

## Masters Dissertation: Why Gen Z Is Disappointed in Luxury Brands

### Research aims :

- Map Gen Z's expectations of luxury brands
- Identify triggers of disappointment
- Categorize behavioral responses to disappointment
- Explore what motivates Gen Z to seek alternatives

### Methodology :

- Qualitative, purposive sampling, 12 semi-structured interviews, ages 21-26, all "familiar with luxury brands"
- No mention of interview length, coding method (thematic? grounded theory?), or inter-rater reliability if multiple coders — these details matter for a dissertation committee and their absence is worth flagging before submission [Guessing this is omitted rather than absent from the actual methodology chapter]
- 12 is a defensible number for exploratory qualitative work, but "familiar with luxury brands" as the only screening criterion is broad — no control for income, purchase frequency, or country/culture, which matters a lot given the paper later claims social-media amplification and cultural sensitivity as key findings

### Results :

- Expectations shape the brand relationship
- Disappointment occurs both directly and indirectly
- Functional failures (product/service) and identity-based failures (brand no longer reflects self-image) coexist
- Social media amplifies disappointment
- Responses are selective, not all-or-nothing exit

### Original/interesting findings :

- Indirect disappointment via identity and authenticity breaks — this is the most defensible "original" claim if the literature review shows prior work focused mainly on functional failures
- Social media amplification mechanism (online communities, influencer content, backlash exposure) — plausible but this is arguably already well-established in consumer behavior literature broadly (not luxury-specific), so "original" may be overclaiming unless the dissertation ties it specifically to luxury identity dynamics [Guessing — depends on your lit review framing]
- "Negotiate relationship instead of immediate exit" — this is the most genuinely interesting finding since it contradicts a simple loyalty-vs.-defection binary; worth foregrounding as the paper's real contribution

### Managerial recommendations :

- Increase transparency/authenticity

- Align CSR claims with actual practice
- Improve after-sales service
- Monitor digital communities
- Strengthen cultural sensitivity
- Invest in long-term Gen Z engagement
- Weak point: these six recommendations are generic enough to appear in almost any Gen Z marketing paper regardless of the specific findings above — the dissertation would be stronger if each recommendation were explicitly tied back to one of the five named triggers/responses rather than listed as a general checklist

Conclusion :

- Frames disappointment as extending beyond functional failure into identity, authenticity, and social amplification, shaping brand relationships
- Claims both theoretical and practical contribution. The theoretical contribution is more defensible (the "negotiation not exit" framing) than the practical one, since the managerial list isn't distinctively derived from the data as presented here.