly to one or more areas of the code and resources above.

This research explores how AI virtual assistants can enhance customer engagement for luxury fashion brands among Gen Z consumers in the UK. Participants will engage in semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Ethical principles of respect, care, and beneficence guide this process. A pre-session questionnaire will be shared to help participants prepare and avoid sharing confidential information. All sessions will be recorded only with prior informed consent. Data will be anonymised, stored securely on UAL-managed systems, and used solely for academic purposes. Participants will be fully informed of their rights and may withdraw at any time without consequence.

Does your work or enquiry require you to work with participants, or reuse personal data that has been obtained elsewhere? If people are participating directly, please ensure they fill in the participant information and consent template (Ask your Course Leader to provide these). If not, go to Questions 6 to 9.

**3. Who will the participants be?** Please tick the boxes as appropriate.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Students at the University
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff at the University
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other. Please specify: Luxury Consumers, AI specialists, Luxury Industry Insiders

**4. What will participants be asked to do and/or how will their personal information be used? Explain in terms appropriate to a layperson.**

Participants will be invited to take part in either a one-on-one semi-structured interview or a moderated focus group, discussing their insights and experiences with AI virtual assistants in the luxury fashion sector. A pre-interview questionnaire will be shared in advance to give participants time to reflect and reduce the chance of disclosing confidential or sensitive information.

Sessions may be recorded for analysis purposes, but **only after obtaining informed consent**. All contributions will be anonymised, and participants' identities will be kept strictly confidential.

**5. What potential risks to the interests of participants do you foresee and what steps will you take to minimise those risks?**

A participant's interests include their physical and psychological well-being, their commercial interests e.g. IP; and their rights of privacy and reputation. Please note that compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR is a legal obligation.

- **Confidentiality in focus groups:** There is a risk participants may unintentionally share confidential or identifying information. To mitigate this:
  - A pre-discussion questionnaire will be used to help participants prepare.
  - Participants will be reminded not to disclose identifiable or private information.
  - They will be asked to respect the confidentiality of what is shared by others.
- **Recording risk:** All recordings will be made only with **prior, explicit consent**. Participants may opt out of being recorded and still take part.
- All data will be anonymised, securely stored on UAL-managed systems (e.g. OneDrive), and used strictly for academic purposes. GDPR and UAL data ethics will be followed.

**6. Does your project involve children or minors (anyone under the age of 18) or vulnerable adults (e.g. a person with a learning disability)?**

	No

**7. What potential risks do you foresee to yourself and what steps will you take to minimise those risks?** E.g. does your work raise issues of personal safety, impact on vulnerabilities for you (or anyone with whom you are collaborating), especially if taking place outside working hours or off University premises?

As this project involves conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups—mostly online or in academic settings—the physical safety risks are minimal. However, there may be potential emotional or mental fatigue from managing participant engagement, data collection, and analysis. To minimise this, I will ensure that interviews are scheduled with adequate breaks in between, avoid late-night sessions, and seek regular support from my supervisor. If any sensitive or challenging topics arise during discussions, I will manage them calmly and respectfully, while prioritising my own well-being and boundaries. I will also make use of UAL's academic and well-being support services if needed.

**8. Are there other areas of ethical concern? How do you plan to manage these ethical considerations?**

In focus group settings, participants might overhear or recall information shared by others. To manage this:

- Clear confidentiality guidelines will be provided before each session.
- Participants will be reminded to avoid sharing identifiable content.
- Moderators will reiterate that all shared information is private and must not be discussed outside the session.

All participants will be asked for **informed consent before recording**, and will be reminded of their right to withdraw at any point without giving a reason.

**9. I confirm my responsibility to deliver the project in accordance with the Code of Practice on Educational Ethics of the University of the Arts London (the University)**

**If I am using personal data:** I will only store it on UAL-managed systems and will use the Participant Information and Consent Template to collect personal data. I will ensure I follow the [data protection principles](#) at all times.

Print name of applicant:	Yaana Siroya
Signature of applicant:	Yaana Siroya
Date:	23 <sup>rd</sup> July, 2025

<b>10. I support this project and have reviewed it with the applicant.</b>	
Print name of Tutor:	Shushan Karapetyan
Signature of Tutor:	<i>Shushan Karapetyan</i>
Date:	July 25, 2025

**Please submit this form and the relevant attachments to your Unit Leader/Course Leader/Programme Director.**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Participant Signed Consent Forms**

# ual:

## CONSENT TEMPLATE – (PARTICIPANT FCP A)

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet
2. I agree to participate in the research project as described
3. I agree to the items checked below:

- to be interviewed
- to take part in a focus group
- that my interview session will be recorded
- that information obtained may be published in an anonymised form.

4. I acknowledge that:

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- (d) The security of the research data will be protected during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published. Any information which will identify me will not be used.

### Participant's Consent

'I agree to the above as indicated and give my explicit consent under GDPR Art.6(1)(a) and Art.9(2)(a) for my personal data to be processed by UAL as indicated on this form, including any special category data I may choose to provide'

Participant  
:

Date: 08-08-25

*Amisha Sharma*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)



# ual:

## CONSENT TEMPLATE – (PARTICIPANT FCP C)

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet
2. I agree to participate in the research project as described
3. I agree to the items checked below:

- to be interviewed
- to take part in a focus group
- that my interview session will be recorded
- that information obtained may be published in an anonymised form.

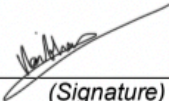
4. I acknowledge that:

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- (b) The project is for the purpose of research. It may not be of direct benefit to me.
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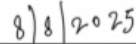
### Participant's Consent

'I agree to the above as indicated and give my explicit consent under GDPR Art.6(1)(a) and Art.9(2)(a) for my personal data to be processed by UAL as indicated on this form, including any special category data I may choose to provide'

Participant  
:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Date:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
8/8/2025

# ual:

## CONSENT TEMPLATE – (PARTICIPANT FCP D)

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet
2. I agree to participate in the research project as described
3. I agree to the items checked below:
  - to be interviewed
  - to take part in a focus group
  - that my interview session will be recorded
  - that information obtained may be published in an anonymised form.
4. I acknowledge that:
  - (a) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied (unless follow-up is needed for safety).
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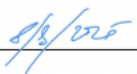
### Participant's Consent

'I agree to the above as indicated and give my explicit consent under GDPR Art.6(1)(a) and Art.9(2)(a) for my personal data to be processed by UAL as indicated on this form, including any special category data I may choose to provide'

Participant  
:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Date:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
8/8/2025

# ual:

## CONSENT TEMPLATE – (PARTICIPANT FCP E)


1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet
2. I agree to participate in the research project as described
3. I agree to the items checked below:

Y to be interviewed ✓  
 Y to take part in a focus group ✓  
 Y that my interview session will be recorded ✓  
 Y that information obtained may be published in an anonymised form. ✓

4. I acknowledge that:
  - (a) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied (unless follow-up is needed for safety).
  - (b) The project is for the purpose of research. It may not be of direct benefit to me.
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### Participant's Consent

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Participant :   
(Signature)

Date: 8/8/2025

# ual:

## CONSENT TEMPLATE – (PARTICIPANT FCP F)

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet
2. I agree to participate in the research project as described
3. I agree to the items checked below:

- to be interviewed
- to take part in a focus group
- that my interview session will be recorded
- that information obtained may be published in an anonymised form.

4. I acknowledge that:

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Participant: Tchopra Date: 08/08/25  
(Signature)

# ual:

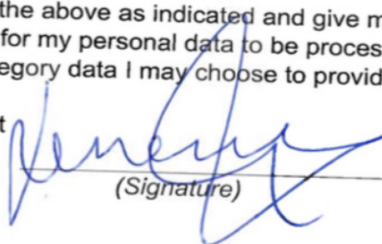
## CONSENT TEMPLATE – PARTICIPANT IP A

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet
2. I agree to participate in the research project as described
3. I agree to the items checked below:
  - to be interviewed
  - that my interview session will be recorded
  - my job title and company name may be used
  - that information obtained may be published in an anonymised form.
4. I acknowledge that:
  - (a) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied (unless follow-up is needed for safety).
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  - (d) The security of the research data will be protected during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published. Any information which will identify me will not be used.

### Participant's Consent

'I agree to the above as indicated and give my explicit consent under GDPR Art.6(1)(a) and Art.9(2)(a) for my personal data to be processed by UAL as indicated on this form, including any special category data I may choose to provide'

Participant  
:

  
(Signature)

Date:

18.08.2025

# ual:

## CONSENT TEMPLATE – PARTICIPANT TIP A

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet
2. I agree to participate in the research project as described
3. I agree to the items checked below:

- to be interviewed
- that my interview session will be recorded
- my job title and company name may be used
- that information obtained may be published in an anonymised form.

4. I acknowledge that:

- (a) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied (unless follow-up is needed for safety).
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### Participant's Consent

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Participant  
:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Date:

13th August 2025

# ual: CONSENT TEMPLATE - (PARTICIPANT TIP B)

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet
2. I agree to participate in the research project as described
3. I agree to the items checked below:

- to be interviewed
- that my interview session will be recorded
- my job title and company name may be used
- that information obtained may be published in an anonymised form.

4. I acknowledge that:

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## Participant's Consent

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Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

  
(Signature)

Date: 11.08.25



**CONSENT TEMPLATE – (PARTICIPANT CP B)**

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet

2. I agree to participate in the research project as described

3. I agree to the items checked below:

- to be interviewed
- that my interview session will be recorded
- my job title and company name may be used
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4. I acknowledge that:

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**Participant's Consent**

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Participant:		Date:	18/08/2025
		(Signature)	

## **Appendix 3**

### **Focus Group & Semi- Structured Interview Transcripts**

## FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

**Interviewee** 0:01

And what are your expectations when you see AI being used in luxury communication like what? These are the things that they're doing, but is there anything that you would expect?

**FCP A** 0:04

My expectations in luxury communication is of virtual chat bots and hyper personalised feeds. Because every time I interact, let's say with brand A and I find a product that I resonate with, I would constantly see that on multiple platforms.

So I feel like **hyper personalised feeds is that one thing that definitely clicks into my mind the 1st and then virtual chat bots**. Of course **it makes your task easy** when you're looking for something particular on the website or if you have a particular picture in your mind. If you need assistance and.

You're shopping online, you are not really in the retail platform in person, so you're shopping online. So that makes it easy for you. So those are the two predominant things I would say apart from this, maybe **styling recommendations** and then, yeah, these are the.

3 dominant things that clicks into my mind.

**Interviewee** 0:57

And what are your expectations when you see AI being used in luxury communication like what? These are the things that they're doing, but is there anything that you would expect?

**FCP A** 1:07

I **don't like in the face marketing**, so I mentioned about how we now have hyper personalised feeds. Sometimes it's great, but a lot of times it becomes too much. You don't want to be sitting at your phone at 12 in the night and then seeing random products that you probably looked up for.

Or the day before yesterday or things like that. So I don't. I think **I would expect a balance in terms of these marketing strategies**. I don't know if that's the correct, whom they have to refer to the.

**FCP A** 1:42

To these topics as. But yeah, a balance between that and maybe a little bit

**Invivo**  
**Emotional**  
**Initial**  
**Causation**

“HYPER  
PERSONALISED  
FEED CLICKS MY  
MIND FOR CHAT  
BOTS”  
“MAKES TASKS  
EASY”

“STYLING  
RECOMMENDATION

“DON'T LIKE IN  
FACE MARKETING

“BALANCE OF  
MARKETING  
STRATEGIES”

of an emotional touch, maybe, maybe like emotionally resonant strategies and not in the face marketing. So yeah.  
That's what my expectation is.

**Interviewee** 2:01

OK, FCP B, you can you describe how luxury fashion brands you engage with are using AI currently?

**FCP B** 2:10

To be honest, most of G brands I shop from in store they do not have any AI features. It's mostly when it comes to online purchasing. So these AI tools can be incorporated into suggesting certain like products based.

On your previous purchases or using like your history throughout purchasing from the brand to promote their new product lines or get you like previous access or early access to new release products.

**Interviewee** 2:46

Thank you.

Would that be for your expectations as well that would that?

**FCP B** 2:54

As of is, is it something I expect?

**Interviewee** 2:57

Yes.

**FCP B** 2:59

Well, to be honest, it doesn't really matter. Like if I'm looking for a certain product, I do not really wait for the brand to promote it for me, but as long as the brand is giving recommendations, it shows that they are taking care of their current customers, which is a good thing.

**Interviewee** 3:17

OK, they're both.

"EMOTIONAL  
RESONANT  
STRATEGIES"

"AI TOOLS FOR  
SUGGESTIONS"

"PROMOTE NEW  
PRODUCT LINES"

"RECOMMENDATION  
SHOW BRAND IS  
TAKING CARE"

**FCP C** 3:21

Hi so I think the brands of I, I am buying like right now to be honest, I think luxury brands are all over the place in terms of where they're trying to do everything that when Meta was came there, they tried there. They tried doing that. That didn't actually work, so I think they're just hopping on trends to, I don't know why, just to market themselves more or to make themselves more seen, but I don't think it's really required. I think luxury we buy luxury for heritage and for. The history they have and to for me all these gimmicks are actually want like they're trying. I'm actually not buying more luxury because of these gimmicks. No, I'm checking to brands that are just original to themselves and. Trying not trying too hard to do everything they can.

**Interviewee** 4:19

OK. And what are your expectations from them if they like, if they wanted to use AI, what do you think in which form it should be like the correct use of AI should be done?

**FCP C** 4:31

I think to I think try trying one and like virtual assistants who can help you decide the right fit for you and your size. I think because I think online shopping is pretty tough if you because people all brands are making different type of fits in their clothes.

**Interviewee** 4:42

Yes.

**FCP C** 4:52

Shoes as well. For me, some brand might fit. I'm 42 but in some brands my shoe size is 40 and then some 43. So if they can help in that and compare it to other brands that I already have.

“LUXURY BRANDS ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE, TRYING TO DO EVERYTHING”

“HOPING ON TRENDS”

“LUXURY IS HERITAGE”

“NON-ADOPTION TRIGGER”

“FORCED INNOVATION”

“VA’s CAN HELP RIGHT FIT AND SIZE”

**Interviewee** 5:03

Yes.

**FCP C** 5:08

That might be really useful.

**Interviewee** 5:08

Yeah.

OK, what are your expectations when sorry, how can you describe luxury brands that you engage with are using AI right now in their communication?

**FCP E** 5:23

Particularly in my case, I rather prefer than the brands going old school and following the same prototypes that I've been there for over the centuries. I personally prefer that if they are coming on with time and with the due diligence and processes that are going on in our worlds.

It is a good somewhat step in my head. Specifically, instead of talking anecdotal, I would rather quote vogue that recently used AI as a particular model in their whole presentation and showed all their different outfits on it and.

**Interviewee** 5:44

Yeah.

**FCP E** 5:57

Vogue was not the first one we've had, Levis. We've had other brands as well, like the semi luxury, if you call them, particularly in my case, **I would feel that luxury brands are taking a good step ahead with AI** A lot of things could be you know.

**Interviewee** 6:04

Yeah.

Yeah.

"LUXURY BRANDS  
ARE TAKING A GOOD  
STEP WITH AI"

**FCP E** 6:16

Schemed in a better way, like **personal stylist being one of the industries that is, you know, quite not in the correct usage right now. AI could completely take over** that as we have mentioned earlier that yeah, different fits have different. Fittings and different styles. So instead of me going to every store and every place and checking it out instead if I could get one simple hub where I could see myself styled in those, that is something where AI comes in role for me.

**Interviewee** 6:41

Yeah.

OK, FCP D.

**FCP D** 6:49

I feel that in today's world, **AI is like it's going to soon lead us.** So I feel it's a good thing that brand luxury brands have started using it like in my opinion, like when we have some brands of a **virtual try ONS** and you know like it's a good thing that you can even like when I'm buying something.

And then it shows **more recommendations** based on that. I feel it's like catering to what I wear or what I need and like it gives you more streamlined approach like instead of scrolling so the whole site you just have like some products which you know like is like **cater to your choice, your style and everything.**

**Interviewee** 7:11

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP D** 7:27

So in my opinion it's a good thing and I see that, you know, like how mostly like brands they've incorporated online. I would like it if they would incorporate something like that in their offline stores.

“AI TAKEOVER”

“AI TAKEOVER”

“VIRTUAL TRY ONS  
UTILITY”

“CONTEXTUAL  
RECOMMENDATION”

“TAILORED TO  
INDIVIDUAL”

**Interviewee** 7:30

And.

OK, So what you would expect from AI is some sort of AI related tech. Even in their stores, yeah.

**FCP D** 7:50

Yes, like for example, some brands they offer customization and personalization in their products, but that's only when you go to the offline stores and get it done yourself. So like if you could see it online, like see what colour you would want or what design, what pattern and you could just.

**Interviewee** 7:56

Yeah.

**FCP D** 8:05

Do it yourself like online and then you just get the product. That'll be a good thing rather than going all the way and getting that done like having seen it.

**Interviewee** 8:16

Got it FCP F.

**FCP F** 8:20

Hi so basically I in terms of like shopping, luxury, sorry my voice it's so much more what I use in the beauty industry so more than like clothes, shoes, bags it's more beauty related. Where?

**Interviewee** 8:32

Yeah.

**FCP F** 8:37

You can try every product on your face which is like it scans your skin, tone everything and then you can see like what shade suits you and that is

“OFFLINE ONLY  
PERSONALISATION  
A SERVICE GAP”

really **convenient** when you're like sitting at home and you've used a few products before and you can like so that happens with like foundation shades as well.

So if you've used the foundation of another company and you just add that that OI use a foundation of like for example Charlotte delivery and then you can just like put the shared number and then it will suggest you all of the shades for every brand. So I feel like that's more convenient or that's used in a.

**Interviewee** 9:11

Yeah.

**FCP F** 9:16

Better way I would say comparatively to like, yes. Obviously like clothes, all of them are helpful but when but I feel like with **luxury you need to like feel or experience the product** but with makeup once you kind of know the brand or you've like.

**Interviewee** 9:18

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 9:35

Used a few products, it's so much **easier** based on, you know, a few questionnaire, maybe like a skin analysis or, you know, a tone analysis you can like, buy products like continuously so.

**Interviewee** 9:48

And would you expect from, let's say clothing or shoe brands, how would you want to see them use AI, which would be beneficial like you said, how the makeup industry is pretty beneficial the way they're using AI? What's something you would like to see in the luxury industry with maybe clothes or shoes that would be more useful to you?

**FCP F** 10:00

"VTO CREATES  
CONVENIENT"

"SENSORY AND  
EXPERIENTIAL  
VALIDATION"

"EASY TO PURCHASE  
PRODUCTS"

Yeah.

I feel because clothes, unless you try. I don't think so. Like you will actually get to know the fit. So I don't know how or what I would expect from like the clothing industry, but it's so much more like.

**Interviewee** 10:16

Yeah.

**FCP F** 10:26

You know, the **human connection** are like somewhere where maybe are like the tone of like, you know that oh, hey, this is my style, maybe suggest a few pieces that would suit my body type, which is more important than just how it looks like. You know, everyone has like a different shape. So maybe more like you rated.

**Interviewee** 10:38

Yeah.

**FCP F** 10:45

According to like your figure, you know because not everything suits everyone. So yeah, somewhat **like a more like personalised based on like the fit.**

**Interviewee** 10:49

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 10:59

You know, not just like, the generalised style.

**Interviewee** 11:03

Yeah. So if I have to ask, you would probably prefer shopping in store rather than online, if it's luxury.

**FCP F** 11:03

“HUMAN  
CONNECTION”

“FIT BASED ON BODY  
FIT”

But I don't know.

If it's luxury, it would be in store because then I get to like, feel the product, which is one of the biggest experience. So when you like, see something, it looks good maybe, but once you feel it, you understand, is it worth the price you're paying?

**Interviewee** 11:13

Yeah.

OK.

**FCP F** 11:26

Because sometimes it looks good in pictures but not in real life. So if I'm paying that amount, I would want that quality. I would want, you know, the exclusivity of it. I don't want everyone to like have it if I'm paying that price.

**Interviewee** 11:26

OK.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 11:42

So yeah, maybe in person would be.

**Interviewee** 11:45

A better choice for you? Yeah. Can you guys also one by one just say do you all prefer shopping online or in store for luxury?

**FCP F** 11:46

Yes.

**FCP A** 11:56

I would say for me it's kind of between online or install. Of course, I completely agree with what the Nishi mentioned. Of course you like getting the feel of the, let's say if you're shopping for a fashion clothing item, you of course get to feel the fabric. You get to know about it for the

in the store, but sometimes **I feel it's more convenient** while you're sitting at your home while you have the luxury of sitting at home and then shopping for products. It's kind of somewhere in between for me, so I don't really have a particular answer between in store or online, so it's come somewhere in between for me.

**Interviewee** 12:28

Yeah.

Oh.

OK. Yeah, then issue you want to add on something you can say?

**FCP F** 12:38

Yeah. So I was saying it also I feel depends on if, if you're like, **shy, anxious**. I feel like you're not shopping online makes it so much easier that you can just go to the store, feel everything come back home.

Sit down and then order it because you've seen it. You felt it. But you know the entire process of like having that conversation with them or whatever. Sometimes it's just like not OK for some people. And I feel like, you know, having the **comfort at home** just being like, hey, I want this.

**Interviewee** 12:54

And then.

**FCP F** 13:11

Let me just buy it without having the entire thing of like going to the store talking to them.

**Interviewee** 13:17

Also, because it's a lot quicker, sometimes it's efficiency, also because it's a lot more quicker online, you can just do it at your pace. You can do it at 12 in the night, and nobody's gonna ask.

**FCP F** 13:18

I'm sorry.

“ONLINE SHOPPING  
IN CONVENIENT”

“ANXIETY RELIEF”

“COMFORT OF  
SHOPPING FROM  
HOME”

Yes.  
Mm-hmm.

**Interviewee** 13:31  
Yeah.

**FCP F** 13:32  
Yeah, just.

**FCP A** 13:33  
And also because I think sizing plays a major role sometimes when you're in in the store and you can't find the size, it's not the same online. If you want a particular size, you can clearly see if it's available, if it's in stock or not, while if you're in store, you have to get hold of the sales advisor and ask them.

**Interviewee** 13:41  
What?

**FCP A** 13:51  
Hey, do you have a size and they'll be like either they'll help you out if they're busy. They would not. So you're on your own. So it's more like the same if the if the sales team is not really helpful, it's more like the same shopping online or in store in store in terms of the.  
The services. So yeah, that's one more point.

**Interviewee** 14:10  
FCP B, you online or in store?

**FCP B** 14:14  
Well, it depends on the product of course, but if it's a product I previously purchased online would be the way to go since it will be **more convenient**, especially if it's a **limited edition product**, I'll prefer purchasing it online.

“CONVENIENCE  
PURCHASE +  
LIMITED EDITION  
URGENCY”

**Interviewee** 14:24

Yeah.

**FCP B** 14:30

Cause I do not want to stand in a queue.

**Interviewee** 14:33

OK

**FCP C** 14:36

For me it's in store because sometimes I'm going to purchase one item and I come back with three or four. So sometimes I see more stuff and we do like it. So it's in store for me.

**Interviewee** 14:44

Yeah.

OK, FCP E.

**FCP E** 14:53

Yeah. So for me it will be in store because for me, I personally believe that it's not just about if you're talking about luxury in particular, it's about the journey and the traditions in which you shop about it. The shows are designed in a certain fashion that they kind of give you the whole outlook of what you are.

**Interviewee** 15:00

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP E** 15:12

Buying and from where you are buying. So the experience that is offered in that particular outset is something that I prefer instead of online because I do. I personally feel that if I'm spending a tonne of money on something that isn't going to be very useful, but I'm going in for the

“DON'T WANT TO  
STAND IN QUEUE”

“IN STORE'S  
SHOPPING JOURNEY  
AND TRADITION”

culture, for the tradition, for the name that is associated with it, I would rather. For the whole experience that comes along with it. So yeah, for me it's true.

**Interviewee** 15:34

Oh.

OK, FCP D.

**FCP D** 15:39

For me, I mostly prefer buying stuff online, and that's just because like, suppose if I'm out somewhere I have like already viewed something or maybe just walked into the store and like something. But you know, I need time to, like, think about it, if I really want to invest in it or maybe I could see something better. So it's like you come home, you add things to your cart and like you see other brands.

Or maybe explore things and then you know when you decide and then you can just order it online. It's like it's kind of like a boat. Basically you go and see the stuff and then you order it online. But I just find online it's much easier. You can order anything you want, you can pick what time you want the delivery, whether you'll be available or not.

**Interviewee** 16:12

Yeah.

**FCP D** 16:17

And all those features.

**Interviewee** 16:20

Yeah, you typically like to 1st decide the pros. Ones of a particular product and then see if you actually want to invest in it or not.

**FCP D** 16:28

Not exactly like suppose if I'm just like if I'm just gone shopping and like, you know, just in general, like I'm looking at stuff and then I just like a particular product, a lot. But I'm just like in double thoughts whether I

“HERITAGE FIRST  
INSTORE  
EXPERIENCE”

should buy it, whether I need it or you know, it's such an impulse purchase. So with the time you think about and then rather to go back again to the store and pick it up, it's just better if you order it online and maybe sometimes there are some products which are not available in the store, but you have other colours of them available online, so that.

**Interviewee** 16:57

Yeah.

OK, FCP A, let's start the next question with you. In your opinion, how does AI impact emotional engagement when you interact with luxury brands online, let's say a chat bot or maybe a recommendation or something like that. How does it impact your emotional engagement towards a brand?

Have anything to do with it or is it no nothing working out.

**FCP A** 17:23

So like I mentioned previously, it's one of my expectations of if you're if, let's say, luxury brands are using AI marketing or emerging fashion technologies in their marketing strategies or their digital communications. **I want to see the brands communicating with me with emotional resonance, which I don't see right now.**

**So I and I personally believe a personal touch like a human touch is very important.** Of course, when you're shopping with luxury brands, because of course, like a lot of people have mentioned here, the heritage is what you first seek. The heritage is what attracted you to the brand first before the products could actually make an impact on you.

**Interviewee** 17:49

Yeah.

**FCP A** 18:02

Minds. So I don't see that happening anytime soon. But yeah, as of now, I don't think it does connect with me emotionally, but I would love if in **the future we could actually use AI marketing to sort of tap into your emotional** bit and make.

“LACK OF HUMANISED COMMUNICATION”

“AI MARKETING → EMOTIONAL PERSUASION”

Interviewee 18:07

Mm-hmm.

OK.

FCP A 18:21

Connections and then communicate those brand values and those brand heritage or communication. So I don't see that happening right now.

Interviewee 18:30

OK, but can you, can you recall of a time when AI made your shopping experience either feel enjoyable or very frustrated any of the one like an example?

FCP A 18:42

Initially when I when I think the virtual chat bots were launched while they were rolling out, it was kind of different so you wouldn't have to wait in the line to sort of connect with the service providers or sales advisors. You could initially get answers to your.

Interviewee 18:51

Yeah.

FCP A 19:00

Questions, but now that it has been there for a long time, it sort of has become monotonous in terms of you don't really connect with the chat bots and you don't really get the answers which you're actually looking for. So a lot of times I think it has been frustrated for me now. Initially, of course, it was exciting.

Cause you were trying a different feature. You was trying something new, so now I think it has been frustrating, particularly something that has been.

I would say attractive to me was the LVMH authentication services where you could actually have a look at your existing products if it's authentic or not or yeah, if it's viable or. Does it match the authenticity or the heritage

"CONNECTION  
BUILDING THROUGH  
STORYTELLING"

"REDUCED WAIT  
TIME"

"MONOTONOUS NO  
CONNECTION"

"PRESENT =  
FRUSTRATION  
PAST = EXCITING"

of the brand so things like that have attracted me a lot. But now I don't think it's been the same.

**Interviewee** 19:57

Yeah. Now it's hard to get frustrating because it's nothing new in there. Yeah, it's become too old for us. FCP B, what do you feel? Does it create an emotional engagement when you interact with brands online?

**FCP A** 20:00

Yes, yes, yes.

Yeah.

**FCP B** 20:12

To be honest, no, whether online or offline. Usually when I go to purchase a product I have already seen it a couple of times or came across it. So if I'm purchasing something it's because I have made the decision that I need this product after seeing it a couple of times.

**Interviewee** 20:23

Yeah.

**FCP B** 20:31

So it's not certainly emotions, but it's more of seeing something repetitively makes it get stuck in your thoughts or in your mind, which makes you make the purchase. But I feel like sometimes if a brand wants to create more emotional connection.

**Interviewee** 20:45

Yeah.

**FCP B** 20:51

Usually it's through offline.

**Interviewee** 20:54

“MEMORY IMPRINT”

Yeah. OK. And can you tell me of an experience where AI made it either easy for you or too frustrating for you, or a mix of both?

**FCP B** 21:05

To be honest, usage of AI in purchasing certain products in my life hasn't added pretty much a lot or it has been like a seamless experience through purchasing an online product. But in store I haven't realised any difference.

So I don't think it really had an impact.

**Interviewee** 21:23

OK, OK. Levels.

When you're shopping online, does it impact? Does AI have an impact on your emotional engagement?

**FCP C** 21:29

Yeah.

I think it's pretty **frustrating** because like nowadays, whenever, whenever I'm on a website there's a small chat button which I feel like shouldn't be there.

**Interviewee** 21:48

OK.

**FCP C** 21:49

And it's just popping up every time, so it's pretty frustrating.

**Interviewee** 21:54

OK, it shouldn't be there. Or should it be like upgraded to a form with what FCP A said that now it's been too monotonous and it needs like an upgrade where you're not?

**FCP C** 22:04

Yeah, I don't think it needs an upgrade, but I think another day **a real person chatting with you or talking to you, it's much better.** AI have like

"FRUSTRATION  
RECENTLY"

"HUMAN  
INTERACTION LEADS  
SATISFACTION"

did have answers.

Written like they have, they have like they give me random answers for anything. If I want to ask also so they're not that helpful and like I really don't think luxury brands need AI and they're.

**Interviewee** 22:29

Yeah.

**FCP C** 22:37

Like in the chat box, a real person chatting would be better as they can understand your situation better.

**Interviewee** 22:39

OK.

OK. And has AI ever made any shopping easier for you? Or let's say frustrating for you?

**FCP C** 22:55

Like I said, frustrating.

**Interviewee** 22:57

Yeah. Can you give an example of it?

**FCP C** 22:58

Yeah.

Uh.

I think I was online looking for a product on some brands website and I want to ask the size of it. Like it wasn't mentioned on the website. I don't know why but I want to ask the size.

**Interviewee** 23:09

Yeah.

**FCP C** 23:20

And if it was available in a specific store and I tried for like an hour, didn't

get any relevant answers so end of the day I have to call the store and ask them if they have the size available.

**Interviewee** 23:32

OK.

FCP E for you has AI created any sort of an emotional engagement when you interact with plans?

**FCP E** 23:42

Actually, I wouldn't have an opinion on it personally, because I've always been old school. If I go for shopping, I need that. You know that **authentication from that salesperson**. Yeah. OK. I am looking good in this or that. I need that third opinion from someone. And so that, OK, if she's telling me or he's telling me that, OK, I'm the best person.

**Interviewee** 23:56

Yeah.

**FCP E** 24:02

That I started today. Then only I'll buy it, otherwise I won't buy it. So personally for me, AI doesn't really matter and I'm quite impulsive with the shopping as well. So online isn't my thing to be very honest. So I don't have really an opinion on whether AI is helpful or not. But yeah, if I have to shop something, I wouldn't really rely on AI.

**Interviewee** 24:05

You.

OK. And has there any, has there been any instance where you were not only shopping but looking for something any, I made it either easier or frustrating for you?

**FCP E** 24:34

I think AI is not that, you know simplified as it is discussed the **right prompts and the right questions will get you the right answer**. What we are, you know what we're adapted to is that we talk in a very. Random way

“SALESPERSON  
AUTHENTICATION”

“RIGHT PROMPT =  
RIGHT ANSWER”

about what we want things and we've had that one to one interaction with humans so they get us, they understand, OK, they would be talking about like this, they get a rough idea and then they interact with us with AI. It's not the same. Whatever you input whatever input you give to them, they'll reply to you exactly same. So I think.

**Interviewee** 24:55

Yeah.

Yes.

**FCP E** 25:07

Before talking about whether AI is helpful or not, we really **need to understand and adapt to the ways we need to ask AI for the help** in my scenario.

“UNDERSTAND AND ADAPT TO AI”

**Interviewee** 25:16

OK, FCP D for you.

**FCP D** 25:20

For me, probably I honestly do not like the AI chat boot system because there have been times when you know you're trying to explain something to them and **they do not understand it and it's like it gets frustrating** at a point because first of all you have a problem.

“FRUSTRATION DUE TO MIS-UNDERSTANDING”

Already your mood spoiled because of that problem. Like you receive something and you know it has a problem with it. And then when you're explaining it to someone, firstly explaining it to a like maybe like you're doing your own your laptop. So it's like you don't not talking to a person, it's not a one-on-one things.

**Interviewee** 25:46

A machine.

**FCP D** 25:52

And it's like you have to explain it so much in detail and everything. It would be much easier if you would. I don't would not even prefer if it was

on chat with like a human. I would actually prefer the calling system, which is there like maybe, you know you pick your order and then you know they say would you like to connect and call and then we would because it's much easier faster and like you know.

**Interviewee** 25:52  
Yeah.

**FCP D** 26:11  
No. You can explain like when you're like. Suppose I'm talking to you, you reply and you know it's a much faster conversation when you're texting. Sometime you miss a word and it gets too much. So I personally do not like it. And in things like this, situations like this, I actually prefer to rather go.

**Interviewee** 26:23  
Yes.

**FCP D** 26:28  
To offline stores, whereas I prefer online. But then sometimes you just helpless.

**Interviewee** 26:34  
OK, then issue for you.

**FCP F** 26:38  
So having studied psychology, I feel it's a very, you know, like nuanced thing of like it. Basically, AI cannot replace the human connection, which everyone's been talking about, like it can just, like kind of enhance it. So where this part gets, you know, like.

**Interviewee** 26:55  
Yeah.

**FCP F** 26:57

"CALLS WILL MAKE IT EASY"

"FAST CONVERSATION"

"ENHANCE HUMAN CONNECTION"

Very tricky of like how much do you want it? Kind of like, you know you can get like a few options now. But like, it really depends on like what kind of a person you are, what product you're looking for. So sometimes it's very generalised of the help. So basically it's like, OK, do you want this this.

That, but sometimes you want more, so that's obviously better, like when you talk to someone where they can understand. Are you buying a gift for someone so they can ask their preferences where when you're just asking for help on like the website they wouldn't know? Is it if it's for like a person who you know, appreciates where.

Jewellery or you know, something like that. So like it, **it lacks the emotional part because I don't think so. AI can ever kind of replace** that because that also kind of works in therapy, which is obviously off topic. But it can never replace that. So

Interviewee 27:48

Yeah.

FCP F 27:54

It can just make **it kind of more convenient.** You can never like. So basically, we're all humans. We **thrive on human connection.** It can never be possible that you're isolated and you know you're just shopping because it's so much more of an experience. Even like buying something shopping.

Interviewee 28:02

Yeah.

FCP F 28:12

You know, returning something. It's so much of an experience like you're not related to the product. I feel like, yeah, I don't think so. Like it, it really depends on if something had to change, it could be how to **integrate like fashion and psychology.**

**So if you want to like tap into the emotions,** that would be something you know brands can like kind of actively lookout for and then, you know,

"EMOTION DEFECIT –  
HUMAN  
IRREPACIBILITY"

"CONVENIENCE"

"NEED HUMAN  
CONNECTION"

"FASHION-PSYCH  
FUSION"

change. So how colours are used or how words are used it all really depends on. So basically kind of marketing, right, but.

**Interviewee** 28:29

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 28:47

More into not just basic marketing, not like oh hey, I have a product. It's amazing the, you know, like the material quality. Yes. But there's so much more to like when a person buys a product. So, you know, somewhere like tapping into that as well.

**Interviewee** 29:00

Yeah.

**FCP F** 29:04

And for me, like it depends. I've had, like, **good experiences** as well using like these filters or you know, like it makes life easy when you know that. OK. Hey, you're looking for this product and it's so much easier when you just like list your philtres and you got something, you know out of it but.

More than that, sometimes it's **frustrating** when you just don't know and you're, like, lost. You're like, OK, now what do I do? I don't know where to start from. And then, you know, when you go in store, they will help you find that starting point. So they will, like, narrow down you.

**Interviewee** 29:28

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 29:40

You know, choices, your budget or whatever it is, so yeah.

**Interviewee** 29:47

OK. Coming to next, what features of an AI virtual assistant would matter

“GOOD EXPERIENCE WITH AI”

“FRUSTATING EXPERIENCES”

the most to you? So for example, if it was to upgrade, what kind of features would matter the most to you? What would you want to change in the existing system?

**FCP F** 29:48

Thank you.

**Interviewee** 30:03

Something like either the and if it's a conversational AI, it's not a chat bot where you're texting, but a conversational where you're having a conversation. What are the features that you would want to change or wouldn't matter the most to you? It could be the tone, it could be the kind of recommendations you're getting so more personalised to what you. Styles or aesthetics are so what's that one thing that would really matter the most to you if it was conversational AI?

**FCP A** 30:33

I would say yes. Rather than just having **monotonous or random replies** if it would have been more conversational like you mentioned, it would be great, but then having like a **conversational chat bot wouldn't alone be enough.**

Because all of us have mentioned here, we kind of need that emotional or human connection. So working on how can we make those recommendations **feel more personal** and more spot on South that it feels **like it's tailored for you** and you're not getting?

**Interviewee** 30:54

Yeah.

**FCP A** 31:06

A monotonous answer which fits all categories of customers. So if we could work on doing that, that'd be great. I think it could be the **new innovation in the virtual assistant field for AI.** Secondly, I would say.

I recently was shopping on this jewellery brand based in the UK, which is called Astrid and MU. So instead of having like chat bots, they have their

“MONOTONOUS AND  
RANDOM”

“CONVERSATIONAL  
CHATBOT IS NOT  
ENOUGH”

“MORE  
INDIVIDUALISED”

“NEW INNOVATION”

own people and sort of their AI generated video. I know there comes so privacy and so on here.

But then it feels more real. It feels like you are literally talking to a person on the screen. So something along the lines of that where you actually get the feel that you're talking to a real person and not a chat bot predominantly. So something along the lines would be great.

**Interviewee** 31:47

OK.

OK, good name for you.

**FCP B** 32:03

OK.

Is the mic open? It's not opening. Oh, it's open. OK, perfect. Can you just repeat the question again? Because.

**Interviewee** 32:06

Yeah.

Oh.

So for example, if it was a conversational AI, what features would matter the most to you? Would it be the tone? Would it be the aesthetics of that AI, or would it be the brand values that it's inculcating within itself like you know?

That probably this AI belongs to this brand. What would be something that would matter the most to you?

**FCP B** 32:35

I would say brand values because obviously as of the conversation, I do not expect the AI to pretend to be a human, so at least **reflecting the brand values would add value to that feature.** So that's definitely the most important.

**Interviewee** 32:44

OK.

"BRAND VALUE ALIGNMENT"

Yeah.

Weber, for you. What would matter the most to you in a conversational AI?

**FCP C** 33:00

I think the ability to solve a problem should be there. I don't want to talk to an AI if it can't solve my problem from sizing to like what the colour would look like.

**Interviewee** 33:14

Yeah.

**FCP C** 33:15

Or would it be? Would it be like? Would I look good in it in at an event? So like if it can solve a problem then it's great, but if it cannot then there's no point of an AI.

**Interviewee** 33:21

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah, solve a problem with like styling advices being given correctly.

**FCP C** 33:35

A by a wide range like it can be anything actually.

**Interviewee** 33:39

OK, planner for you.

**FCP E** 33:44

OK, so for me personally, chat box and conversation and everything doesn't really matter. Couldn't care less, doesn't, you know, really affect me in any kind of a scenario. But yeah, the only thing if I would see AI playing a role in the fashion industry would be being the personal stylist that everyone needs. Because that has always been kind of, you know, considered to be a very how do I put in the words like?

“PROBLEM SOLVING AI”

“DEMAND FOR PERSONAL STYLIST”

**Interviewee** 34:14

It's something everyone needs.

**FCP E** 34:14

I think that, yeah, everyone needs and a lot of people couldn't afford at the time because it is kind of a luxury in itself. So if we are making, **if we are looking to make fashion convenient, then styling would be the scenario** which I would see AI playing a better role in.

**Interviewee** 34:19

Yeah.

Yep.

**FCP E** 34:32

Instead of, you know, having a conversation with me and telling me what is what and how should I proceed with it? Because honestly, at the end of the day, AI can't really replace it, but.

**Interviewee** 34:44

Yeah.

**FCP E** 34:45

I think it would be much more beneficial in that kind of output, yeah.

**Interviewee** 34:49

Scenario OK, Ashley, for you. What's one thing that you would matter the most to you in a conversational AI?

**FCP D** 34:58

Like I said earlier, that like the problem solving technique should be, you know, probably like they should work on that the most because everyone almost had talked to they almost face the same concern which is that whenever they try explaining something it just goes the other way around and it's like.

“TO MAKE FASHION  
CONVENIENT  
STYLING IS  
SCENARIO”

**Interviewee** 35:16

Yeah.

**FCP D** 35:17

Basically, when you do shop, when you like, shop with someone like a human like they see your colour tone, your way of styling and you know they have a better input whether what would suit you or not. And of course they're trained in it as well. But for someone like an AI, like how would you explain your skin tone, your way of styling and everything and like?

There are options where you can send photos, but then that's just a breach of privacy I feel.

**Interviewee** 35:42

Yeah. OK.

**FCP D** 35:44

Sophie, for me, it would be something more tailored to a person's, like, I don't want it to be as in a very broad or general thing that, you know, many people of the same category can fit in it, but more tailored to like each person's style. Or maybe if you cannot exactly tell, you could, like, give suggestions, then this would suit people like this. This would suit.

**Interviewee** 35:55

OK.

**FCP D** 36:03

People like that and you know, sometimes it happens that when you like, like every different clothing item has a different fitting. But of course your body, your like measurements and everything, they remain the same. This like, you know tailor thing where you can just tell this is the size of each part and you know they could tell that this side would fit you like this maybe.

**Interviewee** 36:04

Yeah.

**FCP D** 36:22

If we're tight on this area, or maybe this would be loose, so like something like that.

**Interviewee** 36:27

OK. Can you share for you what feature would matter the most to you?

**FCP F** 36:31

Thank you.

I feel like in conversational, you know this thing? It depends on like the product actually like there's like a number of products, it really depends on like what you're looking for.

For example like if you're buying like luxury jewellery.

I'm sure you're not going to talk to someone on like the chat box or like whatever or just like philtre things you have to like kind of try it. It's a huge investment you're making. So I feel like if at all.

I feel the tone would matter the most of like you know how. So when you're like kind of reading it, you need to be like connected to it in some or the other way it because aesthetics do matter, but it matters more in the product because in the end, even if like the layout.

**Interviewee** 37:16

Yeah.

Hmm.

**FCP F** 37:24

Of the shop is like beautiful as in of like for example like Sabyasachi the beautiful store it is. It is just a museum basically on its own. But in the end I am not taking that home. I am taking the product home. So yes aesthetics of like the brand matter. But in the end just the product.

“TONE IN AI VA WILL  
MATTER”

**Interviewee** 37:40

Yeah.

**FCP F** 37:43

Products coming home, like the entire store, isn't so like the tone because it's like, you know, I'm texting someone, talking to someone philtres or just anything. So I feel like the tone matters. The words use matters and then, you know how you.

**Interviewee** 37:57

Yeah, so be able to bring that sort of a connection, obviously not a human like connection, but something more closer to that.

**FCP F** 38:08

Yeah. Just at least, like somewhat helpful in any way possible it, it doesn't have to cater everything because you know we all have different wants from you know like kind of buying it or like you know whatever it is but like at least to some level it should be helpful.

**Interviewee** 38:19

Yes.

**FCP F** 38:26

It shouldn't just exist because it's existing everywhere. It should be for a purpose, basically.

**Interviewee** 38:31

Yeah.

OK.

**FCP F** 38:35

Oh yeah.

**Interviewee** 38:37

OK, let's come to privacy concerns. We heard that a lot. So how important is trust in data privacy when using AI assistance with luxury brands? Would that be a very concerning point for you, or is that a point that you would not be really concerned about?

**FCP A** 38:58

I wouldn't say it's something that I won't be concerned about, but having said that, I also understand that we now live in a time where having to **keep your data private is a next level task**, because of course we have social media.

**Interviewee** 39:02

Yeah.  
OK.

**FCP A** 39:17

We have AI chat boards, we have philtres. We have augmented reality, virtual reality, you name it, and everywhere you have to give your data in. Let's say we have a lot of pop ups in the UK and every time you visit a pop up you are scanning QR codes. You're giving away permissions.

For your location, for everything, and I don't think a lot of people go back and check for the locations or the data that you've already shared with these brands and everything. So yes, it does fall under the category of how concerned you are for your data, but I don't think.

At any point, you yourself are taking care of your data, so it's really a debatable topic. If the consumers are more responsible, then it's great, but you can't really rely on the brands to keep privacy.

Under the domain. So yeah, it really depends. I would say yes, yes. Please go on.

**Interviewee** 40:13

But if.

**FCP A** 40:29

Yes.

"DIFFICULT TO KEEP  
DATA PRIVATE"

**Interviewee** 40:29

And so is it something different that, oh, it's a luxury. I don't think they would leak data because they would in the app.

**FCP A** 40:34

No, I think it's the same for all brands. If it's, if it's a premium brand, if it's a luxury brand or if it's just a street level brand, I think it's just the same for all because let's all agree we're talking about IT. So it's not like luxury brands are using some different softwares at the end of the rates.

It's the same technology that every other brand is using, so I don't think it really makes a difference. If I had to make a choice between, oh, my data is safe with the luxury brands and my data is not safe with the premium brands or the High Street brands, I think it's the same. So it won't really make a difference for me between the brands.

**Interviewee** 41:12

OK, FCP B, for you, our data concerns are really big thing when you're shopping.

**FCP B** 41:19

To be honest, I don't think it's a concern because our data is already being sort type of everywhere and every platform, every type of interaction, from hypermarkets to every purchase you make, it is being tracked.

To give you future suggestions or promote you to certain products. So I don't think it's much of A concern because of how common it has become. But as of luxury brands, consumers should have the option.

**Interviewee** 41:46

Yeah.

**FCP B** 41:50

To keep certain stuff private, let's say someone that's well known that wants to purchase a luxury product and doesn't want others to know about it. If he's like an influencer or with a high amount of followers. Then

"DATA BEING TRACKED"

they should be keep that data private. But in other cases for regular consumers, I think it shouldn't have a negative impact. It will mostly have a positive impact as long as they're using get for you to make more purchases from the brand. Nothing more than that.

**Interviewee** 42:21

Yeah.

Yeah. FCP C, in your mind, what do you think about data privacy concerns? Is it something that bothers you or do you just feel that my data is irrespective, anywhere on all social media platforms and like Misha and FCP B said that we already have shared our data with everyone. So it's not.

Very new thing to share it with somebody else as well, because it's just everywhere on every other side.

**FCP C** 42:54

I do feel like that, but there's still, like, a **fear of my data getting misused** by big tech because end of the day they're selling all the data to different companies.

So my like I think that if it's being used for their **internal purposes or to make their product better or to make my purchases better, my experience better, then it's fine.**

**Interviewee** 43:10

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP C** 43:25

But I just don't want it to be get to be misused because you know what AI can do to photos and all now.

**Interviewee** 43:26

Yeah.

Yes.

“FEAR OF DATA BEING MISUED”

“PERCIEVED BENEFIT – ACCEPTANCE”

**FCP C** 43:33

And it can do anything like there's a wide range of possibilities your data can be misused, so if it's not been misused, then it's fine. Yep. And if they're using it for growing the company and.

I'm giving me a good experience and then it's fine. Otherwise I would be cautious.

**Interviewee** 43:54

OK, FCP E for you data concerns. Is it a big problem or are you OK with it?

**FCP E** 44:01

For me personally, I like to believe the fact that **privacy is a myth in the world we live in right now**, although as much precautions or as much measures that you take in your life, we all do exist in a database somewhat or the other.

So for me it is not really a very big task of how to protect my privacy and identity in itself, so I wouldn't care much about it in itself.

**Interviewee** 44:17

Yeah.

Yeah.

FCP D for you is data privacy a big concern?

**FCP D** 44:33

Somehow, like, however, said that if it is being done to improve their services or, you know work on something, then probably it's fine. But yeah, like today now it is like any site you see and you want to place an orders like you have to give your address, your number, your e-mail and everything. But earlier it used to just stick to one.

Like either a e-mail or a number, but I understand it's necessary, but then as a person you obviously get scared thinking about what could happen because there are numerous cases now happening every day. But then sometimes you don't have any other option, but just to. But like probably everyone always wants.

“PRIVACY IS A MYTH”

**Interviewee** 44:55

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP D** 45:11

The safety and everything. So until and unless it is not extremely necessary, I would not feel comfortable in sharing my private information with all these.

**Interviewee** 45:20

OK.

OK, FCP F, for you, data privacy concerns.

**FCP F** 45:29

It does matter to me because you know, for example, there are a few things I would want to share willingly, and there are a few things I wouldn't want to share. For example, my face as simple as that. There's so many other things I could have done instead of, you know, sharing a picture of me.

Face for you know, whatever. But there's so many brands, you know, like the beauty brands, they require you to like, you know, show your face and then like, you know, they can, like, analyse the concerns or whatever it is. But it is possible to do that in store. So I feel like, you know, you can kind of like.

Somewhere like, you know, give your data which is like an e-mail address or like, you know, a phone number, which is fine, but you can avoid like a few other things just to be safe. So it really depends on like, what are you using it for. So like, obviously, because privacy does matter.

**Interviewee** 46:19

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 46:28

And yes, in this world, like someone, you're walking down the street, you're being like pictured, like 1000 times, basically by like random people as well. So it's not even like, oh, hey, it's just, you know, companies.

**Interviewee** 46:38  
Yeah.

**FCP F** 46:43  
Or whatever it is, just like a tourist. You know, capturing a picture. So you are there in that picture and you cannot do much about it. So it's not even just that. It's just like how willing you are to like actively put yourself out there or, you know, give your information like a card detail or like, you know, whatever it.

**Interviewee** 46:50  
Yeah.  
Yeah.

**FCP F** 47:03  
So it it's just like the **grey area right now**, but obviously as humans we would want privacy, we would want that safety from the brands. So basically the trust that, oh, hey, listen, I will charge X amount of money, but in return I will.  
**Kind of guarantee that this data will not be leaked, so that's what differs luxury from, you know, kind of like, oh, a normal brand** or like, you know, something that when you go to Zara, they're not going to like.

**Interviewee** 47:32  
Yeah.

**FCP F** 47:35  
For example, kind of build that trust. They're like, oh, hey, do you want this? Yes or no, you know? But like, when you go walk into the luxury store or whatever it is, they will make sure that this is what you want. But I will make sure that, you know, you have your reasons for it. It's not just.

“GREY AREA”

“DATA  
ASSURANCE”

**Interviewee** 47:42

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 47:55

To buy that thing. So yeah, it's like a grey area for me. Obviously it does matter, but you can't do much about it. You can do some things about it. Not much, but yeah.

**Interviewee** 48:00

OK.

OK.

How does your interaction with AI differ from that of a human sales advisor in luxury store?

**FCP A** 48:21

I think like we have all been discussing, it's very monotonous. It lacks of human connect. So and now that it has been around for a long time, it has become frustrating. So if I had to pick between AI and having.

To connect with the sales advisor, I think I would pick the sales advisor.

**Interviewee** 48:44

OK. And what kind of changes would you want to see in an AI to probably choose an AI the second time?

**FCP A** 48:55

In terms of like marketing or specifically for virtual assistants.

**Interviewee** 49:00

In in terms to like interacting with them like how you would do to a sales advisor for any reason, whether you're looking for a size, whether you're looking for a recommendation, etcetera, would what would make you opt to using an? AI instead of a sales advisor, what would you want that AI to change? That would make you use that?

**FCP A** 49:21

I think more personalised recommendations, so having that bit of AI mean it's weird, say putting that out, but having that humanised touch into AI cut let's be realistic. If we had to compare a human and an AI, the only thing that would.

Make an AI stand out would if it had better capabilities than a human. So which I think the only thing it lacks is the human touch. And of course, in order to work the AI you are the one who has to give prompts. So probably having like a personalised recommendation like I mentioned.

Before and the ability of not giving random answers and actually solving the problem. Things like that, I would say.

**Interviewee** 50:13

OK, FCP B, for you, what would be that one turning point that would make you probably use an AI rather than going to a sales advisor for help?

**FCP B** 50:17

None.

**Interviewee** 50:36

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP B** 50:38

It can be helpful in online purchasing because let's say you are looking for a certain product that you're struggling to find. So an AI chat bot can give you a shortcut to find this product.

Or find something similar to what you're looking for. So in that case it can help online, but in physical stores I don't think it can really simplify that process unless it's like a self-checkout feature.

**Interviewee** 50:55

Yeah.

"ANSWER  
CONSISTANCY"

"AI CHATBOT =  
FASTER PRODUCT  
DISCOVERY"

**FCP B** 51:09

Which prevents like interacting with the human.

**Interviewee** 51:09

Yeah.

OK, level for you. What's the one thing that you would want to change in an AI to probably use a AI for rather than a sales twice or?

**FCP C** 51:22

I think, yeah, it's **human touch and it's the personal experiences humans have.** So a sales assistant might be able to help me more because he has experienced some things working for the brand that he might be able to help me with.

And an AI wouldn't be able to because humans feel and experience things in a different way, of course, so that that past experience of him might be able to help me a lot more than any I would.

**Interviewee** 51:39

Yeah.

**FCP C** 51:55

So I think that's missing right now.

**Interviewee** 51:55

Yeah.

OK FCP Ev for you.

**FCP E** 52:03

Yeah. So I think I've answered this soldier as well. For me, AI couldn't really replace the human interaction because at the end of the day, if even we are talking about adding a human touch to the AI, that is something that we have in an impeccable and epidemic form.

**Interviewee** 52:12

"HUMAN LIVED  
EXPERIENCES &  
TOUCH"

Yeah.  
Yeah.

**FCP E** 52:22

Present right now instead of adding the same qualities to generated intelligence, we have that kind of an outlook present nowadays. So for me I would rather say nothing could really improve in AI that would make me go to a shop and interact with AI rather than the sales.

**Interviewee** 52:24

Yeah.

**FCP E** 52:42

Expose it.

**Interviewee** 52:42

No, but if it is online, not go to a shop. If it was for the website, what would one thing that you would want to change in an AI to make you talk to it? Obviously not when you're going in, so you would obviously prefer if a human standing. Why would you go towards a machine to talk to it? But if it was online?

**FCP E** 52:48

Mm-hmm.

If it's online and if I have to give an option, then it would be a human touch of course, because that is something that the websites or the any like of the digital platforms that are present do not include and that is something that why the in shop experience is preferred by a large number of.

**Interviewee** 53:16

Yeah.

**FCP E** 53:20

People that would be a turning point, maybe, maybe some different

designing options maybe I would say like, OK, that if I'm selecting a particular kind of an outfit, then maybe adding accessories to it or adding some lowers to it or something like the other to make.

Get a perfect combination so that add and subtract is something that I would prefer rather than doing myself soving through and wasting a lot of time, I would prefer the recommendations in that particular outlook, yeah.

**Interviewee** 53:42

OK.

OK, control for you. What's the one thing that you would wanna change in an AI to make you use it a bit more?

**FCP D** 54:03

Probably human touch **make it seem less robotic** because now it's just like you type something. Then you get like the exact answer. It's more or less like. Suppose when you go to a store, you ask a person, they add on things as well, which the thing would be beneficial.

But when you talk with an AI, they just give like point to point blank answers. So probably make in more detail, make them add more details and you know, just like when you're shopping, it is very important and the brand or the people working for the brand they.

**Interviewee** 54:26

Yep.

**FCP D** 54:38

Attract the client towards the brand rather than giving them points which they would not like. Probably like or. This is like a this factor like seeing stuff like you know when talking to AI chat, but sometimes they're glitches, sometimes you know.

**Interviewee** 54:42

Yeah.

"MAKE IT LESS  
ROBOTIC"

**FCP D** 54:54

So basically a human touch.

**Interviewee** 54:54

Yeah.

OK, then issue for you. What's the one thing that would probably make you use an AI?

**FCP F** 55:01

Play song.

I think it would just be **simplified language as simple is as it can be**. You know when you're just struggling between like work, family, friends, whatever and sometimes you just want to buy a few things. You just want to buy a gift, for example.

I just want the language of like the entire interaction to be very simple that hey, you know, you go from A to BB to C and then it's just like, you know, it doesn't have to be very complicated. I want something in this budget. This like, you don't have like a few philtres.

**Interviewee** 55:34

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 55:39

And then it's just done. So basically like, obviously humans would be like the preference, right? But you know, if at all I had to choose, you know, like the AI. Yeah. So I would just. Yeah.

**Interviewee** 55:50

Yeah, you do not want an exact moment to be given like more simply just said and.

**FCP F** 55:56

Yeah, just simple stuff like, hey, you know this these we have like, these

“AI NEEDS TO BE  
VERY SIMPLE”

ten options. What do you want from it? And then you know, because the more choices we have, sometimes it does get complicated because, you know you don't know.

**Interviewee** 56:08

Yeah.

**FCP F** 56:12

In the end, what you want, you know, sometimes you go to a restaurant, you know the menu is very limited and sometimes you're like, oh, hey, that's crazy. I would want to like, you know, a bigger menu. But in the end, when you have more choices, you're more confused.

So like that also leads to that. So you know, sometimes you like simple things as well, obviously depending on the product. But it's just simplified stuff like you know, I don't want at least shopping to be complicated. You know life is already complicated. Let's make something what gives you happiness easier, you know.

**Interviewee** 56:27

Yeah.

OK.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 56:47

Like I don't know, like shopping does make a lot of people happy. You know, it can just be the smallest thing ever, you know, just buying like your favourite ice cream, for example. You know, and it that the ice cream can be like 30 lbs, for example, luxury.

**Interviewee** 56:53

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yes.

**FCP F** 57:04

“NO COMPLICATION  
IN SHOPPING”

“SHOPPING MAKES  
PEOPLE HAPPY”

But you know it gives you the happiness. So I think like, just of how, like now everything's become like very complicated that oh you need to understand these jargons. You need to understand everything.

**Interviewee** 57:07

Yes, of course.

**FCP F** 57:20

Sometimes you don't need to understand anything, you just want that you know that you can afford that, and then you just go buy it like you don't need like 10,000 other complications. You just need like a simple thing that. So yeah, something on the simplified terms I would want.

**Interviewee** 57:26

Yeah.

OK.

**FCP F** 57:39

Or maybe you can have like two options. One is like a more detailed, you know, conversation and one's like a more simple so you can choose also. Yeah. Like which one you want. So not everyone has to like get the simplified version. So like you, you know, just.

**Interviewee** 57:46

Yeah.

**FCP F** 57:54

Switch between whatever you like for the time, so yeah.

**Interviewee** 57:56

Yeah, like a GPT like basing GPT or deep research, GPT.

**FCP F** 58:00

Yeah, yeah. Like kind of like, you know, you can choose. So sometimes you. Yeah, so.

**Interviewee** 58:04

Yeah. Which one do you want? Yeah. Sometimes when you're in the mood to actually shop, you might want the good.

**FCP F** 58:10

Detailed version yeah, you know like something but like kind of like understands your taste, choice preference, but sometimes you just don't need that. So I feel like the like switch maybe like you know the two options.

**Interviewee** 58:20

OK.

**FCP F** 58:25

Yeah, something I don't know if it's possible, but.

**Interviewee** 58:25

Yes.

Yeah, that's fine. Absolutely. OK. For it to be hypothetical in all forms.

**FCP F** 58:32

Yeah, it is. Yeah, so.

**Interviewee** 58:35

So the next question, because everyone's spoken a lot about human touch, so I have to ask this that when we're talking about humans, I don't think that when you walk into a store and when you move out purchasing something, I think the sales advisor would recognise.

Or would you like? I don't know. Remember your face for another week. 10 days until unless you're not a regular bio. If you're a regular bio with that same sales advisor, etcetera, then it's a different thing. But I think another point that what AI holds is that it can have your entire history from what you've purchased.

Whatever you've purchased online, and if it has like a feature or whatever

you've purchased in store, you can just add it on and then based on everything that you've purchased from scratch to say or birth dates or just random facts about you or some special occasion that you've purchased for, sometimes you know we opt for. Like a gift packing for XYZ person and write a personalised note to add it onto that packaging or whatever. So based on all that that we've done in the past, if I don't think any human would ever remember.

Our entire history of purchasing, but that with an AI is much more easier like a machine would obviously remember your things. So would that make it more personalised to you? Like just, I think, let's say 10 days before your wedding you get a note wedding. Sorry, 10 days before your birthday you get a notification.

And saying, hey, your birthday's on the way. Are you looking for a party dress or whatever? Something like that. Would that probably get you to use it a bit more like it using all your history to see what kind of outfits you like, what IO aesthetics. What's the colour palette, etcetera?

Is that something that would probably change the scenario?

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP A** 1:00:43

Brands do have your accounts where they can actually have a look at your purchase history and they do have that personal connect, but then having said that, of course it's when you are a regular customer and when you do shop with the brand a lot. So let's say you're shopping with the XYZ brand and they know your purchase history. So they can recommend you products based on your.

Purchase history. Now let's say be you. You are a new customer and you haven't really shopped from them. I still think having a human actually cater to you and listen to your needs would be better.

But of course, if you want if for the ease of having it, it would make things 10 times more easy, having an AI do those things online. But that is more related to when you're shopping online. But in terms of having.

“AI CREATES EASE”

**Interviewee** 1:01:20

Yeah.

**FCP A** 1:01:36

A notification come up 10 days before your birthday. For me personally, I'll speak for myself. I don't think it would make much of a difference because of course I already know my birthday is coming up, so I might just treat myself and shop for myself so I don't need an AI to tell me, hey, your special occasion is.

**Interviewee** 1:01:44

Yeah.

**FCP A** 1:01:56

Coming up, so maybe you wanna shop for this special occasion or things like that. Of course it can add on to that, but I don't think personally for me, it would make a lot of difference for me.

**Interviewee** 1:02:07

OK.

FCP B, what about you?

**FCP B** 1:02:13

Well, I think yes. And the point of you're not a regular customer and they can use AI to remember you. And in store, I think it's a good thing. **It can benefit the brand itself by improving its interactions with its consumers.** you're not fully depending on AI, but you're using AI as a tool to remind the staff or the salespeople about certain consumers that haven't been coming regularly. So in that case, it would be useful.

**Interviewee** 1:02:46

OK, level for you.

"CONSUMER  
INTERACTION  
BENEFITS BRANDS"

**FCP C** 1:02:49

I think it would be useful if it's doing the same for my family and friends. I do know when my birthday or what I want, but if it if it if it would help me.

**Interviewee** 1:03:00

Yeah.

**FCP C** 1:03:05

Decide on something for my example, my mother or my father. If I wanna buy something for them, and if there's some dates are coming up. And if I accidentally forget about it, it can remind me and tell me they would like this on the on this occasion. So

**Interviewee** 1:03:16

Yeah.

**FCP C** 1:03:21

That would might that would might be helpful like.

**Interviewee** 1:03:25

OK. Yeah, runner for you.

**FCP E** 1:03:30

I particularly would rather see the two different sites to it as a company or as an organisation. It is a very helpful feature because that is what brand interaction means and that is what something will increase in the particular upcoming future. But as a consumer at the very same time I'd be quite concerned with this very feature because.

**Interviewee** 1:03:42

Yeah.

**FCP E** 1:03:49

For two very reasons that I personally believe. First being, I wouldn't want

AI to access my data till the time I'm not asking for it. If I would need help I'll ask directly. I wouldn't want AI to give me help. If I'm not, you know, necessarily needing it.

**Interviewee** 1:04:05

Yeah.

**FCP E** 1:04:05

Yeah, that'd be the first thing. Secondly, I don't know about everyone else, but it was quite quantitative. Hear the opinions right now because at the very same time we're talking about privacy, we're talking about AI, and we're talking about all the information and data that are to be safeguarded and not to be shared unnecessarily.

**Interviewee** 1:04:23

No.

**FCP E** 1:04:24

At the same time, we are somewhat in the need of an AI to present US information through those dates to, you know, particularly in my opinion, that wouldn't be a very good option for a consumer. And because at the same time data leaks, are there privacy issues are there?

Other agencies are there that need the data that they don't have right now, so that would increase in more of a cybercrime in itself and you don't know how your data has been processed in because obviously you provided in a certain way that you want it to be processed. But that's not how life works. It could be used in a very different format as well.

**Interviewee** 1:04:46

Yeah.

Yes.

**FCP E** 1:05:02

To I personally believe that, yeah, about the information for As for the companies As for the brand interaction of the publicity, marketing, sales,

everything, this is quite a good feature. But as a consumer itself or a single individual, it won't be as good as it seems to be.

**Interviewee** 1:05:02

Yeah.

Thanks.

Yeah.

**FCP E** 1:05:18

Because like as.

**Interviewee** 1:05:18

Yeah, it is the issues.

**FCP E** 1:05:22

Sorry.

**Interviewee** 1:05:23

It could raise data privacy issues.

**FCP E** 1:05:26

It could, it could. It very much could, and talking about like as someone mentioned about like gifts for families, friends, everything, etcetera. That is a good option. But at the same time, there's a feature called reminders in my phone. I would rather prefer using that for buying gifts instead of telling AI about the whole geography. And you know, history about my family, that OK, this is.

There this is there, they say both there and everything, because that is where the privacy actually works. And actually, you know, the whole scenario comes in place there.

**Interviewee** 1:05:55

OK, FCP D for you.

**FCP D** 1:05:59

Yeah.

For me, probably I think it's the same what everyone has said, but still I would not want them to.

**Interviewee** 1:06:08

1.

**FCP D** 1:06:10

You know, like something **privacy nowadays is something which is very it's at a risk everywhere.** So until and unless I am not giving permission to use it, I would not like it. And as Weber one panda said, like Weber said that he would want reminders and Panda said you could put it on the phone.

**Interviewee** 1:06:11

What?

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP D** 1:06:29

It's like I feel, you know, if it's someone you're buying a gift for, that person must be really close. If you're deciding to buy something from a luxury brand for them. So you won't exactly need a reminder or someone to remind you if they're that person that you're gifting them, something like that, you can just do it. And like the whole part of giving a gift is like a personalised thing.

**Interviewee** 1:06:30

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP D** 1:06:49

I would not want someone to do it for me, and in all this I feel there's a breach of privacy and you know, it just happened. Like once you give in and then it's like they might use it for something else and then it's just downhill from there.

"PRIVACY RISKS"

**Interviewee** 1:06:53

Yeah.

But even if you're not giving dates, let's say if it's just your backdated history or something like that, then you would still have an issue.

**FCP D** 1:07:15

And it's fine. Like, suppose if they're seeing my what I've bought and giving me based on that, yeah, then all that's fine. But like adding or giving extra information just to get something, I feel that's not right.

**Interviewee** 1:07:29

OK FCP F for you.

**FCP F** 1:07:34

I thought can you repeat the question because it's been long.

**Interviewee** 1:07:37

Yeah. So I asked that how a sales advisor would not know what you've purchased in the past. And as soon as you walk in, nobody knows that you're going to be coming today that, oh, they've checked and have a looked at it. It's basically you walk in and you have that conversation and all that. So for that.

**FCP F** 1:07:54

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 1:07:56

AI using your bad data history to kind of understand and as we all know, it's most of the brand platforms have now become an Omni channel. So whatever you shop online is again a data with whatever you shopped in the store, so.

Do you think recommendations based on your past history? Because that's something that only AI could do and not an associate would know even if they have the history. But I don't think at that given point they

would leave you and go and probably check your history. They would answer it as an in the flow.

So.

Do you think AI would be helpful to, you know, get recommendations more personalised to your previous purchases and what you've shopped, what you've liked, what you've purchased season Wise? Maybe category wise, what you like shopping more? Is that something that would be better in an AI as compared to like a human?

**FCP F** 1:08:53

So like how we all like patterns. We all have kind of a fixed style, your style kind of changes after a certain situation, but usually you know you have like a few years at least that you know you have a very similar style and it doesn't.

**Interviewee** 1:09:00

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:09:11

Doesn't change very frequently. It's not, oh, every month you're wearing, for example, all of like the pastel colours, and suddenly you're shifting to like, all of the neon colours, for example. You know, it's a very if you are a minimalist person, you will want things in and about.

Kind of that aesthetic. So obviously, **you know when AI is there, I feel like it's more easier** because it's more pattern based. It's more that hey, you know, like you previously purchased just shirts. So it kind of knows that, oh, maybe you're looking for a shirt.

**Interviewee** 1:09:29

Yes. Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:09:49

You know, somewhere like or more like formal wear. Not just sure. But like, you know, because kind of that is just, like understands what your

"AI CREATES EASE"

requirements are, you know and in compared to like as a person you would have to explain everything that oh, hey, I'm looking for like a formal.

**Interviewee** 1:09:49

Yeah.

Yes.

**FCP F** 1:10:06

You know, outfit or whatever. Obviously it really depends again on the company, like the brand, the product or whatever it is. But yes, patterns, we do like patterns like you know we do like for example if you like.

You know more of like the minimalist style you would not want to be shown all of like the bold prints or whatever, like somewhere you don't want to waste that time. You just want to, you know, have it. And obviously that's only when you know you've purchased with the brand by like.

**Interviewee** 1:10:22

Yes.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:10:54

It just makes everything in one place where other like, you know, you go to a store, you talk to this person for maybe 10 minutes. You explain them the style and then they're like, oh, hey, I'm not going to come in tomorrow. So like, if you need help, you have to explain the entire scenario again to like someone else.

**Interviewee** 1:11:11

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:11:13

So with like information just stored and it's not anything personal information, it's more about like your style and maybe somebody or budget, but that's all about it. So like privacy in that matter does not matter. So it's just more like, you know, that's my style, that's my preferences.

**Interviewee** 1:11:23

Yes, that's.

**FCP F** 1:11:31

That's my colour tone. If you like. You know, I just want these recommendations. I feel like, yeah, it does help to like, you know, to some extent at least where you're just shopping for.

You know a particular thing or like whatever.

**Interviewee** 1:11:52

OK. Last two questions remaining. So let's go with the second last one. In what ways do you think AI in luxury should evolve to match your expectations?

**FCP A** 1:12:09

I think being able to communicate the brand values cause of course, if you're talking about the luxury fashion industry, it involves a lot of heritage because that is what the luxury brands have built their business upon. If we pick out anything, Dior has its own heritage. Louis Vuitton has its own heritage.

**Interviewee** 1:12:18

Yeah.

**FCP A** 1:12:28

All of these brands come from different brand values, different brand communications, so being able to cater to these values and being able to communicate these values specifically if you're only talking about AI because of course the sales advisors everyday do that. So being able to do

“BRAND VALUE &  
HERITAGE  
COMMUNICATION”

“BRAND VALUE  
INTEGRATION IN AI”

that as an AI think that would really help AI marketing in the field of luxury fashion brands.

**Interviewee** 1:12:45

Yeah.

OK, FCP B, what do you think?

**FCP B** 1:13:00

Well, sorry. Can you repeat the question again so I can phrase it in a certain way.

**Interviewee** 1:13:07

In, in what ways do you think AI should evolve to match your expectations?

**FCP B** 1:13:17

To be honest, it can evolve in terms of offline purchasing because I think currently an online purchasing AI is already being used throughout of beneficial points. I can't remember the name of the brand. One of the brands even incorporated AI.

And to the way people navigate, **navigate the product online so it's easier to view the product 3D and 360 views in an easier way.** But as of offline they can incorporate.

AI next to certain products to view like the previous collection or to show the history of that product or the like the same product from the year before. So they can convince you that this certain product has heritage.

So it can be beneficial for the brand as of marketing purposes.

**Interviewee** 1:14:15

OK, level for you. What in what way should AI evolve to match your expectations?

**FCP C** 1:14:21

I think I do agree with FCP B. It could provide you with the details of its history. For example, **if I'm talking about a watch, you could tell me how**

“INTERACTIVE  
VIEWING FOR  
PRODUCT  
NAVIGATION”

the watch was made, who designed it.

Like what happened after it was released and all if it had any big changes in society that might be really helpful. Yeah. And the storytelling aspect or in in the marketing aspect.

**Interviewee** 1:14:46

This retelling aspect.

**FCP C** 1:14:53

And if I'm using it for myself, I think just the like. I don't think it needs a feature, but it just being able to understand what I'm saying. If that can be fixed, then I think more people will be able to use it.

**Interviewee** 1:15:08

Yeah.

OK FCP Ev, what for you?

**FCP E** 1:15:15

Yeah, actually that's discussed about the watches like luxury doesn't, you know, it really retail to only clothing. Watches like being the switch watches being at all the mass big game being at any other such heritage watches it comes with a lot of brand value and more like they are like an.

**Interviewee** 1:15:15

What do you want?

**FCP E** 1:15:33

Collectible NFT kind of a thing. That OK? You get it? It's not just a necessary it's more like an investment. So like, for example, if I take an example of stock X being a company that is in UK as well, it shows you the latest bid, the last bid, the last selling price.

**Interviewee** 1:15:39

Yeah.

“PRODUCT  
STROYTELLING”

**FCP E** 1:15:50

The you know the increase in the pricing or the decrease in the pricing, so that is something I would prefer air for because if I'm going for luxury, it does not. It does not just you know incapitate the information till the time I'm buying it, it's for beyond as well because it goes through generation, it goes through ages and everything.

**Interviewee** 1:16:06

Well.

**FCP E** 1:16:10

Yeah. If I'm going for something like a watch was Swiss watch. If I'm going for something that is a collectible in a luxury line, I would prefer the whole, you know, the finances about it as well. Whether how much it was being sold for, how much it is right now. How much would it go in the?

**Interviewee** 1:16:23

What?

**FCP E** 1:16:27

Near future, if it could be predicted and whether the collectible value for it would increase or is it decreasing and what's the, you know, the like the economics to it. Yeah, that is something that, you know, really matters to me. Moreover, I think as I've mentioned plenty of times the personal stylist aspect of the AI that is very easy to access. As well, and that is something that is somewhat added to some of the companies. Not everyone, but yeah, that is something that could really factor in AI being in the fashion industry in itself. I think that as well and mainly yeah, that the point about the whole history and everyone has mentioned the history of the product.

**Interviewee** 1:16:53

Yeah.

**FCP E** 1:17:07

And everything. So the economics is something that I would be looking into if I'm going for something much collectible.

**Interviewee** 1:17:14

OK Ashwin, for you.

**FCP D** 1:17:17

Sorry, can you repeat the question?

**Interviewee** 1:17:20

I'd say how would you want AI in luxury to evolve to match your expectations?

**FCP D** 1:17:29

Probably like I wouldn't want more options of, you know, like how we can just by seeing online see how it would look on us something like that. Like I think some brands they offer that for makeup nowadays.

That you can see the shade, how it would look like a lipstick shade or something. So like things like that. But the thing with that is also like they do it with you, turn on your camera and do it. So it is kind of like you're giving in to, like, showing your face and stuff. But at the same time, sometimes when you just don't wanna go and do it. So like probably something like that for clothes.

**Interviewee** 1:17:44

Yeah, but.

**FCP D** 1:18:04

Obviously for shoes it's not possible because schools have a fit in everything, but for clothes it's still. Or maybe you know, like this is a way too much. I think it will be too much evolution for this, but like probably you know like how.

**Interviewee** 1:18:07

Yeah.

**FCP D** 1:18:20

A particular bag. If you see it or how would you need to style yourself to go with the bag, like something like that? How they would want to style you with their products, like something we could go something like that.

**Interviewee** 1:18:26

Yeah.

OK, then issue for you. What would you want to like, evolve your AI to match your expectations?

**FCP F** 1:18:36

So.

For me it would be like **I would want categories into like what I'm looking for**. Is it so you know how sometimes as I've already mentioned it, it really depends on like the purpose of that purchase.

So for me it really depends on you know if for example, in the end it's makeup, OK. So our beauty, skin care, whatever it is. So in those I would want like a particular feature or but you know when it's.

Coming to like clothing, it's a different thing. So basically more like purpose driven. So how AI could like you could you could just have options of like you know five to seven questions and then you can like choose of like what you're looking for and then based on that like you got like customizations.

**Interviewee** 1:19:23

OK.

**FCP F** 1:19:38

So because sometimes you don't want recommendations, you know, sometimes you want accessories attached to it. As you know already

“CATEGORY BASED  
SUGGESTIONS”

mentioned, like it depends on like what you're looking for. So kind of making that.

**Interviewee** 1:19:52

Yes.

**FCP F** 1:19:54

Into more like a segregated thing of like, do you want recommendations or do you want, you know, like additional accessories to it or do you want, I don't know, just some kind of like validation as well. So sometimes we do require that obviously that's not possible like.

**Interviewee** 1:20:12

Yes.

**FCP F** 1:20:13

No one's gonna compliment you, but validation based on, you know, like the colour of your hair, maybe or like, you know, your skin tone or like your body type. So kind of those it cannot be like real life compliments obviously but somewhere like.

**Interviewee** 1:20:15

Me.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:20:31

You know to be like, hey, you know this colour would suit you or based on the occasion, you know, so maybe like it's a bit complicated in in the form, but it really so some companies are like some brands can do that depending on like the product. So it would be better to have.

**Interviewee** 1:20:32

Yes, we can.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:20:50

Like some kind of like categories where you kind of choose what you want at the moment, because in general AI is just not asking for help. It's so much more than you know because like other people can help you as well, it's not, you know, just AI helping you figure what your style is or like, you know what you.

Want your friends or family can do the same, so it is just more kind of.

Compartmentalised where you like. Oh, hey, I want this now. Next and next and next, you know? So somewhere like more organised. If I would say.

**Interviewee** 1:21:19

Yes.

OK.

**FCP F** 1:21:30

But yeah, that that would be something I would like look forward to it.

**Interviewee** 1:21:34

OK.

**FCP F** 1:21:35

Yeah, the comfort of like having it.

**Interviewee** 1:21:40

OK, now last question. How would you describe the ideal interaction with AI from one of your favourite luxury brands? It can be completely hypothetical, it can be something that's not at the moment or not seen happening as well. It can be hypothetical.

Particle. But what's that ideal? One thing that you would want an AI assistant to have from one of your favourite luxury brands?

**FCP A** 1:22:08

In terms of the online space, I would say **being emotionally resonant,**

being able to communicate clearly, no monotonous language, being spot on my recommendations. Now that we are talking about hypothetical scenarios, I would love that.

**Interviewee** 1:22:15

OK.

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP A** 1:22:26

In in terms of offline retail spaces, speaking for myself, I personally love new experiences, so something that an AI could offer that hasn't been done before in the retail spaces we're talking about the offline spaces and the offline environment. So I would love that maybe like an innovation in the retail spaces to make lives easy. So, yeah, that'd be my answer to that.

**Interviewee** 1:22:55

OK, FCP B, for you, what would be the ideal interaction with any assistant? Firstly for online that that could be anything and then you can share one for offline.

**FCP B** 1:23:07

I would agree on the point of recommendations, definitely for online platforms, what comes most importantly is recommendations tracking my previous purchases, knowing what type of products I'm looking for so it makes you spend less time looking for. Certain products making it easy for you to mix and match and as of in store definitely adding to. Also the experience of customer. Anything that would make. Even integrating human and AI touch can be beneficial like we spoke about before, which can be used to remind the salesperson about you. This can be beneficial so it doesn't have to be a fully AI feature, but AI can enhance human experiences as well.

“ANTHROMORPHIC  
QUALITES”

“QUICK  
CONVERSIONS”

“BLEND OF HUMAN &  
AI”

**Interviewee** 1:23:59

OK, wherever for you. What's that ideal interaction? It can be hypothetical. It's not supposed to be something that's ongoing or you see it coming in the future. It can be hypothetical as well. Describe that ideal interaction with an EI assistant from one of your favourite luxury brands.

Yeah.

**FCP C** 1:24:20

I think for me it would be obviously giving me recommendations if they have something new or if it's something related to something I would like. For example, there was Wimbledon last month.

So if it's rated with that or a golf tournament, then I'd be more inclined towards buying that. And if you can give me sizing options for men, I'm talking about men I don't know about women, but for men, if I can tell that AI that.

**Interviewee** 1:24:49

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP C** 1:24:54

Look from this plant I wear size this.

And they can tell me. OK, so if you wanna buy this, we recommend if you wanna lose fit, then go for this size. If you want a slim fit then go for this size. So if you can give me sizing recommendations that would be good.

**Interviewee** 1:25:12

OK FCP Ev, for you. Oh, sorry. FCP A has to say it before FCP Ev continues. Yeah, go ahead.

**FCP A** 1:25:20

Sorry, just to add to what FCP C mentioned, I completely 100% agree with that because that is that one thing that I face the issue about every time I'm confused with the size. I always have to ask chat GPP, hey, I wear this

“FIT  
RECOMMENDATION

size from this brand. So what would you recommend in terms of the size from brand B?  
So yeah, that is one thing that I face a lot of issue with, yes.

**Interviewee** 1:25:40

It's.

Yeah, FCP Ev, your answer, what would be your ideal interaction with me, I assistant?

**FCP E** 1:25:52

So yeah, as everyone mentioned, the recommendations, the sizing is a very big problem because I'm someone who doesn't like a baggy fit. I'm someone who goes for the perfect fit. So yeah, that's something I would be looking into. That's something that would suit my body physique in particular.

**Interviewee** 1:26:01

Yeah.

**FCP E** 1:26:10

In terms of clothing, yeah, that is the only thing I feel that's missing out is that the prototype of like if something like, if I don't want to put in my information, my photographs, a prototype about something that looks around me and, you know, shows me the exact same fitting of the same.

**Interviewee** 1:26:10

Yeah.

**FCP E** 1:26:25

Yeah.

And in terms of, as I mentioned, like if I'm going for something collectible, if I'm going for a Swiss watch, if I'm going for all the mass or something like that, I would like the whole, you know, the whole geography around it that OK. For example, if it was built for 500 at the time, it's being sold for 1500, it could go to 3000 and that is something I would like to invest in

"FACE SIZE ISSUES"

because for me, luxury. Is more like an investment in myself. So yeah, that is something I look forward to if it if that would be possible that I will be happily buying much more stuff and you know wasting my money.

**Interviewee** 1:26:49

Yeah.

OK, Kashi, for you. What would be the ideal interaction with an AI assistant?

**FCP D** 1:27:06

Probably just like I've said before, the **size issues** like someone like where I could put my exact measurements and **I would get a tailored response that you know if you whatever type of fit I want.** And sometimes it happens that you know, like certain clothes they fit you well from the top but they're better loose and vice versa.

So something which would tell me if that would suit my body type or not just by if I could just explain how I'm rather than sharing my photos and everything that and probably like I said earlier the how I'd want like styling advice.

**Interviewee** 1:27:24

Yes.

Yeah.

**FCP D** 1:27:39

So like suppose I purchase maybe a blazer and it could tell what kind of you know, like if I should wear a turtleneck or maybe I should wear AT shirt or a polo inside, something like that.

**Interviewee** 1:27:43

Yeah.

**FCP D** 1:27:53

Yeah.

“SIZE ISSUES”

“TAILORED  
RESPENSES”

**Interviewee** 1:27:53

OK. Lastly, FCP F with you, what would be your ideal interaction with an AI? Assistant.

**FCP F** 1:28:00

So it would be something **more convenient or like just making things easier**. So I would want one kind of website where I put in my existing details of like you know the things I currently use in like the luxury.

You know, aspect or whatever it is or like and then I get recommendations kind of not based on trends but something what is actually beneficial for me because you know like.

**Interviewee** 1:28:33

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:28:35

If you have TikTok you will have like you know 10 products of like you know a similar kind of like just like a very minute difference. So but obviously as a consumer I cannot buy everything.

**Interviewee** 1:28:50

Yes, of course.

**FCP F** 1:28:50

No matter, I would like to buy, you know, maybe like 5 creams or whatever it is from, like the best brands or whatever, but that's not possible. So to kind of limit choices as well because.

**Interviewee** 1:29:04

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:29:06

You know when you have endless choices, it's not kind of possible, but

“CONVENIENCE AND EASY”

you would want to try right as well. Like if I'm using like a lipstick from Gucci for example. But I would want to try something from Ms also because they both do like.

**Interviewee** 1:29:08

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:29:21

You know, like the cosmetic collection or whatever it is, but it's not possible to own everything. So, you know, based on something what you already have and you know kind of giving you similar options. Yes, you can obviously.

**Interviewee** 1:29:35

Yep.

**FCP F** 1:29:36

Try something new, you know, like go and like, you know, out of your, you know, common things. But. But usually I feel like it's so much more like time saving when you have like because somewhere like.

**Interviewee** 1:29:50

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:29:53

As an AI, what? But the thing is like to make life simpler, you know? So that's the purpose of it. So you know when it's more like there are like 20 brands when you walk into Harrods, you are spoiled for choices. But in the end, you can't get everything.

**Interviewee** 1:29:59

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:30:12

So you know when that's the thing, you know, to kind of like somewhere

concise and be like, hey, you know, if this is your skin type, buy these things. You know, maybe these brands are not good for your skin type no matter how high or how.

**Interviewee** 1:30:13

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:30:29

I don't know. Like, yeah, trendy. Not even trendy, but like how maybe luxurious they feel. Or like, you know, the brand or like it's very popular amongst millionaires, billionaires or whatever, but it's not for your skin.

**Interviewee** 1:30:29

Change, yeah.

**FCP F** 1:30:44

You know it's always possible and these things are more possible in like the skin care hair care industry, obviously for clothes it doesn't matter much because the material you can like obviously read and like decide but it's more like.

**Interviewee** 1:30:44

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:31:00

On the beauty you know side rather than like the shoes or like the clothing or the bags, you know because jewellery also you know for example like I recently saw this thing by like in Tiffany and Company you can like.

**Interviewee** 1:31:07

You get.

**FCP F** 1:31:17

Kind of like try the rings like virtually, but obviously because it's an engagement ring brand, you wouldn't want to just see it online and buy it. You would want to go with your partner. You don't have the entire experience of like choosing the colour cut, whatever it is.

**Interviewee** 1:31:20

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:31:36

But because it's been so common to integrate AI into everything, sometimes it loses the essence of the brand. Like you know, it's an engagement ring. It cannot be just bought online, you know, like, yes, it's convenient to buy it online. It shouldn't be bought online, you know.

**Interviewee** 1:31:42

Yes.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:31:56

So obviously it really depends on you know how you're using it, but the ideal interaction would be more related to like you know things which don't hold sentimental value. You know, I would not want a brand.

**Interviewee** 1:32:09

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:32:13

Like Tiffany graph to just be like, oh, hey, online five options 5 colours. Just choose it. You'll get it at home like. No, I don't want that. I want to walk into the store feeling all like, giddy and emotional being like, hey, this is something.

“NON-SENTIMENTAL  
PURCHASES”

**Interviewee** 1:32:20

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:32:28

Which is meaningful. I don't want to just buy it offline and being like, hey, it's at my convenience. No, I want to go the extra mile. And like you don't put in the effort. So like, want my partner doing that, whatever it is, so.

**Interviewee** 1:32:42

Yeah.

**FCP F** 1:32:44

Yeah, I'm not gonna buy my own drink, but so you're not, like, getting the idea of like, it really depends on, like the product in the end. So yeah.

**Interviewee** 1:32:47

Yeah.

Yeah, perfect. We are to the end of this focus group interview and thank you so much. All of y'all some of them were very short. Notice that issue is very short notice, but thank you so much for taking the time out and doing this. I know.

**FCP F** 1:32:58

Project.

**Interviewee** 1:33:12

Especially for FCP A, FCP B, FCP C, and me, we're all been doing our dissertations and we're in the middle of that. And two, you know, spare two hours. It's not easy because there are ten other things going on for us as well. And I completely understand and even for FCP E, FCP D. They've been back home and again to remove two hours for something like this. It's not easy, but thank you so much. And FCP F, thank you for agreeing to do this very last minute for me. And thank you all for your time and it's been amazing and very insightful as well. And thank you so much. It

“BEYOND  
CONVENIENCE”


would add on a lot to my research, it's done, but please do not forget to sign the consent forms for me. Otherwise it's of no use to me, so I will share that over to you by tonight and then you can take the time to send it back to me, yeah. Thank you so much.

FCP A 1:34:00

Perfect. Thank you.

Interviewee stopped transcription

**MEMBER – CHECKING**

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>
<b>FCP - A</b>	
<b>FCP - B</b>	Kareem Shaaban
<b>FCP - C</b>	
<b>FCP - D</b>	
<b>FCP - E</b>	
<b>FCP - F</b>	Tchape

## **SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS**

## Industry Participant A (IP A)

**Interviewee** 0:03

Recording has been started.

**IP A** 0:05

So it's oh, it's Friday the 1st of August. I can't believe that my name is IP A. What else did you need me to say?

**Interviewee** 0:14

Participant #A.

**IP A** 0:15

Participant A

**Interviewee** 2:24

Thank you. Thank you so much. So, let's begin the interview. Can you describe me how your brand currently uses or is exploring AI tools for digital communication?

**IP A** 2:36

Yeah, and I what I wanted to just say here as well, just to give you a bit of context at Capri, to be honest with you, **we're at very kind of early stages when it comes to AI.** We do use it in certain forms.

But believe it or not, as a huge luxury brand, you would think we'd perhaps be a little bit more ahead of the field, but we've got kind of two, I guess there's two kind of areas. We've got our external which I call like E COM, you know websites, all of that, they're a little bit more ahead.

And over the last few years, they've obviously looked at things like **chat bot if to help support their customer inquiries.** So that's kind of a little bit more ahead of the game when it comes to internal and I guess where I'm a little bit more involved.

We have actually, and I'm not directly in the pilot, but we're currently piloting a few different **AI tools that will help explore how we can create content** for whether it be our employees or whether it be customers.

And a big push for that was obviously down to, well, number one, we're very behind when it comes to kind of you know, technical things, but also **Gen Z are a huge focus** for us and I'm sure we'll talk about this at length during this meeting that.

**Gen Z expect certain things and a certain level, so that was kind of the reason why should we be moving a bit faster? We absolutely should.**

- Invivo
- Emotional
- Initial
- Causation

"EARLY ADOPTION"

"CHATBOT  
SUPPORT FOR  
HELP"

"AI TOLS FOR  
CONTENT  
CREATION"

"GEN Z FOCUS"

Gen Z expect certain things and a certain level, so that was kind of the reason why should we be moving a bit faster? We absolutely should.

But that I guess that's kind of the main objective again at least in my world as to why we're exploring it.

**Interviewee** 4:29

So like you said that Gen Z is your main motivation, say to explore more digital communication, because they're the ones are demanding it a lot and it are there any other motivations apart from them that that, you know, makes you drive through?

**IP A** 4:38

Yep.

Yeah, I think another one, of course is efficiency. We, as you can imagine in a business like ours, we have a lot of process and.

Generally speaking, we have less people, but we need to do more work and there's more deadlines and there's more targets. So another way of looking at what our processes are is a huge driver for this because like I said, we're believe it or not quite.

Behind when it comes to kind of technical things, whether it be communication platforms to how we control, how we buy product and what I mean by byproduct, I mean the buying team when they pick the product for the season. So, a lot of.

A lot of that is a driving factor because.

We can't just be working from word documents and Excel spreadsheets for the rest of our lives, so that's that. I guess that's, I guess our second driver really.

**Interviewee** 5:45

Yeah.

So like you mentioned that you use AI for a lot of your back end processes just to make it more efficient to make it more easy in your opinion were like AI few years ago, Was it solely for the

“GEN Z EXPECTATIONS”

“PURPOSE OF EFFICIENCY”

“TOOLING GAP”

purpose of back end and is now coming towards front end to solve more customer queries or more service-related community.

**IP A** 6:10

No. In actual fact it was the other way around, really. We. I definitely think our customer experience, ecom teams have been a lot more in it. For a long time, whilst we're not, you know, all singing and dancing AI, they definitely were looking at that kind of way before us. In actual fact, when it comes to kind of internal, it's quite a relative. It's a relatively new topic. I would, I would say even.

The last 18 months, it's only really been taken seriously because we actually it's we're realising that it's not just, you know, the external, it's about actually what happens within the business as well. So for sure other that the external teams were a lot more, they're ahead of the game.

More than we were.

**Interviewee** 7:08

I mean, I know you're more into the internal part, but would you know that? Why was the external team so keen on using it? What kind of benefits or in what? What problems were they solving like through a chat bot? What problems or what issues were being solved or in what?

**IP A** 7:23

Yeah. From what I from what I gather and like, obviously I'm not fully in that department. It was, it was definitely down to helping the

“E-COMM TEAMS  
ARE MORE AHEAD  
IN CUSTOMER  
CENTRIC  
APPROACH”

speed of how we can of helping customers. I believe they have targets of like.

**IP A** 7:42

How many minutes it's supposed to take, you know, to help someone with a query, and these could be queries like you know a size of a product or my products faulty or my product hasn't turned up or like it could be anything of that really. And we needed to service our customers faster and of course.

A luxury brand. So what do you expect when it comes to a luxury brand? You expect luxury service, so we needed to put ourselves out there to be confident that we would say that we are giving a luxury service, whether it be online in store.

**IP A** 8:19

You know, so that was a huge part of it. We needed to be able to service our customers quicker and give them that better customer experience really.

**Interviewee** 8:31

Coming to that, as we were talking about Gen Z being the new group and everyone every brand is trying to target the Gen Z first nowadays. So, have you encountered any challenges or any insights in regards to the emotional connection that they have towards?

“SPEED OF HELPING CUSOMTERS”

“SERVICE CUSTOMERS FAST”

“LUXURY SERVICE ACROSS ALL PLATOFRMS”

**IP A** 8:53

So what I just to say like I said at the beginning, obviously we are at early stages earlier stages than perhaps other people. But however I, I do feel like I've got quite good insight into the industry and things I've heard.

As well, so I will sometimes go down that route in case I'm you know, we I haven't experienced anything. But one thing I will say is I think with AI what we've definitely seen and what I've heard and what people have told me is there's a real risk of it feeling really transactional.

And Gen Z expect things that are emotionally engaging that they can be personalised to them, so if it feels like there's a lack of emotion or you know.

Connection. They won't like it. So something that that's obviously what I think about in my world when I'm where my me and my team are writing things for our internal customer, our employees which you know.

A lot of them are Gen Z, so we really need to think about like what that means to us as well. So, I would definitely say that's a huge factor when it comes to like challenges that whilst we want to get something that you know is.

Fast and it's going to help us, you know, achieve way more. It can't just be a robot because people won't connect to it, so it needs to have our tone of voice and it needs to feel like they're talking to someone that, you know, that would be sat in the office so and that. And that can be hard. So that's definitely, I definitely.

**Interviewee** 10:25

Yeah.

“TRANSACTIONAL RISK”

“EMOTIONALLY ENGAGING AND PERSONLAISED”

“CANNOT BE A ROBOT, IT WON'T CONNECT”

“BRAND TONE AND ANTHRPOMORPHIC EXPEIRENCE”

**IP A** 10:38  
Challenge.

**Interviewee** 10:41

I was just coming to that, that in your experience, do customers respond to the tone and personalization features of AI assistance? If any example, can you share that like would like you said that they would want to talk to somebody as if they're standing in a store.

**IP A** 10:57

Yeah. I mean it's I guess the only AI assistance we really have I guess is the chat bot we have on our website. But I remember when that was launched, it was good four or five years ago now, there was a lot of talk at the beginning around people got frustrated with it.

Because it's a bit like I always use like Barclays Bank as an example, when you constantly **just go round and round in circles with the same question and it gets so frustrating** and then you just want to be able to pick up the phone and phone someone, don't you? So there's a lot of work that had been done to make that experience not happen essentially.

**IP A** 11:37

Because it was hard not for it to feel like a robot or, you know, you. You'd have a very, very specific question and it just wouldn't be able to answer it, whereas that's not the case now. So, I, yeah, I think that's that, that can be a turn off as well for people.

**Interviewee** 11:56

Yeah. So, what elements did you change in the previous one to get that more fixed, say less robotic?

“GOING IN  
CIRCLES LED TO  
FRUSTRATION”

**IP A** 12:06

In all honesty, I wouldn't say I know too much about that. I can certainly find out for you if you'd like me to go away and find out for it, but because I kind of wasn't involved in all of that, it was, you know, the E Comm and customer experience team. I don't know what they did. I know.

I know they had a lot of feedback groups, they had, they reached out to customers, and they got a lot of insight from them. But I don't know what they did specifically to help change that. But like I said, I can find out for you.

**Interviewee** 12:41

Yes.

**IP A** 12:44

If you'd like me to.

**Interviewee** 12:44

That's it. Based on Gen Z's expectations around tone platform choice that they're using, their response towards it are they taken into consideration in, Capri Holdings, which is such a huge luxury house in the way.

**IP A** 12:49

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 13:03

People are designing the customer communication.

**IP A** 13:07

For sure, in principle, yes. I mean we aim, and this is internal and external. We aim for tone responsiveness. So, we want to be able to respond to someone as quickly as possible.

And transparency as well, and that's trying to give it as much

“USER FEEDBACK PROVIDED INSIGHTS”

“RESPOND QUICKLY AND TRANSPARENTLY”

information as possible. So, people get the full picture. Obviously, we don't have loads and loads of AI tools that are not all completely widely used, but the expectation is that they would always shape our communication.

So I would absolutely say that you should. **You should really be getting the same experience if you're searching or If you're talking to someone via our website to how we communicate within our internal brand as well.**

**Interviewee** 13:59

Yeah, that's amazing. And what types of data protection measures does the brand take to ensure that the information is not misused in any form?

**IP A** 14:11

Again, again, I'm not like completely technical, but we're **GDPR** compliant and we're very, very serious about that as well. We've done lots of communication about that internally and externally and any tool that we.

Bring into the business whether it be AI or anything, would go through **really a rigorous review, especially with IT. We have the biggest IT like checklist.** If anything comes into the business that's.

Electronic or a platform. Whatever. Oh, my God. It's about 50 pages long. So, it we're very, very watertight when it comes to that kind of thing. GDPR is obviously something we discuss all the time.

**Interviewee** 15:19

Yeah, that's great. But do you think are all generations more

“CONSISTENT  
BRAND  
EXPERIENCE”

“GDPR  
COMPLIANCE”

“SECURITY  
ASSURANCE”

concerned about data protection or is transit a little bit different or it's all the same that now nowadays everyone's been very careful about how data is being used?

**IP A** 15:35

To be honest with you, I would say people care about it more for sure. I also think unfortunately there's a I think since the pandemic as well, there's been a lot more fraudulent things been like happening. I don't know about you, but I often get a random text message from someone saying they're my mum and they want to, and I need to give the money. I just so I do think Gen Z and everyone in general.

I think **it's way more important now.**

**Interviewee** 16:12

Yeah, yeah. After I think there are a lot of there have been a lot of digital theft as well and that's got people concerned. If so as you know that my dissertations on AI, virtual assistants and how they can be used on the e-commerce platform.

**Interviewee** 16:33

To again create a more store space. Kind of a thing. What luxury brands are known for is the luxury service that we get in our store and how they can show a same kind of feel even on the e-commerce platforms.

**IP A** 16:47

Mm-hmm.

**Interviewee** 16:48

So can you walk me through how AI assistance can influence the luxury shopping journey in your experience?

“DATA  
PROTECTION IS  
WAY MORE  
IMPORTANT NOW”

**IP A** 16:55

Yeah, I think from what I've seen and certainly like what I like. And then also you know, hearing about it from colleagues at work, I think one of the one of the main things for me is that they can really help enhance the experience, like smarter recommendations or fast access to like styling, I feel like we're always just all so busy all the time, aren't we? So, I know that that's been a massive factor and it kind of gives. A more premium personal touch really, because again, its kind of, you know, it feels like you're talking to someone face to face. So, I definitely think that kind of thing has been a huge influence on what we've wanted to help, like what we wanted to design, but also that then means that that filters into other experiences. When we think about how we serve in store or how we communicate within the internal like corporate offices. Um, we want to be able to kind of give people faster access and easy ways to understand. So yeah. So, I think that that that's a massive factor of how it influences.

**Interviewee** 18:14

And to create this kind of home experience. What do you think will be the biggest challenge? Like for example, like technical issues, cultural issues, organisation issues, what do you think would be the biggest like a stone to overcome?

**IP A** 18:30

Yeah, I would say I think the thing that we struck well this is I guess my personal opinion. I think what I would say could be a challenge is culturally luxury retail is very, very Human led like you, it's usually, you know, going into a store and it's speaking to your favourite sales associate and getting a glass of champagne and all of that. So, I think technically you've got to kind

“SMART & RECOMMENDATIONS OR STYLING CAN LEAD TO CUSTOMER ENHANCEMENT”

“PREMIUM PERSONAL TOUCH”  
“HUMAN FEEL”

“HUMAN LED”

of make sure that you're ensuring that brand tone and emotional like connection is still there.

So I think that I'm sure would be a challenge for lots of different brands because ultimately, you're doing it to speed up. You know your service, but you've got to keep the essence and that you know, like the values of what you really are as a brand. So, I'd imagine that would be a big challenge.

**Interviewee** 19:36

And like you said, my next question exactly regarding that, how do you try to reflect luxury and brand values in digital AI systems because again, like you said that it's so culturally inheritant that how do you try to you know inculcate those values in in a merely robotics?

**Interviewee** 19:56

System, no matter how much you try to make it human like.

**IP A** 20:01

Yeah, I would say, well, really, the assistant should really reflect the brand's, you know, like refined voice, really and be they need to be emotionally intelligent essentially, which is, I guess, all of the work that has to be done, you know, in the back end, before anything's like that is launched because.

Like visual and tonal consistency needs like needs to be apparent like so you kind of got to get your brand values within the AI system which I know a lot of work gets put into that like beforehand. But so yeah, so I think.

Yeah.

It's what we keep saying. It feels like you've got to go. They would be talking to me like face to face if, if they could so.

“BRAND ESSENCE  
AND VOICE”

“BRAND VALUES”

“BRAND ALIGNED  
AI”

**Interviewee** 20:47

Are you?

Just are you currently tracking how Gen Z engages with AI tools like anything on that? If you have any opinion or just a personal experience?

**IP A** 20:53

Yes.

Not now. Like I mean, to be fair, I could be wrong. The E Comm team could be. I haven't heard that. We are just because I guess we haven't. It's not such a huge scale, however.

We would absolutely look to do that, like for instance, just to give you a bit of context where like for me and my team, we're hopefully going to be launching a new communication or employee engagement platform over the next kind of 6 to 12 months. So, we absolutely would be wanting to look at usage feedback.

Responses to that and Gen Z would be a huge part of that, I.

Potentially think that they could be doing stuff like that in ECON, but I wouldn't know specifically.

**Interviewee** 21:46

Are you? Do you? You tell me of a success indicator or like, a trend that that translated to a good indicator in in AI that you've seen like something that's really it was basic but now it has grown and now every brand is using something like that.

**IP A** 21:48

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 22:04

Uh, like a nice AI example.

**IP A** 22:05

Umm. A nice AI example. Yeah. I'm trying to think personally and in

“GEN Z AS A FOCUS  
AREA FOR  
RESEARCH”

store. I guess I would. I mean, I'll go back to really thinking about like what I was saying earlier, like **it's amazing to see how an AI assistant can essentially help put together an outfit** or.

And within 5 minutes, you're suddenly wanting to buy three or four more things in what you were going in for. And **I think those kinds of features really help people's thought process like quicker and kind of, you know.**

Well, I guess it's **the art of manipulation** a little bit, I guess so. It's like the Labubu's, isn't it? I don't know whether you've seen them, but it's like, why does suddenly everyone want one just because they're everywhere. So, I would, I think that's what stands out to me. I think something that.

**Interviewee** 23:04

Yeah.

**IP A** 23:13

I'm trying to think there was a store I went to, and I can't for the life of me remember what where it was, but it was just I was fascinated by going on. They had like iPads in the store.

And you could go and essentially put like picking out pick something you wanted to like potentially to buy, but then you could also like then try it like it would put it on you as well. So, it's just like stuff like that I think is **really cool.** It's like actually funnily enough, that's just made me think of something else.

On our Versace website is little things like the fact that I don't know about you, but when you buy things like sunglasses like you want to know that they're going to look good on your face, especially if you're going to pay like 200 lbs and on the Versace website, you **can actually virtually try them on.**

**Interviewee** 23:55

Hmm.

Yeah.

Yeah.

“AI ASSISTANT CAN PUT TOGETHER AN OUTFIT”

“QUICKER DECISIONS”

“ART OF MANIPULATION”

“VIRTUAL TRY ON IS COOL”

**IP A** 24:05

Did I go and buy 200 LB pair of sunglasses after that? Yes, I did. So, I think little things like that. Like I think more and more people like just want to be instantly able to decide if they're going to buy something whereas you know it used to be. I've checked the website. Oh, I'm not sure whether I like them. I'm now going to go all the way into central London to try them on.

So I think that stands out to me as things that I think people feel really impressed with.

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 24:29

You know, AI does smarter recommendations. Do you think like now when you put like a look kind of a thing that you want, they give you like a whole thing, like everything from top to bottom to accessories to footwear, everything. Do you think that kind of helps in upselling and cross selling as well?

**IP A** 24:32

Yeah.

Yeah, for sure I would say.

Units per transaction targets or sales would, I'm sure, would be for a lot of brands would be higher because I think people more often than not you're going to get one thing and then you end up often getting something else as well because The thing is it's like I said, I use laboo boos as like a bit of a joke, but like, the more and more.

Things get like put in front of you.

You then start to want it, don't you? And then you're like, oh I probably should get those shoes that go with those trousers now. So, yeah, I think it will. It would help for sure.

**Interviewee** 25:17

And.

“VTO LEADS TO SALES”

“INSTANTLY DECIDE”

“INCREASE IN ATV THROUGH RECOMMENDATIONS”

OK.

Yeah, and it just feels like I think now this kind of bottom would only look good with this kind of look because you've seen it in a way.

**IP A** 25:27

Yeah.

Yeah.

Well, the funny thing is, I don't know about you, but I also now this is this is a personal thing, and I obviously love AI. And I think in the world I'm in, you know, everything is so fast all the time and I never have enough time. But I feel like now it kind of can cause almost sometimes.

Stunt your own opinion on things, and then you're suddenly like, oh God, well, I don't really know. Now I'm. **I'm so used to being told something now. I don't know my own opinion, so I think that's something you kind of must, you know, be aware of.**

**Interviewee** 26:05

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah, I think back in the day we used to like to think of practical solutions for any problem. Now it's all ChatGPT. And then I think just your ability to think is vanishing because you're being told every time you have a problem and it's there, you have your solutions right there.

**IP A** 26:12

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 26:31

And now that ever if you want to think it, it just becomes so difficult.

**IP A** 26:36

Yeah, for sure.

“OVERRELIANCE  
RISK”

**Interviewee** 26:40

Coming to the next question, how do you ensure AI assistance? Just sorry my bad. What if any have you observed of AI assistance having one engagement and personalization on e-commerce platforms? You can use chatbot as a reference like after that. Have you seen any more engagement or any more say feedbacks of personalization that you've got?

**IP A** 26:48

Yeah, no worries.

**Interviewee** 27:07

Through the customers.

**IP A** 27:09

Umm.

I am not entirely sure from feedback of customers.

I'm not so close to the web like the ecom website, I'm just trying to think of what I've heard recently of what they've been working on because they, they, they recently kind of reformatted all of the.

The website and kind of like the user journey, but I'm not completely versed with kind of what they did. Again, I could absolutely find out a bit more information about that for you. If you want people wanted.

Me too, because I I'm not. I'm not that close to it.

**Interviewee** 28:03

That's absolutely OK. What? What role do you think AI virtual assistants will play in brands? Future strategy for engagement?

**IP A** 28:14

I mean, honestly, I think it will be a huge part of everyone's strategies. I think especially for next year, I think AI is going to support story, our storytelling. Product Discovery, obviously styling

“AI A HUGE PART OF BRAND’S STRATEGIES”  
“FUTURE SCOPE”

as we've talked about and I honestly think it'll be all with Gen Z's expectations in mind. Look, I've seen brands already have it as part of their strategy and I think.

**Interviewee** 28:45

Yeah.

**IP A** 28:48

Like as I'm sure you've heard, a million and people say it's not going away. So it's figuring out like how?

**IP A** 28:58

You we can use it in a positive way for our brand, but I would absolutely say if we spoke next year, I would imagine AI will be a huge part of our strategy. Now it is in roundabout ways like for instance. It's part of my internal comms strategy and then there's other elements like in learning and development and whatnot, but I think it will be a much bigger thing by this time next year.

**Interviewee** 29:25

In your experience, how can you make sure that the AI assistant aligns with brand values on inclusivity sustainability?

Even like a if at all you have like a live virtual assistant. How? How would you try and make sure that it's all aligning with sustainability, inclusivity, where people don't feel that they've been targeted or pinpointed at on any forms of religion, race, etcetera.

Yeah.

**IP A** 29:55

I mean, so on that we would require obviously we would require like

“BRAND’S  
STRATIGIES BASED  
ON GEN Z”

AI IS NOT GOING  
ANYWHERE”

inclusivity like training data we would need to think about kind of accessibility considerations and obviously like I've said transparency.

**Interviewee** 29:57

Yeah.

**IP A** 30:15

I think.

It's a tricky 1 because, like ethical AI, it needs to be right and you've got to tie it to, you know, the brand. And there's got to be. And The thing is, you've also got to make it like trusted as well. So they'll. There would have to be a lot of work that that goes into that like with training. And like I said, the data because we'd need to make sure that you know, we represent in the in the right way.

**Interviewee** 30:47

In your view, how do AI virtual assistant's features help a brand stand out in the digital luxury space? And.

**IP A** 30:59

I think they could. I think in future I think it's going to be even more prevalent that they support the like the telling of our stories. But in more kind of interactive ways.

So delivering more kind of create curated content.

Kind of bringing exclusivity to life. I can just see that the more and more you know, people start to understand AI, it's going to it'll be the first thing that people go to create whatever content that they need, whether it be for in store online.

In our offices. So yeah. So I absolutely think that they're going to be our go to tool for anything. It's scary like to see all of the things that you can do with it. And I think it's just trying to understand how you can then utilise that like in a positive way.

I think it's amazing what you can ask chatGPT to do currently, so I think I think that will be a huge part of, you know, visual

“INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY”

“ETHICAL AI”

“TRUST REQUIREMENT”

“SUPPORT IN STORY-TELLING INTERACTIVELY”  
“CURATE CONTENT AND BRNG EXCLUSIVITY TO LIFE”

“ALL PURPOSE AI”

merchandising strategies, customer experience strategies in the future. And look, there's brands that are out there that are already doing that.

**IP A** 32:16

But everyone will kind of get to the same level. I'm sure at one point.

**Interviewee** 32:20

What? What features do you think are most valued by Gen Z consumer?

**IP A** 32:25

Good question. I think there has to be.

I think I the word emotion always comes to me. It needs to have an emotional connection to it. They need to.

The tone and The Who they're talking to needs to feel like they're, you know, your friend down the road, **tools that can pick up on kind of context and mood**, I think, will be a huge part of kind of what they like and don't like because The thing is, like I said to you before.

**Luxury has always been a very personal, intimate experience.** You know, I just, I often think of like people going down Bond Street and you know, like all of the stores down there. And like the experience you would receive.

On, although, like Gen Z perhaps didn't have that they, that's what they want. If they're speaking to someone online, yes, **they need the speed** and the, you know, the being able to get it kind of there. And then I don't know, even **getting the delivery to arrive on the same day.** But I think as soon as it feels like they're just talking to or not talking to anyone. And they'll turn off completely, so it needs to be **emotionally intelligent.**

“CONTEXT AND MOOD AWARE”

“PERSONAL INTIMACY”

“SPEED EFFICIENCY AND SAME DAY DELIVERY”

“EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH HUMANS”

**Interviewee** 33:43

Like you said, luxury is more of an internal experience. It's like a whole journey of purchasing something and getting it with getting it home with you. Do you think that's another reason why luxury brands have typically been slower than fast fashion brands to get a lot of?

**IP A** 33:44

Yeah.

Yep.

**Interviewee** 34:00

AI or e-commerce or a lot more engaging features as compared to fast fashion because.

**IP A** 34:07

Yeah, it's a. It's a really good point.

And I can only go by kind of experience in.

I feel like there was **potentially a little bit of fear with luxury** because kind of what I was saying a minute ago, like everything that we have known and talked about over the last let's use the 10 years I've been with Michael Kors and Capri.

**It's all been about customer service in store** and it's all been about that experience and you know **making it feel like they're at home**. And so I look this isn't.

**IP A** 34:50

It might not be true, but it's definitely what I feel and what I've seen.

There's been more of a fear factor of well, that's just going to completely change everything that we've been working towards for the last 10 years. We couldn't possibly do that. Whereas I think

“FEAR WITH LUXURY”

“LUXURY IS ALL ABOUT CUSTOMER SERVICE AND MAKING THEM FEEL AT HOME”

fast fashion, I mean there, there's, there's a lot more online. In any way so that the ecom business is kind of the driving factor whereas ecom is like a add on to ours. So I think that that played a part in it and has played a part in it and still is because.

**IP A** 35:25

You've got to think about.

What's right for the bit your business really there isn't. There isn't going to impact it in a negative way.

**Interviewee** 35:33

Yeah. And just coming to the last question, looking ahead, what new AI features or capabilities will you personally be more excited about for, for Gens? I can see what's something that you would want to see like it could be something like extremely fictional as well.

**Interviewee** 35:53

It can be something like that, but something that you feel can never be imagined, but you would have loved to see something like that happening on an e-commerce platform.

**IP A** 36:02

Could I get an ecom platform that would be able to send me to another country to go to go on holiday to go to the beach?

**Interviewee** 36:07

IP A 36:14

Yeah. Oh, yeah, that's a good point. Yeah. Maybe we do that. Maybe you can send. I can go to VR like and be in a luxury hotel in Thailand or something. No. But I think in more in kind of my world and my space, I think personally and my role, I hope to.

IP A 36:34

Be able to see a lot more diverse AI tools. That will mean that employees can interact with each other in a way that feels. Like they can connect with employees across the world. That helps with that whole vision of feeling like you belong somewhere. So I'd like to see kind of more on that, whether it be, you know, videoed content or.

However, AI tools work essentially, but something that would help with employee engagement and really connect each other. I think when it comes to kind of more ecom stores that kind of world, I definitely would love to see.

I think I would hope that you'll be able to go into stores more, but have experiences within the flagship store because it's one of those things where I'm one of those people where I will always say you've got to have that flagship store still somewhere.

You've still got to go and really experience the brand, but I'd hope that you'd be able to go into these stores now and they'll be real like fantastic features within that. Whether it means that you've got an immersive space or.

Mirrors that do something I feel like some of the presentations that the students did at the beginning of the year had stuff like that and making that.

In store experience, something that you've never seen before, I

“ENJOY A LUXURY HOTEL WITH VR ENABLED FEATURES”

“SENSE OF BELONGING”

“CREATING IN-STORE IMMERSIVE BRAND EXPERINCES”

think when it comes to like ECON platforms, I think it's all about efficiency and fast like being fast really. But I'd love to see AI becoming more kind of.

Prevalent kind of like face to face, like within an immersive experience.

Oh.



## PARTICIPANT TIP A

**Interviewee** 0:03

There is a lot of marketing, and a lot of brands are now looking at that the Gen Z market, Even a lot of research says that Gen Z is the new group who'll that'll be the next generation luxury buyers. So, because a lot of brands are focusing on them, plus they're the ones who make more. An AI and more technology-focused group.

**TIP A** 0:26

Crab for discussion, right. Yeah, sorry.

Sorry, I've had a really busy morning, so apologies, but I mean, I think one of the things that's interesting about AI is that it is becoming more and more ubiquitous. I mean, I don't know whether you saw ChatGPT's AI opening earnings.

Forecast this morning, but the valuation of that organisation is absolutely massive. It's quickly becoming one of the most valuable companies in the world, and it's not just doing it because of one emerging consumer group that will become something that is starting to become something and will become something. They're doing it because, actually, what is so interesting.

The thing about AI is that it applies to every age group, not just the younger ones. And I think that's why I asked the kind of question that is in one of the, I mean, we'll talk about the technicalities of it. And when you ask your first question, I would just sort of encourage you to think about the fact that what is fascinating about AI is that it talks to you like you talk to it.

And that means you know someone in their 80s can talk to it and it will reply in the same tone of voice. But the technology is the same.

What is so interesting about it is that it's conversational and it provides information that is relevant to you.

**Interviewee** 1:43

You.

- Invivo
- Emotional
- Initial
- Causation

"AI IS BECOMING MORE UBIQUITOUS"

"VALUABLE TO COMPANIES"

"CROSS-GENERATIONAL RELEVANCE"

"INDIVIDUAL INTERACTION"

"CONVERSATIONAL AI WITH RELEVANT INFORMATION"

**TIP A 1:47**

It believes it is relevant to your age group, but your lifestyle to a whole range of things, and one that I've always got this kind of antipathy towards classification, such as Gen Z or millennials or things such as that, because.

I'm an old fashioned. I mean I'm an analogue marketing director by training and when I was like starting on my career back in the 90s before digital, we used to, we used to have to do. We were doing research the whole time on our target groups, and they used to be these huge, homogenised groups.

Basically, CA-1ABC1C2DS and ES, and then we would give personas to the BS and the C ones and the A's, and you know, but they would, they would, they would have 2.2 children, and they would live outside Birmingham and they would drive this kind of car and we try and get these kinds of ideas of who these people were. But of course, the reality is that.

Each of those groups had several 10s, hundreds of millions of people in them, and you can't categorise them. And what's so interesting about digital is you can, you know, but **using digital tools, you can understand individuals, like understand individual purchasing behaviour, understand individual desires and wants and lifestyle and all the rest.**

The rest of it, and I do find it interesting that, faced with all of this individualised information, marketers still talk about these huge homogenised groups. One of those first clients we ever had was ASOS, and we're talking about like, nineteen, not, 2000 and kind of five 2006. So ASOS were only sort of three years old.

They were only obviously online, and they were one of the very, very first, only pure online retailers, and they could recognise 35,000 individual consumer segments. They didn't know what to do with those segments because it was too early in that journey of what do we do around individual.

“INDIVIDUAL LEVEL INSIGHTS”

**TIP A** 3:41

But they had all of these thousands, 10s of thousands of individual consumer subsets, whereas we still talk about Gen ZS and one of the things about Gen ZS and then millennials and then my generation, Gen X and then my parents, generation boomers. Is when we start talking about these homogenised groups, they kind of stop and then another one starts. And of course that's not true. Is it **because one they all blend over**, there are some Gen ZS that display millennial behaviour, and there are some.

**Interviewee** 4:13

Yeah.

**TIP A** 4:15

And **there are some Gen X that display Gen Z behaviour**, and then I can remember once getting really sort of cross at a conference because someone was saying was talk standing up on stage and talking about millennial behaviour being categorised by, they want good value, and they want convenience, and they want a great range. Well, my mother is in her 80s, and she wants good value and she wants good range and she wants great products. It's not a prerogative of millennials. You're Gen Z, do you not want good, good convenience? Do you not want good prices? Do you not want good products? I always sort of worry that some of these categories kind of push you into thinking into categorising entire demographic segments to be one thing and then you say well and that's different to the other one, but actually that's not the case and the only reason why I'm banging on about this for ages is. That is what is so interesting about AI. Like AI is conversational.

“ALL GENERATIONS BLEND OVER IN SAME WAY”

“SOME GEN X SHOW GEN Z BEHAVIOUR”

It's talking to Yaana as Yaana as you talk to it. It's not talking to it. As TIP A talks to you or Louis Vuitton talks to you or whatever, it's you and everybody has their own. You know, if you're talking about AI as.

**Interviewee** 5:14

Yeah.

**TIP A** 5:26

Being a kind of virtual boyfriend or a virtual counsellor, or virtual friends, or not. Just telling you where to buy stuff or, you know, but actually that really sort of powerful individual kind of opened up your heart to it. Well, then it's going to know stuff about you that you never tell Louis Vuitton or you never tell Chanel.

**Interviewee** 5:40

Yeah.

**TIP A** 5:45

You'd only ever tell your closest, most trusted friend, and you might not even tell them, so it's not a Gen Z Gen X thing. In some ways what it what I find very interesting about AI is it almost transcends demographics.

It's talking to humans. It's machines talking to humans, or it's humans having a dialogue, having a conversation with a bundle of wires and chips and electrons, but in a way that feels intuitively individual.

“AI TRANSCENDS  
DEMOGRAPHICS”

“HUMAN- LIKE  
CONVERSATION”

Not homogenised.

Anyway, I don't know if that's helpful

**Interviewee** 6:30

So the question is, can you describe how brands are currently using or are exploring AI tools within their digital communication?

**TIP A** 6:46

So look, I mean, what is interesting about AI is it can do everything right, not everything, but it can do a very wide range of things. So I'm only going to talk about AI in its broadest possible sense.

A lot of our clients, when they think about AI, they think about generative AI and when they think about generative AI, they only think about image creation. So there's a lot of conversation about virtual avatars, wearing virtual fashion and replacing models. And as is often the case, a lot of our clients really have no idea what AI is. There's a bandwagon and there.

**Interviewee** 7:07

OK.

**TIP A** 7:21

Jumping all over it, unlike some other bandwagons metaverse, is a good example. VR is another good example. Wearables is another example, and more and more holography is another example.

Because they're so narrow in their usage.

“BRANDS THINK ABOUT GENERATIVE AI”  
EG – IMAGE CREATION, VIRTUAL AVATARS”

“BRANDS ARE FOLLOWING A BANDWAGON”

“NARROW IN USAGE”

**Interviewee** 7:23

Yeah.

**TIP A** 7:39

You know, like VR is very good for wearing goggles and looking at virtual worlds, but nothing else, you know, because they're quite narrow in their usage. They that innovators like myself constantly promise over promise what it can do and start talking about it changing the very fabric of our lives. And it never does. And those. And fashion always moving on to the next thing, right. Chanel doesn't put last year's fashion on next year's runway. **They always want something new.** So the same thing is happening with AI. Now **we're in the middle of an AI hype cycle.** That the question is, will that **hype cycle dissipate and move on to some new innovation?** One know what's interesting about **AI is a bit like the oxygen that we breathe.**

**Interviewee** 8:17

Yes.

**TIP A** 8:17

It's kind of everywhere, although clients don't realise they're thinking about it in classically brand simplistic terms, which is people that don't understand technology trying to do something because everybody else is doing it and they feel they'll be left out if they don't get involved. So you're asking how they use it. Well, basically, just think about the different types of AI or think about different types of AI that we use, and maybe that's the way to answer your question. So yeah, we do work in generative AI, but there are two different types of.

Use case for generative AI. There's the generative AI, which is about content creation, semi-automated content creation. Whether that's imagery, video, text, you know, creating something without having

“ALWAYS WANT SOMETHING NEW”

“HYPE CYCLE + INNOVATION SHIFT”

“AI IS LIKE OXYGEN”

to do CAD models or visualisation or drawing.

Using AI's to create content and again content across a whole range of different outputs. Yeah, creating text, creating an image, creating video, creating a sound, creating anything around creation if one, but then that's only one strand of generative AI. Of course. The other strand of generative AI.

**Interviewee** 9:14

Yeah.

**TIP A** 9:28

Communication and actually joint. If AI is all about communication and initially it's about the chatbot idea or the ChatGPT idea of finding ways for humans to. I mean what I think about Steve Jobs.

And one of one of the legacies that Steve Jobs left us when he designed the interface for Macs was he used a very human interface.

You still have a desktop on your laptop on your, on your computer, and that desktop has folders. And there are files that go into folders. And when you want to and you throw them away, you drag those files and folders across your desktop and put them in the trash bin and you empty the trash bin. And these are all kind of things that we do as human beings. Before computers were built. So that was his way of trying to find an interface that we feel mirrors the way that we behave in an analogue world.

This way of trying to find a human way of connecting again with the wires and the cables and the chips and the circuitry that's inside this thing here which doesn't understand English. So that was the way that he did it ChatGPT is now doing exactly the same.

“AI USED TO  
CREATE CONTENT”

“CHATBOT IDEA”

“MACS HAVE A  
HUMAN  
INTERFACE”

“HUMAN WAY OF  
CONNECTING”

**Interviewee** 10:31

Yeah.

**TIP A** 10:38

AI generative AI is doing exactly the same. It's trying to find human ways for you to interface, so that's a generative AI bit. But we also do work in classification, AI and classification. AI is basically a form of AI that looks at a large language model or an immense amount of data, and then classifies.

Place that data into different piles so that you'll end up with the data split out into a number of different areas, and then we use regressive AI, which basically looks for different connections and patterns within those piles so that you can start to join things together. So when you go on to ChatGPT and you ask it a question, you're using generative AI. And then when you ask it a question and it heads off into the Internet, it's using classification AI to try and find any mentions of what you're which may be relevant to you, and it uses regressive AI to try and join together some of those into something that is that isn't answered your question. So we use those a lot.

We also use semantic segmentation AI, which is a form of. It's particularly visual, and it recognises imagery and it cuts. It basically cuts like it cuts me out of my background. It's looking at one pixel versus another.

Simplest form. It's what's happening on your laptop now. As you blur your kind of background, but we use it in a number of more advanced ways to cut things out so we can analyse it. Look at skin tones and textures, match light levels.

Lots of lots of ways of basically generating a baseline so that we can look at the real picture compared to the baseline and see what the difference is and then change things according to that. And then of course the other one we do well hybrid AI is.

Joining together lots of different AIS, like the ChatGPT model, the user journey of AI for the question, regressive AI and classification

AI and Agentic AI is obviously the new sort of hot thing which we're using a lot now, so it's almost like a sentient thing. It answers the question the.

**Interviewee** 12:32

Yes.

**TIP A** 12:46

You ask the agentic AI to do something and it keeps on going off and doing it, and every time it finds more information it feeds that information back into itself to help fine tune what it's looking for next. So it's kind of it's a semi.

Sentient, I guess, but we use it a lot for sort of trend analysis and things such as that. So it's constantly going out and looking for trends and when it finds trends it then leaps all over that trend to try and refine them and ask more questions of it. And it sees something that's interesting that we've directed it to and then it keeps going. Back in there to try and make it clearer. And so those are the kind of things that we use and then the application for those, yeah, **trend analysis engines, product finders, recommendation engines.**

You know fragrance finders, but also trying to get away from that Amazon idea of you bought a pair of trousers. So here's another pair of trousers, but maybe in a different colour that more I don't like. You bought a pair of trousers and therefore you might be interested in this book of poetry or that out that holiday destination or this bottle Of wine trying to, I guess. Think about **predicting human behaviour,**

“USAGE FOR  
TREND ANALYSIS  
ENGINES,  
PRODUCT FINDERS  
AND  
RECOMMENDATION  
ENGINES”

not on past behaviour but on future behaviour, or maybe on emotion or maybe other factors other than historical purchases. Lifestyle, whether it's raining or sunny.

What other people are buying that kind of thing, which I'm quite interested in? Because and by the way, just stop me if I'm going on too much. But I'm quite interested in that in that idea which AI potentially could help with, which is.

**TIP A** 14:29

If you think about brands, because obviously you're a lot of your areas around Brands, brands would typically try and.

Basically, brands try and find what they think you might like. So brands are making us. They're having a think and typically that's based on what you bought before and it might be based on what they're trying to push for this season. So it's a bit, it's, it's a bit, yeah, I mean.

**Interviewee** 14:41

Yes.

Yeah.

**TIP A** 14:55

Brands are pushing their agenda and they're trying to get you to buy something but I think you know when we think about fashion, for example, well, not just fashion, I mean all things in life, it's interesting to find new stuff that you wouldn't have necessarily thought you liked.

**Interviewee** 15:11

Yeah.

“FUTURE  
BEHAVIOUR OF  
HUMANS  
AND EMOTIONS”

“BRANDS THINKING  
ABOUT  
TECHNOLOGIES  
THAT CONSUMERS  
MIGHT LIKE”

**TIP A** 15:11

Maybe AI can help you do that, so that rather than like AI at the moment, brands are using it to try and find the middle ground, whereas actually, wouldn't it be more interesting if AI understood Yaana and then pushed her towards an extreme?

An interesting area of fashion that of course isn't in the middle ground because you've never explored it. You've always been taken to the middle ground, but maybe it's something that might be interesting. There's kind of, you know, dark, dark areas of the universe which actually are really you, but you've never been explored.

**Interviewee** 15:29

Yeah.

Yeah.

**TIP A** 15:48

A bit like that. That button on your Apple music, which kind of is the create a station button that looks at what you're listening to, but starts to come up with new music and that thing of like finding something that's new that you never, that's a **really fun, interesting thing and.**

**Interviewee** 15:56

Yeah.

Yeah.

**TIP A** 16:06

One of the very earliest sort of retail tech projects that we saw 20 years ago because we've been going for 20 years, we didn't do it, but CNA, the departments, the fashion brand, department store in Brazil, they it was just when Facebook had launched Facebook likes. And so you can like products online.

And when you went into CNA store, there were hangers products

“FUN AND INTERESTING”

on hangers, but each hanger had a digital readout embedded into the hanger and it told you how many people had liked that project online. So you'd walk to a store and you'd see that that jacket had 58,000 likes

**TIP A** 16:44

And the next jacket had 12 likes and most people would use that information to say I'm going to go for the one that other people like. But there are other people on this planet, not that many of them, but some that would say I'm using the same information in a completely different way because I do not want to walk into a party where everybody's wearing the same gear and therefore.

**Interviewee** 16:47

Yeah.

It.

OK.

**TIP A** 17:04

Therefore, I'm going to use that information to buy the one that only 12 people like, so I'm quite interested in AI that allowed, which, by the way, brands have no interest in doing whatsoever. But using AI to help you find new interesting things there is that magical moment of discovery, whether it's.

A fact or a partner, or fall in love, or you find you turn the corner and you see the Eiffel Tower for the first time. You know, these kind of magical moments in life? That's what I'm that's what I would love AI to help me find.

**Interviewee** 17:38

OK.

“AI CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION BUT BRANDS ARE NOT INTERESTED”

“AI CAN CREATE MAGICAL MOMENT OF DISCOVERY”

**TIP A** 17:40

Rather than just kind of say, well, everybody loves the Eiffel Tower, so let's push you to Paris so you can see the Eiffel Tower. Forget brands. Don't like that because you know, most people go to Louis Vuitton to buy something with a Louis Vuitton logo on it. But actually what could be much cooler is that little handbag manufacturer in Notting Hill that. Only makes 50 handbags a year, and no one's really heard of. And if you can find that, then you're the cool one, right?

Everybody else is part of the tribe, part of the herd, and you and you stepped out and you found something that's new and individual that makes you.

A cooler, more interesting person. Can AI help you do that?

**Interviewee** 18:16

Yeah.

**TIP A** 18:18

That's probably not the question you asked, but anyway.

**Interviewee** 18:21

No, inside. So when we discuss that what brands are currently doing you, you said like a bunch of things say meta words say we are augmented reality personalised stylist and all that do can you can you explain me what are the goals and motivations that drive that kind of an integration like what?

**TIP A** 18:39

Yeah.

“WHEN YOU FIND  
OUT SOMETHING  
NEW, YOU ARE  
COOLER AND  
MORE  
INTERESTING THAN  
OTHERS”

**TIP A** 18:45

They're all jumping on a bandwagon I haven't seen much evidence, by the way. I'm being very I'm being deliberately unfair to brands, but brands jump on bandwagons. One of the things that I think you want to keep an eye open on is who's funding a lot of this stuff.

**Interviewee** 18:47

Yeah.

**TIP A** 19:00

And what you typically find, not just in AI, but historically, when these new innovations come along, the people that fund them are the marketing teams. And then at some point and because they're new techs, right and the merchandising teams can't afford it because they're only going to invest in something that.

**Interviewee** 19:09

Yes.

**TIP A** 19:20

That actually generates the return. You know, a merchandising team have a margin and they've got to make that margin and anything else that they have to pay for is a cost. That means they

“MARKETING  
TEAMS FUND  
THESE NEW  
INNOVATIONS”

may not make that margin. So they're only going to invest in it if they are 100% sure in their own minds that it's going to increase conversion or generate.

**Interviewee** 19:27

Yes.

Yes.

**TIP A** 19:40

Additional sales or revenue so.

I don't see much evidence yet of merchandising teams buying AI, not the kind of stuff that we're talking about. I mean, there's efficiency stuff that's specifically about, you know, shortening pipelines, stock and inventory control. But I'm not talking about that because I don't know anything about that. But the stuff that I do.

**Interviewee** 20:07

Yes.

**TIP A** 20:07

Stuff most, most of its being funded, certainly in our place by marketing teams and then at some point marketing teams will get bored and they want the new thing they want. The next thing, so they'll stop funding it and that's why **these groups come and go because everybody's all over it and then all the marketing teams want to move on to something else.**

“SHORT LIVED +  
MARKETING HYPE”

**Interviewee** 20:09

Oh.

Yes.

**TIP A** 20:26

And then it's back to the residue of interest that was there before. AI will not be like that because it is. It is literally, as I said, it's like

oxygen. We all you know, we all breathe but and it's got so many different. You know, there wasn't that long ago what, five years ago maybe six years ago that AI was.

**Interviewee** 20:28

Yeah.

**TIP A** 20:45

Being, yeah, artificial intelligence was basically only being used to talk about whether or not we can build a machine that could beat a man at chess.

**Interviewee** 20:55

Yeah.

**TIP A** 20:56

Now you know it's everywhere. It's everything you have has got an element of AI in it, so it's it is everywhere. It is obviously here to stay. It is powerful. It is important. But with it, when it comes to brands, they're still playing around.

**Interviewee** 20:58

It's.

**TIP A** 21:12

And by the way, they're doing a pretty bad job. All of us are doing a pretty bad job because the technology is new, right? It isn't anyone's fault. You know, we're all talking about it as if it's the game changer, the biggest revolution, and it certainly will be. But it's not today. Like some of the AI stuff I see a isn't really AI. And it's pretty.

“AI IS EVERYWHERE”

“IT’S POWERFUL”  
“BRANDS ARE STILL PLAYING”

“BRANDS ARE DOING A BAD JOB”

**TIP A** 21:32

Weak stuff.

**Interviewee** 21:34

Yeah, that's.

**TIP A** 21:34

I mean there's other two other things to it. I think about there are quite a lot of AI tools out there already that people can use. So quite a lot of our clients have access to those tools and they're trying to do all this themselves and what they're finding is that they can get 80% of the way quite quickly with these tools. But that **last 20%, which is perfection is very difficult for them to achieve.** Which I guess is why they need us, right? I hope anyway.

**Interviewee** 22:03

That's true. Yeah. In your opinions are AI tools currently being used to handle more service related, say customer related queries or more of the back end like to get in a.

**TIP A** 22:17

Well, it's all of that, but more right, because you're talking about back end. **Yes, back end.** Then you've got the customer related services, yes, but we've talked about image creation and content, you know and imagery and you know in those two extremes that you've talked about, you know where do virtual mannequins? Virtual you know virtual digital avatars. You know, where, where does all of that bit come in? Where does you know, using AI to generate the imagery on your website, not just the kind

“PERFECTION GAP”

“AI IS FOUND IN  
BACKEND”

of models but the but the sneakers, the handbags, you know? You know, there's a, there's a. That's why I'm. I mean, it isn't.

Be I would just urge you to think very carefully about trying to fit AI into binary buckets.

Like basically everything we do has AI everything.

**TIP A** 23:07

Everything you know, we were doing Tommy Hilfiger's fashion show two years ago. AI, we're doing, you know, fragrance finders for Dior, AI. Everything we're doing has an element of AI in it. In the same way that you know everything we do has an element of visual in it.

**Interviewee** 23:23

Yes.

**TIP A** 23:24

It's just everywhere. So I'm not sure it can be categorised in quite a binary way. There were people doing things in that area but there are people also doing things in every little aspect in between.

**Interviewee** 23:30

OK.

Basically, every department is using it in some of the other form.

**TIP A** 23:40

OK.

You tell me something and they'll be picked up and I can give you an example of someone trying to do something in that area.

**Interviewee** 23:51

Yeah.

**TIP A** 23:51

Sorry, that wasn't a request, but I'm just saying that literally it is everywhere and it's it isn't back end or front end.

**Interviewee** 23:53

Yes.

Yeah, it's just everywhere. Yeah, that's fine. While working with so many luxury brands as your clients, have you observed any sort of trend Z's digital behaviour and expectations like our brands doing any sort of campaigns just to lower the trend Z?

**TIP A** 24:14

No.

By the way, there must be examples. Don't get me wrong, but I, as I said at the beginning I don't recognise. I **don't recognise a campaign to a specific target group**. I'm not interested in it. I don't care about it. I'm interested in directions of travel. I mean, here's a question for you. Yeah. What? What defines the Gen Z?

**Interviewee** 24:30

Yep.

**TIP A** 24:34

Or Gen Z customer consumer.

**Interviewee** 24:38

I don't know. I think Gen Z is someone who likes a lot things to be customised to be personalised.

“DON'T RECOGNISE  
CAMPAIGN FOR A  
SPECIFIC TARGET  
GROUP”

**TIP A** 24:48

I do too, right. And here's, and here's a here's an insight I'm not I'm not Gen Z.

**Interviewee** 24:50

Yeah.

Yeah, yeah. But maybe I mean, there are.

**TIP A** 25:00

I mean here is. Here is one for you young. I mean maybe Gen Z, like, have absolutely zero patience because you're constantly consuming media as quickly and as easily as possible and you don't, you don't care about normal media channels and like digital sheep, you're grazing everywhere. Better YouTube, better TikTok. Bit of Snapchat.

**Interviewee** 25:12

Yes.

**TIP A** 25:19

For this bit of that, might that be? Might that be unfair?

**Interviewee** 25:27

Thank you.

**TIP A** 25:29

Because if it is, then AI works very well for you, right? And then that's. That's why I'm saying it. Because you know, in the old days, you know, you had to type into the Internet, you had to get to go to Google and type in a request and then all Google did was give you 20 or 30 links that you'd have to go and look at and Oh my God, that's quite time consuming. But you shouldn't be, not. You shouldn't be nodding your head. You should

“GEN Z HAVE ZERO PATIENCE BECAUSE THEY ARE CONSTANTLY CONSUMING MEDIA”

“USING INTERNET WAS TIME CONSUMING”

be going. No, it's fine. But actually with ChatGPT, it's a you just bang it, you just talk at it, right. So actually the speed of.

**Interviewee** 25:53

Yes.

**TIP A** 26:05

Relationship is faster. The **speed of communication is faster.** Maybe that's a Gen Z thing, maybe I don't know, but. But I think there is. Certainly you can say and again it's not a Gen Z thing actually. But when we look at when I look at it and at new consumer groups coming through.

**TIP A** 26:24

They are having to react and respond and to leverage increasingly smaller and faster communication loops. So AI seems to fit quite neatly into that. Something that does a fair amount of your thinking for you.

**TIP A** 26:41

**Feels like it's something that's moving faster than you having to do that thinking for you.** And I do think that is all joking aside and all. I just think that that that is an increasingly obvious set of circumstances for the world that we live in and the generations that are coming through are.

**Interviewee** 26:42

And.

“AI’S SPEED OF  
COMMUNICATION IS  
FASTER”

“AUTOMATED  
THINKING”

**TIP A** 27:01

Accelerating faster and faster and faster in terms of the media they consume and how they how they interact with media and ChatGPT seems to me to be a way of rather dramatically simplifying in a good way the process of assimilating information and making choices.

**Interviewee** 27:18

Yeah.

**TIP A** 27:21

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 27:23

Have you encountered any sort of challenges or any sort of insights about Gen Z's emotional connection towards AI powered features?

**TIP A** 27:32

I guess it's what we were just talking about.

**Interviewee** 27:34

Yeah, it's just.

**TIP A** 27:34

But that's why I don't. I don't agree with the Gen Z focus and I'm being I'm being slightly difficult and obese here. But again, I don't think it's a generational thing. I think it's a human thing. And if I said that. Gen Z are accelerating in terms of all these. The tightness of these communication loops, but I'm exposed to those loops too now and I'm probably not going around those loops as fast as you are and your friends, but I'm going around it a heck of a lot faster

“AI ASSISTANCE”

“AROUND LOOPS AS FAST AS YOU CAN”

than I was 20 years ago and a heck of a lot faster than I was three or four years ago.

**Interviewee** 28:07

Yes.

**TIP A** 28:10

It might be sluggish to my children, but it feels really fast to me and so AI can help me in exactly the same way as it can help you. So I think it's a general. Sorry I'm being I am being obtuse. I'm being a pain in the \*\*\*, you know. But it isn't a generation a demographic category thing. It's a change in the in the world thing that that your generation is growing up into and mine is on the way out of. But we're still part of this world. And therefore we are still exposed to the same drivers.

But just in a in a subtly different way, but I can't. I genuinely can't hand on heart stand up and say there is a fundamental difference in the way that you behave digitally in the way that I behave digitally. **There may be some velocity.**

**Interviewee** 29:02

Yeah.

It's. I don't think it's just the velocity, but I think also like the preference like to say I would preferably want to shop digitally but not my parents or their generation would preferably because they've not done it since.

“VELOCITY  
DIFFERENCE FROM  
GEN Z”

**TIP A 29:22**

Well, I don't know if that's the case. I mean, that might be the case with your parents. But, but that's not.

**Interviewee 29:25**

No, but that's the whole generation that I'm talking about, like they would like to walk into a shop and do it, because for them, back in the days, that was a sort of entertainment as well that going shopping outside. It was like a form of entertainment.

**TIP A 29:29**

OK.

Yeah, identify. Agree with it. So by the way, I understand exactly what you're saying, but again, that's why I worry about. That's why I said at the beginning, I worry about these categorizations of groups, so my mum, she only shops digitally and she's 84 and she will never goes into shops, she only shops digitally. She just feels comfortable. It fits in with a lifestyle. She's much happier gardening or chatting with her friends. She finds going to a shop, shops, a chore. She only goes out if she absolutely has to.

And by the way, because we do a lot of work in store, I mean a lot. You know, you walk into Charlotte Tilbury and you're not going to see elders, you're going to see young, your colleagues, right. Hey.

And they're in a shop and they're loving it. **They're because it's loud and it's raucous and it's fun.** And what's great about **Charlotte Tilbury is her ability to create an environment that.**

“LOUD, RACIOUS AND FUN”

“ABILITY TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT”

**Interviewee** 30:21

Hmm.

**TIP A** 30:33

That's attractive. So for your generation, but I'm not sure my mum would enjoy, Charlotte Tilbury. So I don't think it's as black and white as that. But anyway, that's a separate conversation.

**Interviewee** 30:35

Yes.

Yeah.

Yeah, going on to the next question.

**TIP A** 30:49

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 30:50

In your experience, do you think consumers respond to the kind of tone and personal life personalization features that AI assistance would provide, like the way they're talking, the way they're answering the kind?

**TIP A** 30:52

So let me let me argue in a different way. So on a basic level, you know **you can programme an AI to talk in whatever tone you want.**

You can talk to you in French, you can talk to you in a happy way.

You know, like you, I mean, you can plug you, you can now go to ChatGPT or Google AI. And you could say.

You know, give me my shopping recommendations using the voice of Freddie Mercury or using the voice of Gegner's Khan or using the voice of Taylor Swift and it'll do it right. So no problem at

“YOU CAN  
PRGRAMME AN AI  
TO TALK IN A TONE  
YOU WANT”

all. You know where you want to tone. Great. You want your AI to shout at you. Yeah. Fine. You want it? You want it to.

**Interviewee** 31:28

Yeah.

**TIP A** 31:42

Whisper to you. Yeah, fine. Whatever. No, no issue with that. That's fine. Whatever you want. AI will do it in the tone or using the vocabulary. If you want to talk to you in Triphibian or Shakespearean English.

It will say, you know, Verily, Yana, for thy taste, overflowed in bound, you know, whatever, you know what I mean? No problem at all. The bit that I would ask suggest that you think about is actually not about that, but about.

**Interviewee** 32:02

Yeah.

**TIP A** 32:16

Who does that AI belong to? Who is that AI on the side of? Who who's AI do you trust? That's what it's about for me. Because you're talking about brands. So basically what you're talking about is recommendations.

Among other things, but you're basically saying will that AI recommend me a really cool product and then? But then? But then who paid for that AI who? Who is using who is the who's, who's got the bunnies pulling the strings to make that AI work because.

**Interviewee** 32:32

Yeah.

Yeah.

“ETHICAL  
CONSIDERATION”

“HUMAN INFLUENCE  
AND AI  
MANUPLICATION”

**TIP A** 32:50

If it's Burberry.

Then Burberry is going to tell you that that you should be buying a Burberry X or a Burberry Y if it's, you know, Louis Vuitton, it'll be Louis Vuitton telling you this. so I think the interesting bit for AI is not the brands, the interesting bit for AI is.

You know you ask an AI for a recommendation on a jacket and it goes out and it finds a jacket that it thinks you will like. Forget whether it's Wheaton or Burberry. It could be vintage, right? It could be your mum's jacket. Could be whatever it could be anything. And. And so then that AI.

**Interviewee** 33:19

Yeah.

Yes.

**TIP A** 33:28

Is actually made. Is your AI right? But then who owns that AI? Is that AI actually owned by Google? Or is it owned by open AI Is it owned by the UK Government, you know, or whatever? Who's actually owning that? Who is using that data?

What is the benefit? I mean what is, you know, Google is so big because Google owns so much of your data. **You, your generation and my generation and my children's generation have handed over all of their data for free.** And Google's use that to make a lot of money. so Google, Google don't exist because they're charitable.

**Interviewee** 33:52

Yes.

What?

“GENRATIONS HAVE  
HANDED OVER DATA  
FOR FREE TO  
GOOGLE”

**TIP A** 34:07

And what they want. Yaana is for you to be able to find all the information that you want through their search engine. They want that data and they want to monetize it now, again, someone's invent, you know, just think about the amount of money that's been invested in AI over the last few years. The hundreds of billions of dollars.

**Interviewee** 34:13

Yeah.  
Hits.

**TIP A** 34:25

From investors that want their money back. So we're talking about cash here. And again, a lot of people are thinking about the AI as being, you know, your friend. Is it your friend? I don't know. Are you? Is he? I mean, that's the that's I think it's about trust.

**Interviewee** 34:27

Yeah.

**TIP A** 34:41

And it's about commercial requirements from AI, because again, AI it isn't. Is it a friend, Yana, or is it a foe? Is it on your side or is it on the side of big business? And if it's on the side of big business, then what are you giving in exchange for what you're getting back and?

**Interviewee** 34:41

Yeah.  
Oh.

**TIP A** 35:01

Do you trust what you're getting back in terms of? Yeah, product

“DATA  
MONETIZATION”

“CUSTOMER’S SIDE  
OR BIG BUSINESS’S  
SIDE”

recommendations, but anything right and are you actually going to, you know we've been we talked about people find you know using it as a sort of a virtual partner. You know if actually they're virtual partners, Google.

**Interviewee** 35:03

Yeah.

**TIP A** 35:19

What does it? What does it mean? So the bit so I think of it in terms of like ownership like if the UK if what happens if your chat bot was actually owned by the American Government, what happened if Donald Trump's government actually created this chat bot and they own it and everything that that you ask it.

**Interviewee** 35:19

Yeah.

**TIP A** 35:38

Now going to America, I mean it these this is this is, I mean I don't mean to be dark and dystopian, but I'm just sort of getting you thinking about you know, a lot of people think that it's only a good thing and it might well be a good thing. But if you're going to it for a point of view.

You want to be able to trust that point of view, and I don't want an angle on the information that I'm give because if there is an angle like, you know, IKEA is always going to push me what it wants me to buy, then it's not actually.

**Interviewee** 35:58

Yes.

**TIP A** 36:12

My friend, actually it's a piece of advertising and I should look at it

in exactly the same way that I look at any advertising slogan that that says it's product makes me look sexy. You know what I mean? so

**TIP A** 36:27

Just thinking maybe think about it in terms of that. It's **trust**, that's what it is. At least with Google you had the ability to, to look through the sites and make your own mind up. You could just you could discount some. They're all of those sites are paying Google money to get them up the search ranking but.

**TIP A** 36:47

If you can go on to them and you can check and validate whether you think it's right or wrong ChatGPT doesn't do that. Or Google AI doesn't do that. It gives you the joined up answer. It doesn't allow you to look at all of the sites it says this is what this is the answer. To the question here it is there that one there, that one there. So you know **this trust element is interesting.**

**Interviewee** 37:12

But.

But then if we want to compare it at on such a large scale, but just including fashion where we've got say sales advisors, when we walk into a shop, they would also give us advice obviously to buy their own.

“TRUST”

“VERIFICATION  
ISSUES”

**TIP A** 37:29

They would walk into their shop, right? So you know, you know that they're that they're that they're pushing their product, but **ChatGPT it's a bit looser**, right. It's a **bit vaguer** Like you go into Google AI, you know you're not going into a shop.

**TIP A** 37:46

That that Google AI is your AI. You probably use the Google AI you know yesterday to tell you what the weather was going to be like in whatever or what or what's my first lecture or you're talking to it like you're talking to your friend or someone else. And now you're saying by the way, what?

**Interviewee** 37:46

Yeah.

Yeah.

**TIP A** 38:05

What summer T-shirts should I wear? You're talking in your mind. You're talking to a friend. You're not talking to a sales associate at H&M. But when you walk into a shop, you are so again. If that sales associate says it's this, then I'll go right. Well, I know you're pushing me your products. That's fine. But I'll have a look at it and I'll make up.

“CHATGPT IS LOOSE  
AND VAGUE”

**TIP A** 38:25

But my mind, but it's a suggestion, not really a strong recommendation. It's not a recommendation. It doesn't carry the same recommendation as a recommendation from a friend.

**Interviewee** 38:36

So for so for my project.

**TIP A** 38:39

If a sales associate tells you that's the jacket, do you automatically buy it?

**Interviewee** 38:44

No, of course I have a think over it. And then I tried on see ask ten other people, if I really am interested. Do I look good? Exactly.

**TIP A** 38:46

Sure.

If a friend told you if you went shopping with a friend and they said Yaana, that is the one you're more likely to go. OK, OK. I trust you. I trust. I trust you. And if you think that I still may not buy it, but actually to say no to a trusted friend is basically what you're saying is.

**TIP A** 39:11

Yeah, I like it, but I don't totally agree with you. I like it, but maybe not quite it just it's a little bit different. The dynamic is actually the dynamic is a lot different.

“SALES ASSOCIATE  
IS A SUGGESTION  
AND NOT A  
RECOMMENDATION”

**Interviewee** 39:15

But then there my research stands is how luxury platforms on their ecommerce websites can use live AI virtual assistants just to have that luxurious experience that you have when you walk into a store.

**TIP A** 39:38

What luxurious. I mean, how can it do that? What is that luxurious? I mean it's a chat bot, right? What? What trousers shall I wear these ones?

**Interviewee** 39:40

Yeah.

Yeah.

But then.

**TIP A** 39:50

I'm going out to a I'm going out. I've got a birthday party at the weekend. What should I wear this?

I'm I could do with AI could do with a new pair of socks. Those ones. **Where's the luxurious? Where's the luxurious?** There's the luxurious. Basically, luxury isn't just about product recommendation, right? It's. I mean, **if you go down the old school luxury, it's design, it's architecture, it's smell.**

**TIP A** 40:16

How the sales associates fawn over you, do they offer you a glass of champagne as you're buying \$1,000,000 worth of diamonds? Do they wrap it up? How does it, you know, how it's everything, right?

“HOW CAN IT BE LUXURIOUS”

“LUXURY IS ABOUT DESIGN, ARCHITECTURE, SMELL”

It isn't. It isn't just kind of that one, that's a, that's a salesman or saleswoman saying, you know, I think you probably need a different size.

**Interviewee** 40:23

Yeah.

**TIP A** 40:35

So I don't think it's a luxurious experience. I mean you can dress it up and you can say, you know, oh valued customer, I think you should buy this, but it's not. AI wouldn't say it's a luxurious experience.

“AI LIMITATION FOR EMOTIONAL PERCEPTION”

**Interviewee** 40:38

Back.

But how can?

**TIP A** 40:50

It's a clever experience. It's a smart one, but it may may not be very luxurious.

“IT'S A CLEVER AND SMART EXPERIENCE”

**Interviewee** 40:53

Yeah. How pushed do you know make it maybe with the orders and a few freebies, of course. A glass of champagne cannot be ordered.

**TIP A** 41:04

I'm not sure it's right. So I mean again I just be careful about just don't just careful that you don't. I'm not saying you are, but just careful that you don't fall into the trap that thinking that AI is this magic source that does everything.

“AI IS NOT MAGIC THAT DOES EVERYTHING”

**Interviewee** 41:19

Yes, of course.

**TIP A** 41:20

It does some things and it doesn't do other things. Now I hear lots of people thinking that it's going to whatever. I just isn't. It's right up at that height. But you know, again, just bear the particular instance that you're talking about. It's a recommendation.

**Interviewee** 41:37

Yes.

**TIP A** 41:37

It's not a luxury experience, it's a recommendation. Now, how do you give that recommendation in a luxurious way that may or may not be AI?

I don't know what the answer is. I don't know how AI can give a recommendation in a luxurious way.

Because then it goes back to the question actually is what is luxury? What is it? What does luxury mean? What is a luxurious experience? Full stop AI. What is an what is it? And then can AI it? Does AI have a role in that? And I think what we're talking about is.

**Interviewee** 41:55

OK.

Yes.

What?

**TIP A** 42:13

Recommending product.

**Interviewee** 42:15

But what if along with the product it's giving you a sort of storytelling where it's been made the craftsmanship that's been used?

“LACK OF  
LIMITATION TO  
PROVIDE  
RECOMMENDATION  
IN A LUXURIOUS  
WAY”

**TIP A** 42:23

H&M do that. That's not that doesn't have to be luxurious. Tesco's could do that. They probably tell you now where the where the milk was, what farm the milk came from, what is luxury, I mean. So I'm being again. I'm being disingenuous. Yeah, but.

Like you know what? Keep thinking about what does AI actually do and the kind of things that you're talking about are, you know, not AI necessarily. Perhaps.

**Interviewee** 42:52

Yeah.

**TIP A** 42:54

But AI is AI can do something very well, but it can't do everything. Maybe it will do in the future, but it can't do it yet.

**Interviewee** 42:59

Yes.

Yeah. What types of data protection measures? Do brands take or do you take for your particular?

**TIP A** 43:12

Yeah.

Luxury is about a premium right. Luxury is about how do I justify a premium like if this mouse was luxury, its value would be more than some of its parts, right? That's the luxury thing that the ability to charge a premium.

“AI A POWERFUL TOOL FOR FUTURE BUT NOT A TOOL THAT CAN DO EVERYTHING”

“LUXURY IS ABOUT PREMIUM AND THE NEED TO JUSTIFY THE PREMIUM”

**TIP A** 43:30

So then thinking about AI like if it's providing a luxurious experience, it has to be generating a premium or justifying a premium. And again

I think that's very difficult to do online.

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 43:47

OK.

**TIP A** 43:48

I think you can. I mean what we're talking about is rational, right?

What we're talking about is the ability to make a recommendation.

Luxury is about the ability to create a kind of lifestyle that you want to buy into and you have to pay a premium to get access.

**Interviewee** 44:01

Yes.

**TIP A** 44:06

It's not about the products. I mean, sorry, it is all about the products, but it's about how the products what. So yeah. Anyway, sorry. Yeah, I've got 10 minutes. Sorry if you've got any other burning questions you want to get out.

**TIP A** 44:25

No.

“DIFFICULT ONLINE  
LUXURY  
TRANSLATION”

“ASPIRRATIONAL  
VALUE”

**Interviewee** 45:06

Yeah. What impact of any have you observed of virtual assistants having on engagement and personalization's do you think they create any sort of personalised experience or?

**TIP A** 45:17

They will do. I mean, I don't know, I mean.

**Of course they will, and they'll get better.** OK, one of the things I think so. So I mean, I mean of course, like I said, we can. **You can ask your chat bot to talk to you in any language or whatever you want. You know, you can personalise that experience. So it fits completely for you, you know, to luxuriate it.** You know we're talking about like the luxury.

Thing you could you could talk to you in a pseudo French action accent and feel very cosmopolitan and Parisian. You know that. That's all fine.

**Interviewee** 45:41

Yeah.

**TIP A** 45:50

I mean, yeah, I mean I think one of the things to think about which is not an answer to this question, but again it's a, it's a thing that I would urge you to think about is.

And a lot of brands get wrong. So brands think brands are used to build building a handbag and they finish that handbag and they perfect it and then they push it on sale. So everything is fully finished and fully done, they don't build half the handbag and

“VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS WILL GET BETTER”

“PERSONALISED AND TAILORED INTERACTION”

put it on sale.

They build the whole thing and it's perfect and it's on sale technology never, ever, ever works like that. Right? The first, you know, I was on a plane from Munich last week. You know the plane I flew back on is very, very different to the aeroplane that the Wright brothers flew in 1904.

You know, **technology gets better and better and better and better.**

The iPhone Steve Jobs didn't invent the iPhone and then stop inventing iPhones, you know, and say, well, I've done the iPhone, I'm going to go off and do something else. No, the iPhone 2 comes on the three, the four, whatever we're up to now, the 17.

**Interviewee** 46:44

Yeah.

**TIP A** 46:51

You know, Google didn't just appear like it is now. Overnight it's taken it 20 years to get to where it is open. **AI is constantly changing** and what? What **technology typically does is work in sprints, so they do little bits of functionality and then they stop.**

**Interviewee** 46:51

Yeah.

**TIP A** 47:08

And then they look and see what that is, and then they amend and adapt and change so they never deliver. You know, you get beta releases, right? You never they never fully finish something and say right. That's it. I'm I've done a search engine. Now **I'm walking away you keep on innovating and making it better and faster.**

So it's completely different to brands, but brands don't understand that with 10 technology because they spend money, they buy something and they expect it to be absolutely spot on and perfect and almost fully formed like a handbag.

“TECHNOLOGY GETS BETTER”

“AI IS CHANGING”  
“INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT”

“CONTINUOUS INNOVATION”

**TIP A** 47:57

What impact will AI have on brands in 10 years' time? Then you immediately get away from. Actually AI is pretty weak now. I mean, just by all the hype, by the way, it's incredibly clever, but it's right at the beginning of its evolutionary cycle, right? It's right at the beginning.

**Interviewee** 48:13

Yes.

**TIP A** 48:15

And although you know the press and the coverage are, you know game changing, it's not game changing yet. I mean I don't think any of us can really say that AI has utterly disrupted retail today. I think we can say that it will utterly disrupt retail within the next 10 years, but not today. So what?

What brands are doing with AI now is actually really weak and poor. They're just sticking a toe in there. And yes, their PRS are saying that it's, you know, that they're at the forefront of a revolution and they would they always do, no matter what the technology is. But it's not very powerful today.

The recommendations are not very good. The use of it is not. They haven't really worked out how to use AI yet. No one really like I was. You know, I was dismissive. But the point you're making about a luxurious experience is relevant. It is a relevant point, but it isn't happening today. But how will the AI?

**Interviewee** 48:59

Yep.

Yeah, it.

“AI IS WEAK AS IT'S STILL EMERGING AND IS RELATIVELY NEW”

“CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS ARE NOT GOOD”  
“NEED TO WORK ON HOW TO USE IT”

**TIP A 49:11**

In 10 years' time, add to the luxurious experience. Those are the interesting bits, right? Don't worry about, just recognise the inadequacy of what it is despite the hype. But it will get better and better and better and better. But brands are not doing anything good in AI yet.

I mean, just look at the outcry over the last like at the moment big thing in AI is virtual is digital avatars, digital models there's and everybody's doing it now, you know, **H&M did it and everyone thought, Oh my God, that's really odd. And then Hugo Boss did it and now Vogue put them on the cover and everybody's like in outrage.** Oh my God, Oh my God, you know, it's.

**Interviewee 49:35**

Well.

**TIP A 49:48**

Just, yeah, it it's classic short term, but then everyone, **no one's going to care about it in in a couple of months and they'll be doing something else.** so what is that long term value of AI that that's the critical thing. Think about it in terms of like, you know, 20 years and then don't think about what a brand is doing.

**Interviewee 49:56**

Yes, that's.

**TIP A 50:08**

Think about brands and consumers in the luxury in the fashion space.

“BANDAWAGON EFFECT”

“NO WILL CARE AND NOW SOMETHING NEW WILL COME”

**TIP A** 50:15

What kinds of things will be valuable for consumers? Not what technologies push, but what do you think consumers will want in 10 years' time?

**Interviewee** 50:25

So just going to my last question, what new?

**TIP A** 50:28

You've got 3 minutes.

**Interviewee** 50:32

Yeah. Looking ahead, what new features or capabilities are you most excited to develop for customers? It can be completely hypothetical or a very long futuristic, but some.

**TIP A** 50:45

Well, look, it's about, **it's about that relationship**. So retail is about trust, right? You the brands that you think about, the brands that you value as the honour who do you like? **It's brands that you trust and it's brands that you feel talk to your lifestyle, your values.**

**Interviewee** 50:58

Yeah.

**TIP A** 51:04

You know, there's a reason why lots of people aren't buying Tesla's

“AI TO CREATE  
RELATIONSHIPS”

“BRANDS  
REFLECTING  
PERSONAL VALUES”

anymore. And it's not just about the quality of the car, right? The brand has been undermined by the behaviour of its founder. So and the and therefore the values of Tesla don't align to people. To the values of people that that would have been hoovered up those cars. so

So I guess the interesting bit about AI talking about it being like the oxygen all around us is to **create those bonds** and I don't feel connected to a brand digitally. I don't feel connected by its website. I look at its website like I'm looking at a short window.

**Interviewee** 51:36

Yeah.

**TIP A** 51:45

Right. I don't look. I can go in and meet people and talk to people in the brand and I can appreciate the environment. But a website is just for the stuff, right to buy. It's not that engaging. I don't feel close to a brand through its website. I feel close to it.

**TIP A** 52:02

Around its entire brand persona and everything that it does, but not the website and not the and not the digital channel. So if **AI can soften that and make that feel more in tune with me.**

**Interviewee** 52:19

Yes.

**TIP A** 52:19

**That I feel that an inanimate digital tool understands me and is talking to me as TIP A.** Then I think that's interesting, isn't it? And

“CREATE BONDS”

“USER ATTUNEMENT”

“AN INTIMATE TOOL THAT UNDERSTAND THE PERSON AND TALKS TO THEM LIKE THEM”

that's what AI purports to be able to do at some point in the future.  
That's what it will be doing.

**Interviewee** 52:33

OK. Thank you so much for your time again and yeah.

**TIP A** 52:36

All right. So maybe you thought, and I'll sign it, it may not be today,  
maybe tomorrow, but I will get it signed, don't worry.

**Interviewee** 52:40

That's fine. That's fine. That shouldn't be a problem. And your  
insights were extremely valuable. And yeah. No, no, no, I am not.  
It is actually very valuable. It's also a lot beyond my research. So  
it's good for me to have that sort of knowledge

**Interviewee** 53:00

So it's been really great helpful for my research and I'm really  
grateful for you taking the time to do this.

## PARTICIPANT TIP B

**Interviewee** 0:06

You can start it started recording.

**TIP B** 0:08

OK, I'm TIP B, chief strategy and impact officer at style DNA with the participant number TIP B and I'm conducting this interview on request of Yaana Siroya about luxury fashion and AI agents.

**Interviewee** 0:29

Yes. So let's start with the first question. Can you describe how style DNA is currently using or exploring AI tools for their digital communication?

**TIP B** 0:33

Yeah.

Well, first of all, style DNA started with a in 2019, back in 2019 when there was no open AI, so accessible as it is today to create conversational experiences.

To use generative AI, so it started back in 2019 with the idea to **help consumers shop smartly**. What does it, with the help of AI and but shop smartly, it **means using AI styling**.

Services already back in time because they help to understand. OK, whatever I'm buying, whether it will fit me, which is part of the style, or whether how can I combine it? How can I wear it? What are the different ways based on different occasions? That's the second part.

And this is how the whole story started, because **today stylist services are limited** either to either in store, in luxury stores or they are limited also like online where you have to pay extra money. In our case,

	Invivo
	Emotional
	Initial
	Causation

"HELP CONSUMERS  
SHOP SMARTLY  
THROUGH AI  
STYLING"

"STYLIST SERVICES  
ARE LIMITED"

we wanted to help consumers to make AI stylist services accessible with the help of AI and machine learning as well, and at the same time to help consumers also to.

Think when they want to buy to promote conscious shopping behaviours. That's how it all started today. We evolved a lot. We

evolved on the level of using like applying personalization.

Into our AI stylist and personalization is a different a little is based on the consumer rather than on the transactional data because.

Up to today, all the personalization and in most ecommerce's, it's still the case. They're using personalization as based on transactional data based on clicks based on pages viewed. Based on this is a pure transactional data.

**Interviewee** 3:06

What?

**TIP B** 3:06

And you don't know who is behind those clicks and what is the reason behind those clicks whenever in our case we ask customer to go through the short onboarding where we ask to scan the face.

We create personalised colour palette, then based on the customer requests we introduced closet management when customers upload what they have in the wardrobe because they want to know whether what they're buying, how can they?

Style with what they have already. How can they wear this based on the occasion? We also ask for lifestyle. We ask for body type today we are also releasing a try on feature.

On not on, just random avatar but on customer. So if you want to see how for example, this dress will be on you, you can apply this try on feature. I mean you need to do a picture of yourself.

And at the same time I mean then you will see how it's on you. Yeah, you will see your body, your face.

“TO MAKE ACCESSIBLE STYLING SERVICES WITH MACHINE LEARNING”

“USING PERSONALISATION BASED ON TRANSACTIONAL DATA THROUGH VIEWS AND CLICKS”

“USER INTENT”

“VIRTUAL TRY ON NOT ON RANDON AVATARS BUT ON CUSTOMERS TO PICTURE YOURSELF”

**TIP B 4:27**

So that's how it is used personalization and we have our AI stylist, which is done through the conversational, let's say **e-commerce part of conversational e-commerce**, where consumers usually one of the most requests we receive is I'm going somewhere.

**Interviewee 4:50**

Yeah.

**TIP B 5:08**

Or I have this interview or I have a special date? And what do you recommend me to wear? Or I have this skirt? How do I style it and either we recommend with what customer already has to which access we have or we recommend through the new items.

**Interviewee 5:21**

Yeah.

May I ask what are the what was the motivation or goal behind starting something like that?

**TIP B 5:36**

The biggest vision and the biggest goal was to make **AI styling accessible styling features accessible to more consumers and to also we've seen that we are reducing the returns.**

This means that consumers, they know what they have in the wardrobe, consumers know how to wear what they're buying, and consumers at the same time, they kind of like also do the at the same time. They think before they click the buy button and as well we make the in the luxury, especially in the luxury space. **We make the consumer**

“COVERSATIONAL  
E-COMMERCE”

“PERSONALISED  
DISCOVERY  
LEADING TO  
REDUCTION IN  
RETURNS”

“MAKE CONSUMER  
JOURNEY,  
PRODUCT  
DISCOVERY  
JOURNEY MORE  
PERSONALISED”

journey, product Discovery journey a bit like much more personalised.

And this means that I mean, whenever they see, whatever they see, it's already something which is specifically let's say created for them.

So if red colour doesn't feed them, they will not see red recommendations, you know, clothes with red colour.

So we wanted to make this product discovery process much more personalised.

**Interviewee** 6:57

With while working with so many of your clients, have you come across Gen Z shopping behaviour? Any expectations that they have or is that not the focus of?

**TIP B** 7:11

Yes, of course. Gen Z right now and this is not only based on our experience, this is also based on McKinsey business of fashion recent research I can share with you those research if you want.

So **Gen ZS, they are asking AI, they are asking AI to help them with their search.** So **they are tired of this,** let's say type what you want. I'm looking for long sleeveless yellow dress.

And **seeing the random results, they are fish.** They ask hey, I want AI to help me find I want AI to help me get what I like, what I need. Right. What I'm asking for. To be more precise, more specified and then.

**Interviewee** 8:07

Yes.

**TIP B** 8:07

At the same time, why conversational? Because with the raise of open AI solutions like ChatGPT or generative AI, let's say right DeepSeek ChatGPT and all those alternatives which are several.

Consumers **Gen Z is growing with these solutions. They're used to asking a question and getting a clear, detailed, step-by-step answer and personalised because it takes the history of questions and it learns**

“GENZ ARE ASKING AI TO HELP THEM WITH THEIR SEARCH”

“TIRED OF RANDOM RESULTS”

“GENZ GROWING WITH THESE SOLUTIONS”

about the person and they're personalised to the person based on the location.

So they're kind of like used on the fast and specific and clear solutions and this is what they're asking for and that's why we're constantly working on, improving, on adjusting to their request. We are doing a lot of also.

Questionnaires in our app just to always be on track on their needs and on their like expectations from similar services. But they literally says as it is like hey, I want AI to help me find. I want AI to improve the search.

**Interviewee** 9:22

So this this behaviour of Gen Z does affect your communication planning strategy in a way.

**TIP B** 9:29

Of course, definitely because I mean, in our communication strategy, we don't send one general message to everyone, the communication is personalised, right? Of course, if it's a general announcement of some new feature or something, this is this type of.

**Interviewee** 9:38

Yeah.

**TIP B** 9:49

Of communication is about when we're talking about marketing communication, right? So I mean how it is and it can be used like hey last year to also optimise the wardrobe, right? Last year you bought with us those jeans. Look we have now this.

Sneakers, which will be a great fit to those jeans. So the communication is much more personalised and a lot of companies they're now also, they're now having challenges with loyalty programmes with involving customers.

In loyalty programmes, this can be fixed with a very specific personalization not based on transactional data but based on customer lifestyle, customer behaviour, customer. Be like previous purchases

“CONVERSATIONAL AI EXPECTATIONS”

“FAST AND SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS”

“BRANDS HAVING CHALLENGES WITH LOYALTY PROGRAMMES”

“PERSONALISATION ON CUSTOMERS LIFESTYLE AND BEHAVIOUR DATA”

based on much more deeper information which can build that that personalization, personalised communication, communication needs to be personalised and this is possible only with AI.

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 11:00

OK, have you encountered any challenges or insights regarding genzer's emotional connection towards AI powered features?

**TIP B** 11:10

Well, first of all, them **they're dependent depending on those features and when they don't see it, right. So they kind of like are lost,** you know for example or we have our own app like a marketplace.

**TIP B** 11:30

With all those AI features in inside and but there are several brands which we don't have in our app yet, right because of the different political, internal political reasons of the brand. Either they don't want to be on the market.

Place or the connection is a should be built in a different way. So what we see is that Gen ZS. They are asking us to bring in these brands because they want to buy in that brand through our product discovery AI features.

Right. They don't want just to go to the brand and buy what brand offers they want to apply those personalised recommendation and everything and this is obviously a challenge for them because from one side we cannot give them immediately what they want in some cases.

**TIP B** 12:29

“GEN Z ARE LOST  
WHEN THEY DON'T  
GET THE RIGHT  
ANSWERS”

And from another side it's like brands also needs to be much more open rather than they are now to this type of services and to AI. They are trying a lot. They are experimenting a lot, but they're still very far away.

**Interviewee** 12:50

In your experience, do consumers respond to the tone like the voice tone features of AI assistance? If so, then can you do you have like a specific example to share?

**TIP B** 13:03

What do you mean if they respond?

**Interviewee** 13:08

Do they have any liking or disliking towards? If it's a conversational AI? If it's speaking to you do they want it to be in a preferred style of talking? Does the tone of.

The conversation AI matter to them in in your experience.

**TIP B** 13:30

Well, the tone should be friendly and the tone shouldn't be nudging.

This is what for us is a priority, right? So we don't push customer to buy something.

**TIP B** 13:44

“BRANDS STILL  
LACK IN AI  
EXPERIECNES”

“TONE SHOULD BE  
FRIENDLY AND  
NOT NUDGING”

We, On the contrary, the prompts which we create, and they should be the case of every single brand taken into account sustainability, sustainability part and the impact, environmental impact and social impact. Me, myself, I'm promoting conscious marketing.

**TIP B** 14:05

I'm very much into it. I am against any manipulative messaging, manipulative tones, right? Because in the end customer they realise, hey, I just bought this because of that. Like, I mean, four more right here of missing out.

And but I don't even need it. They realise it and they realise that they were manipulated literally, so the conversation should be honest, should be clear. If there is something which we cannot offer, or we don't think this is not, this is, this is fit we tell. Yes, it should be they.

**Interviewee** 14:32

Yeah.

Like.

**TIP B** 14:42

Want this? They want this open, transparent, clear communication. If it's a no, they want to hear a no. But it needs to be friendly. It needs to be respectful and it needs to be transparent, like honest.

**TIP B** 15:01

That's the key for us.

**Interviewee** 15:04

“CONVERSATIONS SHOULD BE HONEST AND CLEAR”

“TRANSPARENT AND RESPECTFUL REFUSAL IN FRIENDLY TONE”

What types of data protection measures does Style DNA take to ensure that customer information is kept confidential and not misused in any form?

**TIP B** 15:15

Well, first of all, up to today, we have never shared any customer data to with anyone up to today, right? That's number one. I mean this is very important for us, **GDPR** or all those like privacy.

**TIP B** 15:34

The legislation is being followed very strictly and rigorously. However, we see that, for example, if customers want to use our solution in another brand. We this is something which we're starting seeing, right, so we need to share this customer data app behaviour data, not personal data obviously, but App behaviour data only we have to share with the third party and then we ask customer.

**We ask consent of customer if we can share app behaviour data with a third party in case customer engages with a third party and they give us this permission.** That's the only case the rest personalised personal data and all of that is never being shared with customers.

**Interviewee** 16:27

Do you?

**TIP B** 16:28

With the third parties, we don't have third parties, right? It's our proprietary solution or the only thing is just Google and all of those where we use as the basis as the for. But the solution is our proprietary, we don't have third parties in the middle to share the data with.

“GDPR  
COMPLIANCE”

“DATA  
PROTECTION AND  
BEHAVIOUR DATA  
CONSENT”

**Interviewee** 16:50

Yes, of course. Do you think consumers are very, let's say, conscious about their data or do you think it's not as much and they're not as bothered?

**TIP B** 17:04

Look, I mean about their personal data. They **are not very worried because the personal data we know we are living in a digital world**. It's everywhere, right? You have WhatsApp, you have Instagram or you have any meta solution it's been.

**Interviewee** 17:18

Yeah.

**TIP B** 17:23

Like everyone, let the whole meta knows and Meta sells to 3rd party as well, right? So we were a bit cautious about face scanning part. Whether they will because this is already sharing like your face not only some emails.

**Interviewee** 17:36

Yeah.

**TIP B** 17:42

And payment data. But they don't share with us payment data either. We don't want to have that information but face we were thinking, hey, how they will react, right? Because we need to build that

“NOT WORRIED ABOUT PERSONAL DATA BECAUSE OF DIGITAL WORLD”

colour palette to understand, to help to customer, to learn which colours are fitting them.

**Interviewee** 17:57

Yes.

**TIP B** 18:01

And which don't. And we were **surprised** that customers are willing to do this because these are also face scanning is also becoming a commodity because you have all those makeup features, sunglasses or glasses try on.

**TIP B** 18:19

Features and you scan your face and then you see OK, which hairstyle will fit you, which makeup will fit you, which glasses will fit you? This is already happening for several years and.

**Interviewee** 18:23

Yeah.

**TIP B** 18:36

In our case, we don't show what how to change hair. We don't do these recommendations, but we use it purely to create colour palette which is much more important for them than just try on some makeup, right? But many companies are using the face scanning already.

**TIP B** 18:57

Technology. We built our own because the goal is not to try on any hairstyle or something. The goal is to create colour palette. It's a bit

“SURPRISINGLY  
CUSTOMERS ARE  
WILLING TO DO  
FACE SCANS”

different case and now since we are releasing the try on feature on the body and we will.

**TIP B** 19:16

Ask customers to take picture of their body. This is something which we've done. We asked them a lot of customers are happy to do it because they online. They're tired of those returns management

because they buy something and it doesn't feed them and.

They're waiting for it, for example, so they're willing to take a picture of their bodies. But that's also, for example, they trust us, right? We didn't have any incident where data was leaked or something.

**Interviewee** 19:45

Yes.

Yes.

**TIP B** 19:51

But in cases of brands, some brands are still very cautious with all this type of data. For example, we were we were also thinking how they will react on close it from one side there we see that they're uploading in AI stylist chat, right?

Right, they're uploading. Let's say. Hey, these are the skirt. I want to know how with what? I can wear it and we create outfit from the catalogue and then we saw that they want to have their close it items in the app because they're uploading right. We build the close it feature and.

**Interviewee** 20:30

Yes.

**TIP B** 20:30

But the first year customers uploaded more than 6,000,000 items from

“A LOT OF CUSTOMERS ARE HAPPY TO CLICK A PICTURE OF THEIR BODY IF IT'S ONLINE”

“TIRED OF RETURNS”

their close it, so this type of data they're willing to share because they when they see the value, when they see that it's just for the sake of collecting data.

**TIP B** 20:50

And reusing it. I don't think this will be the case. They will realise customers are very smart now.

**Interviewee** 20:57

Yeah, that's true. Can you walk me through how AI assistance can influence the luxury shopping journey like in your experience?

**TIP B** 21:07

Yes. So AI and luxury AI assistant and luxury.

At **this stage it is not compatible a little bit.**

Because **luxury is all about personalised journeys**, right? I mean, by personalised it means they have their own concierge. When you enter into luxury shop and at the same time they want to keep this store, they are not interested in increasing online purchase.

**Interviewee** 21:24

Yes.

**TIP B** 21:40

Says they want to keep it personal because they up selling opportunity in all of this. This is much higher. However, what we see that they need AI assistance.

Online for those customers, especially the new generations, Gen Z' and etcetera which are following them, **they are more online driven because a lot of luxury stores, they have queues.**

“AI ASSISTANT AT THIS SATAGE IS NOT COMPATIBLE”

“LUXURY IS ABOUT PERSONALISED JOURNEY”

“BECAUSE OF QUEUES, GEN Z WANT TO SHOP ONLINE”

**Interviewee** 22:08

Yeah.

**TIP B** 22:14

Right. I mean you said that when you enter into the store, you see whether it's luxury or not. But I would say it's even visible before because usually on the high season they have queues and customers are waiting new generations. **They hate queues they don't like, they want they are, they are.**

**Interviewee** 22:26

Yeah.

**TIP B** 22:32

**Fast generation of fast decisions of fast solutions of ready generation for ready solutions.** So and they will be demanding for more, for example Louis Vuitton.

For this year, they are focusing on LVMH group, right, but Louis Vuitton is a leading brand. They are focusing on personalization and they want to use AI assistant to apply for personalization features, right. They want to give this personalization let's say experience.

**Personalised experience, which they cannot do without AI,** cannot again, it will be either based on transactional data or they need to apply personalised lifestyle data and for luxury segment.

**Interviewee** 23:12

OK.

**TIP B** 23:28

It's like, yeah, it's important.

**Interviewee** 23:32

What do you think will be the biggest challenge in deploying an AI virtual assistant on a luxury platform?

“GEN Z HATE QUEUES AND WAITING”

“FAST GENERATION WITH FAST SOLUTIONS”

“TAILORED EXPERIENCE CANNOT BE DONE USING AI”

**TIP B** 23:39

The biggest challenge is the **fear** that luxury assistant will kind of like **will not give that that, let's say, private concierge service**. That's the biggest fear. And for example when I.

Was discussing with the Kering group I was telling, talking to them what they think about AI stylist etc. They say, hey, we have a lot of stylists which create curate every single look.

Right. But at the same time, they say, hey, this cannot be replaced by simply by the AI, but at the same time you need to understand that for example, if we take Gucci right so their customers, they they're not buying only Gucci, they're buying other brands as well.

**TIP B** 24:36

And Gucci doesn't know which brands they're buying. So if there is like again like this challenge right from one side, **they want to know to make experience more personalised and they can get this through the closet feature, through the wardrobe feature, because customers will be uploading other brands to understand how to combine what.**

They buy with Gucci, but at the same time they are scared that the styling will not be based on Gucci style. It will be based on trends or on something. But what we want to promote.

**Interviewee** 25:09

Yeah.

We want oh.

**TIP B** 25:12

Is that styling should be based on customer choices, right? So the solution I see here is of a customer choice. I'm always promoting the choice option.

“FEAR REGARDING LACK OF PRIVATE SERVICE”

“PERSONALISATION TROUGH ONLINE CLOSET FEATURE”

**TIP B 25:31**

Customer should choose whether he wants AI stylist or whether he wants personalised stylist if he wants a personal stylist online, he needs to wait, for example, in Pinko right. I was looking for something and pinko offers this AI style. No stylist, not AI style.

**TIP B 25:51**

Stylist option when you are it's a prime fashion. It's not purely luxury, but it's premium fashion. So you're going to pinko. You're choosing the if you look staying for some seconds on the product page the message pops up saying hey, do you need styling advice?

Which is a very good initiative. And then I say yes, I want the styling advice right, just to test it. And then when I say yes, I want the form pops up where I knew which I need to fill in and then the stylist will come back to me within 24 hours. I'm not sure.

If I want this service anymore within 24 hours because I'm right now looking for it. But if I would have a choice, get the advice now or choose the personal stylist to come back to you and talk to you after 24 hours.

**TIP B 26:46**

That would be much better. Maybe I would check now, but I would also check what stylist will tell me, but at but at least I would have some opinion and at least I would have some choice you know to make not brands of. **Customers are tired for brands making choice** for

“TIRED OF  
BRANDS MAKING  
THE CHOICE”

them, you need to buy this. You need to buy this. You need to buy this. No, they need personalised journeys where they can explore the new products.

**Interviewee** 27:22

In in your design work for an AI stylist, how do you ensure that the AI interface reflex, choosing aesthetics mode and interaction like how do you build on a stylist like that?

**TIP B** 27:36

What do you mean? How do we ensure what exactly?

**Interviewee** 27:40

How do you ensure that the AI interface reflex cues of aesthetics, mood and interaction?

**TIP B** 27:48

Oh, we well, first of all, I don't think they care more for user aesthetics each **they already expect by default the UX to be perfect.**

**Interviewee** 28:04

Thank you.

**TIP B** 28:04

**Whenever UX is broken, they stop. You lose the customer,** so they already they expect by default. It's not something they are checking, but they are surprised when in today's world it's still not done. Let's say

“EXPECT UX TO BE PERFECT BY DEFAULT”

“IF UX IS BROKEN THE CUSTOMER WILL NOT USE IT AND YOU LOOSE THE CUSTOMER”

this way. So what we do, we do a lot of tests on a daily basis. We run a lot of tests, we measure every single test and.

**TIP B** 28:36

Because luckily we can do this. We have a lot of very useful insights on how to educate about new feature, how to adapt, what customers care about, what works for customers to start thinking right to start interacting.

**Interviewee** 29:01

Yes.

**TIP B** 29:01

That's important. Again, we are a we are against nudging, but at the same time we guide customers through the whole discovery journey afterwards.

**Interviewee** 29:13

Are you currently tracking how transit engages with AI tools through any of the tools like CTRS anything like that to track the behaviours?

**Interviewee** 29:29

To track how Gen Z engages with AI tools. There are tools like.

**TIP B** 29:34

Well, they're very active with AI tools. Of course we are checking. We are seeing. We are seeing what works best, what doesn't work. For example, in our case, the matching part on the

“FEATURE  
EDUCATION AND

“AGAINST  
NUDGING BUT  
GUIDANCE FOR  
PRODUCT  
DISCOVERY”

matching part is very important for them for every. Product they open, they see whether it's a match or not, right for them. And then we define we clearly say openly it's a match with let's say print and shape, but it's not a match with colour and season or something like that right. There are 4 categories.

**TIP B** 30:14

Where we are checking against the matching, but they say some want to see it, some don't. And since we're working globally, we need to also understand that for example by US.

Customer consumers app is being much more actively used with those features and they come back rather than with the Europeans. They are much, I mean, a little bit more.

Let's say maybe not used to it because there is much more similar solutions etcetera in the states rather than in Europe yet, yeah. So

**Interviewee** 30:49

What role do you think AI virtual assistants play in the future strategy for luxury brands for engagement process?

**TIP B** 31:10

It would highly, highly important role, highly important because the customers will be demanding and maybe it will be against the willingness and readiness of luxury brands, but customers will be demanding those.

Of AI assistance, they will be demanding the personalised experience because they are already solutions like Style DNA, which are offering those with luxury brands. So we have different fashion segments but they will. It will be a must. And in the end, all the all the brands, most of

“BRAND-CUSTOMER TENSION”

them will end up, for example, of course, there will be brands like Bottega Veneta which will not have it. They're even not investing anything in their digital strategy they.

**TIP B** 32:08

They only focus on in store experience. They don't have anything in their road map for digital and they are out from any marketplace. They are not anywhere right. They want to keep customers only within Bottega Veneta. They don't do a lot of social and they want to continue. Being that classical luxury brand.

There will be such brands, but this won't be the majority. They will be just exceptions.

**Interviewee** 32:34

In.

Yes, in your view, how do AI virtual assistant features help a luxury brand stand out in the digital space?

**TIP B** 32:48

By personalization, **by applying personalization because they will learn more about their customers and they will be personalising the whole journey of the customer.** That's the main thing. Some of the how they can stand out between them.

**TIP B** 33:07

Well, some **brands may focus, they need to choose the niche.** If for example, I don't know.

Sally Hansen wants to focus on skiing or sports. Let's say they can

“CUSTOMER  
INSIGHTS WILL BE  
A RESULT OF  
PERSONALISATION”

“BRANDS NEED TO  
FOCUS AND  
CHOOSE A NICHE”

promote these like give this special styling advices for in this spec they need to choose niche and try not to do everything for everyone and copy everything they need to.

**TIP B** 33:37

Choose niche because every luxury brand I mean is being purchased for some specific occasion. Some brands are being used for daily outfits, then there should be a different type of AI implementation. Some are being used like.

Like with you for events for specific occasions, others are being used. I don't know by like a lot of piano and all by high, high, very high net worth. Say individuals like royalty, royal families. Then the introduction of AI. It should be told completely different. **What's beautiful part is that AI allows you to stand out.** It's just brand needs to decide where they want to focus when they are standing out. That's it.

**Interviewee** 34:24

Yes.

OK. And the last question, looking ahead, what new features or capabilities of AI are you most excited to develop for your Gen Z consumers? It can be something very long term, it can be something a bit hypothetical as well. It's just something that would excite you that oh if this was possible.

It would really help me engage the Gen Z.

**TIP B** 34:53

Yeah.

I have a very clear vision on this or first of all talking about style DNA. We are releasing this try on feature which we believe will help enormously consumers in their shopping. Experience. Then I love the initiative. European Union is has launched

“AI HELPS YOU  
STAND OUT”

about digital product passport, about **traceability and transparency**, like looking into OK, if I'm buying this.

What was the? I don't know, child labour used or not, this type of transference features which luxury is much more advanced rather than others. This traceability part and the third general for fashion.

I am and it's still far away. We are. It's a maybe a long term, but I really looking forward for circularity in fashion, let's say, to more like, I don't know, I'm to use more the reselling opportunity to use more the.

**Repairing opportunity right. Resell repair. Reuse** like all those three are rule which it's like in my head. So I expect AI to be shifted more into this direction because I mean we have already.

**TIP B 36:27**

Or what 6-7 generations clothes produced. Now we need to think about reducing overconsumption and promoting more. Each brands needs to think about it, promoting more and teaching education.

**TIP B 36:47**

Team consumers on how to reuse, repair or recycle right or resell there is. I love the log. There is one initiative in LVMH Group. I don't remember the brand now, but there is a one brand for.

For the suitcase, so they offer the service of renewing. If you have already suitcase, which is expensive suitcase, but it's like totally old already with a little scratches you can submit it and you will get a, let's say not the new one but the same.

But already with a new design.

“TRACEBILITY AND  
TRANSPARENCY”

“3R RULE”  
HEALTHY  
CONSUMPTION”

**Interviewee** 37:28

Yes. Repaired. Yeah. And it will have like a new design, yeah.

**TIP B** 37:32

Yeah. So this type of things AI should be applied to this 3R rule. Let's say for fashion. Fashion should be changed. The conception of fashion, luxury or non-luxury.

**TIP B** 37:47

It should be more transparent, but this is already we are in the line with it. We are on the way with you, Green Deal and but recycling parts still on the level of solutions we are still not there.

**Interviewee** 37:51

Yeah.

Yeah, I think there's a very nice brand called Patagonia. They do winter jackets.

And they had an advertisement. That was that you pass on your Patagonia jacket from one generation to the next to show that we don't. Everybody doesn't need a new jacket. This is so good in quality that it can be layered down to generations and that.

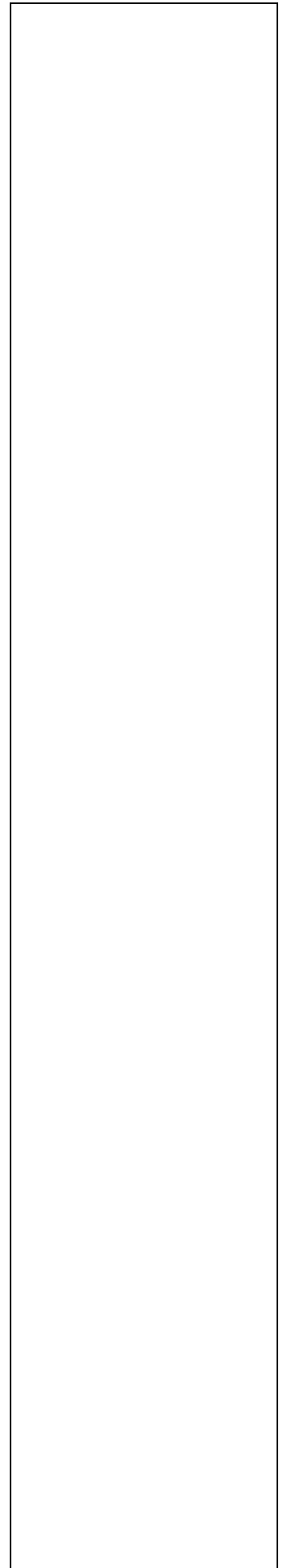
**TIP B** 38:32

Exactly.

**Interviewee** 38:33

To be used and even now I think they do have a programme where if your jacket is, let's say washed out or torn or something has happened, they repair it and give it back to you and they change the

design a little bit and you would have like a colourful jacket now. But they do it in a really nice.



**PARTICIPANT CP A**

**CP A** 0:03

Hi, I'm CP, I'm participant number A and it's the 7th of August 2025.

**Interviewee** 0:12

Thank you. Thank you so much. Now I will just.

Let's begin with the interview.

Yeah. So firstly, thank you so much for participating in this interview. It really means a lot. So if you have any queries in the questions between do let me know and if you want to stop anything or just breathe for a moment, do let me know and then we can go over again.

So let's start with the first question. I want to know what's your general impression of how AI is integrated into the luxury space.

**CP A** 1:08

OK, so I'm not massive on using AI to like to find out information and things, but when I have used it, I found it like it's very basic. It's the same as any like fashion or just normal website you go on and there'll be a chat box.

I haven't found it to do anything specifically for me.

**Interviewee** 1:28

Yeah.

OK, so that takes us to the second question. What do you expect from luxury brands, e-commerce platforms in terms of experience or interaction?

**CP A** 1:46

I'd say for me, like, luxury is like a lot about art and making things look cool. So I think I quite expect like a nicely laid out website, it being clear where things are like measurements like this model wearing this size.

**Interviewee** 2:08

- Invivo
- Emotional
- Initial
- Causation

"NOT MASSIE ON USING AI"

"TAILORED FOR CONSUMER"

"ARTISTIC LUXURY"

"QUITE LIKE A NICELY LAID WEBSITE"

So, like you said that you don't think they've been successful enough in providing that sort of an experience?

**CP A** 2:37

Yeah. I think especially with like measurements of clothes, it can be very hit or miss if they put them on.

**Interviewee** 2:47

OK. How would you describe your emotional experience when interacting with AI assistants like chat bots on luxury plant platforms?

**CP A** 2:58

I can **get quite frustrated** sometimes.

Should I explain more? Yeah. **I just think they're very basic**. And I think once I went on machine AI I don't know if you know the brand was yeah, luxury like brand and a good one. It was like the only option to contact them at that minute was to use a chat box and I asked it a question like is this in stock in your whatever store in your London store? And it said sorry, please contact us tomorrow at 8:00 AM kind of thing.

And it was like, yeah, it's still like I think very basic and yeah.

**Interviewee** 3:43

Yeah. So what they say that oh, it's 24/7 available, it just it's not technically.

“FRUSTRATION  
OF CHATBOT”

“CHATBOTS ARE  
VERY BASIC”

**CP A** 3:50

Yeah. And I, yeah, I think as well **it can only go as far as what it knows** on a website and if the websites say didn't have that information, obviously like it can't tell me.

**Interviewee** 4:04

Got it. So contrary to that, can you share an instance where AI made your shopping easier or more enjoyable?

**CP A** 4:14

So I do a lot of like vintages and second-hand shopping and use AI. Lot say if I've seen like a nice piece online and it doesn't say where it's from, I can screenshot it, put it into like **Google Image search.**

**Interviewee** 4:19

What?

**CP A** 4:32

And then find out what the item is. Yeah. Yeah. So in that instance, **I do quite like AI for these.**

**Interviewee** 4:35

Yeah, all similar items as well.

OK, On the contrary, can you share as an experience where AI assistant didn't meet your expectation like you had a certain level of expectation and you felt like, oh, like something that you've tried to for the hype of it or maybe something like that?

**CP A** 5:00

Definitely the one I just explained where I like.

Used it to see if they had an item in stock and it didn't know. I'm trying to think. I'm not sure if I've done one for like.

“IT CAN ONLY GO AS FAR AS WHAT IT KNOWS”

“DO LIKE AI FOR GOOGLE IMAGE SEARCH”

Yeah.

The hype of it, I don't know.

**Interviewee** 5:27

OK.

Nothing.

**CP A** 5:32

No, like in what?

**Interviewee** 5:34

Like an experience like either, like a pop-up that was too hyped and some because due to some digital again due to some digital interface or even as basic as using Snapchat philtres or any TikTok Philtres even as basic.

**Interviewee** 5:54

Because that and you felt like the campaign was too hyped, or it was just not delivering or meeting your expectations.

**CP A** 6:03

Yeah, I remember where they did that thing where it's like you can put like one of their little pumpkins or, like tomatoes on your camera, if you like. You are code. **And it was kind of like fun** for, **like, maybe 2 minutes.** But yeah, it didn't last.

**Interviewee** 6:12

Yep.

OK, it was just like a very short experience.

**CP A** 6:24

Yeah.

“FUN BUT NOT  
LONG LASTING”

Interviewee 6:26

Can you describe your emotions when a thing doesn't meet your expectations? Like what other emotions that are running in your head?

CP A 6:40

Oh yeah, like frustration, annoyance and yeah.

Interviewee 6:48

OK. Do you personally prefer shopping online or offline?

CP A 6:53

So I search a lot online and then I will go and try it in the store, especially if it's luxury because I want to be sure if I'm spending that much money on something it fits properly.

Interviewee 7:08

OK.

In for example, if it was an AI assistant, in what ways do tone the visual presentation or the human like traits affect your AI experience?

CP A 7:24

So any like AI experience I've had has usually just been like very standard like you type in a question, and it will answer to you. But I do think it would be like a bit more fun if like her luxury brand, like made it a bit artier and like cool. And like if you were speaking to someone maybe.

Interviewee 7:47

Yeah.

How often do you engage with AI features while shopping? Let's say, is it too high to low?

CP A 7:59

I would say not a lot at all other than when I'm like, doing vintage

“FRUSTRATION AND ANNOYANCE WHEN AI DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS”

“AI AS AN EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN VERY STANDARD”  
“AESTHETICS CAN MAKE THE WEBSITE VERY COOL ALONG WITH ANTHROMOPHIC QUALITIES”

shopping and trying to find an item I would never go to it to like, say, how would I, how should I style this?

Kind of thing cause I think.

**Interviewee** 8:16

OK, it wouldn't. Yeah. Do work with stylists.

**CP A** 8:18

Off.

Yeah, I yeah, I kind of sorry.

**Interviewee** 8:21

But.

Sorry, no, no, please continue.

**CP A** 8:25

I think I would trust a human and like store employee more about their opinions of how to style something rather than a robot.

**Interviewee** 8:34

Yeah, I was just coming to that that would you like opinions of somebody in store as well because there are some people who don't like opinions at all, which is fine. But I was just trying to get your answer that if it was an in store, would you try to ask somebody what would go with what?

**CP A** 8:54

Yeah, like I've found myself a couple of times going to like a shop and being like, oh, I like this, but I don't know what I'd wear it with. And yeah.

**Interviewee** 9:08

OK. How much do you trust AI assistance in terms of data privacy and personalised suggestions?

**CP A** 9:17

“HUMAN TRUST  
FOR STYLING”

Umm so with data privacy, I think I didn't worry about it because I only message it, but I would say maybe if I was speaking to something I would be a bit more concerned. Yeah, I like. Sometimes I don't like speaking like Siri on my phone. Like I think sometimes I find it.

**Interviewee** 9:34

Themselves.

**CP A** 9:42

A little bit weird.

**Interviewee** 9:44

OK.

**CP A** 9:45

And then with personalised suggestions.

Not that much, to be honest. Yeah, maybe if my algorithm was better.

**Interviewee** 10:00

Take care, I also want to know that what type of solutions do you think would be helpful to make these technologies a bit more trustworthy.

**CP A** 10:09

Oh.

I'm not entirely sure, maybe just like.

Privacy notice and like a tick box kind of thing.

**Interviewee** 10:24

Yeah.

OK. Do you think AI assistants feel authentic, or do they come across as robotic?

**CP A** 10:39

“I DON’T WORRY ABOUT DATA PRIVACY IF IT IS JUST MESSAGE ALTHOUGH IF IT WAS CONVERSATION I WOULD BE WORRIED”

“TAKE PRIVACY CONSENT”

I would still say slightly robotic, even though.

Yeah, they can like.

Type speak in a certain way which sounds human, but I think my experience is like they still don't know as much as a human can like in the tone and the way they like phrase sentences. It's human like but.

I don't know at the end of the day, I'm still aware I'm speaking to like.

**Interviewee** 11:09

A robot? Yeah.

That's fine. Can you walk me through how AI assistance can influence your luxury shopping journey?

Yeah.

**CP A** 11:20

Yeah, like I say, I don't use it that much, but I would say it's more on the online processes into to the in store and it would be like if I had any questions like. Do you have this in store? What are the measurements of this? Usually, if it's not on the website, it won't know and it will tell me like be like. Sorry I don't know this or yeah, but sometimes as well as like is this stocked anywhere else?

**Interviewee** 11:48

OK.

What? What do you think would be your biggest challenge while using an AI virtual assistant that speaks to you? Would it be technical issues, organisational issues, cultural issues? What do you think would be the biggest problem for you too?

“ROBOTIC  
COMMUNICATION”

“AI CAN BE USED  
MORE FOR  
ONLINE  
PROCESSES”

“RIGHT  
INFORMATION  
AVAILABLE ON  
WEBSITES  
REGARDING  
STOCK, SIZING,  
MEASUREMENTS”

**CP A** 13:02

Yeah, I think if anything like **technical** like where to find it on the website kind of thing. But yeah, I don't find it too difficult to use.

**Interviewee** 13:14

Yeah.

OK. How does your AI interaction differ from human sales advisor and luxury stores?

**CP A** 13:26

Yeah, I would say **it's very different. I usually like would ask for sales assistance advice. I kind of prefer the human interaction and styling and just like having a conversation.**

**Interviewee** 13:38

Yeah.

**CP A** 13:44

Station with people who have, like usually if they work in luxury there, they have a similar interest.

**Interviewee** 13:51

Yeah.

How important is it to you that AI assistance offer tailored style advice like an install stylist?

“TECHNICAL  
ISSUES”

“HUMAN TRUST  
FOR STYLING”

**CP A** 14:02

Honestly, like not that important. I think I'd rather just have a sales assistant tell me, like, have in store stylist advice from them and yeah.

**Interviewee** 14:21

Do you do you revisit brands that provide personalised AI suggestions?

**CP A** 14:27

Not really, no.

**Interviewee** 14:31

That's fine when interacting with an AI assistant from a luxury fashion brand, what features would make it feel more luxurious to you?

**CP A** 14:42

Kind of like I said before, if they kind of turned it more into an experience and like this kind of cool thing you're interacting with.

**Interviewee** 14:52

Yeah.

**CP A** 14:56

Yeah, maybe if it.

Felt more human, I don't know.

**Interviewee** 15:02

Yeah, just be more human, basically.

**CP A** 15:06

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 15:09

How would you feel about an AI assistant that remembers your style

“ENGAGING  
EXPERIENCE”

“FELT MORE  
HUMAN”

journey or helps you celebrate your milestones like a birthday message or an important day message that so basically whatever history. That the brand has of yours. How would you feel if they remember about that or remember your previous purchase history?

**CP A** 15:26

Oh.

Yeah, I think I would find that like quite cool, especially if it was like a brand. I really liked.

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 15:47

And how would that change your perception of AI virtual assistance?

**CP A** 15:52

I think I would view them as like again, like a bit more human and it like it knows me. I'd maybe trust it a bit more if it was like you've purchased this, you might like.

**Interviewee** 16:04

OK, in your view, how do AI virtual assistance features can help a luxury brand stand out in their digital space?

**CP A** 16:24

Features help

I'm not sure to be honest.

“MEMORABLE  
PERSONALISATION  
TO MAKE  
CUSTOMER  
DELIGHT”

HUMAN-LIKE  
BEHAVIOUR HELPS  
TO TRUST AN AI ”

**Interviewee** 16:40

It can be hypothetical as well. It doesn't have to be like what kind of features do you think would we'd be able to like, make that luxury pants stand out?

**CP A** 16:52

Oh, actually, if it was like, oh, no, this isn't for virtual assist. None.

Maybe if it was able to like to help me measure things.

**Interviewee** 17:08

Yeah.

**CP A** 17:10

And like, tell me like the length of the sleeve or whatever. Maybe if it was like looked a bit cooler.

**Interviewee** 17:19

Yeah.

**CP A** 17:20

Uh.

Yeah, I don't really know.

**Interviewee** 17:23

OK, what according to you like with your friends around and everyone, what features are most valued by gens at customers like you?

**CP A** 17:35

Within fashion and AI.

**Interviewee** 17:38

Yeah, luxury, fashion and AI.

“AI ABLE TO HELP  
MEASURE  
THINGS”

**CP A** 17:45

Hmm.

I'm not entirely sure.

**Interviewee** 17:51

Yes.

Just you can say for yourself any 3 words or 4 words that would describe the kind of features that you would value the most.

**CP A** 17:53

Uh.

I could say like useful.

Efficiency.

**CP A** 18:08

And.

Yeah, I don't really know, sorry.

**Interviewee** 18:16

That's fine.

In what ways do you think AI and luxury should evolve to match your expectations?

**CP A** 18:27

I think like virtual try on and because one of the websites I've shopped from essence, they don't have a store and it's you have to order from. I think it's Canada.

**Interviewee** 18:30

Yes.

“USEFUL AND EFFICIENCY ARE FEATURES THAT ARE NEEDED”

“LIKE VIRTUAL TRY ON”

**CP A** 18:43

So shipping's a lot to send back and it would be very useful if I could see what the clothes looked like on me before I bought them using AI somehow. I don't know if it's all but.

**Interviewee** 18:56

Yeah.

**CP A** 19:00

Umm.

And yeah, just like a cool online experience maybe.

**Interviewee** 19:08

Yeah.

How would you describe the ideal interaction with an AI assistant from your favourite luxury brand? This is completely hypothetical. Like what do you think would be the ideal experience to have, including whatever different things that you want to put and you can frame your answer that way.

**CP A** 19:29

That's a good question. I think I would maybe like go on the website looking at an item and like have.

Like an AI wardrobe thing, and it would like to be my measurements and then it would put the item on me and then I could be like, OK, nice. And then I could ask that like, do you have this in stock? And if they say yes?

**Interviewee** 19:47

Yeah.

Yeah.

**CP A** 20:16

“VIRTUAL TRY ON  
CAN HELP IN  
REDUCTION OF  
RETURNS”

“COOL ONLINE  
EXPERIENCE”

“AN AI  
WARDROBE”

And then I could go to the shop and buy it and try it on there or just order it if it looked nice.

**Interviewee** 20:26

OK, that's a nice one.

**CP A** 20:31

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 20:32

Yeah, like how you add things to your cart. You add things to your wardrobe.

**CP A** 20:37

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 20:38

Yeah, that sounds good.

OK. I think we're done. And is there anything else that you wanna share related?

**CP A** 20:52

I don't think so, but I'll let cells pops up.

**Interviewee** 20:54

No.

OK, that's fine. Thank you so much for your time. I will just stop the recording first.

Oh.

“INCREASE IN  
ONLINE ORDER  
THROUGH VTO”

**PARTICIPANT CP B**

**Interviewee** 0:04

So I'll start with the interview questions. So, while purchasing luxury, do you prefer shopping online or is it always in stock?

**CP B** 0:13

For luxury items, it depends. If I have the time, I will prefer to go into store just because you. That way you know if you're spending a lot of money, you'd rather see the product in store know you're happy with it or you might see something else in store you might prefer. If I don't have the time

**CP B** 0:32

I would buy online just because and then I know if I need to return it. If I don't like it, it's convenient for me, but preferably in store if I could.

**Interviewee** 0:41

OK. And what's your general impression of how these days AI is being integrated into luxury fashion space?

**CP B** 0:52

It's hard to tell really because.

I haven't seen it as much in luxury like as in for me myself in in the shop. I don't use AI for anything, so I don't know how, if its helping luxury brands evolving or if it's not.

**Interviewee** 1:06

Yes.

**CP B** 1:15

I don't really see the difference with AI in that sense. I think it helps in other aspects, but for fashion I don't. I don't know if it really helps it.

- In vivo
- Emotional
- Initial
- Causation

“HIGH VALUE VALIDATION”

“ONLINE = CONVENIENCE”

**Interviewee** 1:18

OK.

Do you do you expect any kind of experience from luxury brands on their website because it's, it's become a lot about experience in the last five to 10 years. Brands want to provide you with an experience and not just a purchase.

**Interviewee** 1:42

So do you expect any sort of? Do you have any sort of expectations from the e-commerce platforms?

**CP B** 1:53

It's I don't have any expectations because where you are shopping online, **there's only so much that a brand can offer** you apart from just making a sale, things like.

**Gift boxing or there's delivery where they hand deliver it to you** as opposed to just sending it with the Courier. Things like that that they provide on their website **is like a good touch**, but I don't expect anything like extra from them because I know I'm just shopping online. It's not going to be the same treatment.

You'd get in a store, so I kind of get that, yeah.

**Interviewee** 2:28

Yeah.

How would you describe your emotional experience when you're interacting with AI assistants like a chat bot or like a virtual stylist on the e-commerce platforms? Have you interacted with them at any?

**CP B** 2:45

I have sometimes when I recently bought a bag from a designer store, I did

“ONLINE THERE’S ONLY SO MUCH A BRAND CAN OFFER”

“GIFT BOXING OR HAND DELIVERY IS A NICE TOUCH”

ask them for like pictures of it in real life as opposed to just the model shoot. So, you can see colours and stuff like that. **It is a quick response** but sometimes. I prefer to speak into an actual stylist, or an actual person as opposed to AI because **it only comes out with their set answers**. So sometimes I think it's helpful, but sometimes if I need actual help, I prefer speaking to an actual assistant.

**Interviewee** 3:19

That's right. Can you share an instance where you felt that one of these?

Let's say integrations of digital communication on their platforms made your shopping journey either easy or enjoyable.

**CP B** 3:35

Umm.

Hold on. Repeat the question again. Sorry.

**Interviewee** 3:41

Can you can you share an instance where AI made your shopping journey easier or enjoyable?

**CP B** 3:47

I can't really because like most of the time **it's just unless** I have a question about delivery or the item itself, or if it's out of stock. I don't really need AI to help me with the purchase. It's basically just had to call buy and that's it. Really. Yeah. I've never had, like, an overwhelming experience with it.

**CP B** 4:10

Yeah.

“QUICK AI RESPONSE”

“COMES OUT WITH SET ANSWERS”

“AI JOURNEY IS USELESS”

**Interviewee** 4:11

But on the contrary, have you had times where it was a bit frustrating as well? Like you said that a chat bot would have like set answers.

**CP B** 4:21

Yeah, yeah, I like I said, like certain things, like if products were out of stock or things like that. **It's just frustrating** because you're AI Agent isn't going to tell you whether it's coming back in stock or other designs of this and that it just says it's out of stock, whereas an agent, an actual agent.

Help you properly with making a purchase. So, I think in that sense I prefer speaking to someone properly as opposed to an AI system.

**Interviewee** 4:49

Yeah.

In for example, if it was a virtual assistant like a conversational virtual assistant, what would you want? Like, what would you want from that experience? Would like a bit human like traits or the tone of the conversational AI? Would it matter to you?

You or you wouldn't be bothered about it.

**CP B** 5:14

I don't think I would be bothered **as long as I'm getting like the right information** back about whatever I'm asking about, that's fine. **I don't need it to be like overcompensating and be extra polite** because it's just an AI. But I'm only having a short. It's not like it's. I know the thing like, it's just a short conversation.

So if it's giving me the right information, I think that's the main point.

**Interviewee** 5:39

Yeah. And like, would it be the same in store as well, like when you're walking into a, let's say, Selfridges or Harrod's, when you're purchasing something? And but would you expect the same sort of treatment from like

“INFORMATION LACKING AI”

“RELIABLE INFORMATION”

“I DON'T NEED IT TO BE OVER-COMPENSATING OR EXTRA POLITE”

A Lifestylist or like a client advisor there.

**CP B** 5:56

I would probably expect it more in store because obviously you're with a store going into store. Your kind of paying for that that little bit extra for that service you're paying for them to go above and beyond and you're paying for them to bring out water and whatnot and just make an experience out of it. It's just like I said, it's only convenient for me. To buy online. If I don't have time, so there's only much choice with that.

**Interviewee** 6:22

OK. Do you usually engage with AI features like virtual stylist and styling recommendations, chat bots, stuff like that?

**CP B** 6:22

Yeah.

I do use ChatGPT but not for styling references. No. So I don't really use AI, no, they're styling.

**Interviewee** 6:39

Yeah.

How much do you trust AI in terms to data privacy? Like, are you concerned about your data being misused in any form from like, let's say, luxury brands e-commerce platforms?

**CP B** 6:58

I mean.

It's hard because.

They obviously need certain things from you to make sale and things like that. So, and where we also use like a Shopify system, we also must take down data. We are as careful as we can be with it, but there's always going to be something in the world that's going to happen like M&S for instance where their whole.

“CAREFUL DATA  
HANDLING”

**CP B** 7:24

So that was hacked. It's you. You are cautious of it, but there's only so much you can do if you must give your data, you have to give it. There's only to make a purchase. It kind of must be done. So yeah.

**Interviewee** 7:25

Yeah.

In your opinion, do you think stuff like a conversational chat bot would feel authentic, or do they come across as a robotic invention for you?

**CP B** 7:49

They do seem more robotic than just speaking to like someone normal just because obviously, like I said, the answers you get back are just kind of generic. They're not tailored for you. So yeah.

**Interviewee** 8:06

Can you can you be able to walk me through how AI assistance can influence your luxury shopping journey in a good way? Like what? Like you said that they seem more robotic. What would change that perception? Like, what would you want that would make an AI assistant be more helpful to you?

Yeah.

**CP B** 8:28

I think maybe if you are looking at a product they can suggest things that are maybe similar designs creating looks.

Be able to interact with you on your needs like if you were speaking to like a normal agent where they would be able to help you kind of have that as well, so it doesn't. It doesn't feel like you're talking to a robot or still feels like you're talking to someone and that you've you're getting what you need to get from them basically like help.

“YOU ARE CAUTIOUS”

“ROBOTIC RESPONSES”

“SUGGEST THINGS THAT ARE SIMILAR”

“HUMAN LIKE INTERACTION”

**Interviewee** 8:47

Yes.

Yes. And what do you think in in getting this? What do you think would be the biggest challenge? Like do you think it's technically not possible it's it would have like a cultural difference to it or like what do you think would be the biggest issue in?

Getting that ideal touch.

**CP B** 9:21

I think the biggest issue would be that **if it becomes so comfortable with ordering online that so many people then won't go into stores** so that you won't then have that option of going into store and seeing the product because so many people are just comfortable with buying it online at the end of the day, like when you do go shopping, it is about.

Experience like I said that you're seeing the out the item in store the way you're being greeted, the hospitality and things like that. I think that would be its biggest challenge that they would be **deflecting off their retail stores**.

**Interviewee** 9:41

Yep.

How does your interaction with AI differ from a human sales advisor in luxury stores?

**CP B** 10:07

I think it's like what I said before, it's just it doesn't really do much as opposed to just if you're asking something give you, like **generic answers** back, that's it mainly, yeah.

**Interviewee** 10:18

How important is it to you that AI assistance offer tailored style advice?

Like as opposed to an in-store stylist would do like tailored to let's say your previous purchases or tailored to your body type or and things like that like your preferences.

“REDUCED STORE VISITS IF ONLINE IS SO COMFORTABLE”

“DEFLECT IN RETAIL STORES”

“AI GIVES GENERIC ANSWERS”

**Interviewee** 10:36

So do you think that's something that would cater you more to using these or do you think you would still prefer to go down to the store if you've got the time to?

**CP B** 10:47

I think I'd still probably prefer to go down to the store because it's not like it's just making a day out of it. And like you said, the past records of what you've purchased and say you've bought an item, you want something that matches it or something that goes with it and things like that. I think it's just easier to then go into store and as opposed to doing that online.

**Interviewee** 11:09

How well do you think in the future AI assistance can personalise recommendations for you?

**CP B** 11:16

It probably can. I mean, maybe **not so much in luxury stores**, but your everyday retail stores more that middle end market, I think it would definitely help in terms of **recommendations** SEO, you've purchased this, this is something that could go with it or this is something that's very similar kind of similar to what they have now websites, but just in an AI version, yeah.

**Interviewee** 11:37

Yeah.

More like a conversational version where someone's talking. Do you revisit brands that provide like personalised suggestions? Do you? Do you like

“RECOMMENDATIONS  
WILL NOT WORK FOR  
LUXURY STORE”

going back to their website? Any brand, even if it's not luxury, but any brand that you know, I think you should. They give those suggestions, do you?

**Interviewee** 11:58

Do you like it, and do you revisit such brands?

**CP B** 12:00

Yeah, I do revisit. I do. Yeah. I always see. Like, they kind of know what style I tend to go for this. So, they'll always put some jeans or some T-shirts that would or tops that would look kind of like the style I would wear. So, I tend to do, I tend to, yeah, go back to that brand. Yeah.

**Interviewee** 12:16

Thank you. When interacting with an AI assistant from a luxury fashion brand, what features would make it feel more luxurious to you?

**CP B** 12:28

Umm.

I don't know really.

**Interviewee** 12:33

It hypothetical as well like it's something that you can just imagine and tell me it doesn't have to be a practical answer.

**CP B** 12:42

Yeah.

I don't know, to be honest. It's hard because there's only so much you can do on a website platform, right? There's, I don't really know.

**Interviewee** 12:53

“GO BACK TO BRAND”

Yeah.

No, I mean, that's what I'm saying that don't try to get practical. You can just say what would make it feel more luxurious to you, whether it's practical or impractical. That's not the point. Yeah, but.

**CP B** 13:09

Maybe if it wasn't like just a chat bot and if it was like you could see a virtual assistant. So, like you could see their face, and you could see them as opposed to just having to continuously chat to someone you're having a conversation face to face with someone. So as if you're actually in a store, but it's just online. Maybe something like that?

**Interviewee** 13:31

Yeah.

OK.

How would you feel about an AI system that remembers your journey or celebrates your milestones like let's say?

They know that sometimes when we purchase something we like, whether it's a gift or let's say a birthday, dates are given, sometimes information we give. So how would you feel if that AI remembers and if you get like a notification or say?

**Interviewee** 14:03

Closer to that, you get like a for say, if it's like a live chat bot you get like AI don't know like a recording from them or something like that. How would you think about something like that? Would it like would you go

“HUMAN  
CONVERSATIONAL  
INTERACTION”

back and see what suggestions do they have for you, or would you still not be bothered?

**CP B** 14:14

Yeah.

**CP B** 14:24

I think it would be a nice touch. I do like it. Like when you get but like for instance for birthdays you get emails from certain brands say happy birthday. Sometimes they give like the discount code and things like that. So, I think stuff like that, it is a nice touch. So, I'm sure if it if a virtual bot did that as well it would also a nice touch to have.

**Interviewee** 14:45

Yeah.

And would it not like? Would you not be bothered about like getting so many emails or anything like that? Would that bother you?

**CP B** 14:58

I wouldn't mind the emails every so often, but sometimes brands e-mail me like 3 \* a day and it's very frustrating. So, I think if the brand knows its limit and emails me when I need to be emailed like not all the time, I think that would be OK yeah.

**Interviewee** 15:06

“AI THAT  
REMEMBERS  
JOURNEY IS  
NICE TOUCH”

“VIRTUAL BOT  
DOING THIS IS  
ALSO A NICE  
TOUCH”

In your view, how do AI virtual assistant features help a luxury brand stand out in the digital luxury space? What do you think? What would help them stand out in the digital luxury space?

**CP B** 15:18

Yeah.

I don't know what would help. What would help them stand out compared to our brand.

**Interviewee** 15:44

Yeah. What? What? Basically, what kind of features of a virtual assistant would make them stand out?

**CP B** 15:55

Definitely things like we said before, things like recommending products say if they've seen a product. Oh, we've got this. We've got all this matches this, this bag with this outfit or like the little things you said, like the milestones and the birthdays and.

**CP B** 16:13

I think little things like that that make it seem like you're speaking to someone I think just makes it stand out more than others. It makes you want to go back because you felt like you've had a good experience with them. Yeah.

**Interviewee** 16:26

What? What features are most valued by you like? As a Gen Z consumer, what? What features do you value the most? What's most important to you when you're shopping luxury?

“PERSONALISED  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
+ PERSONAL  
EVENT TRACKING”

“HUMAN TOUCH,  
DIFFERENTIATING  
FACTOR”

**CP B** 16:40

When I'm shopping.

Mainly that it's hard, like when you're purchasing something just to make sure like you're seeing the product properly, the information about its fabric colours, dimensions, things like that. I'm an easy shopper, to be fair. So, it's hard like I just if I see something I like, I buy it.

**CP B** 17:10

I whereas I'm sure my mom or my sister, they would be more. Oh, let me think about it or let me look at a different website and see it from a different perspective or things like that. I don't really look for anything key as long as it's **easy to shop from** as long as it's an easy platform to shop from and it's available. The **stock is available** then yeah, that there's nothing key for me.

**Interviewee** 17:34

Yeah, just you're. You're like an easy buyer.

**CP B** 17:37

Yeah.

**Interviewee** 17:38

OK, in what ways do you think AI and luxury should evolve to match the expectations?

**CP B** 17:52

I don't know. I again. There's only so much that AI can do for fashion. I feel especially purchasing online. I don't think it can do it. Can't force you to buy anything. It's not going to help persuade you. Like if you're.

“EASY TO SHOP”  
STOCK AVAIBILITY”

To buy a luxury item, you're gonna you either have the money you're gonna buy it or you're not gonna buy it. I don't think AI can influence you into making a purchase or make.

Yeah, that makes sense.

**Interviewee** 18:27

Yeah. How would you describe the ideal interaction with an AI assistant from one of your favourite luxury brands? What would be like an ideal interaction with it?

**CP B** 18:43

Just generally being helpful, knowing their infant like knowing about their brand, about the products like I said before, if something's out of stock, they'd be able to tell me if it's back in and things like that. Just kind of just useful information. Beyond that, I don't think it's needed, yeah.

**Interviewee** 19:05

Yeah. OK. Perfect. Thank you so much and leave for doing this. And thank you so much for taking out the time as well.

**CP B** 19:09

That's OK. Are you gonna send me the link to sign, or is it?


**Interviewee** 19:16

Yeah, I'll send you a form. I'll send it on WhatsApp only since your emails not working. You just need to sign on the last page along with today's date and tick mark those check boxes.

“DON'T THINK AI  
CAN INFLUENCE  
MAKING PURCHASE”

## Member Checking – Semi- Structured Interviews

### PARTICIPANT – IP A


 to me ▾  
Hi Yaana,

This is all fine, there are no edits or additional comments from me!

I am on holiday as of tomorrow and will be back on the 22<sup>nd</sup> if you need anything else from me!

Thanks,


### PARTICIPANT – TIP A

 to me ▾  
Hi Yaana,

If this is what I said then I stand by it - but I don't have time to suggest anything else!

J

### PARTICIPANT – TIP B


 to me ▾  
Hello Yaana

Good Evening

Thanks for sending the transcript for a review.  
I had a look and I can confirm the transcript you sent

Do let me know for anything else.

### PARTICIPANT – CP A


 to me ▾  
Hi Yaana,

Hope you are doing well and not too stressed with the dissertation.

Yep! That is all perfect I've signed and attached below.

Good luck with your submission lovely!

### PARTICIPANT – CP B

 to me ▾  
Hi Yaana,

Thank you for your email.

I am happy to proceed with the answers below and have no input.

Have a lovely evening.

Kind regards

## **Appendix 4**

### **Thematic Codebook**

## CODEBOOK

Transcripts Only (code type and font)			Usage
Sub Code (Italic)	Code (Standard)	Code Identifier	
<i>In vivo Coding</i>	In vivo Coding	IV	Through out
<i>Emotional Coding</i>	Emotional Coding	E	Through out
<i>Initial Coding</i>	Initial Coding	I	Through out
<i>Causation Coding</i>	Causation Coding	CAU	Through out

Participant Coding Process Colour
FCP A
FCP B
FCP C
FCP D
FCP E
FCP F
IP A
TIP A
TIP B
CP A
CP B

RQ – 2 (A)

Participant	1st Coding Iteration	Eclectic Code Denotation	2nd Coding Iteration	Final Coding Iteration (Insight)	SUB/ CATEGORISING	
CP A	“CHATBOT FAIL REAL TIME ACCESS”	I	Incomplete responses	Frustration	Existing Realities	
CP A	“CHATBOT IS BASIC”	IV	Lack of AI functionality			
CP B	“FRUSTRATION LACK OF INFORMATION”	E	Unhelpful responses			
CP B	“NEED ACCURATE STOCK DATA”	IV	Accurate Functionality			
FCP D	“GIVE RELEVANT INFORMATION”	IV	Information Seeking			
CP B	“ROBOTIC”	IV	Lack of Emotions	Impersonal Feeling		
FCP A	“LACK OF EMOTIONAL RESONANCE”	E	Emotional disconnect			
FCP B	“LACK OF CONNECTION	E	Emotional disconnect			
TIP B	“TRANSPARENT CONVERSATION”	IV	Need for transparency in AI	Transparency		Aspirational Desires
TIP B	“GEN Z HATE QUEUES”	E	Fast, Quick,	Efficiency,		
IP A	<i>“Luxury consumers expect instant, accurate, and effortless service.”</i>	IV	Superior service expectations	Efficiency		

Author’s Own

RQ – 2 (B)

Participant	1st Coding Iteration	Eclectic Code Denotation	2nd Coding Iteration	Final Coding Iteration (Insight)	SUB/ CATEGORISING
FCP C	"RIGHT FIT"	IV	<b>Practical utility</b>	Utility	Functional Properties
CP B	"I NEED RIGHT INFORMATION BACK"	IV	<b>Efficient Data</b>	Efficiency	
FCP C	"VIRTUAL TRY ON"- Reduce effort-increase confidence	CAU + E	Trying Efficiency	Efficiency	
TIP B	"TRANSPARENT CONVERSATION"	IV	Need for transparency in AI	Efficiency	
TIP B	"GEN Z HATE QUEUES"	E	Fast	Efficiency	
TIP B	INDIVIDUAL PERSONALISATION	CAU	<b>Holistic personalization</b>	Individual Recognition	Beyond Transactional Data
FCP A	"TAILORED RECOMMENDATIONS"	IV	<b>Desire for tailored suggestions</b>	Individual Recognition	
FCP F	VA NEED TO UNDERSTAND CONSUMER'S STYLE	CAU	<b>Individual personalisation</b>	Holistic understanding	
FCP B	"FIT & SIZING ACCURACY"	IV	<b>Decision-making support</b>	Holistic understanding	
FCP C	"HELP WITH SIZE ACROSS BRANDS"	IV	Fit Decision support	Holistic understanding	
FCP A	"NEED TO ASK CHATGPT FOR BRAND SIZE"	IV	Size Decision support	Holistic understanding	
TIP B	"GEN Z DEMAND MEMORY"	I	memory-based personalization	Individual Recognition	
FCP B	"TRACK & RECOMMEND"	I	Personalised curation	Individual Recognition	
CP A	"MEMORY RECOGNITION"	I	Personalisation and memory	Individual Recognition	
FCP F	"PERSONALISED RESPONSES"	CAU	Personalisation improves immersion	Relational Depth	

Author's Own

RQ – 2 (C)

Participant	1st Coding Iteration (Quote + Elaboration)	Eclectic Code Denotation	2nd Coding Iteration	Final Coding Iteration (Insight)	SUB/ Categorising
FCP E	<i>privacy is a myth, but dint want to share personal data</i>	I	Fear of Data sharing	Fear of Misuse	Data Privacy
FCP C	<i>fear of my data getting misused...</i>	E	Data Misuse	Fear of Misuse	
FCP A	<i>if AI uses it to make shopping easier, I don't mind</i>	CAU	Data sharing trade-off	Conditional Consent	
IP A	<i>"AI is not unbiased; it always represents the brand's interest first</i>	I	Bias of Commercial Motive	Commercial Motive	
FCP F	"Privacy is a grey area	IV	Data safety expectations	Conditional Consent	
TIP A	<i>"Who does that AI belong to?"</i>	IV	Commercial motives & bias	Commercial Motive	Authenticity
FCP A	prefer balance + emotional touch."	I	Authenticity concern	-	
FCP C	"not buying more luxury because of these AI gimmicks."	IV	Resistance to gimmicks	Authenticity concerns	

Author's Own

RQ – 3 (A)

Participant	1st Coding Iteration (Quote + Elaboration)	Eclectic Code Denotation	2nd Coding Iteration	Final Coding Iteration (Insight)	Sub / Category
CP A	<i>A bit more human - I'd maybe trust it a bit more.</i>	CAU	Human Touch	Anthropomorphic Touch	Relational Engagement
FCP D	<i>"If AI keeps track of my preferences, I will shop more with them"</i>	CAU	Preference recall	Past Recognition	
FCP B	<i>When AI remembers your details, it feels exclusive</i>	CAU	Remember purchases	Past Recognition	
FCP B	"Recommendations that track previous purchases; even remind the salesperson."	I	Preference recall & human like behaviour	Anthropomorphic Touch	
FCP A	"Constant sizing confusion — ask AI to remember brand-to-brand mapping."	IV	Past purchases	Past Recognition	
FCP A	"AI-video with a person felt more real than chatbots."	I	Humanised interface	Anthropomorphic Touch	

Author's Own

RQ – 3 (B)

Participant	1st Coding Iteration (Quote + Elaboration)	Eclectic Code Denotation	2nd Coding Iteration	Final Coding Iteration (Insight)	Subcategory
CP B	<i>Easy when AI provides suggestions- I'd return</i>	CAU	Revisit Brand	Lasting Relationships	Loyalty
FCP B	"Most important: reflect the brand values- Shows loyalty	IV	Brand value alignment	Lasting Relationships	
FCP A	<i>recommendations feel more personal spot on..."</i>	I	Tailored suggestions	Behavioural Data	Longitudinal Personalisation
FCP F	<i>have kind of a fixed style... if the assistant understood it</i>	IV	Style pattern recognition	Preference Data	
TIP B	<i>need to apply personalised lifestyle data</i>	CAU	Lifestyle-based personalisation	Behavioural Data	

Author's Own

RQ – 4 (A+B)

Participant	1st Coding Iteration (Quote + Elaboration)	Eclectic Code Denotation	2nd Coding Iteration	Final Coding Iteration	Sub / Category
FCP E	Want finances of luxury investments	I	Invested Value	Asset Insight	Value Based Utility
FCP C	<i>Luxury is more like an investment</i>	IV	Resale & investment insights	<b>Asset Insight</b>	
FCP E	“Show price history / investment value	IV	Value communication	<b>Analytical Guidance</b>	
FCP A	“AI should communicate brand values/heritage.”	IV	Heritage storytelling	-	Proactive Engagement
CP A	<i>birthday message from AI makes you feel recognised</i>	IV	Milestone-driven interactions	-	
FCP A	“Use history for timely nudges (e.g., birthdays) — mixed appeal.”	I	Proactive memory	-	
FCP B	“AI should have the brand’s values”	IV	Value + Heritage	-	
CP B	<i>“If it was like you could see a virtual assistant</i>	IV	Visual humanisation of AI	<b>Humanisation</b>	Digital Luxury Benchmark
IP A	<i>“Luxury consumers expect immersive experiences</i>	I	Superior service expectations	Sensory Elements	
FCP C	“Stop hopping on trends; we buy for heritage, not AI gimmicks.”	CAU	Anti-gimmick stance	<b>Emotional Connection</b>	
FCP B	AI can show product history/previous collections.”	IV	Heritage at point-of-sale	<b>Human Connection</b>	
IP A	<i>“Gen Z expects things that are emotionally engaging</i>	E	Emotional intelligence in AI	<b>Emotional Connection</b>	
CP B	<i>“Fear of digital cannibalising physical</i>	E	Omnichannel tension	Emotional Connection	
IP A	Virtual Try On is very helpful	IV	Immersive Experience	<b>Sensory Elements</b>	

Author’s Own

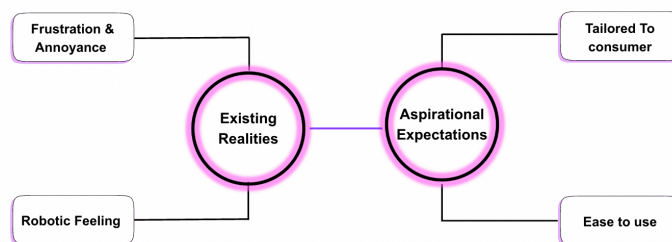
## **Appendix 5**

### **Codebook Development Process**

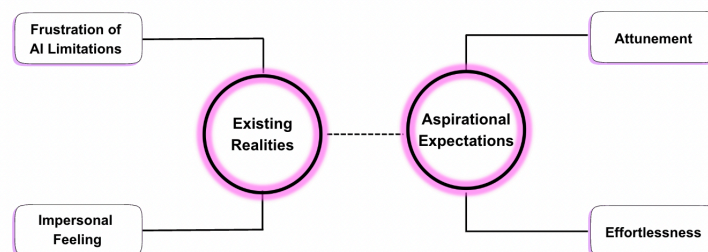
To illustrate the evolution of my thematic analysis, I have included diagrams that show how rough codes were refined into sub-categories and final categories across each research question. This provides transparency into how the themes emerged and were consolidated.

**RQ2: How do Gen Z consumers perceive and experience AI-powered virtual assistants in luxury fashion e-commerce?**

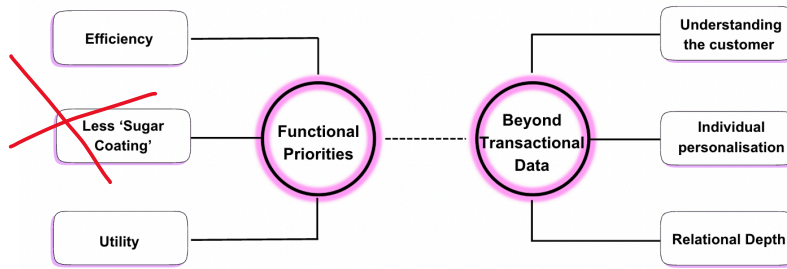
For **RQ2a** (emotional and cognitive responses), I began with, identifying rough codes like *Frustration & Annoyance / Robotic Feeling* against *Tailored to Consumer / Ease to Use*.



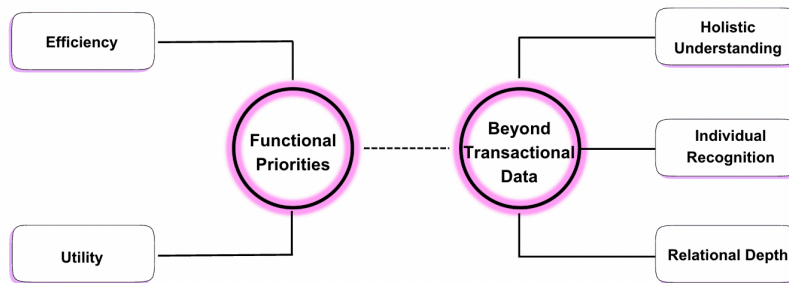
On refinement, I sharpened these into *Frustration of AI Limitations / Impersonal Feeling* versus *Attunement / Effortlessness*.



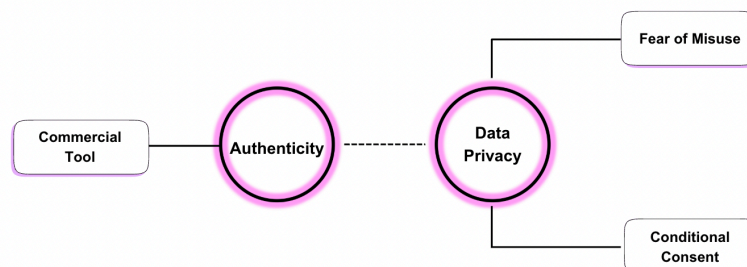
This clarified the tension between **Existing Realities** and **Aspirational Expectations**, setting the foundation for how perceptions are shaped.



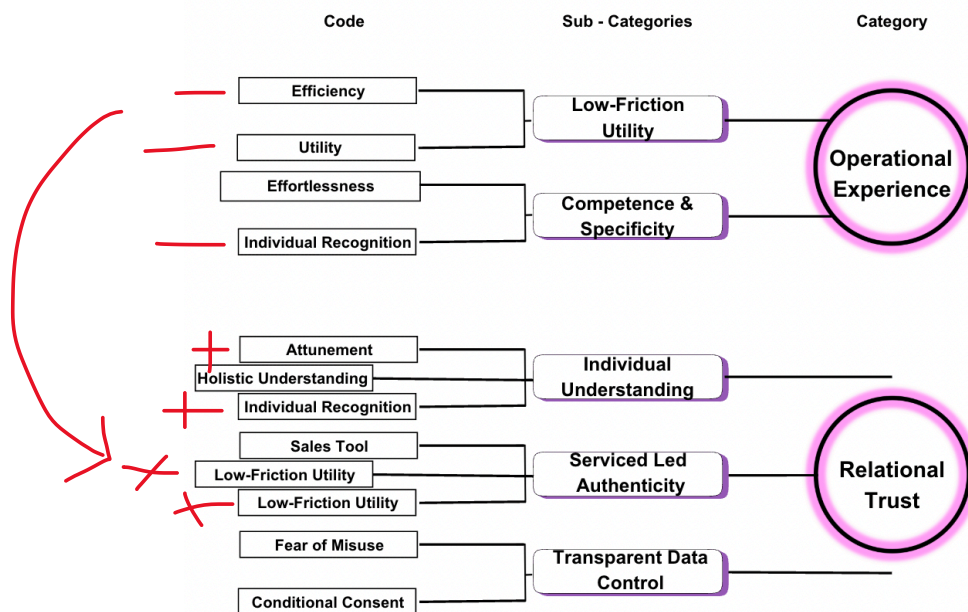
**RQ2b** The initial draft included more fragmented codes such as “Less ‘Sugar Coating’” and “Understanding the Customer.” On reflection, some felt repetitive or too narrow, so I refined them into broader, more precise categories. This process helped streamline overlapping ideas and create a cleaner, more conceptually robust final framework.



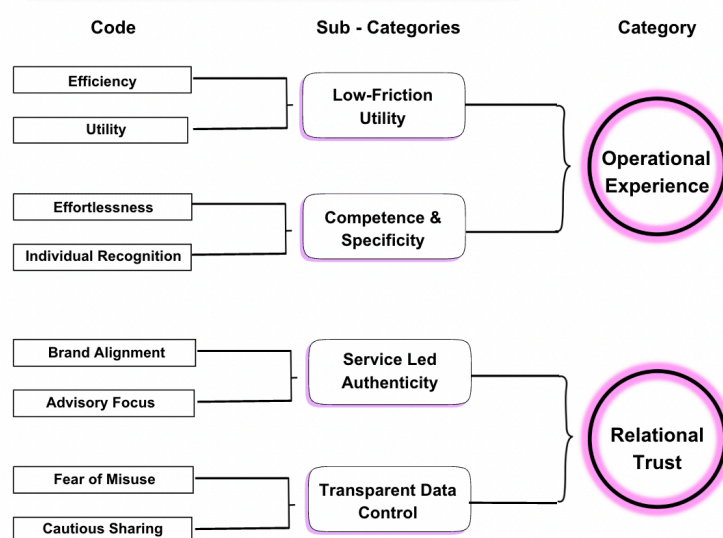
**RQ2c**



## RQ2 (A+B+C)



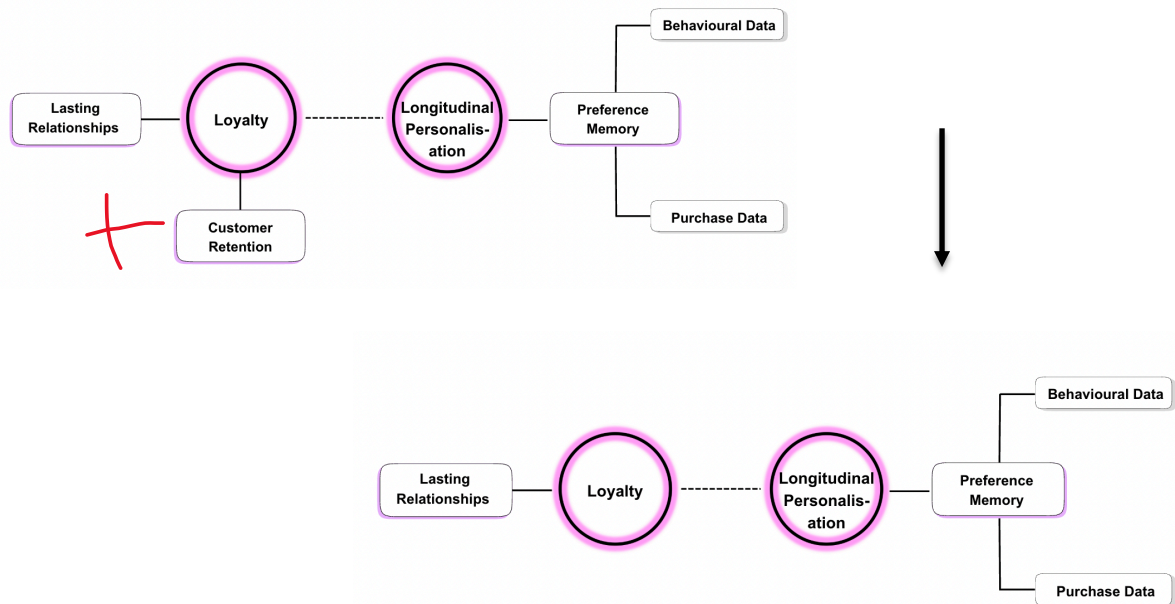
In the initial version several codes overlapped multiple times, in refining to the final version, I streamlined the codes into clearer groupings, consolidated overlaps, and reframed broad terms into sharper sub-categories. This produced a more structured and focused framework.



**RQ3: What roles do AI virtual assistants play in personalisation and customer engagement for Gen Z in luxury e-commerce?**

For **RQ3 A** (value and enjoyment), I explored where *Relational Engagement* stemmed from *Past Recognition* and *Anthropomorphic Touches*.

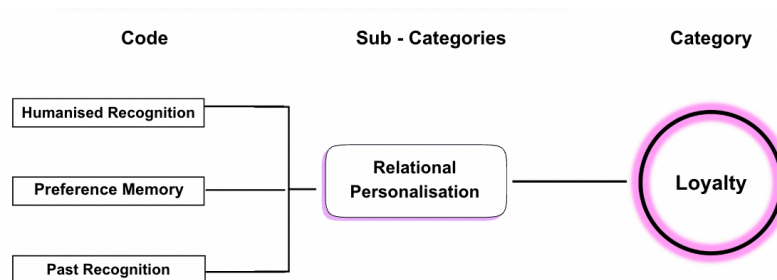
For **RQ3 B** (personalisation and loyalty), my first draft linked *Loyalty* and *Longitudinal Personalisation*.



The refined version condensed this to *Lasting Relationships* and *Preference Memory*.

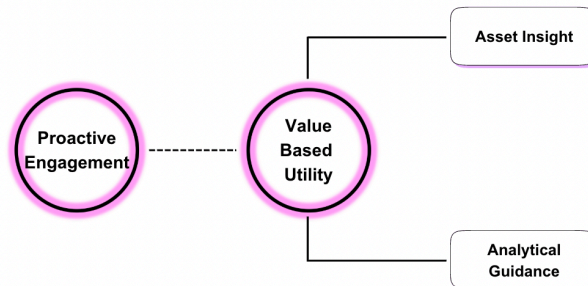
**RQ3 (A+B)**

Finally, in the overarching framework, I brought these together under **Relational Personalisation** → **Loyalty**, showing how AI fosters engagement.

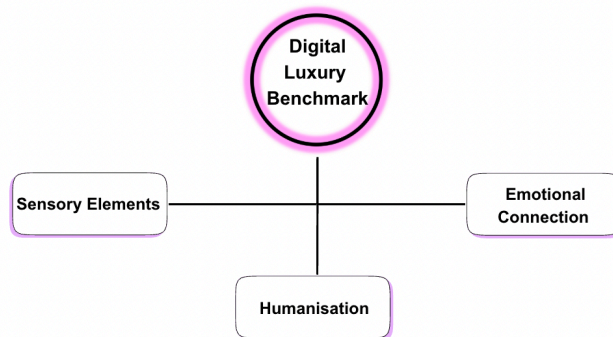


**RQ4: How can luxury fashion brands optimise AI virtual assistants to enhance market positioning and engagement with Gen Z?**

For **RQ4a** (luxurious tone/interface/UX), I mapped around *Proactive Engagement & Value-Based Utility*.

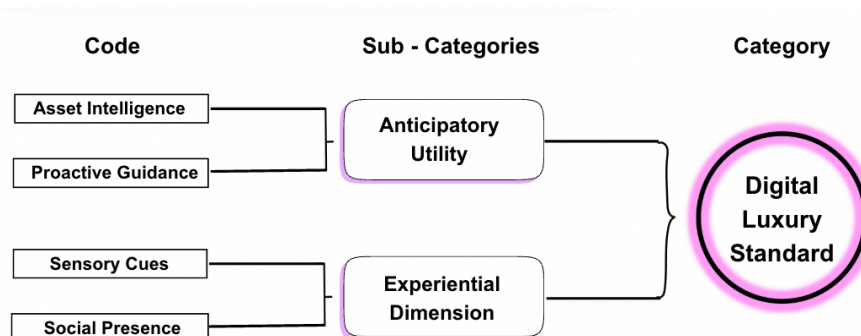


For **RQ4b** (emotional exclusivity & engagement), I identified themes around *Digital Luxury Benchmark* with *Sensory Elements, Humanisation, Emotional Connection*.



**RQ4 (A+B)**

I then consolidated these into which integrated Anticipatory Utility and Experiential Dimensions, forming the category: Digital Luxury Standard.



**Appendix 6**  
**Generative AI Mapping Document**

Gen AI tool (Which tool?)	What AI interaction does this tool have?	What prompt did you use (copy/paste)	What output was generated from this prompt?	How did you use this output in your work?	Date of use
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Paraphrasing & word-reduction	"Paraphrase to reduce word count by ~20% while keeping academic tone: <paste paragraph>"	Shorter, clearer paragraph retaining key claims	Met word limits without losing nuance	Jul 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Plain-English checks	"Does this paragraph read naturally? Flag jargon and suggest simpler phrasing."	Suggested rephrases and de-jargonised lines	Improved readability for mixed academic/managerial audience	Jul 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Synonyms & terminology refinement	"Give academic alternatives for 'trust scaffolding' in luxury AI context + 1-line definitions."	Terms like <i>trust architecture</i> , <i>assurance mechanisms</i> , <i>transparency controls</i> with definitions	Improved precision and avoided repetition in Lit Review	Jul 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Flow/logic check vs framework	"Does this 'Findings' section align with my model (Operational Excellence, Relational Personalisation, Brand Alignment, Trust & Privacy)? Suggest fixes."	Highlighted gaps, suggested signposting and re-ordering	Strengthened argument flow in Chapter 5	Aug 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Recommendations structuring	"Turn this long text into a table of recommendations with themes, enablers, risks, KPIs."	Concise table with measurable KPIs	Inserted as Table 5.1 in Ch.5	Aug 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Thematic Coding	"Check if the codes and sub-categories align with my research question."	Suggestions and few word changes in codes	Reworked on some of the codes and themes to collate the data as much as possible	Aug 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Harvard referencing tidy-up	"Format these sources in Harvard style and remove duplicate. <paste refs>"	Cleaned, consistent references	Final reference list & in-text citation checks	Sep 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Abstract & summary compression	"Condense this 250-word abstract to 170 words without losing contributions."	Tighter abstract	Final abstract submitted	Sep 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Figure captions & legends	"Write concise captions for: (1) TAM×U&G model, (2) multi-axial coding diagram, (3) Poster framework."	Three 1–2 line captions	Added beneath figures in Ch.2 & Ch.4	Sep 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Poster text distillation	"Create 80–100 word mini-paragraphs for Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Findings, Contributions, Limits, Future Research."	Section blurbs ready for poster	Dropped directly into final A1 poster	Sep 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Risk/ethics wording	"Draft neutral language on privacy, consent, and bias guardrails for luxury AIVA."	Balanced, non-promissory wording	Ethics/limitations strengthened	Sep 2025
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Title/subtitle variants	"Suggest 10 concise titles and subtitles emphasising luxury AIVA + Gen-Z + trust."	Title options with tone variants	Chosen final title & poster header	Sep 2025

Author's Own