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KATHERINE BRAUN GALVÃO BUENO SRESNEWSKY

O PODER DA ESCUTA NO VAREJO DE MODA DE LUXO

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Prof. Dr. Carlos Gilberto Carlotti Júnior
Reitor da Universidade de São Paulo

Profa. Dra. Maria Dolores Montoya Diaz
Diretora da Faculdade de Economia, Administração, Contabilidade e Atuária

Prof. Dr. João Maurício Gama Boaventura
Chefe do Departamento de Administração

Prof. Dr. Felipe Mendes Borini
Coordenador do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração

KATHERINE BRAUN GALVÃO BUENO SRESNEWSKY

THE POWER OF LISTENING IN LUXURY FASHION RETAIL

O PODER DA ESCUTA NO VAREJO DE MODA DE LUXO

Tese apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração do Departamento de Administração da Faculdade de Economia, Administração, Contabilidade e Atuária da Universidade de São Paulo, como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Doutora em Ciências.

Advisor/Orientador: Prof. Dr. Andres Rodriguez Veloso

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ABSTRACT

Relationship marketing is the aggregating attribute of clienteling practices and listening behavior of salespeople and consumers. There are several impacts of an effective salesperson listening and continuity of the relationship with the consumer, and then the application of clienteling practices to the emerging long-term relationship. Although there is some recent interest in clienteling and more in-depth regarding salespeople's listening behavior, the literature investigating this concept still needs to be more comprehensive and applied to fashion luxury retail. By exploring perspectives and practices with the support of fashion luxury retail experts, salespeople, and customers, this dissertation deepens and advances understanding of the complex relationship between clienteling and salesperson listening behavior. The first article has a qualitative approach to clienteling and an investigation into practices in luxury fashion retail based on experts' opinions. It presents a definition proposal for clienteling, a list of existing practices, and strategic, organizational, and future vision on the topic. The second article is a qualitative study, using an audio diary, on how luxury retail salespeople evaluate their listening behavior with customers. Examine the different adjustments needed in salesperson listening behavior for each customer profile. The third and final article presents a quantitative view, which explores Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) salesperson listening behavior model, replicating it with luxury fashion consumers and adding new variables. It proposes a reduction in factors related to the seller's listening behavior to the original model, as well as the relationship with trust and satisfaction with the seller, with an impact on different generations. This set of articles shows that building a long-term relationship with the luxury fashion consumer has several complexities, comprising strategy, practice, consumers, and sellers as interrelated factors.

Keywords: Relationship Marketing. Clienteling. Salesperson listening behavior. Fashion luxury retail.

RESUMO

O marketing de relacionamento é o atributo agregador das práticas de clienteling e o comportamento de escuta dos vendedores e consumidores. Diversos são os impactos de uma escuta efetiva do vendedor sobre a continuidade no relacionamento com o consumidor, e então, a aplicação das práticas de clienteling para o relacionamento de longo prazo emergir. Embora haja certo interesse recente nas temáticas de clienteling, e mais aprofundado no que diz respeito ao comportamento de escuta do vendedor, a literatura que investiga tal conceito ainda é muito fragmentada. Ao explorar as perspectivas e práticas com o suporte de especialistas, vendedores e consumidores do varejo de moda de luxo, esta dissertação aprofunda e avança a compreensão da relação complexa entre clienteling e o comportamento de escuta do vendedor. O primeiro artigo possui uma abordagem qualitativa sobre clienteling e uma investigação sobre as práticas no varejo de moda de luxo, partindo da opinião de especialistas. Apresenta uma proposta de definição para clienteling, lista de práticas existentes, visão estratégica, organizacional e de futuro sobre o tema. O segundo artigo é um estudo qualitativo sobre como os vendedores do varejo de luxo avaliam seu comportamento de escuta com o cliente, através de um diário de áudio. Examina os diferentes ajustes que devem ser realizados no comportamento de escuta para cada perfil de cliente. O terceiro e último artigo apresenta uma visão quantitativa, que explora o modelo de comportamento de escuta do vendedor de Ramsey and Sohi (1997), replicando com consumidores de moda de luxo e adicionando novas variáveis. Propõe uma redução de fatores relacionados ao comportamento de escuta do vendedor em relação ao modelo original, bem como a relação com a confiança e satisfação com o vendedor, com impacto em diferentes gerações. Este conjunto de artigos mostra que a construção do relacionamento de longo prazo com o consumidor de moda de luxo possui diversas complexidades, composta pela estratégia, prática, consumidores e vendedores como fatores inter relacionados.

Palavras-chave: Marketing de Relacionamento. Clienteling. Comportamento de escuta do vendedor. Varejo de moda de luxo.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The art of listening is the main technique of this dissertation. Known as the "ability to understand spoken language" (Rankin, 1928, p. 630), listening was applied to different audiences related to relationship marketing in fashion luxury: specialists, salespeople, and customers. Based on this triad, a composition of different perspectives allows us to deeply understand relationship marketing management and its developments in clienteling and salesperson listening behavior.

Relationship marketing (RM) can help luxury companies manage customer relationships (Guo-feng & Xiao-wen, 2006), resulting in a clienteling strategy. Vaguely defined as all client-relationship practices, with a higher dependence on salespeople, clienteling reinforces the one-on-one interaction in retailing (Jain et al., 2018). Luxury customers also search for one-to-one relationships (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012) and value experiences more than material goods, especially the ones with a higher desire for exclusivity (Kim, 2018). However, it will also be closed for salesperson interaction, thus impacting listening behavior (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997), relationship quality, and consequently, clienteling strategy. The relationship between clienteling and listening behavior is complex and multifaceted, and the literature investigating it under the lens of relationship marketing still needs to be completed (Mitussis et al., 2006).

This dissertation contributes to the literature on relationship marketing in several ways, deepening and advancing the understanding of clienteling and bringing salespersons' and customers' listening behavior to the context of fashion luxury retailing. First, it organizes the understanding around clienteling. Then, it investigates the salesperson's self-perception of listening behavior and finally describes the evaluation of the customer's salesperson's listening behavior based on Ramsey and Sohi (1997).

The practical contributions of this dissertation contain three parts. First, it proposes a definition, list of practices, and strategic view of clienteling, the primary strategy associated with relationship marketing. Second, it suggests that different listening behaviors occur according to customer type, and third, it offers companies insights about how much salesperson listening behavior also impacts trust and satisfaction with the business, with particular attention to generational age.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the complexity of relationship marketing in fashion luxury, the research question that guides this dissertation is: **What are the relations between clienteling and listening behavior in fashion luxury retail?**

1.2 GOALS

Three papers present answers to the research question guiding this dissertation. The goals presented below summarize the specific goals of each of these papers:

- Organize and describe the knowledge and practices surrounding clienteling in fashion luxury retail, how it is defined and strategically applied, and the expectations for the future of relationship marketing in luxury.
- Explore the customer listening behavior insights from salespeople in fashion luxury retail with an audio diary, how salespeople were listened to by customers, self-evaluate their listening behavior, and present new venues for managing customer expectations from salespeople's point of view.
- Expand Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) salesperson listening behavior model with fashion luxury retail customers by adding new variables and verifying the influence on trust, satisfaction, and future interaction intention.

1.3 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

The following three main chapters of this dissertation comprise the research papers developed. After these sections, the final chapter presents the dissertation conclusions. The information about the three articles is presented below:

- **CLIENTELING IN FASHION LUXURY RETAIL**

This qualitative study addresses the clienteling concept in relationship marketing and fashion luxury retailing, presenting a definition and list of practices for clienteling. The resulting manuscript targets international conferences such as EMAC 2024 and journals such as "Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management".

Authorship: Katherine B. G. B. Sresnewsky and Andres R. Veloso.

- “ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?”: A DAILY DIARY BY FASHION LUXURY SALESPERSON

This qualitative study explores salesperson’s opinions about customer listening behavior in fashion luxury retail, presenting orientations of listening behavior per group of customers. The resulting manuscript targets international conferences such as ENANPAD and CLAV 2024, and journals such as "Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management".

Authorship: Katherine B. G. B. Sresnewsky and Andres R. Veloso.

- “HOW MUCH I WAS LISTENED?”: AN OVERVIEW FROM FASHION LUXURY CUSTOMER ABOUT SALESPERSON LISTENING BEHAVIOR

This quantitative research explores the theory of Ramsey and Sohi (1997) applied to fashion luxury customers in an emerging country. Presenting a proposal for the reduction of SLB variables from the original scale, the impact on trust and satisfaction was also identified, and generational age was added as a new variable. This paper counted on Gringa and Hunt support for data collection. The resulting manuscript targets international conferences such as ENANPAD and CLAV 2024, and journals such as "Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management".

Authorship: Katherine B. G. B. Sresnewsky and Andres R. Veloso.

2 CLIENTELING IN FASHION LUXURY RETAIL

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Imagine the future of a *Minority Report* film, where you will enter a retailer, and a hologram will approach you by name, offer products based on your last purchase, and alert your sales advisor to offer you physical assistance, just as Tom Cruise when entered the GAP store during the movie scene, as the perfect example of the maximum of personalization. However, once we have this future, as proposed by science fiction and Sheth (2017), we must count on people and data combined to offer a better in-store experience, especially in luxury fashion retailing. Despite data management's fast evolution, technology will hardly replace human interaction (higher tech, higher touch) (Gummesson, 2017). Thus, associated with the expanding offer of luxury products and services (Guo-feng & Xiao-wen, 2006) and the perspective that "the world of luxury is undergoing profound changes" (Thomsen, Holmqvist, von Wallpach, Hemetsberger, and Belk, 2020, pp. 441), enhances the necessity of brands to fight for the share of the heart of their customers (Sheth, 2017).

Luxury brands have the power to establish personal and social relationships, sometimes fulfilling psychological needs (Becker, Lee, and Nobre, 2018). As luxury customers are closer than ever to brands, it creates a challenging scope, mainly when associating technology and experience, which can extend beyond personalized mail messages or incredible shopping experiences (Rathi, Garg, Kataria, and Chhikara, 2022). Customers seek bonds with brands, even if engaging with several brands in different levels of relationship simultaneously; if there is a positive balance for each part, the relationship tends to continue (Pettersson, 1995). Also, consumers search for information about others' experiences with other customers (Kim, Han, and Lee, 2001), online reviews, and feedback (Liu, Burns, and Hou, 2013).

Services and experiences are core in luxury offerings (Wirtz, Holmqvist, and Fritze, 2020). Besides the fact that each service encounter in luxury also reinforces offer luxury aspects, the service luxury experience can build an emotional consumer intention, as experiences can be managed with multiple stimuli and enhance luxury perception overall (Wirtz et al., 2020). For adequate brand relationships in luxury, commitment, loyalty, prestige, intimacy, and satisfaction combine the manageable variables (Becker et al., 2018). Consumers who need to learn about luxury services might not enjoy all the stimuli and quality of the experience; a certain level of knowledge, sophistication, and skills are required (Wirtz, 2020). Quality is the fundamental component of luxury (Becker et al., 2018), and it can also extend to the

relationship built with consumers. The quality of relationships is crucial in luxury and can be influenced by salespeople's abilities to minimize any uncertainty (Kim et al., 2001). Luxury fashion customers who perceive high symbolic, economic, and functional values tend to develop positive relationships with the brands (Jung Choo, Moon, Kim, and Yoon, 2012).

Relationship marketing (RM) can help luxury companies manage customer relationships (Guo-feng & Xiao-wen, 2006), as it already works particularly well in luxury (Kim, Kim, and Johnson, 2010), thus being considered in companies' prime strategy for some luxury sectors (Jung, Ineson, and Green, 2013). RM in luxury consists of developing through managing customer information strategy, effortless actions to know consumers better, and tailored customer experience and technology (Guo-feng & Xiao-wen, 2006). On the practical side, since 2018, private corporate lectures in luxury management in Brazil have presented clienteling as all client-relationship practices. Already considered an essential driver for investment (Willersdorf et al., 2020), clienteling in the literature appears with different writing and meanings, such as clienteling, clientelling, clientelling 2.0, and digital clienteling. In this research, the term adopted is clienteling. If service personalization depends on customer information, for clienteling customer data plays a vital role in providing a salesperson detailed information (Jain, Rakesh, Nabi, and Chaturvedi, 2018). With a higher dependence on salespeople to operate, clienteling reinforces the one-on-one interaction in retailing (Jain et al., 2018), enabling considerable opportunities to create respectful social relationships with luxury customers (Aliyev, Urkmez and Wagner, 2019).

Among the relevance of the luxury sector to business practice, the studies have attracted more researchers (Aliyev et al., 2019), and a significant increase after 2010 still has a vast scope to explore (Rathi et al., 2022). Under the clienteling approach, little attention was paid to relationship marketing, especially with the micro perspective (Gurzki & Woisetschläger, 2017). Also, divergences between scholars and practitioners in relationship marketing (Sheth, 2017) create a constant wage of updates and paradigms discussions (Gummesson, 2017), reinforcing that the RM theory and applications still have research gaps. Capturing the opinions of 20 fashion luxury retail specialists in an emerging country, based on online interviews, the research questions that guide this study are as follows:

RQ1: What is the concept of clienteling in fashion luxury retailing?

RQ2: What are the main clienteling strategies applied in fashion luxury retailing?

RQ3: How is clienteling comprehended from strategic, organizational, and customer perspectives?

RQ4: How is the association of clienteling and technology, for now, and for the future?

The main theoretical contributions of this study, applied to fashion luxury retail, are (1) a theoretical definition proposal for clienteling with the association to RM; (2) a list of clienteling practices; (3) a strategic and organizational view of clienteling; (4) correlations with technology and future perspectives. Practically, the findings of this study are helpful to fashion luxury retailers in terms of understanding clienteling concepts and practices, their association with data information, and their strategic perspective for the future. Such retailers can use this study's findings to better understand how they can adapt their clienteling strategies and stimulate a customer-centered perspective to develop long-term relationships with higher-tier customers.

The study is organized as follows: First, we review the literature on RM, clienteling, and RM and clienteling in luxury fashion retail. Then, we present our methodology and main results. Finally, this study concludes with research implications and limitations and new research avenues.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Relationship marketing (RM): definitions and applications

RM was first presented in the marketing literature by Berry (1983) during service marketing studies. Considering the vast following studies, Gummesson (1994, 1997, 2011) presents that RM comprehends relationships, networks, and interactions between a brand and a customer. It emerged as a reaction to conventional marketing, where interactive and win-win relationships are essential to creating a long-term connection. Nevertheless, neither the perspective that only the company benefits from the relationship (O'Malley & Prothero, 2004) nor the approach of promotions and persuasive sales to create customer dependence (Gummesson, 1997) can be applied nowadays.

With a proposal of transcending business relationships and developing a friendship relationship, Sheth (2017) presents the concept of share of heart, which implies bonding emotionally with customers by expanding the functional or economic value. In this customer competition, successful relations are possible if soft data and non-standard information are combined, engaging real people and flexible systems (Mitussi et al., 2006). Therefore,

investing in RM strategies can generate short-term feelings of gratitude that influence customer commitment and purchase intentions (Palmatier et al., 2009).

RM practices include loyalty programs, bundled offerings, personalized services, and CRM initiatives to change from share of wallet to share of heart (Sheth, 2017). Loyalty and benefits programs have a view of up-selling, cross-selling, and leading customers into an exchange relationship (O'Malley & Prothero, 2004). The increasing emphasis on loyalty programs and CRM associated with RM was highlighted by O'Malley and Prothero (2004) as a more significant mechanism to increase purchase and not necessarily reward customer loyalty. Because CRM is highly dependent on the data client information base and relies on excellence in data gathering (Mitussis, O'Malley, and Patterson, 2006), even though the isolated strategy of CRM is possible due to the link with RM, brands that have disposition can interactively engage and learn from consumer relationships (Mitussis et al., 2006). It is also essential to recognize that customer and salesperson are active in relationship marketing (Gummesson, 1994); as the last paradigm of RM indicates, customer and salesperson interaction must be one-on-one, with a higher level of personalization (Gummesson, 2017).

An evolution of RM is the perspective of joint venture, where brands must develop relationships based on mutual interdependence, mutual commitment, and shared mission (Sheth, 2017), with the support of the paradigm of Service-Dominant Logic (Gummesson, 2017). Jain, Paul, and Shrivastava (2021, p. 14) state that the “fashion industry is a high service dominant industry” where customers play an essential role in the service exchange.

2.2.2 The Clienteling: terms and definitions

The first ones to use the term were Bailey and Bernhardt (1997), who identified clienteling at Bloomingdale's department store during a low-wage industry study in the US. They presented a program created to maintain a list of consumer preferences and habits, interact one-on-one, inform about launches and promotions, and assist with remote purchases. After a decade, Jain et al. (2018) define *clienteling* as a one-to-one marketing approach with personalized communication to enhance positive brand association and customer loyalty. Later, Willersdorf et al. (2020) presented the term clienteling 2.0 regarding the offer of more personalized sales practices for engaging with high-end customers, which is associated with combining people and data with machine learning to generate relevant information for salespeople. The evolution of technology and data information has transformed physical clienteling into digital clienteling (Jain et al., 2018). Jain et al. (2018) introduced the term digital clienteling.

However, Jain et al. (2021) define it as the unified resource of information regarding consumer preferences, behavior, and past purchases to provide a better in-store experience with enhanced salesperson interaction.

2.2.3 RM and Clienteling in Luxury and Fashion

RM and clienteling studies identified in the literature are related to luxury in hotels (Kim et al., 2001; Jung et al., 2013), restaurants (Mosavi & Ghaedi, 2012; Ryu & Lee, 2013), retail (Guo-feng & Xiao-wen, 2006), and fashion retail (Khoa, 2020). Most of the studies focused on the consequences of RM, with the primary goal of enhancing customer retention (Jung et al., 2013) and extending the length of the relationship (Ryu & Lee, 2013). Quality of relationships is a variable that depends on customer orientation, expertise, and physical environment (Mosavi & Ghaedi, 2012), which can influence repeated purchases (Kim et al., 2001), word-of-mouth (Kim et al., 2001; Mosavi & Ghaedi, 2012), customer satisfaction and loyalty (Mosavi & Ghaedi, 2012). Investments on RM were approached by Ryu and Lee (2013), indicating that luxury calculates different efforts depending on customer return on RM initiatives and must invest in maintaining relationships with valued customers.

Applied to retail, during an investigation of how Chinese luxury companies comprehend RM concepts, Guo-feng and Xiao-wen (2006) identified that many companies considered it as the unique implementation of a database customer system, even with a noticed lack of training salespeople about the importance of proper consumer data collecting for successful of RM strategy. Part of RM's activities consisted of monitoring changes in consumer needs, dealing with customer complaints, and sending personalized messages based on consumer behavior and preferences.

In fashion, customer relationship is the factor that most impact brand loyalty (Khoa, 2020). Depending on the degree of friendship and quality of interactions with salespeople (fun, enjoyable, and exciting), the more loyal the salesperson consumer tends to be, directly influencing brand loyalty (Kim & Kim, 2014). In fashion retail, to maximize RM strategy, salespeople must be assisted with building social relationships with customers (Kim et al., 2010). The investment in technology information, combining customer information and fashion trends, can help brands personalize the service encounter and experience (Khoa, 2020). Information related to customer clothing size, color preferences, likes and dislikes, and purchase history are some of the data that salespeople can use to offer more personalized

fashion buying (Jain et al., 2018). This scenario enables brands to create a solid RM strategy with customers as a core asset (Khoa, 2020).

Beyond the one-on-one approach in physical interactions, clienteling practices already mapped include personalized mail communication (Jain et al., 2018), fashion shows, private showings, personal shoppers, and white-glove delivery, which compounds the digital luxury ecosystem (Willersdorf et al., 2020).

2.3 METHODOLOGY

2.3.1 Data collection and participant profile

To answer the research questions, the ‘why?’ led us to a qualitative exploratory approach (Barnham, 2015), as the goal is to determine critical issues and describe “things that really happen” (Gilmore & Carson, 1996, p.22) with the technique of questionnaire with open-ended (Baker, 2003) applied through online surveys (Sam & Jankowski, 2006; Regmi et al., 2016). Online surveys allowed convenience and flexible time to the respondents (Van Sem & Jankowski, 2006; Regmi et al., 2016), cost-effective and the application of adaptive questions (Sam & Jankowski, 2006), had lower costs involved and enabled open-ended questions (Regmi et al., 2016).

Inspired by future research questions proposed by Rathi et al. (2022) and the review of literature about clienteling (Bailey & Bernhardt, 1997; Jain et al., 2021) and RM (Khoa, 2020; Kim et al., 2010), an open-ended questionnaire was built to comprehend the understandings and applications regarding clienteling in fashion luxury retail from specialists ‘perspective. After the research participation term letter (see Appendix 1), the questionnaire with 21 open-ended questions (see Appendix 2), within five groups, distributed as (i) personal and professional information (6); (ii) questions related to clienteling definition (2); (iii) clienteling practices (4); (iv) strategic, organizational, and customer perspective (6), and (v) clienteling, technology and future (3).

Using Google Forms, specialists needed to access a web link via WhatsApp, LinkedIn, or e-mail. From 35 invitations, we recruited 20 specialists in luxury fashion retail from São Paulo, Brazil, including six executives who work for Farfetch and Gringa, who are supporters of this research. Data collection occurred in October 2023. The participants were informed

about confidentiality, anonymity, and research goals. Also, they were classified with pseudonyms and coded.

The 20 participants are six men and fourteen women, with occupations comprehending roles as coordinators, consultants, managers, directors, and CEOs, from a range of international and national fashion luxury retail expertise. Eight participants have more than 15 years of experience in luxury retailing, with only one participant with 1 to 2 years of experience, who is the marketing director of an international fashion luxury retail company in Brazil. Details of informants are in Table 1.

Informant pseudonym	Code	Age	Gender	Occupation	Experience in luxury retailing (years)
Bella	BF	45	Female	Consultant	more than 15 years
Lindsey	LS	44	Female	Communication Manager	5 to 10 years
Raul	RP	41	Male	CEO	more than 15 years
Beth	BH	53	Female	CEO	10 to 15 years
Amelia	AG	46	Female	Global Director	2 to 5 years
Mia	MG	27	Female	Marketing manager	5 to 10 years
Chloe	CL	37	Female	Senior Manager Retail Operations	10 to 15 years
Ava	AM	62	Female	CEO	more than 15 years
Lea	LA	42	Female	Communication and Marketing Manager	5 to 10 years
Clara	CA	39	Female	PR and Events Director	more than 15 years
Nathan	NE	44	Male	Product Manager	more than 15 years
Enzo	ER	37	Male	CRM Coordinator	5 to 10 years
Jade	JR	44	Female	Senior Manager	more than 15 years
Ines	ID	41	Female	Marketing Director	1 to 2 years
Mathias	MC	51	Male	Brands Director	more than 15 years
Marie	MK	43	Female	Personal Shopper	10 to 15 years
Julia	JT	32	Female	Head of Marketing and Growth	2 to 5 years
Jonas	JI	42	Male	COO	2 to 5 years
Cora	CF	48	Female	Head of PR	more than 15 years
Luca	LB	39	Male	Regional Sales Manager	10 to 15 years

Table 1 – Specialists in fashion luxury retail participant's profile

2.3.2 Analysis method: content analysis

We manually analyzed the data content analysis (Gilmore & Carson, 1996; Krippendorf, 2004) with both deductive and inductive approaches (Krippendorf, 2004) since we are replicating reality and extending the theoretical framework based on the RM perspective. With an interpretative emphasis (Gilmore & Carson, 1996), data was organized by units of

analyses (words and sentences), associating them to each participant's code. Then, the information was organized around the RQ topic, mainly spread through the questionnaire, and required an ongoing analysis (Gilmore & Carson, 1996). Following this, we could compare the most frequent terms and descriptions mentioned by the participants and develop content analysis. RQ1 required us to set specific coding categories, such as (1) relationship perspective, (2) personalization, (3) customer history, and (4) salesperson fashion knowledge. The data analysis was conducted by a researcher with over 15 years of experience in professional and academic luxury fashion management, providing a deeper understanding of RQs (Gilmore & Carson, 1996).

2.4 FINDINGS

Parting from the real world of everyday findings associated with the data organization into categories of analysis combined with the literature review allowed us to answer the four research questions and achieve the objective of this study.

2.4.1 Clienteling in fashion luxury retailing

In response to RQ1, research data suggest that clienteling still has different but complementary perspectives from market specialists. During informal talks with the participants, there was a general lack of theoretical understanding of clienteling; however, generally, it can be considered “*the main differentiator between luxury retail and others*” (AM, Female, CEO). As participant BH (Female, CEO) mentioned, “*Each luxury sector has its peculiarities with clienteling, regardless of whether it is fashion or not.*” To clarify this, we first asked them to define clienteling.

The combination of the coding categories (see Table 2) of relationship perspective, personalization, customer historical, and salesperson fashion knowledge allows us to define that clienteling involves a set of relationship marketing strategies and practices based on customer history with the company (salesperson), created to attend higher tier customer preferences in a personalized and exclusive way. Compared to the previous definitions, our proposal is complementary to Jain et al. (2018), which includes the long-term relationship approach to clienteling and amplifies the applications to communication and to a set of marketing strategies that combined can create clienteling practices. Also, as Bailey and

Bernhardt (1997) and Jain et al. (2021) stated, customer data is essential to this activity. According to participant MC (Male, Brand Director), it is a “*new relationship model that is not a simple WhatsApp message.*” Table 3 presents previous and new definitions to clarify our contribution to the literature.

Coding category	Participants quotes
(1) Relationship perspective	Relationship marketing strategy (JI). Customer relationship management (RP,BH). Set of communication strategies and actions aimed at a list of customers (LB). Long-term customer-relationship (AG,JT). Strengthen customer relationships (MG,NE). Create a relationship with the customer (CL,ID). Build customer loyalty (JR,MC).
(2) Personalization	Exclusivity (NE,JT). Individuality (CA). Concierge (JI). Personalized and exclusive relationships with customers (AG,LA,BF,JI). Richer customer experience, with greater empathy, attention to detail, impeccable and humanized service (JR,NE,AM). Offer the complete brand experience that goes beyond the physical product (JR,CL,MK,MG).
(3) Customer historical	Listening and understanding of customer needs (ID). Attentive to the customer's wishes (BF,MK). In-depth customer knowledge (CA,JR). The use of data and information about customers to understand their preferences, needs, and purchasing history (AG,CF,LB,LA). RFV and LTV matrix (RP). VIP status (LS,CL,CF).
(4) Salesperson fashion knowledge	Specialized and in-depth product knowledge, empathy, and a strong desire to meet customer needs (JR,JT). Inform customers about the history of the brand, the culture surrounding the products, and how they are made, this delights the customer (LB). In-depth knowledge of customer fashion styles and preferences (AG,ID). Offer extreme personalization and bespoke service (NE,CF,JI,AG). Fashion luxury training (MK,LB,JR).

Table 2 – Coding category and participants quote

Term	Definition	Source
Clienteling	A program created to maintain a list of consumer preferences and habits and interact one-on-one; inform about launches and promotions, and assist with remote purchases.	Bailey and Bernhardt (1997)
Clienteling	One-to-one marketing approach with personalized communication to enhance positive brand association and customer loyalty.	Jain et al. (2018)
Clienteling 2.0	The offer of more personalized sales practices for engaging with high-end customers, which is associated with the combination of people and data	Willersdorf et al. (2020)

	with the use of machine learning to generate relevant information to salespeople	
Digital Clienteling	Unified resource of information regarding consumer preferences, behavior, and past purchase, to provide better in-store experience with enhanced salesperson interaction.	Jain et al. (2021)
Clienteling	Involves a set of relationship marketing strategies and practices based on customer history with the company (salesperson), created to attend to higher-tier customer preferences in a personalized and exclusive way.	Research data

Table 3 – Terms and definitions of clienteling

Apart from this general understanding from the participants, the following question was to comprehend if any specific concept of clienteling is specific to fashion luxury retail. The importance of salesperson fashion knowledge was pointed out by Kim and Kim (2014), Kim et al. (2010), and Khoa (2020) and reinforced by most research respondents. Also, respondents reinforced how fashion luxury training for salespeople is essential to an effective clienteling strategy, as participant LB (Male, Regional Sales Manager) mentioned, "*employees with luxury education may be better seen and respected by their customers,*" as "*salespeople and consultants play a fundamental role in creating emotional connections with customers*" (AG, Female, Global Director).

2.4.2 Main clienteling strategies applied in fashion luxury retailing

Based on the comprehension of clienteling, *RQ2* was answered, with the participant's confirmation that the practices already mapped in literature, such as personalized mail communication (Jain et al., 2018), fashions show, private showings, personal shoppers, and white-glove delivery, (Willersdorf et al., 2020), are applied in fashion luxury retail. However, the research data suggest that other "*non-commercial experiences*" (MG, Female, Marketing Manager) are crucial to luxury fashion retail. Apart from a participant's quote that "*we adapt to something that makes sense for the client's lifestyle*" (CL, Female, Senior Manager Retail Operations), we asked them if they missed practices from this previous list and a vast number of clienteling practices were mentioned by the participants and are presented in Table 4.

Clienteling practices

Source

Personalized mail communication	Jain et al. (2018)
Fashions shows, private showings, personal shoppers, and white-glove delivery.	Willersdorf et al. (2020)
Invitations to parties or dinners attended by the creative director/founder (BF,JT). Lunches or dinners between brand customers (LB). Early access to the collection and exclusive products (JT,JI,AM). Loyalty programs (JI,JT,RP). Exclusive discounts, different payment methods, free shipping, exclusive service channels (JI). Special shipping and collection methods, exchange of benefits with other brands/services that are of interest to the customer, referral programs (JT). Gifts on special dates in the customer's life (not just those on the retail calendar – i.e.: birth of a child, wedding birthday) (ID,CL). Non-commercial experiences: gastronomic experiences, visits to closed galleries, invitations to art and entertainment events (LA,LS,MG,NE). Personalized treats (AM). Reservations at trendy restaurants, spas, and hotels (CL).	Research data

Table 4 – Clienteling practices in fashion luxury retail

Complementary to this list, we also asked the participants if they could detail some of these practices. Related to early access to the product, the practice is to anticipate a collection launch in 15 days; personalized treats for post-sales follow-up, such as sending personalized thanks and maintenance service for purchased products (AM, Female, CEO) and until managing customer shopping transactions (JR, Female, Senior Manager). The fashion shows were more detailed and related to the VIP customer service structure during fashion week, including fashion shows, tours, meetings, and parties with artists (LA, JR, MC, BF). The non-commercial experiences detailed were a long-awaited show with Beyoncé in New York in a premium seat (LS, Female, Communication Manager), a guided tour of a Gallery in Milan (AG, Female, Global Director), an invitation to Cannes with all experiences included, from the reception upon arrival at the airport to the gala ball (CL, Female, Senior Manager Retail Operations).

Most respondents also associated these practices only with VIP customers, which must vary according to each segment profile. They indicated that clienteling practices differ for new and longtime customers, higher social status, and low profile. For example, “*a lower profile, discreet client may prefer a more intimate event without media coverage, not accessible to anyone*” (ID, Female, Marketing Director) also for longtime customers, who can receive the early collection at home or store visit by appointment along with a personal shopper to present it privately.

2.4.3 Clienteling comprehended from strategic, organizational, and customer perspective

For RQ3, our goal was to expand investigation about clienteling, comprehend how customers perceive the strategic and organizational side, and present this contribution to a need for more literature. Apart from the customers, the specialists mostly agree that understanding clienteling terms could be more straightforward. However, they are aware of the benefits and exclusivities connected somehow with their purchase behavior. *"They should not know the term "clienteling" but rather realize the benefits related to it"* (NE, Male, Product Manager) as they *"recognize the differentiated treatment and greatly appreciate"* (AM, Female, CEO).

On the strategic side, most participants agree that clienteling should be viewed as a strategic asset, corroborating with Jung et al. (2013), with the customer at the center of all decisions, and some highlighted that this strategic interest and discussion is recent for some companies. Some practical applications when clienteling is strategic to the company are that *"with each launch, we think about how to create unique experiences and improve the connection with our customer base through clienteling"* and *"In some cases, it even influences the selection of products for brands in Brazil because it can direct purchases, considering the specific profile of some customers and the most exclusive approach with them, to convert a sale"* (BF, Female, Consultant). One participant brought to light that when it is not strategic, the *"excuse" is that there is no time, no staff availability to take care of just that"* (AM, Female, CEO).

Still, from the strategic perspective, we asked about budget planning for these activities. We were presented with a medium- and long-term ROI perspective that requires higher value expenses for customers and salespeople. The participants reinforced the importance of salespeople training, as also stated by Guo-feng and Xiao-wen (2006). Also, if money is involved, results tracking is fundamental, as mentioned: *"Ideally there should be methods for "tracking" activities and results. Clienteling without clear targeting does not happen. There should be annual, monthly, and weekly metrics"* (LB, Male, Regional Sales Manager). As suggested, budget planning should be calculated considering how much revenue can be made with each customer. This finding allows us to connect accountability concepts to clienteling. For most participants, the involvement of higher management is strongly related to the success of clienteling and defining the strategy, resources, and priorities. These findings corroborate with Guo-feng, and Xiao-wen (2006), in the RM perspective, that it is crucial to have the involvement of company leadership to the success of it.

Finally, we asked the participants which area was responsible for clienteling from the organizational perspective. Areas such as Marketing, Operations and retail, and Customer Service were mentioned with a highlight to the CRM team as responsible for it. One participant described working in a Clienteling area that is dependent on and connected to all the areas above but with a focus on RM strategy and reported directly to the CEO. Other participants also suggest that all areas should manage these activities, as *"we look for contributions from the most diverse areas to get where we want"* (JT, Female, Head of Marketing and Growth).

2.3.4 Association of clienteling and technology: for now, and for the future

Finally, in RQ4, our goal was to verify if the data management emphasis discussed in the literature (Willersdorf et al., 2020), clienteling managerial practices, and to introduce future perspectives. Considered a necessary investment to be forecast, the correlation with technology was presented by specialists such as (i) allowing the addition of more customer data types to analyze and develop better CRM insights, (ii) supporting salespeople with tools and devices to provide updated customer information; (iii) provide better tracking on customer behavior to adapt rapport; (iv) provide financial analysis and accountability insights. Despite these correlations and benefits, some specialists reinforced the importance of human-to-human connections, concentrated in interactions that technology still cannot provide, corroborating with Gummesson (2017).

For the future, specialists heavily associate technology with a significant emphasis on expanded experiences with the use of AI and AR tools to create an even more tailored approach, as also proposed by Sheth (2017). Also, most participants reinforced the strategic importance that clienteling should receive in the following years, especially to attract more customers to the brands and expand connection emotions, thus offering all the personalization, exclusivity, experience, and one-to-one approach that the clienteling strategy allows. It will become increasingly essential that it will make a difference. Some participant's quotes below illustrate the view of the future:

"Faced with increasingly faster market dynamics and a less loyal consumer, brands will need to work on emotional connection through clienteling." (LA, Female, Communication and Marketing Manager)

"More technological, more personalized, more diverse and indispensable for the competitive environment." (ER, Male, CRM Coordinator)

"To keep up with these changes, investing in more training in this area is imperative to create clienteling departments specifically adapted for luxury retail. This training can help teams better understand customer needs, develop empathetic communication skills, and ensure each interaction is marked by exceptional service." (JR, Female, Senior Manager)

"Brands that do not start implementing these practices will face serious difficulties as they will lose customer attention and interest in such a competitive market." (ID, Female, Marketing Director)

"Therefore, our challenge in this luxury market is: how to surprise this customer who 'has everything'? How to make him fall in love and get involved with the brand? How to be part of this client's life? What we try to do is provide experiences that money cannot buy." (CL, Female, Senior Manager Retail Operations)

2.5 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study accessed an area of application of clienteling. This term still needs to be recognized by text correctors and known in academia, mainly when applied to the fashion luxury retail context. The data provided allowed us to answer all research questions. We were able to (1) propose a definition of clienteling in fashion luxury retail associated with RM theorization, (2) identify and describe the actual practices involved with detailed examples, (3) understand these activities' strategic, organizational, and customer relationships, (4) present a view of the future for clienteling and technology. Our propositions are the first step in theorizing the clienteling practices in academia.

The lack of understanding of clienteling and a definition proposal is also supported by Mitussis et al. (2006), who associate the lack of theoretical evolution to superficial management knowledge about RM definition combined with a limited view of databases. Also, a gap in the literature is the adequate classification of RM in luxury management. Let us consider the classification proposed by Gurzki and Woisetschläger (2017) and Rathi et al. (2022) and include luxury brand management research under the RM umbrella to create luxury value. Finally, associated with the proposal by Jain et al. (2021) and the future perspective presented in this research, we can establish a strong connection and even dependence between technology and clienteling.

Regarding methodological procedure, we can consider our research successful, as according to Regmi et al. (2016), six components are necessary for a successful online survey, and

associated with this research scope, we accomplished five of these components, such as a) user-friendly design and layout: we adopted Google forms with free text box; b) selecting survey participants: mostly from personal connections of one of the authors, Farfetch and Gringa; c) avoiding multiple responses: we limited the participation to one e-mail; d) data management: research data was organized and categorized, also coded for participants quotes; e) ethical issues: a consenting term was presented in the introduction (see Appendix 2), and f) piloting tools: this item was not attended, as no pilot study was conducted previously to the data collecting.

2.5.1 Practical implications

Our study focused on Brazilian fashion luxury market specialists who all work(ed) for international operations; thus, we understand this also applies to developing countries. Remembering Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechhoff, and Kardes (2009, p. 13), “managers should recognize the window of opportunity after an RM investment, during which they can “collect” on feelings of gratitude.” Associating this importance of RM to research findings, luxury management must understand clienteling as a strategic asset based on customer data information that can impact customer relationships and shopping behavior. Also, it highlighted the importance of planning a structure to attend to this demand, with connections primarily to Marketing and Sales. After this understanding, a list of practices can be applied in several businesses, not exclusively in fashion luxury retailing. Regardless of the segment, these practices usually involve higher expenses that must be planned, controlled, and analyzed. From a financial perspective, the forecast of investments in clienteling should be carefully considered.

2.5.2 Limitations and future research

Limitations when researching the luxury market can be vastly described. However, academia's problematic access to executives, salespeople, and customers can be considered the most significant limitation of scientific research. The brand's guardians very well hide the secret of luxury management, as we can classify this audience. Nevertheless, even with a decline of 15 specialists who did not return the messages, we were able to collect our data. We were also just able to participate because of the online survey technique.

Future research can expand this sample, apply personal in-depth interviews, and investigate it in other luxury segments that might present differentiation in clienteling practices and

strategic perspectives. Apart from the other perspectives, studies can be conducted with luxury customers and salespeople to understand their clienteling comprehension and enrich the literature about it even more. Method, reliability, and data validity could be analyzed with the support of qualitative data software, enhancing data analysis and expanding findings. Also, adopting two (or more) independent coders to conduct the same analysis path can enhance the reliability of the findings (Perreault & Leigh, 1989).

Acknowledgment

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APPENDIX 1 – Research participation term

Hello,

You are invited to participate in our research, which is part of a doctoral thesis project at FEA-USP.

The objective is to understand your perceptions associated with practical knowledge about clienteling in luxury fashion retail.

It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any time. We need to know your opinions.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this survey will only be reported in aggregate form. Your information will be encrypted and will remain confidential.

If you have questions at any time about the research or procedures, you can contact (researcher name) by phone at (researcher mobile) or by email at (researcher mail).

Thank you in advance for your willingness to contribute to research on luxury practices in Brazil.

Please start your search now by clicking the Continue button below.

APPENDIX 2 - Research questionnaire

Question group	Question
Personal and professional information	- Name, age, e-mail, telephone, time of experience in luxury, and professional role

- Definition
- For you, what is clienteling in luxury retail?
 - If we consider luxury fashion retail, would you come up with a new definition of clienteling? Is there anything so specific about luxury fashion retail that it deserves more attention?
- Practices
- Some studies have already mapped some activities in luxury fashion clienteling. As you have experience in the area, can you confirm which options (personalized mail, fashion shows, pre-launching, personal shoppers) you have seen in practice?
 - Among the activities already studied, did you miss any activity(ies) that you consider to be clienteling?
 - Could you detail some clienteling activity(ies) that you selected/described?
 - Are there differences in clienteling practices according to the customer profile?
- Strategic, organizational, and customer perspective
- From an organizational perspective, where is clienteling? Which area takes care of or should take care of these activities?
 - From a strategic perspective, is clienteling a topic of discussion in companies at a strategic level? Is it considered as part of the strategy?
 - Does the luxury fashion consumer know what clienteling is?
 - How do you understand the relationship between investments and returns on clienteling actions?
 - Is there already a budget forecast exclusively for clienteling initiatives?
 - In your opinion, is there a relationship between senior management involvement and clienteling success?
- Technology and future
- How do you see the future of clienteling in luxury fashion retail?
 - What is your opinion on customer data and clienteling?
 - How do you see the advancement of technology can benefit clienteling?
-

3 “ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?": A DAILY DIARY BY FASHION LUXURY SALESPERSON

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Imagine you are Ivan, a salesperson from a fashion luxury retailer. The first client of the day is Steve, an old store customer who buys worldwide, almost a friend, with a deep understanding of the brand values. After the lunch break, the following client is Jennifer, who has her first contact with the brand in her home country; everything is new for her, including brand values and product attributes. Also, during the COVID-19 pandemic, both profiles started interacting with the brand digitally, but always with your support. It seems challenging to be a salesperson in luxury retail nowadays. Let us take a look at the past. In the 1920s, luxury consumption was the exclusivity of the elite and well-fortunate people, leading to more homogeneous salesperson-customer interactions. A hundred years later, we still have the traditional customers (i.e., Steve) but new groups (i.e., Jennifer) that join the luxury market every day, with the democratization of luxury (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Inside both profiles, younger generations (Gen Y and Z) are becoming customers and already concentrating two-thirds of global purchases (D'Arpizio et al., 2021). New customers, new interactions.

To manage different customer expectations, luxury brands must be advisors, educators, and sociological guides for the new audience, leading to client domination in specific ways (Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013). The role of salespeople in luxury retailing is not to sell; instead, it is to make the customer understand the luxury components embodied in each product (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009) and to create a bond with them (Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013). It is essential to highlight that luxury customers attribute power to the brands, primarily based on the salesperson's relationship (Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013) and the customer's desire to form relationships with the salesperson (Kauppinen-Räsänen, Mühlbacher, and Taishoff, 2020). Thus, a one-to-one relationship is created between the salesperson and the customer to develop a quasi-affective bond (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). To build this type of relationship, communicating correctly with the customer is crucial for the salesperson (Itani, Inyang, 2015), and listening is part of this interpersonal communication (Itani, Goad, and Jamarillo, 2019).

Prior studies explored the link between salesperson listening behavior and customer relationship construction. Based on effective listening behavior (Castleberry & Shepherd, 1993; Ramsey & Sohi, 1997), listening to customers is a moment of a "silent interpretative conversation" (McKechnie, Grant, and Bagaria, 2007, p.116), and can influence salesperson

adaptive selling behavior (Castleberry & Shepherd, 1993; Pelham & Kravitz, 2008). Considered a crucial skill for a salesperson in a personal selling environment (Roman, Ruiz, and Munuera, 2005), listening is composed of sensing, processing, and responding behaviors (Castleberry, Ridnour, and Shepherd, 2004). Customers trust the salesperson more when they realize they are listened to (Itani et al., 2019; Ramsey & Sohi, 1997). The more the customer receives proper attention and feels individually welcome in luxury, the more delightful the shopping experience can be (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2020). Listening can also lead to better accuracy when judging customers' needs (Hall, Ahearne, & Sujan, 2015), and may vary according to the salesperson's professional experience (Castleberry et al., 2004). Despite this relevance of listening, generally, the salesperson focuses on sales performance, encouraging the focus on persuading the customer instead of effective listening (Roman et al., 2005).

The salesperson in luxury is the face of the organization and often the customer's first point of contact (Ward & Dahl, 2014), and known as a brand ambassador (Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013). They play a central role in creating a solid relationship with clients and embody the brand values (Merk & Michel, 2019; Wang, Chow, and Luk, 2013). Attributes such as charm, elegance, finesse (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009), product expertise, and a sense of brand orientation (Merk & Michel, 2019) are some crucial skills for a salesperson in luxury retailing to offer an incredible experience to all customers, does not matter who is he/she. Nevertheless, at the moment of sales, to be "effective" salesperson may spend more time and attention on customers they judge with the most potential for shopping (Chiou & Hsiao, 2017), not offering the same service for the ones they consider unlikely purchase (Chiou & Hsiao, 2017), even stereotyping them (Cervellon, Poujol, and Tanner, 2019) and being arrogant and inhospitable (Wang et al., 2013). However, because customers can judge that salespeople are snobbish, they buy to prove their shopping condition (Chiou & Hsiao, 2017; Ward & Dahl, 2014; Wang et al., 2013), but without establishing a relationship. The multichannel approach makes online luxury shoppers more price-conscious and value shopping experiences and interactions. They feel powerful and highly valued when treated with respect and courtesy (Liu, Burns, and Hou, 2013). Also, some extra services must be offered, such as style advisors, personal shoppers, and booking an appointment for the store visit (Agrawal, Castleberry, Ridnour, and Shepherd, 2022).

Most luxury brands are investing in emerging markets (Wang et al., 2013), where customers prefer brands that allow them to experiment with luxury privileges (Agrawal et al., 2022).

However, some operations fail as retailers tend to replicate the standards of their operations in such economies (Sharma, Soni, Borah, and Saboo, 2020). Within this context, our salesperson, Ivan, needs to listen to Jennifer to understand her needs better, offer the right product, adjust the interactions, and start a relationship. Finally, he also needs to deepen his relationship with Steve, whom the more he listens to, the more he trusts him. *Listening* is a vital salesperson skill crucial in building trusting and open customer relationships (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997). Capturing the listening behavior of salespeople in an emerging country, based on daily audio diaries and online surveys, the research questions that guide this study are as follows:

RQ1: How is the salesperson's self-perception considering the capability of listening to the luxury customer?

RQ2: What are the types of luxury customers, and how do they behave during the salesperson listening process?

RQ3: Does the luxury customer profile interfere with salesperson listening behavior?

To answer these research questions, we had four salespeople from luxury retailers, such as Gringa and Farfetch, who are supporters of this study in data collecting within their staff, and a participant from a LinkedIn call. The main theoretical contributions of this study are: (1) listening behavior parting from the salesperson's point of view is marginally investigated; (2) luxury salespeople self-evaluate their listening behavior and how it can be different based on customer profiles; and (3) application of the daily dairy method, combined with an audio diary and an online survey, which are also underexplored in the retailing context.

Practically, the findings of this study are helpful to luxury retailers in terms of understanding customers' characteristics of listening behavior apart from salespeople's point of view. In recent years, the luxury market in emerging countries has been an essential source of revenue. Hence, luxury retailers are intensively targeting these customers, even without knowing their behavior. Such retailers can use this study's findings to understand better how they can adapt their salesperson approach and stimulate an active listening behavior to develop a long-term relationship with the emerging markets' customer bases.

The study is organized as follows: First, we review the literature on luxury customer profiles in emerging markets and salesperson listening behavior. Then, we present our methodology

and main results. Finally, this study concludes with research implications and limitations and new research avenues.

3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To contextualize both salespersons and customers in luxury retailing, a theoretical review overlooked luxury customer behavior in emerging markets studies. For the salesperson, the review presents definitions of listening behavior and processes impacting customer relationships in retail settings.

3.2.1 Luxury Consumer Behavior in Emerging Markets

Comprehending luxury customers in emerging markets is vital due to the market size and their different aspirations (Shukla, 2012). Especially after COVID-19, when some luxury customers who used to buy globally started to buy in their home country and want the global experience offered by the brand (D'Arpizio et al., 2021). Unlike the developed market customers, the emerging profile does not necessarily look for conspicuous consumption. However, it intends to gain more prestige in acquisition than showing off, with an increasing search for materialism (Shukla, 2012). Besides luxury consumption, which primarily involves the satisfaction of symbolic items, it is also necessary (Husic & Cicic, 2009).

Luxury customers expect a salesperson who shares information about product technical attributes but also brings the hidden details embodied in each product and brand, with good manners and is well educated (Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013). When interacting with the salesperson, they want a fun experience, enjoyment, and excitement, thus enhancing loyalty with the retailer (Kim & Kim, 2014). Some customers can feel a sense of high achievement and self-respect when buying expensive luxury goods (Kim & Kim, 2014). Despite this need in luxury retailing, in emerging countries, some customers still face arrogant staff approaches more heavily than in developed economies (Wang et al., 2013), and they already expect that the store staff will not be welcoming and will not pay attention to their needs (Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013).

Cervellon and Coudriet (2013) pointed out that they feel empowered if treated like critical people, consider important salesperson advice and knowledge, and are proud when the salesperson recognizes their connoisseurship over the brand and product. However, some

customer characteristics are essential to highlight when operating in emerging markets. In the Indian market, Jhamb, Aggarwal, Mittal, and Paul (2020) revealed that some aspects positively affect consumers' attitudes toward luxury brands, such as brand experiences, personal feelings, and emotions, rather than their personal experiences and knowledge about the brand.

Luxury emerging customers suffer from hedonism, lifestyle, and psychological influences, besides brand image, product quality, and patron status (Husic & Cicic, 2009). Some in the high-status segment tend to drive consumption more related to brands that help them create an identity and distinguish themselves from the low-status group (Sharma et al., 2020). These segments in an emerging economy such as China can comprise five customer groups: achievers, conservatives, experiencers, followers, and idealists (Gao, Norton, Zhang, and To, 2009). Regarding their fashion luxury buying behavior, experiencers are the ones that spend more, seeking social status associated with the products. At the same time, achievers value prestige brands that symbolize their status or power, and idealists spend moderately compared to others (Gao et al., 2009). While in Russia, they can be known as "old aristocracy" and "new money" (Husic & Cicic, 2009). For those worried about prestige, despite their financial income, the primary purpose is to impress others and reinforce social position in the group where the customer desires to belong. Less wealthy shop a few products yearly for enjoyment or social acceptance (Husic & Cicic, 2009).

Considering customer segmentation in these markets, Makkar and Yap (2018) proposed UEA four groups: fashion influencer, trendsetter, fashion follower, and luxe conservative. Parting from this segmentation, Sresnewsy, Yojo, Veloso, and Torresi (2020) proposed for Brazil five groups, presented as follows:

1. New customer: newcomers to the luxury market, it is essential to create an emotional connection and ask questions during the exploration phase of the relationship to recognize which segment they will fit.
2. Trendsetter: accepts advice on items considered for purchase; in case of lack of familiarity with specific products, they want employees to explain and advise them on their use or suitability, imparting knowledge and giving advice.
3. Fashion followers: may be self-conscious about their limited knowledge of luxury, so sellers should put them at ease to receive the differentiated services of luxury retail and advise them on the products that are most suitable for them, as they have a certain lack of knowledge of products, prices, brand meaning and other distinct aspects of the luxury market.

4. Luxe conservatives: demand exclusive shopping experiences; they are not easily amused and require the seller to be ready to provide accurate information and experience.
5. Young creatives: Understand the value of luxury and require salespeople to be prepared to offer differentiated and excellent services, focusing on presenting brand stories.

3.2.2 Salesperson behavior: listening

Listening is the most frequent type of communication, known as the "ability to understand spoken language" (Rankin, 1928, p. 630). As a crucial skill for a salesperson in a personal selling environment (Roman et al., 2005), listening is defined by Castleberry and Shepherd (1993, p. 36) as "the cognitive process of actively sensing, interpreting, evaluating and responding to the verbal and nonverbal messages of present or potential customers". The literature presents that listening can be active, empathetic (Comer & Drollinger, 1999), effective, or ineffective (Roman et al., 2005). Comer and Drollinger (1999, p. 18) defined active, empathetic listening (AEL) as a process where the salesperson "receives verbal and non-verbal messages, processes them cognitively, responds to them verbally and non-verbally, and attempts to assess their underlying meaning intuitively by putting themselves in the customers' place throughout." Lately, the authors applied the AEL to the buyer-seller relationship context (Drollinger & Comer, 2013), identifying listening ability as an antecedent in a selling relationship.

Listening behavior comprises three components: a) sensing, b) processing, and c) responding. Sensing comprehends the stimuli of receiving and attending to the message (Castleberry et al., 2004). Processing is critically related to the capability of the salesperson-listener's memory (Castleberry & Shepherd, 1993), and the more life experiences with the customer, the higher the chance of developing effective communication (Castleberry et al., 2004). Consequently, responding behavior is related to the verbal and non-verbal responses that the salesperson will give back to the customer (Castleberry et al., 2004).

Clopton, Stoddard, and Clay (2001) explored the salesperson's willingness to listen a step before effective listening, proving a relationship between this behavior and customer complaints. When a salesperson expresses their willingness to listen, they demonstrate a customer-oriented approach, and customers perceive them as more friendly, trustworthy,

honest, helpful, and even concerned. Finally, as an interactive process, effective listening starts with the salesperson's interest in the customer and his/her message, followed by behaviors such as eye contact, nodding, and not interrupting, encouraging the customer to give more information, resulting in a positive response through verbal and non-verbal cues (Castleberry & Shepherd, 1993). Effective listening allows the salesperson to understand what is being said instead of simply hearing it (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997). This process requires a salesperson to be completely attentive to comprehend and respond to the customer (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997). It is relevant when companies want to develop a long-term relationship (Roman et al., 2005).

Listening is vital to building relationships and a prerequisite to effective communication (Itani & Inyang, 2015). Based on car customers' opinions, Ramsey and Sohi (1997) proposed a 7-point Likert scale for salesperson listening with components of trust, satisfaction, and anticipation of future interaction, indicating a relationship among them. With mystery shoppers, McKechnie et al. (2007) investigated several aspects of retail encounters, and more listening than talking was present in most salesperson-customer interactions. In high-priced retailers, the salesperson tended to talk more than listen, compared to medium-priced stores in Dubai. A recent study on listening reinforces that good listening is composed of not interrupting customers' talk, keeping eye contact combined with nonverbal gestures, offering adequate information, and demonstrating enthusiasm when responding to customers (Itani et al., 2019).

3.3 METHODOLOGY

Considering the mixed method (Harrison & Reilly, 2011), the investigation combined audio diary and online survey techniques, which allowed the gathering of qualitative and quantitative data about salesperson listening behavior with different luxury customer profiles. The audio diary can offer details and a "fine grain" for listening behavior, combined with an online survey to improve confidence in the audio data (Buchanan, 1991).

3.3.1 Audio Diary

In the research context, diaries are instruments of self-report used frequently to investigate ongoing experiences (Patterson, 2005). Considered a valuable and flexible tool for qualitative

research, an audio diary is a method that allows the capture of the lived experience needed by the researcher during data collection (Williamson, Leeming, Lyttle, and Johnson, 2015). It also provides researchers with information that cannot be accessed with a survey, granting access to spontaneous emotions during the speech right after the event occurs, deepening the comprehension of how things are said instead of what is said (Cottingham & Erickson, 2020; Williamson et al., 2015). Mostly combined with other methods, instead of being used separately, they appear to need to be utilized more by researchers (Williamson et al., 2015), especially in retailing.

This research collected the audio daily from the participants to provide a reflexive moment for the participants (Cottingham, Erickson, 2020). For this more profound understanding of salesperson listening behavior, the same set of questions was applied repeatedly daily. The questions were constructed based on prior studies of Crozier and Cassell (2016) and Cottingham and Erickson (2020) in a way that allows freedom to the respondent but organizes the audio sequence and gives more guidance to the topic that they should navigate (Crozier & Cassell, 2016). The repeated questions in the diary format are based on Fitt (2017).

3.3.2 Online survey

Combined with the audio diary, a daily questionnaire was sent to the participants to self-evaluate some listening components. Applying online questionnaires can have several advantages, such as reduced response time, low cost, ease of data entry, and flexibility in the format (Evans & Mathur, 2018). In this research, all these aspects were crucial for data collection, as one participant informed that it "was easy to access, especially from my mobile."

Survey questions parted from Sresnewsky et al. (2020), considering the five consumer profiles presented in Brazil for luxury fashion retailing, the participants should indicate which profile their customer has more similarity. The participant profile was also detailed with online data and included salesperson profile variables such as gender, experience, and professional role proposed by Roman et al. (2005), and indicated a relationship with listening behavior. These questions were answered before as an initial step for participating in the research.

3.3.2 Data collecting and participant profile

The research contained two stages for data collection, identified as 5-5-5 (5 days - 5 audios - 5 clients); during five non-sequential days, we collected five audios (1st stage) and five online surveys (2nd stage) about customer profiles and behavior.

As Cottingham and Erickson (2020) and Buchanan (1991) suggested, the daily diary audio and survey instructions were pre-defined—the exact text for five days. For the first stage, the audio recording, and following the second stage of the online survey, the instructions are presented in Table 1.

Stage	Data	Frequency	Message
1 Audio Diary	Whatsapp Audio	Daily, with 1 recording	Hello, I hope you had a good sales day. Let's talk about your main client today. First your audio. Think of all the conversations you've had with that customer profile today. Some questions can guide your audio: 1.) How was your listening behavior today? 2.) Did you listen to your customer? 3.) Did your customer hear you? 4.) Did anything happen that interfered with your listening behavior today?" If possible, the recording should be done in a quiet place, for as long as you like.
2 Online Survey	Quantitative data	Daily, with 1 link	Ready. Thank you for sending your audio. Which consumer profile is your client closest to? Click here and answer -> Link Thank you so much for joining us today and contributing to the science of luxury.

Table 1 – Data collecting

Using the WhatsApp platform, messages were sent daily to the participants to remind them of the data collection procedure and to repeat it. This communication occurred between 5 pm to 11 pm by WhatsApp. For five consecutive workdays, the participants sent the information daily to the researchers, especially after their work shift, when they had more time to reflect on their listening behavior and provide fresh and consistent data.

The initial idea was to gather salespeople through the authors' personal and professional network in luxury retailing in Brazil, with some also coming from LinkedIn posts with calls for participants, with a Google Forms link for the attendance of participants; the researchers set a sponsorship supporter with two e-retailers, Gringa and Farfetch, which invited their sales team to participate on the research. The final respondents of the weblink were 33 subscribers,

considering 12 with possible chances and profiles for participation. With eight possible participants who never returned the messages, we count four respondents for the final sample, as presented in Table 2.

Pseudonymous, Code	Gender	Age	Time of experience in luxury	Professional role	Type of attendance
Julia (JA5)	Female	45	5 years	Responsible Salesperson	Online and Offline
Leo (LG6)	Male	28	5 years	Commercial Analyst / Private Clients Relation	Online and Offline
Martha (MF25)	Female	51	5 years	Personal stylist	Online
Sarah (SF30)	Female	49	22 years	Personal stylist	Online and Offline

Table 2 – Participants profile

Even though the initial and daily orientation of sending audio in a five-day sequence, only two participants (JA5 and LG6) participated this way. The other two participants (MF25 and SF30) completed the research within 2 or 3 days between daily audios. Considering the attributes of age, gender, and professional experience investigated by Roman et al. (2005) and indicating a relationship with salesperson listening behavior, some considerations emerged in this study as follows:

- The only male (LG6) and youngest participant sent the most extended audio, which averaged 7 minutes in length. They were the ones who demonstrated a higher interest in participating in the research, including very detailed information in each listening behavior. This finding opposes the initial evidence from Roman et al. (2005) that male salespeople are less involved in customer interaction.
- The participants with the most extended experience in luxury retailing have increased audio lengths during the five days of research, with an initial of 03:29 and a final of 06:25, indicating a possible higher interest in the listening behavior process during the research. This result reinforces the suggestion from Roman et al. (2005) that more experienced salespeople tend to have a more active listening behavior.
- The oldest participant had a decrease in audio lengths, with an initial of 01:02 and a final of 00:31, which indicates lower interest in participating in the research or less intrinsic motivation (Roman et al., 2005).

3.3.4 Data analysis: content method

In a diary method of data collecting, the researcher needs to have the ability to organize, analyze, interpret, and re-present the data, proposing some logical schema (Patterson, 2005).

The data from the WhatsApp audios resulted in more than 69 minutes of content, with the most extended audio at 08:40 and the shortest at 31 seconds. All audio was converted into MP4a files that could be transcribed with an online paid transcription tool (Transkriptor), resulting in 10.760 words to be analyzed. For the online survey, the data was organized by customer profile and date of the collection together with the audio transcriptions information, resulting in a unique database.

Considering the theory of content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004), the data's reliability consisted of comparing the audio's complete transcriptions and survey data to verify if any inconsistency emerged. For example, a salesperson said in the audio that the customer did not listen to him/her and declared the opposite in the online survey. The inconsistencies were reported to the participants to clarify the different opinions, and the data was adjusted. After the data was validated, all the audio transcriptions and data from online survey information were analyzed.

3.4 FINDINGS

The text that emerged from the data was analyzed to answer the research questions presented in the introduction, achieving the objective of this study.

3.4.1 Salesperson self-perception considering the capability of listening to the customer

Considering the questions as guidance that we sent to the participants for the audio recording, the data was analyzed following the sequence and contemplated data regarding the topics. Even though we oriented the participants to answer it on-sequence, they spread information along the audio.

For the first topic, "How was your listening behavior today?" generally, the declared listening behavior was active, proactive, welcoming, informative, non-aggressive, professional, objective, attentive, difficult, and hard to please. Participants' quotes in Table 3 illustrate this behavior:

Question	Participants Quotes
1.) How was your listening	"I always, as always, make customers feel at ease" (JA5).

behavior today?	<p>"Welcome and informative. Welcome, because I always try hard to understand the customers' expectations. In this case, the expectation was to give it as a gift to his mother, so I asked about it. Moreover, because the customer is new to luxury, I think it was easier because everything I said to him, whether he liked it or not, was a learning experience for him" (LG6).</p> <p>"She was very objective" (LG6).</p> <p>"It is always active listening and trying to do a special consultancy" (LG6).</p> <p>"I tried to make him feel comfortable. I am not a person who is very upfront and charging the customer" (SF30).</p> <p>"He used to swear at me a lot, so it was tough to reach a relationship that today is polite and open" (SF30).</p> <p>"I had this proactivity with a delivery, and she thanked me and was very happy, but some of her reactions even scare me because she is often quite rude to me" (MF25).</p>
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Table 3 – Participants' quote for audio question #1

Following the question "Did you listen to your customer?" regarding the personal evaluation of how much each salesperson declared listening to their customers, we can consider that the salesperson listened to their customer if they were available or interested in the interaction. In some situations, primarily when the customer focused on a specific item, had previously had a problem with the company, or needed to be open to the service, it interfered with the salesperson's listening capability. Instead, in other situations, when there is a previous relationship between the salesperson-customer or a specific shopping motivation (i.e., birthday, celebration), it creates a better condition for the salesperson to listen to luxury customers. The following quotes illustrate this behavior in Table 4:

Question	Participants Quotes
2.) Did you listen to your customer?	<p>"I listen to my client, but as I said, in addition to her being with a friend who does not live in Brazil, I did not interfere much with that; I made them feel at ease because it is an experience they are having to come to a store together" (JA5).</p> <p>"I could not listen to her much because when the person goes straight and already knows the product they want, there is not much to work with" (JA5).</p> <p>"She was not a very friendly customer, and she was not open to the service" (JA5).</p> <p>"I tried to listen to him to give the best option. So, I assume I heard it because he was so happy afterward. He even said, "Look, I will tell you something. I am disobeying my sisters, but I will follow your suggestion" (LG6).</p>

	<p>"The three questions she asked were very objective, so I answered them" (LG6).</p> <p>"She likes that you pay attention to what she says and send things consistent with her profile and taste" (SF30).</p> <p>"Because she is a very demanding customer, I tried to handle the situation calmly and said I was solving it. When I talked to her, I called her and said: It took me a while, but I managed to solve this problem" (SF30).</p> <p>"I sent her a selection of pieces, so she could even buy them as a birthday present or receive them as a gift, and it generated a nice sale" (MF25).</p> <p>"I was delighted because she got back to me with great joy, saying that she received everything correctly, very well packaged, and that she was trusting the company again" (MF25).</p>
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Table 4 – Participants' quote for audio question #2

For the third question, "Did your customer hear you?" This behavior indicates a strong dependence on the availability of customers to listen to the salesperson's opinion. In the situations when there was a predisposition for listening, the customer's questions regarded the product's attributes, fashion styling consultation, or shopping delivery doubts. The data also suggest that we might have customers with higher and lower intentions of listening to salesperson advice, as in situations when asked for more product options, opinions about colors, size, styling, product value, allowing them to send text, voice messages, video calls, but also some situations with short questions, objective answers, and polite behavior. Some quotes in Table 5:

Question	Participants Quotes
3.) Did your customer hear you?	<p>"After that time, they were very comfortable. I went in and said something, and then they opened for me to enter the service, asking me what I thought, my opinion, about color. Then I started to give my opinion" (JA5).</p> <p>"She was very open, asked for my opinion, and I always helped her in any way I could" (JA5).</p> <p>"I talked a little with her, but she was very quick with answers; she answered what I asked" (JA5). "He listened to me because he ended up closing the purchase. Right after, he sent an audio saying that I had cleared his doubts and was very thankful" (LG6).</p> <p>"I believe so; she said thank you, and from the purchases she has made for her before, I know she always follows my tips" (LG6).</p> <p>"She listened to me when I answered her questions, and when I delivered it in person, there was a conversation" (LG6).</p> <p>"I always give options, and she always asks for more options, which makes her service take longer. Because she will listen, analyze, and ponder" (LG6).</p> <p>"I assume she heard it, but it is a criticism. She never makes a first-time purchase. She thinks a lot; if we do not have the product, she wants other</p>

	<p>options and has already discarded some suggestions, and within the suggestions that are "pre-approved," she will think about it. So, I think she listened to my suggestions, my advice, my tips for her and even for her not to lose value" (LG6).</p> <p>"The client interrupted me a few times, but in the end, she was super grateful, and at the end of the conversation, she sent a super nice and cute message thanking her for the service and attention I gave her" (SF30).</p> <p>"To my surprise, he told me that he missed my selection of items. 'You did not send me your selection!' he said. And then I sent him another selection, where he chose more items" (SF30).</p> <p>"She likes it when I send audios, and I always try to have this closer relationship; sometimes I ask her how she is and how the baby is doing" (SF30).</p> <p>"She likes to ask for help with sizing, my opinion on which item I like best and why. When I would not say I like something or when I think there is something she chose that I disagree with, I often stay silent; I do not say anything. So, we already have a level of intimacy that is very nice" (SF30).</p> <p>"I send him the news, and I try to keep it extremely concise, with short texts, nothing too long, because he does not like to talk a lot, he does not like people" (SF30).</p> <p>"Thanked for the commitment, the help, the affection, for worrying about the deliveries received" (MF25).</p> <p>"I always keep in touch with her; I keep her loyal, with great affection" (MF25).</p>
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Table 5 – Participants' quote for audio question #3

Finally, the question "Did anything happen that interfered with your listening behavior today?" was the one with the lowest level of information from the participants, within most of the reports indicating that nothing interfered during the listening behavior. However, when it happens, participants were very detailed about what interfered, with situations such as other people participating during the service (even if not in person, via WhatsApp), store staff or customer's relatives, service problems, or even the customer rudeness mentioned as an impeditive for a proper listening behavior from the salesperson. The following quotes illustrate this behavior in Table 6:

Question	Participants Quotes
4.) Did anything happen that interfered with your listening behavior today?	<p>"My new manager appeared in the service; she has been here for a week at the store and started to provide more incisive and aggressive service. Customers felt extremely invaded. One even started texting me on my cell phone, asking what was happening. They did not like it. Then they frowned, and the service ended there" (JA5).</p> <p>"I sent her a message, and she did not reply then, so I followed up with other calls. Then she replied at that moment, but it took about thirty to</p>

	<p>forty minutes, enough for her to send a WhatsApp message from Central and ask her for an answer. I answered her privately" (LG6).</p> <p>"Perhaps the sisters were giving their opinion via WhatsApp. So, I explained to him about the bag, durability, and so on. But the sisters insisted on another model" (LG6).</p> <p>"When I met this client, he was not open to dialogue; he was an insulting person, but an opinion maker and a knowledgeable person" (SF30).</p> <p>"He had a problem at the federal revenue office with some goods and was already giving up on the purchase" (MF25).</p>
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Table 6 – Participants' quotes for audio question #4

Compared to previous studies on salesperson listening behavior, Roman et al. (2005) findings suggest that even with sales based on commission, the salesperson's listening behavior was positive and not influenced by it, and adequate consumer knowledge positively influences effective listening behavior.

3.4.2 Luxury customer profile and salesperson insights during listening behavior

Regarding the luxury customer profile segmentation proposed by Sresnewsky et al. (2020), we analyzed the audio to select information about customer shopping behavior. For a better understanding, Table 7 illustrates the behavior per group with participants' quotes. Considering the four groups, the trendsetters and luxe conservatives had a higher presence, and for all groups, the findings suggest interesting luxury consumer behaviors.

Trendsetters are the ones who "love to see it before everyone" and look for specific products due to their qualified information about fashion and luxury brands, which requires greater attention and a level of fashion knowledge from the salesperson. The Luxe Conservatives require a higher quality in service, product, and relationship, demanding extra efforts as gifts, availability for long service, and deeper customer profile understanding for styling advice and service suitability. Despite this 'invisible wall,' this group tends to create closer relationships with the salesperson and might be more tolerant of service operational failures. Considering the Young Creatives, the results indicate a customer with a higher product level information and a tendency to be straighter and objective in the relationship and interactions, which requires flexible behavior from the salesperson due to the variation from very kind to obscene customer behavior that might happen. Regarding the Fashion Follower, findings indicate that luxury brands are a relevant aspect for buying consideration, which also requires service efforts such as styling consultancy or product hunting. Finally, for the new customer, the

findings suggest that this profile demands longer service time and is more indecisive, as they are unfamiliar with luxury products and take longer to make buying decisions. All findings reinforce the suggestions of Sresnewsky et al. (2020) for all the five groups' profiles.

Luxury customer profile	Participants Quotes
New customer	<p>"She was not born into the luxury market. So, she sometimes becomes a slightly intolerant client with some flaws. I think she uses this service to validate her social status, and I always demand everything impeccably. She was indecisive, and sometimes she orders, we go, close the order for her, and she gives up" (LG6).</p> <p>"This customer demanded more attention precisely because it was a face-to-face service and because he is completely outside the luxury market. Everything had to have an explanation. From the bag's model, the brand's history, and the material used. First, he was determined to buy a bag, but he bought another one precisely because I could share more information and product tips. It is a customer that if I manage to make a good first impression, he will always remember me because I was one of the first to serve him in the luxury market." (LG6)</p>
Trendsetter	<p>"Best customers in the house. They came to the store because I called them to see the new collection that has not launched yet, and it would be a privilege for them, who love to see it before it is launched" (JA5)</p> <p>"The customer arrived very sure of what she wanted, an important dress from the brand" (JA5).</p> <p>"I believe the customer deserves all the attention, as he has already placed more than one hundred orders. All his assistance demands much attention to solve all his doubts. He always wants videos of the products, as he is unsatisfied with just the photos or the descriptions on the website. The product he chose is a vintage Chanel belt from a 1993 collection. So, it is a super rare belt, tough to find. The customer ended up asking for an opinion on whether to buy the belt or not, whether it would value the item if it were not used" (LG6)</p> <p>"She likes classic products, those eternal pieces, without logomania, without anything. However, she has also tried different products. This client gives me work for the following: she never closes the first purchase. Let us say it takes at least a week, a consultancy, and she is not always open to suggestions" (LG6).</p>
Fashion follower	<p>"He is a client who joined my base not long ago, but I have already established a super cool relationship. He is a football player, and he does not talk much. I offered him the personal stylist job and selected items based on his profile. So, I selected three different brands: Burberry, Prada, and Balenciaga. To my surprise, he replied, "I loved it; I'm going to want all the items from this selection you made" (SF30).</p>

	<p>"This client wants me to look for a Hermès bag for her. I have not finalized it yet, but there are many chances of me getting this bag and her finalizing the purchase" (MF25).</p>
<p>Luxe Conservatives</p>	<p>"There were no doubts I could clarify for her because she already understands the piece she bought from the brand; she is a consumer with a lot of fashion information and high purchasing power. On her first purchase, she got the most expensive item in the store, a crocodile Birkin, valued at more than R\$200,000. We send a Murano vase with a flower arrangement and a box of chocolates as a thank you for the purchase and the beginning of a relationship with this customer profile" (LG6).</p> <p>"She is a connoisseur of fashion and luxury brands. This client sometimes talks to me via video call, but today it was just over the phone; we spent about twenty minutes talking, and at the end of the day, the client wants attention" (SF30)</p> <p>"Due to problems with old orders, she took a while to return as she lost confidence in continuing to buy. I sent her a selection of items from the collection because she is a person who goes to events and dinners and receives people at her house a lot. So, I selected based on her lifestyle, and she bought it all" (SF30).</p> <p>"This client is a lady over 50 years old who understands luxury and likes color very much, but not monograms. We are very intimate, and she asks me for my opinion on everything, where the level of trust is very high, and sometimes she likes to make a video call to see me" (SF30).</p> <p>"I sent her a birthday present, and she said thank you so much; she was super sweet. However, we had many problems with this client regarding some goods that the Federal Revenue withheld, and today, I have a very nice relationship with her." (MF25)</p> <p>"She is a client who is quite complicated, but today I have a perfect relationship with her even when sometimes she gets nervous with some situations that are beyond my control" (MF25)</p>
<p>Young Creatives</p>	<p>"They were straightforward with me, asking me for these dresses that are the brand's flagship. I gave them the option in all colors and sizes. They left the dressing room, I served coffee, and then we chatted more. Then I suddenly managed to offer other products, but already in the relaxed moment where they had already chosen what they wanted, and I managed to provide a more invasive service." (JA5)</p> <p>"He is extremely picky about everything and knowledgeable about luxury brands, so he already knows the prices. He does not mind paying; he wants good service. He likes to buy online and does not like that he keeps sending messages all the time, and when you send a message, it must be objective, short, and cohesive" (SF30).</p> <p>"This customer asked me to do a jacket search for him; they were relatively expensive jackets worth more than R\$ 10,000 reais. As he spoke and was happy, he said thank you and liked the various suggestions I offered him" (MF25).</p>

Table 7 – Participants quotes per consumer profile #4

3.4.3 Salesperson listening behavior and luxury customer behavior

After both content, the salesperson's listening behavior, and the luxury customer profile insights, we can identify if there was any impact on the listening behavior of the salesperson according to the customer profile. Answering like this RQ3, each customer profile demands different listening behavior from salespersons in luxury retailing, as described below:

- New customers, due to the need for more knowledge of luxury attributes, need more storytelling, especially about brands and products, indicating a higher level of demand for the service. The results indicate that the salesperson had an informative, active, and welcoming listening behavior.
- Fashion followers are customers with relative knowledge of fashion and luxury brands but who demand high-level services, including style consulting and product hunting. Participants indicated proactive, professional, and attentive listening behavior.
- Trendsetters demand active, professional, and attentive listening from the salesperson, as they consider their opinions on products, prices, and style, despite some resistance, and do not seem to accept a more aggressive approach, which can negatively influence the seller's listening behavior. In the case of online service, sending videos, photos, and other information beyond the website is also reasonably requested.
- Luxe conservatives, due to the long-time consumption of luxury brands, are consumers who demand active, proactive, and attentive listening behavior, as they are more difficult to please. They know a lot about the products, so their questions are usually more related to price, style advice, and service, mainly because some have already shown dissatisfaction. However, when the salesperson listens to and knows this customer and manages to offer products as and when the customer expects them, there is a practical conversion into sales.
- Young creative customers have shown themselves to be open to listening after a specific time of relationship or service, as they have a more critical profile about the product, service, prices, and brands. The results indicate that the sellers had professional, objective, attentive, and non-aggressive behavior but also had difficulty listening to the customer.

3.5 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study assessed the theory of listening behavior applied in luxury retailing within an emerging country. Exploring the salesperson's self-perception of listening behavior and customer profile segmentation in luxury retailing in Brazil brings exciting insights and implications. This research suggests that different listening behaviors should be enhanced according to customer type. For brands in emerging markets, providing an incredible experience to these customers who will continue to be demanding and assertive (Agarwal et al., 2022) is imperative. As a contribution to extant literature, we offer (1) the application of the audio diary method with salespersons from luxury retailing and (2) the proposal of possible listening behavior per customer type.

3.5.1 Practical implications

As mentioned in the introduction, the findings of this study are helpful to luxury retailers, especially those with higher customer interaction, to expand salesperson listening behavior point of view. According to each customer profile, the service must be adapted, and it depends mainly on the salesperson's listening behavior capability. The results can be adapted to each company's customer segmentation reality and be used as a guide to stimulate better listening behavior. Complementary results present that salespersons with higher intrinsic motivation were happy to participate in research, indicating that luxury retailers have an open avenue to improve employees' listening measurements and programs by motivating them to participate in academic research or apply an audio diary or similar tool for this kind of salesperson time for free speech. The insights from this data can be vibrant for marketing and consumer relationship strategies.

3.5.2 Limitations and future research

The main limitation of this study is the sample size; we could not identify the reason for non-participation. We can attribute the low participation rate to research length (5 days) and confidential policies practiced by luxury retailers that disable their staff from participating in research, even with the confidentiality guarantee. It highlights the difficulty of accessing these respondents, especially from fashion luxury retail. We suggest that future studies amplify the

sample size and explore it on other segments in luxury that might also have higher participants' disposition, bringing more robustness to this research topic.

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4 “HOW MUCH I WAS LISTENED?”: AN OVERVIEW FROM FASHION LUXURY CUSTOMER ABOUT SALESPERSON LISTENING BEHAVIOR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you are Elle, the character of Reese Witherspoon in the *Legally Blonde* movie, where she is with her friends in a luxury fashion store and is trying on a dress for a special occasion. A saleswoman who was distant from the group but observing them approached Elle with another dress option. After the saleswoman needed to answer several technical questions about the product correctly, Elle sent her away. It is a perfect example of the salesperson's listening behavior (Castleberry & Sheperd, 1993; Ramsey & Sohi, 1997), which needs alignment with the customer's needs. Listening is considered part of interpersonal communication between customer and salesperson (Itani, Goad, and Jaramillo, 2019), and enhancing salesperson listening behavior (SLB) can lead to customer perception that they are unique individuals and impact, satisfaction, trust, and future interaction intention (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997). In luxury retailing, the effort is to "provide a high-quality service to satisfy customers, in terms both of selling and of building good, long-term relationships" (Kim & Kim, 2014, p. 133), with salesperson usually as the primary touchpoint with the brand (Dion & Borraz, 2017; Ward & Dahl, 2014).

Luxury experiences are related to exclusivity, higher price, desire, status, and especially those that consider the customer's individuality (Kim, 2018). Luxury customers also search for one-to-one relationships (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012) and value more experiences than material goods, especially those with a higher desire for exclusivity (Kim, 2018). Companies need to offer a luxurious customer experience. Thus, every moment must seem like a potential moment of luxury (von Wallpach, Hemetsberger, Thomsen, and Belk, 2020) to create emotional bonds (Kauppinen-Räsänen, Mühlbacher, and Taishoff, 2020). The physical and social environment in luxury retailing can contribute to this delightful moment (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2020) or not. For new customers arriving in luxury fashion consumption every day, entering a luxury store can create inferiority complexes (de Boissieu & Urien, 2022), especially when salespeople adopt complex language, technical vocabulary, inappropriate answers, and don't offer help (Dion & Borraz, 2017). Within this context, if luxury retailers are looking for a practical commitment, friendship, and personal relationship (Shukla, Banerjee, and Singh, 2016), customer profile and needs must be known by the

salesperson in detail, constantly updated with information obtained due to long-term relationship (Reynolds & Beatty, 1999). Lastly, customer data is obtained in CRM systems. However, most luxury customer information is discovered during attendance (Cailleux, Mignot, and Kapferer, 2009), evidencing the salesperson's listening ability as essential (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997).

Nevertheless, even with all salespersons listening abilities, if the luxury customer decides not to listen to them, simply ignoring his/her presence (de Boissieu & Urien, 2022) could compromise brand experience and relationship-building efforts. We still need an answer to this, but we can reinforce that customers do not necessarily need to interact with salespeople (Liu et al., 2013; de Boissieu & Urien, 2022), and if they do, they expect something in exchange. Some fashion luxury customers can create deep relationships with salespeople based on several unfolded emotional reasons but with practical expectations such as access to advantages, product launches, and unique gifts (Welté, Cayla, Cova, and 2022). Thus, to connect appropriately with customers, salespeople need to know their customer profile, including those who want to talk and listen and others who do not want to interact, according to their generational age (Lee, Rothenberg, Xu, 2020; McKechnie & Valdez, 2017; Nwankwo, Hamelin, and Khaled, 2014; Farrag, 2017) and shopping channel (Liu, Burns, and Hou, 2013; Shankar & Jain, 2021), as might also interfere in the evaluation of SLB (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997).

Despite SLB's importance in enhancing bonds and reinforcing relationships with customers, very little empirical work has explored customer evaluations of SLB, specifically applied to the fashion luxury retail context. Within this context, our research goal is to apply Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) SLB model with fashion luxury customers from an emerging country, verifying, testing, and expanding the hypothesis proposed by the authors.

To verify the research propositions, we applied a structured questionnaire with an online survey with a final sample of 81 fashion luxury customers who had bought a product within a week and six months and had any salesperson assistance. The sample also contains customers from luxury retailers such as Gringa and Hunt, who support this study in data collecting within their client database. Based on multivariate analysis, the main theoretical contributions of this study are (1) application and adjustment of Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) SLB model with fashion luxury customers from an emerging country; (2) expansion of the theoretical model of

Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) with the new variable of generational age; (3) offer new venues to be applied in SLB to enhance trust and satisfaction.

Practically, the findings of this study are helpful to luxury retailers in terms of understanding customers' perspective of SLB and its association with trust and satisfaction. Such retailers can use the findings of this study to understand the importance of SLB and develop the related abilities with sales staff to create a long-term relationship with the emerging markets' customer bases.

The study is organized as follows: First, the literature review and hypothesis development regarding SLB with emphasis on Ramsey and Sohi (1997), customer behavior in fashion luxury retail in emerging countries studies, and SLB in fashion luxury retail associated with the attributes of trust, satisfaction, future interaction intention, generational age, shopping channel, and luxury centers proximity. Then, we present our methodology and main results. Finally, this study concludes with research implications and limitations and new research avenues.

4.2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

4.2.1 Salesperson listening behavior (SLB)

Listening is the "ability to understand the spoken language" (Rankin, 1928). In the retail context, salesperson listening behavior comprehends the process of sensing, interpreting, evaluating, and responding to customers' verbal and non-verbal messages (Castleberry & Sheperd, 1993). Considering salesperson listening behavior as a component of sensory marketing in the context that luxury customers manage their relationship intensity with the salesperson (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012), who decide on how much they will interact with them (Reynolds & Beatty, 1999), this choosing between ambient music or salesperson conversation (Helmefalk, 2019). In luxury retailing, all interactions can enhance customer-salesperson satisfaction and loyalty (Reynolds & Beatty, 1999) and build strong brand relationships (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2020).

Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) investigation is the theoretical foundation for this research. The authors developed the SLB with car buyers and presented two big groups: the components of

salesperson listening and relational outcomes of perceived SLB. Each group contains three variables, as presented below:

- Components of salesperson listening: (1) *sensing*, a process that initiates hearing as an incoming stimulus from the customer; (2) *evaluation*, cognition processing where the salesperson understands the meaning of the message; and (3) *responding*, behavioral salesperson response to customer speaking.
- Relational outcomes of perceived SLB: (1) *trust in a salesperson*, perceptions of SLB are positively related to customer trust; (2) *satisfaction with the salesperson*, SLB is possibly associated with customer satisfaction with the salesperson; (3) *anticipation of future interaction*, perceptions of SLB are positively related to customer future intention of salesperson interaction.

The study results indicate that perceived SLB depends on sensing, evaluation, and responding, and to be an effective listener, a salesperson must manage all three behaviors. Also, the success of the relational outcomes depends on the effectiveness of the SLB, except for satisfaction, which had no significant effect.

SLB vary regarding customer willingness to listen; according to Clopton, Stoddard, and Clay (2001), customers with a higher willingness to listen perceived salespeople to be more willing to listen. Recent research suggests that listening can be a significant method for understanding their needs and desires, considering it the holy grass of sales (Itani et al., 2019). Given the discussion above, we present H1 from Ramsey and Sohi (1997) applied to fashion luxury retail:

H1: Perceived salesperson listening behavior in *fashion luxury retail* is a higher-order construct composed of three dimensions: (a) sensing, (b) evaluating, and (c) responding.

4.2.2 Fashion luxury consumption in emerging countries

Before deepening the discussions about the consequences of SLB within fashion luxury customers and presenting the following study hypothesis, we introduce some aspects regarding luxury and fashion consumption, emphasizing emerging countries' studies that will corroborate future discussions.

First, let us comprehend the context of luxury consumption. Luxury shopping aims to offer experiential qualities such as freedom, happiness, perfection, scarcity, care, and excitement (von Wallpach et al., 2020). Based on that, luxury consumption is related to intrinsic and extrinsic reasons (Amatulli & Guido, 2012). For some customers, luxury shopping is more hedonic than functional (Kim et al., 2016), related to ostentation, materialism, and superfluousness (Amatulli & Guido, 2012). For others, culture and individual lifestyle are intrinsic motives vital to them (Amatulli & Guido, 2012), and self-esteem is one strong motivator for buying luxury goods as personal rewards (Truong & McColl, 2011). Although the dichotomy of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can be regulated with marketing mix management and trained salespersons (Amatulli & Guido, 2012), as empathic behavior can help customers to feel more welcomed despite their brand or product knowledge and cultural background also unfold unspoken wishes, as customer expectation is that their emotions will be understood (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2020).

Fashion luxury consumption products are associated with apparel, watches, bags, and shoes (Jain, Roy, Ranchhod, 2015; Zhang & Kim, 2013). In China, Zhang and Zhao (2019) explored the personal values that influence the perception of luxury value and purchase intention and identified four clusters of fashion luxury customers: (i) perfectionists, (ii) balancists, (iii) materialists, and (iv) pragmatists. Regarding experiential value, which includes salesperson relationships, the pragmatists are the customers who value more variable emotions. In Brazil, Sresnewsky, Yojo, Veloso, and Torresi (2020) identified five clusters: (i) fashion followers, (ii) trendsetters, (iii) luxe conservatives, (iv) new customers, and (v) young creatives. In India, customers are concerned with 'identity creation' and look for quality and exclusivity instead of price (Jain et al., 2015).

Second, let us talk about emerging markets. Luxury brands must go where the demand is, especially in emerging markets (Kim, Remy, Schmidt, 2014); in the case of Brazil, even during COVID-19, the luxury market performed better than in North America (D'Arpizio et al., 2021), and still present solid results (D'Arpizio, Levato, Prete, Montgolfier, 2023). When operating internationally, luxury retailers must also understand that buying motivations change according to cultural influences (Hennings et al., 2012). Also, the diversity of customer profiles can be a threat (Kim et al., 2014; de Boissieu & Urien, 2022). Different customer profiles require different personal selling strategies (Wang, Chow, Luk, 2013; de Boissieu & Urien, 2022), primarily if related to SLB (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997).

4.2.3 Consequences of SLB applied to fashion luxury retail

Following and amplifying Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) theoretical review and presenting their hypothesis, we explored the subjects of trust in salespersons, satisfaction with salespersons, and future interaction intention with a specific emphasis on fashion luxury retail studies.

As part of the deepening relationships in luxury retail, the level of trust in customers' personal and commercial information with the salesperson is named a "confidentiality pact" (Welté et al., 2022, p. 654). Trust is not affected by shopping channels in luxury (Liu et al., 2013). However, despite all the magic created in fashion luxury retail, customers can exhibit impolite behavior with salespeople, including being crude, interfering, mastering, and blaspheming (de Boissieu & Urien, 2022). On the other hand, the salesperson is sometimes a servant and almost a friend, but hidden emotional bonds can lead to an intimacy trap and must be controlled (Welté et al., 2022). Both behaviors impact salesperson listening behavior, but effective listening can regulate these extremes and probably enhance customer trust. Based on the above discussion applied to luxury fashion retailing, we present H2 based on Ramsey and Sohi (1997):

H2: There is a positive association between customers' perceptions of salesperson listening behavior and their trust in the salesperson *in fashion luxury retail*.

When talking about satisfaction with a salesperson, multiple variables come to mind that might interfere with it. In luxury fashion retail, satisfaction can be resumed by "advising the customer" (Crespi, 2017, p. 221). The more the customer is listened to, the better advice can be offered by the salesperson, creating an advantage for satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is also weakly associated with in-digital store experience but is strongly related to customized service, reliability, and problem-solving (Ryding et al., 2016), enhancing the importance of proper SLB. Parting from the discussion about satisfaction and SLB, we present H3 based on Ramsey and Sohi (1997):

H3: There is a positive association between customers' perceptions of SLB and their satisfaction with the salesperson *in fashion luxury retail*.

Nevertheless, why listen to the customer and create a long-term relationship? One of the goals is to interfere in the anticipation of future interaction between salesperson and customer. For fashion customers, future purchase intention relates to retail brand experience (Nikhashemi, Jebarajakirthy, and Nusair, 2019). In luxury, social influence and perceived values are essential (Hung et al., 2011). Meanwhile, for fashion luxury customers, this intention can be influenced by the salesperson's capability of successful communication, to praise expressive, meaningful, and natural, offer adequate suggestions, act with politeness and cordiality, and encourage future return to the store (Ishizuka & Kimura, 2023). This context allows us to connect the future intention of interaction and SLB, as salespeople need to develop active listening to offer the expected rapport. As follows, we present H4 based on Ramsey and Sohi (1997):

H4: There is a positive association between customers' perceptions of SLB and customers' anticipation of future interaction with the salesperson *in fashion luxury retail*.

Finally, to combine the relational outcomes of satisfaction, trust, and future intention as proposed by Ramsey and Sohi (1997) and based on them, we present H5 to H7 as follows:

H5: There is a positive relationship between customers' trust in the salesperson and satisfaction with the salesperson *in fashion luxury retail*.

H6: There is a positive relationship between customers' trust in the salesperson and anticipation of future interaction with the salesperson *in fashion luxury retail*.

H7: There is a positive relationship between customers' satisfaction with the salesperson and anticipation of future interaction with the salesperson *in fashion luxury retail*.

4.2.4 Other variables and SLB in fashion luxury retail

In order to expand the findings of Ramsey and Sohi (1997), we present two new variables in this study: generational age and shopping channel. We present a set of new hypotheses following each topic.

4.2.4.1 Generational age

Regarding the generational age classification proposed by the American Marketing Association (AMA), previous studies with the following groups: Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Z, and Millennials. The relationship between fashion luxury consumption and generational age has received more attention recently, but research gaps still need to be addressed (Pentecost & Andrews, 2010).

Regarding fashion consumption, Baby boomers are more conservative and less impulsive (Pentecost & Andrews, 2010). Also, they value the presence of salespersons and service level (Ghal & Lee, 2016). While Gen X is more like Gen Y, impulsive behavior can influence fashion buying (Pentecost & Andrews, 2010). Following, Gen Z represents a strong spending power in the fashion luxury industry, searching for uniqueness and personalization while shopping, which demands a change of behavior from the company side, as they value sustainability, social responsibility, diversity and inclusion marketing, and social media interaction (Wang, 2021). In China, deciding about fashion luxury buying for Gen Z also counts on the opinions of friends and peers, celebrities, and opinion leaders (Sun et al., 2022). Finally, the Millennials, customers who are more connected to technology and who gather more service information online (McKechnie & Valdez, 2017), also value in-person assistance (Lee et al., 2020; McKechnie & Valdez, 2017) and prefer to buy in a physical store while shopping fashion luxury (Lee et al., 2020). With primary hedonic motives, seeks gratification or social shopping and can boost self-esteem (McKechnie & Valdez, 2017). The youngest appearance can also induce salesperson behavior as they need to pay proper attention to these customers (McKechnie & Valdez, 2017). Comparing generations, Nwankwo et al. (2014) found that younger Moroccan luxury customers presented more hedonic motivation for consumption than older ones, who are less rational for shopping. This review allows us to assume that the level of influence on SLB may vary on customer generation, supporting our following hypothesis:

H8: A positive relationship exists among (a) Baby Boomers and Gen X customers with SLB if compared to (b) Millennials and Gen Z.

4.2.4.2 Shopping channel

Shopping channel decisions have more overlap than ever, and it is essential to understand both online and in-person distinctions. Each customer designs the shopping journey and demands multi-channel retailers (Shankar & Jain, 2021).

Related to in-person shopping, visiting the physical store is the first visible sign of luxury (Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013). Attributes such as aesthetic appeal, shopping experience, sense of power, and customer service are noticed by luxury customers (Liu et al., 2013). For new customers, physical shopping also represents a mechanism to fulfill the need for social status elevation, as they can create their 'own' rules while in-store, but that can also substantially damage the communication process with salespeople, even embarrassing them (de Boissieu & Urien, 2022). Conversely, traditional luxury customers can see fashion luxury stores as a second home with frequent visits to the salesperson (Welté et al., 2022). In sum, part of this magic in physical retail depends on the salesperson's level of service (Crespi, 2017).

While online luxury shopping decision comprehends convenience, price condition, and product availability (Liu et al., 2013), it also can represent less pressure to purchase and even lead to relaxation and happiness (Liu et al., 2013) if compared to the pressure of in-person shopping (Shankar & Jain, 2013). For Indian customers, when shopping for fashion luxury online, the lack of salesperson assistance has no significant impact on the shopping experience due to the amount of information about products and services available online (Shankar & Jain, 2021). For US customers, the availability of a human-assisted service is essential to buying fashion luxury online (Lee et al., 2020). Additionally, some customers do not buy online; they search for maximum product information online and purchase offline, a behavior known as web rooming (Shankar & Jain, 2021).

Practically, most of the in-person assistance offered by luxury online stores is under the personal shopper role or customer service in general. Reviews and customer feedback are essential in decision-making while shopping online luxury (Liu et al., 2013). Due to this, the possibility of interaction with salespeople while shopping online depends on customer initiative to activate this service. At the same time, in-person shopping will naturally happen and could interfere with a salesperson's satisfaction. Hence, we hypothesized that:

H9: There is a positive relationship between customers who shopped (a) 100% in person with SLB compared to customers' who shopped (b) 100% online.

To expand Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) theoretical framework, we added two new variables to the SLB model, as presented in Figure 1.

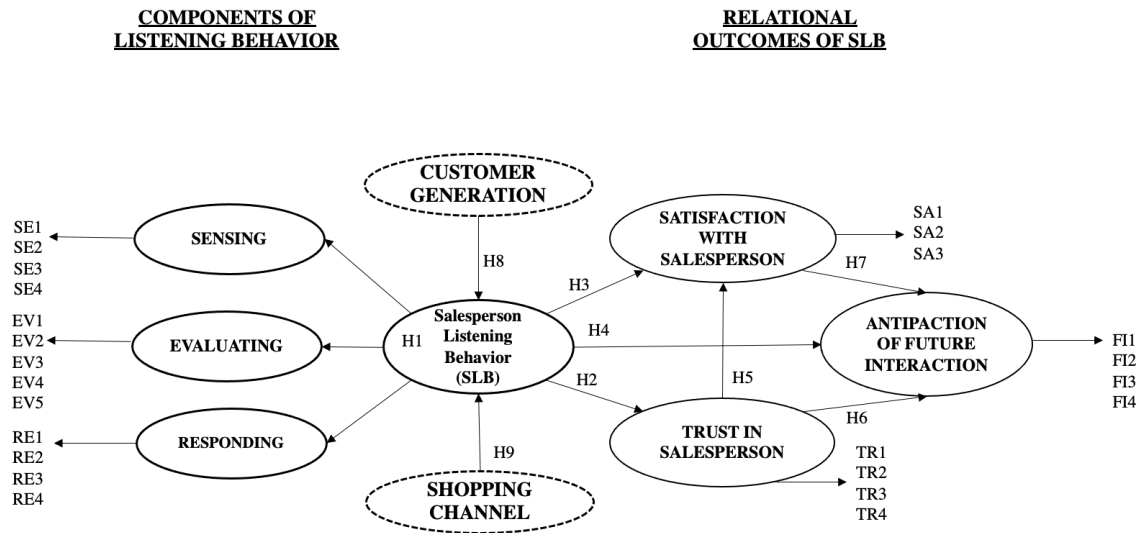


Figure 1 – New conceptual model proposition based on Ramsey and Sohi (1997)

4.3 METHODOLOGY

4.3.1 Questionnaire

The search for 'facts' supported by 'what?' questions guided us to a quantitative approach, allowing researchers to explore different relationships within the data (Barnham, 2015). To capture and explain these relations in our research, we built our questionnaire following partially the recommended design steps (Stone, 1993), except for the pretest condition, which was not considered necessary due to the already tested model from Ramsey and Sohi (1997). The questionnaire contained structured questions that allowed self-completion, data analysis, accuracy, and comparability (Baker, 2003). Questions were categorical and multiple choice (Baker, 2003), with a total of 33 divided into four blocks: (i) participant profile; (ii, iii) fashion luxury consumption information; (iv) SLB evaluation.

The first part included personal information such as gender, age, education level, and city of residence, based on Jain et al. (2015). The second part included information about fashion luxury consumption. It initiated with the question: "In the last year, have you purchased any fashion products from luxury brands, such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci, Dior, Cartier,

Rolex, Coach, and so on?". This brand represents the top fashion luxury brands mentioned in the 500 Brand Finance Report 2023. For the negative answers, we included an open-ended question where participants could describe luxury fashion brands that they bought in the last year. Following, to validate customer luxury profiles and filter the fashion luxury customers, inspired by Zhang and Zhao (2019), we asked for the average amount spent on fashion luxury goods in the last year, with no declared option for those who do not inform this data. It was then asked about the time of last purchase (from last week to a 3-6 month interval), with a final option of not shopping for fashion luxury. A thank you message appeared for those participants who selected this option, thanking them for the reply and explaining that the information offered until now did not meet our respondents' profile.

The third part focused on understanding the last purchase behavior of a fashion luxury item to activate the customer's memory about the salesperson in question. The final part included Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) questions on SLB. We oriented respondents to remember their last fashion luxury shopping interaction with a salesperson and evaluate SLB. The questionnaire survey was written in English and then translated into Portuguese by the author. From the original research, we adapted variable SE2 from eye contact to constant contact, and SE3 was also dedicated only to in-store shopping respondents. As proposed by Ramsey and Sohi (1997), for the first group of variables, components of salesperson listening were applied to the 7-item Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. For the second group, the relational outcomes perceived in SLB, Ramsey, and Sohi (1997) applied 3 and 4-item scales from several authors were applied, but not presented by the authors in the original paper or the mentioned references. Considering the 7-item Likert scale as the most used and with higher validity (Brown, 2011), this research applied it as the measurement scale for the second group of variables. Appendix 1 presents the complete research questionnaire that was applied.

4.3.2 Data sampling

Data sampling occurred between September and November of 2023 with the QuestionPro online survey tool. Online surveys allowed convenience and flexible time to the respondents, cost-effectiveness, and the application of adaptive questions (Van Sem & Jankowski, 2006). Online survey techniques were also applied to fashion luxury customers by Lee et al. (2020), Shankar and Jain (2021), and Sun et al. (2022).

The participants could access a web link from three sources: (1) snowball sampling (Heckathorn, 2011), with luxury management post-graduation students were invited and indicated friends and relatives that would accept to participate in the research; (2) Gringa customers that concluded shopping with personal shopper support by WhatsApp; and (3) Hunt customers database in Instagram.

All the respondents received an initial consent message that clearly explained the participants' commitment to privacy protection, the research intention and importance, and the estimated duration. Once the research was online and an electronic signature was unavailable, the consent form stated that the survey was voluntary and anonymous. Participants could exit at any time, as the questions were not mandatory. The final sample consisted of 185 questionnaires, divided after the classificatory profile question; the remaining respondents had bought luxury fashion items last year, resulting in 81 valid questionnaires. The time length of response for the final group was an average of 7,5 minutes (min.=2,6 min.; max.=30 min.).

4.3.3 Data analysis

The analysis was in SPSS 27 and SmartPLS, which allowed us agility and different verifications around data validation. We separated data into three parts for analysis: (1) sample profile, (2) previous model comparison, and (3) complementary analyses.

For the first part of the sample profile, regarding fashion luxury customers that are difficult to access, and due to the loss of a significant part of respondents, the profile analysis was separated into two groups: (1) customers who continued the research (n=81); (2) customers who did not continue the research (n=104). For this classification, we considered the filter of continuing or not answering the SLB questionnaire. The first group contained the final sample used to test the model of Ramsey and Sohi (1997). Descriptive statistics were applied to calculate frequencies for comparison (Mishra et al., 2019).

The same and complementary analysis was applied to compare with Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) model. With a multivariate analysis approach for testing hypotheses (Johnson & Wichern, 2014; Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson, 2013), exploratory factorial analysis and item-to-item correlation were conducted to start understanding the subject and verify the internal consistency of the constructs. Hair et al. (2013) define *exploratory factor analysis* as an interdependence technique whose primary objective is to define the underlying structure between the analysis variables, the first used in multivariate analysis. As the number of

variables increases and the correlations arise, the researcher needs techniques to manage this volume of information by condensing variables into factors (a group of variables), either with an exploratory or confirmatory perspective (Hair et al., 2013). For grouping variables in the research, we calculated the mean to define each group as the Likert scale was applied. Finally, we applied ANOVA and discriminant validity analysis for the third part, which comprehends complementary hypotheses (H8-H9).

4.4 MAIN FINDINGS

4.4.1 Fashion luxury customer profile and shopping behavior

The findings of profile participants, regarding generation, gender, educational level, and place of residence comparing the two groups are below. The final research sample (n=81) counts 78% of women; most respondents are Millennials (41%), followed by Gen Z (40%), Gen X, and Baby Boomers (9,8% each), with Post Graduation (42%) and Bachelor (33,3%) degrees, and 84% that live in Capital cities. Regarding the non-continued research group (n=104), 85,6% were women, as most of the Millennials (45%), followed by Gen Z (34,6%), X (16,3%), and Baby Boomers (3,8%). Post-graduate (47,1%) and bachelor's (33,6%) for the degree level. Also, the majority, 90,4%, live in capital cities. Comparing the two groups, the participants who continued research were older, had more male participants, and lived in interior cities. For the non-continued, the age variable had a higher difference, with more Millennials having less patience or interest in participating in academic research.

We also asked about customers' fashion luxury shopping behavior; the findings are in Table 1. For the research final sample (n=81), the average annual spending was up to R\$ 50 mil (69,1%) and over R\$ 200 mil (4,9%), with a date of shopping between three and six months (28,3%) followed by last three months (24,7%), last month (22,2%), last 15 days (14,8%), and last week (9,8%). The shopping channel mainly was 100% in person (55,5%), followed by 100% online (29,6%), and 9,8% that started online and finished in person. For the level of intimacy with the salesperson, most participants (74%) were shopping with him/her for the first time, against a minority of 8,6% that always shop with the same salesperson. For the non-continued research group, the number of respondents varies according to the questionnaire advanced, reinforcing the loss of interest in participating in the research. Profiles consisted of the majority (78,8%) with expenses up to R\$ 50 mil, and 8,6% did not

want to declare their annual spending with fashion luxury goods (n=104). The last shopping date of these goods (n=68) was between three and six months (39,7%), followed by the last three months (20,5%) and the last month (13,2%). The shopping channel (n=58) 100% online was adopted for the majority (53,4%), followed by 100% in person (32,7%). Finally, for the level of intimacy with the salesperson (n=51), 82,3% of participants shopped for the first time with the salesperson. The non-continued research contained participants who wanted to avoid declaring their spending with fashion luxury, had lower recency of shopping, and were more adapted to the online channel. In contrast, the research final samples present higher spending concentration with more recent shopping, higher spending, and a significant preference for 100% in person. Both groups concentrated a large percentage of first-time shopping relationships with salespersons.

Shopping behavior variables	Continued research (n=81)	Non-continued research (n=104)
5. Average annual spending with fashion luxury goods		
- Up to R\$ 50 mil	69,1%	78,8%
- Between R\$ 50 mil and R\$ 100 mil	20,9%	9,6%
- Between R\$ 100 mil and R\$ 200 mil	4,9%	1,9%
- Over R\$ 200 mil	4,9%	1%
- Didn't want to declare	---	8,6%
6. Last buying date of fashion luxury goods		(n=68)
- Last week	9,8%	5,8%
- Last 15 days	14,8%	8,8%
- Last month	22,2%	13,2%
- Last three months	24,7%	20,5%
- Between three and six months ago	28,3%	39,7%
- Didn't bought any fashion luxury item last year	---	11,7%
7. Shopping channel		(n=58)
- 100% in person	55,5%	32,7%
- 100% online	29,6%	53,4%
- Started in person, finished online	4,9%	5,1%
- Started online, finished in person	9,8%	8,6%
8. Level of intimacy of salesperson		(n=51)

- First shopping with him/her	74%	82,3%
- I've purchased from him/her	17,2%	13,7%
- I always buy from him/her	8,6%	3,9%

Table 1 – Fashion luxury customer participants shopping behavior

After answering if they bought fashion luxury brands from the Brand Finance 2023 ranking, a complementary question was about other brands they bought that were not listed. The luxury and premium fashion brands mentioned were as follows: Saint Laurent, Valentino, Dolce Gabbana, Loro Piana, Brunello Cucinelli, Arje, NK Store, Vert, Animale, Cris Barros, Alexandre Birman, Missinclof. These brands compose the list of fashion luxury brands that McKechnie and Valdez (2017) mapped.

4.4.2 SLB data comparison with Ramsey and Sohi (1997)

To compare research findings with Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) previous work, we first analyzed the data consistency according to variables loading factors, and we were able to find consistency in our data for the preceding analysis (Johnson & Wichern, 2014; Hair et al., 2013). To test Hypothesis 1, in order to verify if the SLB is a second-order construct of Sensing, Evaluating, and Responding for fashion luxury customers, we loaded the factors of Sensing (SE1->SE4), Evaluating (EV1->EV5), and Responding (ER1->ER4) in order to form SLB construct with varimax rotation. Initially four variables presented lower (<.5) or negative factors loadings (Hair et al., 2013), which were SE3 (Nonverbal gestures suggested he or she was listening to me) ($L = 0.498$, $t\text{-value} = 2.84$, $p < .001$), EV2 (Paraphrased my questions) ($L = 0.295$, $t\text{-value} = 1.86$, $p < .001$), EV4 (Changed subject too frequently) ($L = 0.360$, $t\text{-value} = 1.43$, $p < .001$), and RE2 (Offered relevant information to the questions I asked) ($L = -0.080$, $t\text{-value} = 0.46$, $p < .001$), which we excluded from the model. In a new analysis, still representing lower factor loading variables SE4 (Seemed bored) ($L = 0.425$, $t\text{-value} = 2.46$, $p < .001$), EV1 (Asked for more details) ($L = 0.518$, $t\text{-value} = 2.39$, $p < .001$), and EV3 (Did not interrupt me) ($L = 0.462$, $t\text{-value} = 1.91$, $p < .001$) were also excluded. Our analyses resulted in six factors (see Table 2) that significantly integrate SLB instead of the 13 factors applied by Ramsey and Sohi (1997). The remaining ones are below:

1. Focused only on me (SE1)
2. Kept constant contact (SE2)

3. Tried hard to understand what I was saying (EV5)
4. Used full sentences instead of saying yes or no (RE1)
5. Showed eagerness in his or her responses (RE3)
6. Answered at appropriate times (RE4)

Variable	Ramsey and Sohi (1997) (n=173)		Research data (n=81)	
	Standardized Estimates	t-Value	Factor Loadings	t-Value
<i>1. Sensing</i>				
SE1	.88f		.711	8.79
SE2	.89**	16.29	.698	6.14
<i>2. Evaluating</i>				
EV5	.37**	4.74	.742	8.82
<i>3. Responding</i>				
RE1	.82f		.814	19.02
RE3	.86**	13.69	.706	7.826
RE4	.89**	14.63	.732	7.57
<i>4. Customer's trust in salesperson</i>				
TR1	.76f		.858	22.9
TR2	.91**	12.76	.805	7.21
TR3	.90**	12.62	.875	26.77
<i>5. Customer's satisfaction with salesperson</i>				
SA1	.81f		.903	22.69
SA2	.97**	16.33	.961	46.71
SA3	.95**	15.87	.968	89.21
<i>6. Customer's anticipation of future interaction</i>				
FI1	.97f		.936	44.78
FI2	.87**	20.73	.922	36.68
FI3	.98**	36.91	.970	76.37
FI4	.96**	33.72	.956	46.83

Table 2 -

Measurement model estimates comparison between Ramsey and Sohi (1997) and research data

As this study is related to fashion luxury customers, previous studies can support the justification for excluding these variables. Shukla et al. (2016) and Reynolds and Beatty (1999) explain SE3, SE4, EV1, EV2, EV3, and EV4, who present that customers seek an affective commitment, friendship, and personal relationships, depending on updated information about customer profiles and needs. For RE2, Kim and Kim (2014) present the importance of salesperson fashion knowledge. These factors are what customers expect.

According to Table 2, the remaining factors consisted of Responding variables that demonstrated a significant relationship with SLB following Evaluation and Sensing. It means that SLB is more dependent on Responding, Evaluating, and Sensing variables in order of importance in fashion luxury retailing. Translating the meaning of each variable, SLB depends on the level of focus and attention with customer speeches, frequent and adequate interaction, providing answers with full details, and eagerness in responses. It reinforces the suggestion of Itani et al. (2019) to consider listening to the holy grass of sales.

Compared to Ramsey and Sohi (1997), the remaining variables of our model resulted in almost no significant statistical difference from the original study, except for variable EV5 and Sensing construct. EV5 was the last of the Evaluation group, with the opposite result, indicating a strong relationship with SLB instead of Sensing variables that presented lower statistical significance than the previous study. In fashion luxury retailing, customers SLB to the capacity of the salesperson to speak clearly and objectively. As this, we partially support H1a, H1b, and H1c.

Following Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) analysis, the group of relational outcomes comprises trust in the salesperson, satisfaction with the salesperson, and future interaction intention. For all groups, we did the same variable loading factors, and we removed TR4 (I felt the minimal risk was involved when dealing with the salesperson), as it also initially presented a lower loading factor ($L = .371$, t -value = 2.92, $p < .001$). We tested the remaining paths to verify H2 to H7. Table 3 summarizes the coefficients calculated and each path value.

Structural Paths	Ramsey and Sohi (1997) (n=173)	Research data (n=81)	
	Hypothesized Model	Hypothesized Model	f^2
<i>Relational Outcomes of SLB</i>			

(H2) SLB -> trust	.71 (8.31)**	.77 (14.76)**	1.541
(H3) SLB -> satisfaction	.10 (1.39)	.46 (4.93)**	0.234
(H4) SLB -> future interaction	.24 (3.42)**	.025 (0.143)	0.000
<i>Intercorrelations between outcomes</i>			
(H5) Trust -> satisfaction	.79 (8.04)**	.37 (3.40)**	0.151
(H6) Trust -> future interaction	.31 (2.66)**	.32 (1.71)**	0.063
(H7) Satisfaction -> future interaction	.38 (3.70)**	.35 (1.67)**	0.082

Goodness-of-fit indices

SRMR	0.097
Chi-square	325.723
NFI	0.755

a. Standardized estimates with t-values in parentheses.

b. Variance of the second-order factor was fixed at 1.00.

*p < .01. **p < .001.

Table 3 – Structural paths for hypothesized model

According to the data in Table 3, the chi-square for this model was significant ($\chi^2 = 325.723$, $p < .001$). Complementary, the other goodness-of-fit suggests our model has an acceptable fit to data: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.097 and normed fit index (NFI) = .755. Our results are consistent as SRMR is under .1, suggesting a good fit, and NFI is closer to .1 (Hair et al., 2013).

To verify the convergent validity of the constructs, we calculate the AVE and Cronbach's alpha (CA) of each, as presented in Table 4. We are all above 0.5 and 0.7, respectively (Henseler, Hubona, and Ray, 2016), with substantial R-square ($R^2 > 0.5 < 0.75$) (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017), for trust and satisfaction. As this, we can assume there is an acceptable effect of SLB on Trust and Satisfaction, with a combined weak effect on Future intention of interaction.

Construct	CA	CR	AVE	R-square
SLB	0.825	0.872	0.533	-
Trust	0.804	0.883	0.716	0.606

Satisfaction	0.939	0.961	0.892	0.632
Future interaction	0.961	0.972	0.895	0.429

Table 4 – Construct reliability and validity

Regarding hypothesis testing, the results show support for all hypotheses except one. To analyze the f-square results, we considered Hair et al.'s (2017) classification of strong (>0.35), moderate (>0.15), and weak (>0.02). The specific results for the hypothesized model are as follows:

H2: The fashion luxury customer's perception of SLB is positively related to trust in the salesperson ($sd = 0.058$, $t = 13.39$, $p < .001$), with a strong f-square ($f^2 = 1.541$). H2 is supported.

H3: The fashion luxury customer's perception of SLB is positively related to satisfaction with the salesperson ($sd = 0.102$, $t = 4.47$, $p < .001$), thus with moderate f-square ($f^2 = 0.234$). H3 is supported.

H4: The fashion luxury customer's perception of SLB is not significantly related to the intention of future interactions with a salesperson ($sd = 0.184$, $t = 0.016$, $p > .05$, $f^2 = 0.000$). H4 is not supported.

H5: The fashion luxury customer's trust in the salesperson is positively related to satisfaction with the salesperson ($sd = 0.105$, $t = 3.706$, $p < .001$), thus with moderate f-square ($f^2 = 0.151$). H5 is supported.

H6: The fashion luxury customer's trust in the salesperson is positively related to the intention of future interactions with the salesperson ($sd = 0.194$, $t = 1.737$, $p < .01$), while with weak f-square ($f^2 = 0.063$). H6 is supported.

H7: The fashion luxury customer's satisfaction with the salesperson is positively related to the intention of future interactions with the salesperson ($sd = 0.209$, $t = 1.754$, $p < .01$), while with weak f-square ($f^2 = 0.082$). H7 is supported.

If compared to Ramsey and Sohi (1997), our data could not support H4, unlike those that did not support H3. It means that for fashion luxury customers, perceptions of SLB are more related to satisfaction and trust, with no significant statistical relation to the intention of future interactions. Also, our results suggest that trust (H6) and satisfaction (H7), even with a

positive relationship with the intention of future interactions, have a weak influence in composing customer's future intentions with the salesperson, at least for fashion luxury customers.

4.4.3 New variables to the conceptual model of Ramsey and Sohi (1997)

We tested our new generational age and shopping channel variables to verify if H8 and H9 influence SLB in fashion luxury retailing, considering SLB the dependent variable. Regarding generational age, results suggest that between groups, means are not so different ($p\text{-value} = .047 > 0.05$, $f\text{-value} = 2.769$). Considering Bonferroni's post hoc tests, results indicate that between all generations, Gen X, Gen Z, and Millennials are the groups with the most statistically significant difference in $p\text{-value}$, despite all above the ideal of < 0.05 (Hair et al., 2013). The results indicate that the SLB was perceived to have some difference between Gen X and Gen Z ($p\text{-value} = .079$) and between Millennials and Gen Z ($p\text{-value} = .241$), but not among Baby Boomers ($p\text{-value} = 1$). The tables detailed below present the results of descriptives (Table 5), ANOVA (Table 6), and post hoc test (Table 7).

Descriptives Dependent variable: SLB	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Baby Boomers	8	5,729	0,678	0,240	5,162	6,296	4,83	6,83
Gen X	8	5,188	1,615	0,571	3,838	6,537	1,67	7
Millennials	33	5,641	0,940	0,164	5,308	5,975	3,5	7
Gen Z	32	6,125	0,750	0,133	5,855	6,396	3,83	7
Total	81	5,796	0,965	0,107	5,583	6,010	1,67	7

Table 5 – Descriptives

SLB and age generation - ANOVA	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	7.250	3	2.417	2.769	.047
Within groups	67.194	77	.873		
Total	74.444	80			

Table 6 – ANOVA

Bonferroni / DV: SLB							95% Confidence Interval	
(I) Gen	(J) Gen	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Baby Boomers	Gen X	0,542	0,467	1	-0,723	1,807		
	Millennials	0,088	0,368	1	-0,909	1,085		
	Gen Z	-0,396	0,369	1	-1,396	0,604		
Gen X	Baby Boomers	-0,542	0,467	1	-1,807	0,723		
	Millennials	-0,454	0,368	1	-1,451	0,543		
	Gen Z	-0,938	0,369	0,079	-1,938	0,063		
Millennials	Baby Boomers	-0,088	0,368	1	-1,085	0,909		
	Gen X	0,454	0,368	1	-0,543	1,451		
	Gen Z	-0,484	0,232	0,241	-1,111	0,144		
Gen Z	Baby Boomers	0,396	0,369	1	-0,604	1,396		
	Gen X	0,938	0,369	0,079	-0,063	1,938		
	Millennials	0,484	0,232	0,241	-0,144	1,111		

Table 7 – Post Hoc Tests Generations (Bonferroni)

According to the descriptives related to the means, we can assume all generations have a significant statistical impact on SLB, with particular attention to Millennials (Lee et al., 2020; McKechnie & Valdez, 2017), Gen Z (D'Arpizio et al., 2024), and Gen X, who tend to be more demanding with SLB. These findings oppose the initial hypothesis that Baby Boomers and Gen X. would give more attention to SLB. However, Baby Boomers did not present any significant results. Thus, H8 is partially supported.

Finally, for the shopping channel, also considered as a dependent variable, ANOVA results suggest that between groups all present insignificant statistical means (p -value = .648, f value = .553), which means that shopping in person, online, or with multichannel support does not present relevant influence in SLB. Thus, H9 is not supported (see Table 8).

SLB and shopping channel - ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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Between Groups	1,569	3	0,523	0,553	0,648
Within Groups	72,876	77	0,946		
Total	74,444	80			

Table 8 – ANOVA

4.5 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Our findings suggest that the salesperson listening construct can be applied to fashion luxury customers and can be composed of six factors instead of the twelve proposed initially by Ramsey and Sohi (1997). They value more, respectively, full-sentence conversations, comprehension ability, proper answers, eagerness in responses, and focused and active interaction. Our study suggests a strong and positive association of the SLB relationship between Trust and Satisfaction. Reinforcing Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) findings, but applied to fashion luxury customers, when they perceive that they are listened to, they tend to trust the salesperson more (Kim & Kim, 2014), even creating the "confidentiality pact" (Welté et al., 2022). Also, they tend to be more satisfied with salespeople with proper rapport during listening (Crespi, 2017; Ryding et al., 2016). However, contrary to Ramsey and Sohi (1997), our study did not find a significant relationship between SLB and future intention of interaction. Despite all the efforts Ishizuka and Kimura (2023) suggested for creating a customer's future store return, it does not seem to influence SLB in our research context.

Finally, our study proposed adding one new variable to the SLB model, the generational age. As already mentioned by McKechnie and Valdez (2017), Lee et al. (2020), and D'Arpizio et al. (2024), new generations are shaping the future of luxury consumption. Our study suggests that developing proper SLB from Gen X to Millennials is essential. A significant difference per generation suggests that these groups value personal and detailed assistance, as they care more about listening behavior. Regarding shopping channels, our results did not present any influence on the type of shopping channel and the evaluation of SLB, as previously mentioned by Shankar and Jain (2013), Lee et al. (2020), and Welté et al. (2022).

4.5.1 Practical implications

As luxury companies want to develop long-term relationships with their customer database (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012), they must consider that salesperson listening behavior also impacts trust and satisfaction with the business. So first, top management needs to understand the importance of listening to the behavior of salespeople and customers and understand how much they interfere in trust, satisfaction, and future interaction with the brand.

As salespeople are considered the primary touch point with customers (Dion & Borraz, 2017; Ward & Dahl, 2014), companies can organize training programs that work on the focus, intensity, and responsiveness of SLB capabilities when interacting with fashion luxury customers. Also, companies can explore investigations with salespeople and their listening perceptions of customer behavior, as the respondents are available automatically.

The future of fashion luxury consumption, Gen Z (D'Arpizio et al., 2024) and Millennials (Lee et al., 2020; McKechnie & Valdez, 2017) must be carefully attended by luxury fashion retailers, specifically regarding salesperson listening capabilities, offering a personalized and adequate interaction. For this, sales staff can comprehend several generational ages to meet all customers' age ranges. Despite our results suggesting that future interactions have a weak association with SLB, in order to establish long-term relationships, companies should invest in CRM, including after sales, to incentivize customer store return.

4.5.2 Limitations and future research

Hair et al. (2013) suggested that sample size is critical when talking about structural equation modeling (SEM). Our sample did not reach the minimum of 100 respondents, representing a research limitation. So, future research can expand this sample and verify if significant statistical differences exist when applying SEM.

Despite this fact, our research adequately represents the fashion luxury customers population. Our sample profile consisted of men and women, from Millennials to Baby Boomers, who spend from R\$ 50 mil to over R\$ 200 mil per year, who buy online, offline, and multichannel, mostly living in capital cities and with post-graduate degrees. The fashion luxury customer in Brazil is not engaged in academic research, possibly due to a lack of understanding and a tendency not to share personal information about luxury consumption, whether due to insecurity or to preserving shopping habits in secrecy. With the simplification of the questionnaire variables and possible reduction of response time, future studies will have better

respondent engagement. Although our findings suggest that SLB has no significant relationship with the future intention of interaction and shopping channels, future research can review these variables and explore possible relationships with SLB.

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APPENDIX 1

ITEM	VARIABLES
Participant profile	1. Date of birth 2. Gender: Female or Male 3. Educational Level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elementary - Secondary - Bachelor - Postgraduate - Masters - Doctorate 4. Place of residence (Jain et al., 2015): Interior or Capital
Fashion luxury shopping behavior	5. “In the last year, have you purchased any fashion products from luxury brands, such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci, Dior, Cartier, Rolex, Coach*, and so on?” (Brand Finance, 2023). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes or no For those who answer no -> Please, detail other fashion luxury brands that you bought last year. 6. My last purchase of a luxury fashion item occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Last week - In the last 15 days - In the last month - Three months ago - Between three and six months - I didn't purchase any fashion luxury items last year. For those who answer the last option - > Thank you page for their intention to respond to the survey. 7. “In the last year, how much did you spend on luxury fashion items?” (Zhang & Zao, 2019) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - up to R\$50,000 - between R\$50,000 and R\$100,000 - between R\$100,000 and R\$200,000 - above R\$200,000 - I prefer not to declare

<p>Related to last fashion luxury purchase</p>	<p>8. Regarding your last luxury fashion purchase, it occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% in person - 100% online - It started in person and ended online - It started online and ended in person <p>9. Regarding your last luxury fashion purchase, what was your level of relationship with the salesperson who helped you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First purchase with this salesperson - I have purchased from this salesperson before - I always buy from this salesperson <p>10. What is the gender of the salesperson who helped you on your last luxury fashion purchase?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Female - Male - I prefer not to declare
<p>Salesperson Listening Behavior Ramsey and Sohi (1997)</p> <p>7-point Likert scale (1= “strongly disagree”, and 7= “strongly agree”).</p> <p><i>a. reversible score</i></p> <p>** Variable SE2 was adapted from eye contact to constant contact, and SE3 also was dedicated only to in-store shopping.</p>	<p>Sensorially, the salesperson was:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Focused only on me (SE1) 12. Kept constant contact (SE2) 13. Nonverbal gestures suggested he or she was listening to me (SE3) 14. <i>Seemed bored, a (SE4)</i> <p>During the questions and evaluations, the salesperson:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Asked for more details (EV1) 16. Paraphrased my questions (EV2) 17. Didn't interrupt me (EV3) 18. <i>Changed subject too frequently, a (EV4)</i> 19. Tried hard to understand what I was saying (EV5) <p>During responses, the salesperson:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Used full sentences instead of saying yes or no (RE1) 21. Offered relevant information to the questions I asked (RE2) 22. Showed eagerness in his or her responses (RE3) 23. Answered at appropriate times (RE4) <p>Regarding your trust in salesperson:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 24. The salesperson was friendly and approachable (TR1) 25. The salesperson was sincere (TR2) 26. The salesperson was honest (TR3) 27. I felt very little risk was involved when dealing with the salesperson (TR4) <p>Regarding your satisfaction with salesperson:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 28. The amount of contact I have had with the salesperson was adequate (SA1) 29. I am satisfied with the level of service the salesperson has provided (SA2) 30. In general, I am satisfied with my dealings with the salesperson (SA3)

	<p>Regarding your future interaction intention with salesperson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">31. It is probable that I will contact the salesperson again (FI1)32. I am willing to discuss business with the salesperson again (FI2)33. I plan to continue doing business with the salesperson (FI3)34. I will purchase from the salesperson again (FI4)
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5 CONCLUSION

This dissertation is structured into three papers exploring relationship marketing in fashion luxury retailing within three perspectives: specialists, salespersons, and customers. They were parting from the theoretical understanding of relationship marketing practices (clienteling) to a specific approach of listening behavior from the customer and salesperson's point of view. As previously stated by Kapferer & Bastien (2012), the democratization of luxury is a reality, and companies must improve and adapt their rapport-building (Sresnewsky et al., 2020) to all types of customer-salesperson interaction that can occur. Still, the goal is to gain a share of the hearts of their customers (Sheth, 2017). Thus, all practices related to enhancing relationships with luxury customers are essential drivers for investment (Willersdorf et al., 2020). Our main contribution was Mapping the meaning of clienteling (Bailey & Bernhardt, 1997; Jain et al., 2018) to its association with relationship marketing, then bringing light to the salesperson's listening behavior (Ramsey & Sohi, 1997).

The first paper approached luxury management specialists to investigate the common understanding of clienteling and its applications. With in-depth interviews and content analysis, we answered our four RQs. Finally, it proposed a theoretical definition for clienteling associated with a list of practices employed practically. Theoretically, it also contributes to the organization of the clienteling research agenda and its association with relationship marketing. Practically, we proposed a list of clienteling practices, an organizational and strategic overview, and a forecast for its future. Research limitations remain on individual research analysis.

The second article looks at a less explored perspective, the fashion luxury salespeople's point of view. Applying the audio diary method, we investigated, for five days, how each salesperson evaluated the respective customer listening behavior. With the support of content analysis, we answered the three RQs, and findings revealed that: (1) listening behavior parting from the salesperson's point of view is marginally investigated; (2) luxury salespeople self-evaluate their listening behavior and how it can be different base on customer profiles; and (3) application of the daily dairy method, combined with an audio diary and an online survey, which are also underexplored in the retailing context. Practically, the findings of this study are helpful to luxury retailers in terms of understanding customers' characteristics of

listening behavior apart from salespeople's point of view. The study's limitations are mainly due to the sample size discussed in the paper.

Finally, the third paper investigated how fashion luxury customers evaluate salesperson listening behavior. It applies Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) SLB model with fashion luxury customers from an emerging country, verifying, testing, and expanding the hypothesis proposed by the authors. Based on multivariate analysis, the main theoretical contributions of the study are (1) application and adjustment of Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) SLB model with fashion luxury customers from an emerging country; (2) expansion of the theoretical model of Ramsey and Sohi's (1997) with the new variable of generational age; (3) offer new venues to be applied in SLB to enhance trust and satisfaction. Practically, the findings are helpful to luxury retailers in understanding customers' perspective of SLB and its association with trust and satisfaction. Such retailers can use the findings of this study to understand the importance of SLB and develop the related abilities with sales staff to create a long-term relationship with the emerging markets' customer bases.

It is essential to highlight that for all Papers, even the support of Gringa, Farfetch, and Hunt needed to be more to build robust samples, especially for customers or salespeople. All samples related to fashion luxury retail, and consumption are complex to share information. Regarding the same subject of analysis for the three papers, the fashion luxury salesperson and customer, a vast number of diverse papers, books, and market reports were reviewed for our foundation. The junction of references from all articles generated a list of 116 articles, with only 16 duplicates, organizing the theoretical review of the theme for future studies.

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