Emerald Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management

How brand interaction in pop-up shops influences consumers' perceptions of luxury fashion retailers.

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

How brand interaction in pop-up shops influences consumers' perceptions of luxury fashion retailers.

Abstract

Purpose: This research explores the influence of brand interaction in pop-up shops on consumers' perceptions of luxury fashion retailers.

Design/methodology/approach: Adopting an exploratory, inductive research design, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with female respondents, consistent with the profile of both typical pop-up and 'new luxury' customers, who had recently visited a luxury fashion pop-up shop.

Findings: Factors influencing consumers' perceptions of the luxury brands whose pop-up shops were visited are identified relating to three key characteristics of pop-up retailing identified from a review of relevant literature, termed the *temporal* dimension, the *promotional* emphasis, and the *experiential* emphasis.

Originality/value: This qualitative study explores the perceptions of pop-up shops qualitatively from a consumer's perspective, providing new insights into the personal and complex motivations and attitudes of new luxury consumers.

Keywords: Pop-up retailing; Luxury; Customer experience

Article Type: Research paper

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore how brand-consumer interaction in pop-up stores can influence consumers' perceptions of luxury fashion retailers. Pop-up retailing - defined in terms of an experientially oriented, consumer-brand interaction, which takes place within a temporary store setting (Warnaby et al., 2015) – is increasingly regarded as important in a luxury brand context (see de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014; Klein et al., 2016; Klépierre, 2016). Klein et al. (2016, p. 5761) note that "pop-up brand stores are becoming a popular experiential marketing tool in luxury retail, aimed at creating brand experiences and increasing word of mouth (WOM) within existing and new target groups simultaneously".

Luxury fashion pop-up shops are retail spaces that encourage customer engagement with brands (Pomodoro, 2013; Warnaby et al., 2015), existing for a finite period to create a 'buzz' and a sense of urgency, to stimulate purchase or other action (Gogoi, 2007; Surchi, 2011). In many cases, pop-up shops are supported by new technologies and promotional activities to facilitate an interactive, event-based consumption experience (Russo Spena et al., 2012). According to de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014), using pop-up stores offers luxury brands new possibilities to generate awareness and enhance brand perceptions, and according to Klein et al. (2016, p.1) provides customers with "more approachable access to luxury brands". Echoing this, Klépierre (2016, p.46) notes, "pop-up stores make luxury more accessible and less formal". In addition, Ryu (2011) and de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014) regard pop-up shops as a new way of selling luxury goods, and it has been suggested that they enable luxury fashion retailers to test and boost brand image in newer markets (Burgess, 2012; Pomodoro, 2013).

Such issues are especially relevant for the younger (Baumgarth and Kastner, 2012; Hurth and Krause, 2010), female (Niehm et al., 2006; de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014), fashion-oriented (Hurth and Krause, 2010; Niehm et al., 2006), and technology-savvy (de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014; Marciniak and Budnarowska, 2009) consumers who are more likely to frequent pop-up shops. Such individuals are typical of the 'new luxury' consumer (see Danzinger, 2005; Kim et al., 2012; Okonkwo, 2007; Silverstein and Fiske, 2008), characterised in terms of seeking unique, consumer-centric experiences (Brun and Castelli, 2013; Daswani and Jain, 2011) to create meaningful connections (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009) to the brands they buy. The exploratory research reported below seeks to investigate how visiting a luxury pop-up shop can change consumers' perceptions of the brand in question, and in so doing, complements the limited existing, and more quantitatively oriented, research into the subject of pop-up stores in a luxury context.

The paper continues with a review of the existing literature on pop-up retailing more generally, and in the specific context of luxury retailing, and the characteristics of the 'new' luxury consumer. It then reports and analyses the results of a qualitative study investigating the influence of visiting a luxury pop-up store on brand perceptions of respondents who are stereotypical pop-up and 'new' luxury' customers. The limitations arising from the exploratory nature of this study are acknowledged, and an agenda for future, more substantive research is proposed.

Literature review

The pop-up concept potentially contributes to the achievement of a range of broader business objectives, outlined by Warnaby et al. (2015) in terms of the following dimensions:

- *communicational* - e.g. increasing brand awareness, enhancing perception of brand values);
- *experiential* - e.g. facilitating consumer-brand engagement, building brand communities);
- *transactional* - e.g. increasing sales and market share); and
- *testing* - e.g. as a low(er) risk means of gaining market intelligence.

This is facilitated by the defining generic characteristics of pop-up activities, namely their *temporary* nature, and their *promotional* and *experiential* emphasis. The following review outlines these three interconnecting factors characterising pop-up shops more generally, and also in the more specific context of luxury fashion retailing, before moving on to consider the type of consumer attracted to such retail activity.

The temporal dimension

Pop-up stores are defined by an inherent ephemerality, being temporary entities, lasting from a few days to a year, with an average duration of one month (Kim et *al.*, 2010; Pomodoro, 2013). Beekmans and de Boer (2014) also note the existence of 'hyper-temporary' shops, which may appear (and disappear) with even greater speed. Indeed, pop-up retailing is often conceived of in terms of an *event* (Pomodoro 2013), and the appearance of a luxury fashion pop-up is often contingent on - and linked to - other events such as 'fashion weeks' (Pomodoro, 2013; Surchi, 2011), especially for luxury brands that may also feature fashion shows to launch current seasonal ranges.

If pop-up retail activities are considered as *events*, then existing literature on experiential marketing (see Antéblian et al., 2014; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009) and event management (see Donlan and

Crowther 2014; Bladen et al. 2012; Tum et al. 2006) highlights this explicit temporality, which needs to be accommodated when planning pop-up activities. Drawing on this literature, Shi and Warnaby (2014) identify three processual stages relating to temporality in a general pop-up context:

(1) the *Pre-Pop-up* stage - i.e. incorporating retail strategy mix decisions such as store location, operating procedures, the goods/services offered, pricing tactics, store atmosphere, customer services, and promotional methods before the event, often utilising social media;

(2) the *Actual Pop-up Experience* - i.e. the day-to-day decisions, and the actions that have to occur, in order to produce the event experience, which may focus on promoting interactivity, and socialisation; and

(3) the *Post-Pop-up* stage - i.e. measures to evaluate the event, and to further the longevity of the experience: e.g. via the use of social media commentary after the event has ended.

From a consumer perspective, pop-up's temporary nature can lead to a feeling of urgency and an impetus to action (de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014; Warnaby et *al.*, 2015). Here, consumer inertia (i.e. in terms of not visiting the pop-up store before it disappears) can result in a sense of perceived loss as the decision usually cannot be revised (Baumgarth and Kastner, 2012), and such regret may be higher for more hedonic products (Abendroth and Diehl, 2006), such as luxury goods.

<u>The promotional emphasis</u>

An important defining characteristic of pop-up retailing is its emphasis on brand or product promotion (Kim et al., 2010; Marcinciak and Budnarowska, 2009; Pomodoro, 2013; Russo Spena et al., 2012). Here, a key aim (especially for luxury retailers) is to build customer excitement in order to encourage store visits and enhance brand image (Russo Spena et al., 2012). Thus, luxury fashion brands establish creative, experiential and promotionally-oriented pop-up retail environments to prevent customer boredom and to generate a short-term 'buzz' (Niehm et al., 2006; Picot-Coupey, 2014). Creating this 'buzz' has several positive implications:

(1) given the recent trend towards shorter product lifecycles and increase in the number of seasonal collections (Okonkwo, 2007), pop-ups offer fashion retailers possibilities to react more flexibly to changing market needs;

(2) by promoting new lines/unique product selections within a differentiated and unique pop-up retail setting, fashion retailers can create an experience that is hard to replicate (Baumgarth and Kastner, 2012); and

(3) the focus on pop-up as an *event* can attract media attention and keep the brand relevant in consumers' minds (de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014).

Of particular note, linking to the tech-savvy nature of the archetypal pop-up (de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014; Marciniak and Budnarowska, 2009) and 'new luxury' (Atwal and Williams, 2009; Danziger, 2005; Okonkwo, 2007) customer, and also the inherent ephemerality of pop-up (arising from its temporary nature, as mentioned above) is the role of social media. In this context, using social media can *quickly* create awareness/knowledge of pop-up activities, and also stimulate word of mouth (WOM) (Klein et al., 2016). Thus, in the pre-pop-up stage, retailers can use SMS, blog comments, or social media (Marciniak and Budnarowska, 2009; de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014) to inform potential customers. Details about store openings are usually communicated to a selected group of opinion leaders (Jackson and Shaw, 2009), and knowledge about the time and place of a pop-up can establish an 'insider-only' atmosphere (Burgess, 2012). At the post-pop-up stage, social media can be used to create customer-focused word-of-mouth communication: Mason (2008, p. 207) notes that such WOM can start "a chain of communication that could branch out through a whole community", which can be perceived as more credible than retailer-led advertising (Jackson and Shaw, 2009; Hurth and Krause, 2010).

The experiential emphasis

Fiore (2008, p. 642) defines a pop-up store environment as "highly experiential, focused on promoting a brand or product line, but temporary". Klépierre (2016, p.58) note that, "Done right, a pop-up gives visitors a memorable experience and transforms their relationship with the brand", and identifies three aspects that contribute to this, namely:

(1) *the element of surprise*, providing a break from routine;

(2) *entertainment* (which, linking back to the first characteristic, "because of their limited-time nature, pop-ups are exciting "happenings"… The more exclusive and fleeting consumers perceive the experience to be, the more they will want to be part of it"); and

(3) *fun*, providing a more festive atmosphere, which brings people together, and facilitates contact with brand representatives.

Klein et al. (2016) state that seeking to create a superior brand experience is a factor that differentiates pop-up brand stores from 'flash' retailing and seasonal pop-up stores (such as Halloween or Christmas stores).

Indeed, luxury retailers often use pop-ups to enhance and complement the impact of traditional brand stores (de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014). For example, in a luxury context, both traditional and pop-up store formats share the common goal of highlighting the brand's exclusivity by creating a 'surprise effect' through unique products and in-store environments (Pomodoro, 2013, Kaydo, 2014). However, pop-up shops can also broaden the luxury brand's customer base by appealing to luxury 'novices' (resonating with the notion of the 'new luxury' customer, who shares many characteristics with the stereotypical pop-up shopper). Thus, simpler decoration, friendlier store environment, more accessible products, and new sales techniques are commonly used to accomplish this (Niehm et al., 2006; de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014). A smaller shop size facilitates personal contact with brand representatives and evokes a 'cocooning effect' where customers feel less intimidated and newcomers to luxury consumption are more likely to purchase products (Kim et al., 2010; de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014). Indeed, luxury pop-up shops can strengthen brand fascination, and "generate a supplementary bond of seduction between the brand and the customer" (de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014, p. 66).

<u>The (luxury) pop-up consumer</u>

An important theme in the general pop-up literature is identification of the characteristics that describe those consumers predisposed towards pop-up retail. Niehm et al.'s (2006) quantitative findings suggest that that age, gender, geographic area, and community size all influence consumers' perceptions of pop-up stores, with young people and women demonstrating particular interest. Using a netnographic approach, de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014) identify young women defining themselves as "avant-garde or hip", and eager for innovative, experiential concepts as archetypal pop-up shoppers. Such consumers share many similarities with 'new luxury' shoppers, who are moving away from more overtly conspicuous consumption, and are more interested in unique, meaningful retail experiences (Daswani and Jain, 2011; de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014). Common demographics of the new luxury consumer are: single, working, well-educated, female, and young, and also high levels of brand awareness, fashionable, individualistic, and morally conscious

(Danziger, 2005; Okonkwo, 2007; Silverstein and Fiske, 2008). The characteristics of these two sets of customers are outlined in Table 1, and informed the selection of respondents for this study.

Insert table 1 about here

Methodology

This research took an inductive, qualitative approach, reflecting the fact that, to date, this aspect of retail activity is neglected. Using a purposive sampling approach (Miles et al., 2014), 16 respondents who had visited pop-up shops of ten different luxury fashion retailers were chosen. To ensure appropriate memorisation, each participant had recently visited a luxury fashion pop-up store at least once before the interview took place (Goulding, 2005; Dolbec and Chebat, 2013). Respondents were females between 20-25 years of age, with a good level of educational attainment, consistent with the main characteristics of both pop-up and new luxury consumers, as reported in Table 1. Further information on respondents is provided in Table 2.

Insert table 2 about here

Depth interviews were chosen for their potential to capture emotional states concerning store atmosphere, and the need to understand how active interaction between customers and brands, services, or other people determines personal experiences (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003) in this context. Creswell (2003) emphasises that depth interviews can answer complex questions regarding customer experiences.

Interviews started with broad, open-ended questions, narrowing down to discussing the actual experience (Creswell, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). The interview guide was divided into four main parts, starting with questions relating to respondents' perception and understanding of the luxury retailing and pop-up concepts. The rest of the interview was structured using a temporal perspective relating to the stages of the respondents' perceived experience in the pop-up shop in question - namely, pre-, actual, and post-experience - as outlined in Table 3, which highlights the linkages to the specific literature on pop-up retailing informing interview topics. This temporally-

oriented interview structure was adopted as it was felt that this approach would facilitate respondents' recall of their visit to the luxury pop-up store in question.

Insert table 3 about here

Interviews lasted an average of 25 minutes and were audio-recorded and transcribed. Data were subject to thematic analysis (Crabtree and Miller, 1999), using the template analysis technique (King and Horrocks, 2010), given its hierarchical and flexible coding structure, the combination of "descriptive" and "interpretative" coding, and the use of *a priori* themes (King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 168; Brooks et al., 2015), which allowed the template to be tailored to the specific requirements of the study (Brooks et al., 2015).

Findings

The reporting of respondents' perceptions of their visit to the luxury pop-up store in question has been structured using the *temporal*, *promotional* and *experiential* dimensions outlined in the literature review, given that they are fundamental to any discussion of characteristics of the pop-up concept more generally, and also with particular reference to pop-up in a luxury context.

The temporal dimension

The ephemeral nature of pop-up activities underpinned respondents' understanding of the concept as all 16 interviewees defined a pop-up shop in terms of its temporary nature. The perceived maximum duration for a pop-up shop could be up to several months, but according to some respondents, pop-ups should not exceed a certain timespan: *"…so maybe six weeks. If it was longer it wouldn't be a pop-up shop for me"* (Respondent 3).

Twelve respondents were influenced to visit the store specifically by the limited timespan, articulating the fact that this created an urgency to experience it before it was gone: *"I think when there is a time limit on something it kind of attracts you to actually go do it"* (Respondent 5). This is consistent with the literature on how pop-ups can create a 'buzz' (Gogoi, 2007; Surchi, 2011) arising

from their essential ephemerality. Indeed, if the pop-up shop was perceived to be open for too long a duration, this could potentially be counter-productive:

> "*I feel a bit tricked. Because actually the concept is that the shop will be there a limited period of time but when it's there for so long already you don't really feel any pressure to go*" (Respondent 13).

Notions of temporality in relation to pre- and post- stages in the literature on experiences (see Antéblian et al., 2014; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009, and in a specific pop-up context, Shi and Warnaby, 2014) were apparent in respondents' evidence. Respondent 3 noted that:

> "*I would expect the brand experience [to occur] from before I am entering the shop to the end, and even after I bought the product. I would expect the experience to be really special*" (Respondent 3).

A key issue at the pre-experience (or pre pop-up in this particular context) was how respondents discovered the pop-up shop. In terms of pop-up 'discovery', five respondents identified word-of-mouth (WOM), and eight identified online platforms, as the main source of initial knowledge:

> "*There was a friend actually who was talking about it. It came up in a conversation and I thought it was a very cool concept. So I thought we'd go take a look*" (Respondent 5);

> "*I found out on Instagram. They posted a picture about the pop-up shop. I just browsed*" (Respondent 3);

> "*I read it on Facebook. A fashion store I 'like' posted an event regarding the opening of this new pop-up store*" (Respondent 11).

Only three respondents did not know about the store they visited beforehand, coming across the pop-up whilst on a normal shopping trip. These findings are consistent with existing literature, which emphasises the importance of word of mouth in this context (see Klein et al., 2016).

The experiential marketing literature also highlights the importance of the post-experience stage, and in the context of pop-up activities, it has been suggested that this stage could be important in maintaining any brand momentum created by a pop-up shop, once it has disappeared (Shi and Warnaby, 2014). Indeed, respondents found online post-experience activities particularly useful for the memorisation of the store experience and for further product information: for example:

> "*There was a video on their Facebook page that showed the complete collection. I took a look at it at home in order to memorise what I've seen…It was also the same font they used on their walls…it carried on with the image*" (Respondent 11).

However, such opportunities appeared to be largely wasted by the luxury retailers in this study: indeed, seven respondents indicated that they would have welcomed ongoing brand contact:

> "*It would have been nice to know what happens once the pop-up is finished. Because it felt like once it disappeared - it disappeared*" (Respondent 8);

> "*It seems like…as if I didn't matter to them. That is not a nice feeling*" (Respondent 12).

Interestingly, three respondents stated that they wanted to take away something tangible from the pop-up as a souvenir – and reminder - of the shopping experience:

> "*I liked the fact that they had some accessories so that I could buy a little thing that was not so expensive. Like something you would have bought when you got out from a museum maybe*" (Respondent 3).

The promotional dimension

Warnaby et al. (2015) identify 'communicational' objectives as an important for pop-up activities, in terms of increasing brand awareness, enhancing brand identity and influencing brand values perception (see also de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014; Pomodoro, 2013; Surchi, 2011). Klein et al. (2016, p.1) state that in a luxury context the objective of the pop-up "is not to sell products, but rather to stimulate WOM in order to multiply the reach of the brand in existing and new target groups". This may be of particular resonance when considering the characteristics of the 'new luxury' customer, as mentioned previously. In such circumstances, where there already exists an often very strong brand image, de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014) and Klein et al. (2016) emphasise that there needs to be congruity between how the brand and its values are presented in a pop-up context without diluting the overall brand image, with which people will already be familiar.

This need for congruence was evident regarding design and materiality of the shop interior, the evaluation of which by respondents seemed strongly connected to existing perceived brand images. Various respondents positively evaluated the fact that the luxury pop-up shop communicated something somewhat different from - and more accessible than - the retailer's usual brand image

(see de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014). However, there was a perception that luxury retailers still need to ensure superior quality, consistent with a luxury image:

"*I thought it was quite nice that they were trying something different. And I think they did do it to a very good, kind of classy, level. So I think it did work but it was just very different*" (Respondent 5).

Negative evaluations were usually a result of respondents not liking the image change, or what they thought to be an inferior design concept arising from its temporary nature: as one noted:

"*You can set this [store interior] up in, like, 30 minutes. It's not that very special or 'wow'…I would have expected a bit more*" (Respondent 1).

Notwithstanding this, most respondents acknowledged the need for flexibility in terms of fixtures and fittings etc., but were only prepared to compromise their expectations so far, given that the retailers in question were *luxury* brands: Respondent 16 noted a banner on the exterior of the store, and commented, "*with regard to a luxury brand…the banner seems a bit cheap.*" Similar comments were made about interior store furniture, suggesting that it is incumbent on retailers to find a balance between flexibility and cost (bearing in mind the temporary nature of pop-up), and perceived brand image: respondents seemed willing to accept a lower quality of environment, as long as it was consistent with - and did not compromise – the overall luxury brand image.

The majority of pop-ups visited by respondents in this study did not offer any in-store promotions, which in any case, were generally regarded quite negatively. Here, respondents differentiated between discounted products and limited editions of merchandise. Two respondents did not expect any promotional discounts as it did not fit their image of a luxury brand. Another two participants argued that the heavy use of discounts lowered the perceived luxury brand image:

"*Basically everything was lettered with 'Sale'…it simply lowers its [brand] value so much. It just appeared to me like an outlet [store] and that they abused the term pop-up for it*" (Respondent 12).

However, all participants who mentioned limited editions were highly interested and thought them a positive factor in their shopping experience. This was because it appealed to their "avant-garde or hip" self-perception (de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014):

"*There was a limited edition of the newest accessory collection…It [i.e. limited edition] awakes my attention and my interest when I see something like that*" (Respondent 15).

<u>The experiential dimension</u>

Verhoef et al. (2009) highlight a dynamic aspect to creating customer experience, which was borne out in this study, as respondents' expectations towards the pop-up shop visited were influenced by their previous perceptions of the brand (linking to the above section on promotion). For example, three respondents indicated that their visit was motivated by curiosity about a well-known designer, and consequently they had high expectations of the pop-up store they visited:

> *"I thought, you hear so much about him, I'm just going to take a look, and I also wanted to see how they set-up the concept of this pop-up store"* (Respondent 14).

Ten respondents were explicit in stating that they anticipated unique, novel retail experiences, consistent with their expectations of luxury brands:

> "*I just wanted to check it out because the concept is something new and different that no one's really done before*" (Respondent 6).

Consistent with Klein et al.'s view that "pop-up stores are an exceptional opportunity for luxury brands to reach existing and new target groups alike" (2016, p.5), respondents in this study perceived that the purpose of a pop-up was also to test a new market, or to enhance brand awareness. They felt that a retailer could create memorable experiences by presenting the brand and its values in a creative way:

> "*The aim [of a pop-up shop] is leaving deep and long-lasting impressions, creating something very unique*" (Respondent 11).

Ten respondents expected a unique experiential retail environment, feeling that it should be fascinating and different from a regular brand store in order to justify their visit.

Ambient factors mentioned as an important aspect of the perceived actual experience were music, lighting, scents, temperature, and the ability to touch products. Music was regarded as particularly important in enhancing respondents' experience. Interestingly, respondents who mentioned sensory cues relating to olfaction and temperature perceived them either very favourably, or very negatively, for example:

> *"The smell is really soft. It's not that strong…I can start to choose my clothes with a good mood"* (Respondent 9);

"…there was no air-conditioning and that's why I didn't feel comfortable in the store" (Respondent 12).

Consistent with highly experiential store environments as a defining characteristic of pop-up retailing (Gogoi, 2007; Kim et al., 2010; Pomodoro, 2013; Russo Spena et al., 2012), respondents appeared to perceive the totality of the in-store environment holistically: Respondent 8 noted that:

"*It made you feel like you had entered a new world. From outside to inside, you had started a new experience.*"

Indeed, it has been argued that customer experience in this pop-up context is a co-created phenomenon (Russo Spena et al., 2012), with customers playing an active role, and appreciating the individuality and uniqueness of the store:

"That's how a luxury brand becomes personal to you. So you can say: Wow, this is exactly my style and not everyone else got it." (Respondent 11)

Respondents received brand- or product-related information either from the store interior design concept, or from the store personnel. Six respondents found descriptions in the store environment particularly useful as they helped understanding the elaborate and unique pop-up concepts.

"[…] they put some writing all over the walls which further explained the brand. […] You immediately knew: That's how everything works. […] I really liked it." (Respondent 11)

Two respondents were particularly excited about perceived insider information they received from brand representatives regarding, for example, the processes involved in the making of the luxury products featured, the designer's personal life, and other customers:

"I felt like when I first entered (pop-up) I felt out of place. But after speaking to her [brand representative], I wanted to become part of the brand almost. […] And I think knowing the back story actually might have been the best bit […] it made you feel more connected to the ideas behind it and the designer." (Respondent 8)

However, recognising that brand experience needs to be consistent across all channels, and over time (Verhoef et al., 2009), respondents' perceptions of the actual experience were affected by their online pre-experience of the retailer in question. For example, Respondent 11 stated that seeing the physical store after visiting it virtually (via Facebook) offered her an all-round shopping experience, thereby strengthening brand image. By contrast, some respondents were disappointed by the physical store after an exciting social media portrayal, and one was pleasantly surprised that the

pop-up shop did not overly emphasise the retailer's luxury credentials (as was the case with its online presence), but was perceived as being more accessible.

Given the importance of technology in this context (especially social media, as mentioned above), of the luxury retailers visited by respondents, none integrated social media into the actual store environment, and only one used video screens to visualise runway shows. Respondents seemed somewhat surprised at this, and indicated that they would have liked to see more use of technology (e.g. social media, tablets, smartphones, electronic displays etc.) to provide a more interactive shopping experience:

"*I think it [technology] would make the experience even more fun and if I could share it with friends then it would create interest with my friends*" (Respondent 3).

Regarding social factors, friendly and knowledgeable sales personnel were seen as important contributors to overall brand experience:

"*They also explained the brand; giving me information about the origins of it…it showed me that they stand right behind the concept*" (Respondent 11).

Negative evaluations of store staff generally arose as a consequence of a bored, uninterested, or even dismissive attitude on their part. Respondents perceived such behaviour as unacceptable as it contradicted their expectations of luxury store personnel:

"*One staff member felt a bit distant as if he was, he though too much of himself for the brand. He didn't speak to us*" (Respondent 8).

Perhaps more important was the role of companions with whom respondents visited the pop-up shop: 14 of the respondents interacted with the friend(s) they visited the store with, the majority of whom felt that talking to friends about their retail experience significantly enhanced their visit.

Discussion

The aim of this research was to investigate consumers' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the use of pop-up shops by luxury fashion retailers. In relation to the main question in the title of this paper; namely the extent to which pop-up stores did indeed influence respondents' brand perceptions, the results were mixed. Nine respondents said that held a better image of the luxury retailer after they visited the pop-up store. Four interviewees stated that their brand perception did not change. For three respondents, the brand image actually declined (as summarised in Table 4).

Insert table 4 about here

Respondents were asked about their future patronage intentions towards the luxury fashion retailer visited, and towards pop-up retailing in general. After visiting a pop-up store, half of the participants indicated that they would visit a normal brand store owned by the retailer in question. The other half of respondents did not intend to visit a normal brand store in the future; this latter finding perhaps reflecting the novelty-seeking behaviour of the typical pop-up customer, and the importance of perceived unique experience to this group (Baumgarth and Kastner, 2012; de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014; Niehm et al., 2006). Ten of the 16 respondents stated that they would recommend the luxury fashion pop-up shop they visited to friends and family, because of their positive experience therein. Indeed, when questioned about pop-up shops in general, only one participant would not recommend pop-up shops to friends and family. Thus, even those respondents with an unfavourable perception of the pop-up store visited in relation to this research still appeared to approve of the general concept of pop-up retailing or, like Respondent 14, attributed their poor experience in this case as an isolated incident in relation to the retailer concerned.

The findings reported above highlight some interesting implications for both research and practice. In terms of a contribution to existing academic inquiry into pop-up retailing, these detailed interviews complement existing, quantitatively-oriented research into the pop-up customer, particularly in a luxury fashion context. Thus, the specific characteristics of pop-up retailing mentioned above (i.e. in terms of *temporality*, *promotion* and *experience*), can influence respondents' attitudes to the luxury brands in question – a very relevant issue, given the overtly 'communicational' and 'experiential' objectives which provide a more overt strategic context much pop-up retail activity (Warnaby et al., 2015).

With regard to *temporality*, the fact that these pop-up stores only existed for a limited time was a key motivating factor with regard to visitation. Moreover, the processual aspects inherent in the event and experience literature (incorporating pre- and post- as well as the actual event/experience stages - see Antéblian et al., 2014; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009) were evident in relation to pop-up, supporting the findings of Shi and Warnaby (2014). Thus, given the importance of branding in a luxury context (see Cervellon and Coudriet, 2013; Fionda and Moore, 2009; Okonkwo, 2007), respondents' previous perceptions of the brands in question influenced their expectations of the pop-up shops visited. Indeed, not only were respondents expecting an innovative and engaging store

environment (see Kim et al., 2010; Marciniak and Budnarowska, 2009; Pomodoro, 2013; Russo Spena et al., 2012) when visiting the pop-up shop, but they also expected the experience to incorporate interaction at the pre- and post-pop-up stages (Shi and Warnaby, 2014). Here, as noted above, the use of social media was important, to facilitate 'discovery' of the store, and to maintain an experiential momentum after the respondent's visit: indeed, some respondents in this study seemed disappointed when there was little effort by the luxury brands to maintain contact with them after their visit.

P*romotion* of the brand and its values has been identified as a key objective of pop-up activities (see for example, Pomodoro, 2013; Surchi, 2011). This is particularly important with luxury brands (de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014; Klein et al., 2016), given the *experiential* nature of pop-up in this particular context. However, this research highlights the importance of the need for congruity between pop-up shop and overall brand image. Here, respondents were prepared to accept simpler, more basic store formats because of the fact that they were pop-up stores (consistent with de Lassus and Anido Freire, 2014). However, this was true only to a certain extent: for those respondents in this study whose visit to a pop-up did not result in a more positive perception of the luxury brand in question, the main reason was the fact that the pop-up store environment did not match their perceptions based on their previous knowledge and experience of the brand.

As de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014, p. 66) state, "[p]op-up luxury stores enhance the mythical history of the brands, through its uniqueness, rarity and preciousness", thereby contributing to "the development of the charismatic attraction of the luxury store". This highlights various managerial implications for those responsible for the development and implementation of pop-up activities in a luxury context.

In this study, it is apparent that respondents' prior knowledge of the brand influences their expectations of the physical attributes of the pop-up store and the kind of experience they expect to receive within. This is of particular relevance to luxury (and especially 'new luxury') customers given their hedonic and experientially-orientated persuasions. Thus, while respondents seemed to moderate their expectations regarding certain aspects of the store environment, given the ephemeral nature of pop-up, this willingness to compromise only went so far in terms of expectations and experiential elements arising from the pop-up context.

Another factor for luxury retailers to consider when planning pop-up activities is customers' understanding of the concept. Respondents in this study had a clear idea of what the pop-up concept involved. This was especially true regarding the duration of the period of the store's

existence. The inherent ephemerality of pop-up is perceived as an attempt to create a 'buzz' about the brand. Thus, if the pop-up was deemed to be open for too long a time period, then these knowledgeable respondents appeared to perceive this as a means of trying to almost trick them into responding to the brand's activities by labelling a store as a 'pop-up'.

Conclusion: Avenues for further research

In conclusion, there are, inevitably, limitations to this research owing to the small sample size involved. However, this study does indicate avenues for further, more substantive research, with larger, more diverse samples, to ascertain if the findings can be replicated more widely. Thus, for example, incorporating male respondents into future research, might identify possible gender differences, and also further our knowledge relating to male perceptions, especially as males are an increasingly important target for luxury fashion brands.

Luxury fashion retailers are international and often global in both orientation and operations, so a comparison of consumers' perceptions in diverse marketplaces could perhaps uncover cultural differences in the marketing/promotion of luxury products via pop-up retail activity. Such attempts could provide a basis for classification schemes of luxury fashion pop-up shoppers, thus helping marketers to segment their target groups more efficiently.

Given the specific focus of this study, and the influence of pop-up shops on luxury brand perceptions, future research could potentially investigate the extent to which the consumers' experience of brand-related pop-up activities could try to regain positive perceptions of luxury fashion retailers after previous negative brand experiences.

References

Abendroth, L. J. and Diehl, K. (2006), "Now or never: Effects of limited purchase opportunities on patterns of regret over time", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 342–351.

Antéblian, B., Filser, M. and Roederer, C. (2014), "Consumption experience in retail environments: a literature review", *Recherche et Applications en Marketing*, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 82–109.

Atwal, G. and Williams, A. (2009) 'Luxury brand marketing – The experience is everything!', *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. No. 16 5/6, pp. 338–346.

Baumgarth, C. and Kastner, O. L. (2012), „Pop-up Stores im Modebereich: Erfolgsfaktoren einer vergänglichen Form der Kundeninspiration", *Marketing Review St. Gallen*, Vol. 29, No. 5, pp. 34–44.

Beekmans, J. and de Boer, J. (2014), *Pop-Up City: City Making in a Fluid World,* BIS Publishers, Amsterdam.

Brooks, J., McCluskey, S., Turley, E., and King, N. (2015), "The utility of template analysis in qualitative psychology research", *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 202–222.

Brun, A. and Castelli, C. (2013), "The nature of luxury: a consumer perspective", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 41 No. 11/12, pp. 823–847.

Bladen, C., Kennel, J., Abson, E, and Wilde, N. (2012), *Event Management: An Introduction*, Taylor and Francis, Hoboken.

Burgess, B. (2012), "Pop-up retailing: The design, implementation, and five-year evolution of an experiential learning project", *Journal of Marketing Education*, Vo. 34, No. 3, pp. 284–296.

Cervellon, M. and Coudriet, R. (2013), "Brand social power in luxury retail", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 41, No. 11/12, pp. 869–884.

Crabtree, B. F. and Miller, W. L. (1999), "Using codes and code manuals: A template organizing style of interpretation", in Crabtree, B. F. and Miller, W. L. (eds.) *Doing Qualitative Research*. 2nd edn. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 163–178.

Creswell, J. W. (2003), *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 2nd edn, Sage Publications, Thousadn Oaks, CA.

Danziger, P. N. (2005), *Let Them Eat Cake: Marketing Luxury To The Masses – As Well As The Classes*, Dearborn Trade Publishing, Chicago.

Daswani, A. and Jain, V. (2011), "Understanding luxury branding", *Media Asia*, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 131–139.

De Lassus, C. and Anido Freire, N.A. (2014), "Access to the luxury brand myth in pop-up stores: a netnographic and semiotic analysis", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 21, pp. 61–68.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2008), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. 3rd edn. Sage Publications, Thousand oaks, CA.

Dolbec, P. and Chebat, J. (2013), "The impact of a flagship vs. a brand store on brand attitude, brand attachment and brand equity", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 89, No. 4, pp. 460–466.

Donlan, L. and P. Crowther. (2014), "Leveraging sponsorship to achieve consumer relationship objectives through the creation of 'marketing spaces': An exploratory study", *Journal of Marketing Communications,* Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 291-306.

Fionda, A. M. and Moore, C. M. (2009), "The anatomy of the luxury fashion brand", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 16, pp. 347–363.

Fiore, A. M. (2008) "The ehopping experience", in Schifferstein, H. N. J. and Hekkert, P. (eds.), *Product Experience*, Elsevier, New York, pp. 629–648.

Gogoi, P. (2007), "Pop-up stores: All the rage". *Business Week*, February 9, available at http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2007-02-09/pop-up-stores-all-the-ragebusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice (accessed 11 August 2016)

Goulding, C. (2005), "Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vo. 39, No. 3/4, pp. 294–308.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (2003), *Postmodern Interviewing*, Sage Publications, London.

Hurth, J. and Krause, M. (2010), „Ortswechsel: Pop-up stores als innovativer betriebstyp', *transfer – Werbeforschung & Praxis*", Vol. 56, No. 1, pp. 33–40.

Jackson, T. and Shaw, D. (2009), *Mastering Fashion Marketing*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Kapferer, J. and Bastien, V. (2009), "The specificity of luxury management: Turning marketing upside down", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 16, No. 5-6, pp. 311–322.

Kaydo, C. (2014), "Why pop-ups are getting even more popular", *Trendwatching*, 9 July, available at: http://trendwatching.com/media/bizbash-why-pop-ups-are-getting-even-more-popular/ (accessed 11 August 2016).

Kim, H., Fiore, A. M., Niehm, L. S., and Jeong, M. (2010), "Psychographic characteristics affecting behavioural intentions toward pop-up retail", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 133–154.

Kim, K. H., Ko, E., Xu, B., and Han, Y. (2012), "Increasing customer equity of luxury fashion brands through nurturing consumer attitude", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 65, pp. *1495*–1499.

King, N. and Horrocks, C. (2010), *Interviews in Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, London.

Klein, J. F., Falk, T., Esch, F-R, and Gloukhovtsev, A. (2016), "Linking pop-up brand stores to brand experience and word of mouth: The case of luxury retail", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 69, No. 12, pp. 5761-5767.

Klépierre (2106) *Pop-up Stores: Conquering a New Frontier of Brand Expression*, Klepeirre, Paris. Available at http://www.klepierre.com/content/uploads/2016/02/White_Paper_Pop-up_Stores.pdf (accessed 5 January 2017)

Marciniak, R. and Budnarowska, C. (2009), "Marketing approaches to pop-up stores: Exploration of social networking", Paper presented at *15th Conference of the European Association of Education and Research in Commercial Distribution*, July, Surrey: UK.

Mason, R. B. (2008), "Word of mouth as a promotional tool for turbulent markets", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 207–224.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., and Saldaña, J. (2014), *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. 3rd edn, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Niehm, L. S., Fiore, A. M., Jeong, M., and Kim, H-J. (2006), "Pop-up retail's acceptability as an innovative business strategy and enhancer of the customer shopping experience", *Journal of Shopping Center Research*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 1–30.

Okonkwo, U. (2007), *Luxury Fashion Branding: Trends, Tactics, Techniques*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Picot-Coupey, K. (2014), "The pop-up store as a foreign operation mode (FOM) for retailers", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 42, No. 7, pp. 643–670.

Pomodoro, S. (2013), "Temporary retail in fashion system: an explorative study", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 341–352.

Russo Spena, T., Caridà, A., Colurcio, M., and Melia, M. (2012), "Store experience and co-creation: the case of temporary shop", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 40, No. 1, pp. 21–40.

Ryu, J. S. (2011), "Consumer attitudes and shopping intentions toward pop-up fashion stores", *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 139–147.

Shi, C. and Warnaby, G. (2014), "Pop-up retailing: Managing the temporality of the brand experience". Paper presented at *2nd International Colloquium on Design, Branding and Marketing*, December 9-10, Nottingham.

Silverstein, M. J. and Fiske, N. (2008), *Trading Up: Why Consumers Want New Luxury Goods – And How Companies Create Them*, Penguin Group, New York.

Surchi, M. (2011), "The temporary store: a new marketing tool for fashion brands", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 257–270.

Tum, J., Norton, P. and Wright, J. (2006) *Management of Event Operations,* Elsevier/Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford/ Burlington, MA.

Tynan, C. and McKechnie, S. (2009), "Experience marketing: a review and reassessment", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 25, No. 5-6, pp. 501–517.

Verhoef, P. C., Lemon, K. N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M., & Schlesinger, L. (2009). Customer experience creation: Determinants, dynamics and management strategies. *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 85, No. 1, pp. 31-41.

Walley, K., Custance, P., Copley, P., and Perry, S. (2013) "The key dimensions of luxury from a UK consumers' perspective", *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 31, No 7, pp. 823–837.

Warnaby, G., Karakhorkina, V., Shi, C., and Corniani, M (2015), "Pop-up retailing: Integrating objectives and activity stereotypes", *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 303-316.

Table 1: Key characteristics of the archetypal pop-up and 'new luxury' customer

Characteristic	Pop-up Consumer	New Luxury Consumer
Female	Niehm et al. (2006); de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014)	Okonkwo (2007); Silverstein and Fiske (2008)
Young/ Millennials	Hurth and Krause (2010); Baumgarth and Kastner (2012); de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014)	Silverstein and Fiske (2008); Kim et al. (2012)
Single	de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014)	Okonkwo (2007); Silverstein and Fiske (2008)
High education	Niehm et al. (2006)	Danziger (2005); Okonkwo (2007); Daswani and Jain (2011)
Middle class	de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014)	Kapferer and Bastien (2009); Brun and Castelli (2013); Walley et *al.* (2013)
Technology-savvy	Marciniak and Budnarowska (2009); de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014)	Danziger (2005); Okonkwo (2007); Atwal and Williams (2009)
Hedonic motivations	Kim et *al.* (2010); Ryu (2011); Surchi (2011); Russo Spena et al. (2012)	Danziger (2005); Silverstein and Fiske (2008); Atwal and Williams (2009); Daswani and Jain (2011)
Need for Retail Experiences	Niehm et al. (2006); Baumgarth and Kastner (2012); de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014); Warnaby et al. (2015)	Okonkwo (2007); Atwal and Williams (2009); Daswani and Jain (2011); Brun and Castelli (2013)
Fashionable/ Urban / Hip	Niehm et al. (2006); Hurth and Krause (2012)	Okonkwo (2007)

Table 2: Respondent characteristics

Respondent	Gender / Age	Marital Status	Occupation / Highest Qualification	City of Residence
1	F / 22	Single	Student / B.A.	Manchester
2	F / 23	Single	Student / B.Sc.	Manchester
3	F / 23	Single	Student / B.Sc.	Manchester
4	F / 24	Single	Student / M.Sc.	Manchester
5	F / 20	Single	Student / A levels	Manchester
6	F / 23	Single	Student / B.A.	Manchester
7	F / 21	Single	Student / A levels	London
8	F / 21	Single	Student / A levels	London
9	F / 25	Single	Student / B.A.	Manchester
10	F / 24	Single	Student / B.Sc.	Manchester
11	F / 23	Single	Student / Apprenticeship	Hamburg
12	F / 20	Single	Apprentice / A levels	Hamburg
13	F / 20	Single	Apprentice / A levels	Hamburg
14	F / 25	Single	Student / B.Sc.	Munich
15	F / 24	Single	Student / B.A.	Berlin
16	F / 24	Single	Student / B.A.	Cologne

Table 3: Interview topics and relevant literature

Interview Stage	Subject of Question	Source
Pre-experience	Awareness of pop-up	Niehm et al. (2006); Kim et al. (2010)
	Reasons for store visit	Niehm et al. (2006); Kim et al. (2010); Ryu (2011);
Actual Experience	Evaluation of set-up	Baumgarth and Kastner (2012); de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014)
	Store atmosphere	Pomodoro (2013); de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014); Warnaby et al. (2015)
	Promotional activities	Ryu (2011): Russo Spena et al. (2012); Warnaby et *al.* (2015)
	Interaction with store personnel	Kim et al. (2010); Baumgarth and Kastner (2012); de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014)
	Social media and technologies	Marciniak and Budnarowska (2009); Russo Spena et al. (2012); de Lassus and Anido Freire (2014)
	Social gathering	Niehm et al. (2006); Pomodoro (2013); Warnaby et al. (2015)
	Co-creation	Niehm et al. (2006); Kim et al. (2010); Russo Spena et al. (2012)
Post/experience	Pop-up satisfaction	Niehm et al. (2006); Kim et al. (2010
	Extended experience	Niehm et al. (2006); Kim et al. (2010)
	Changing brand perception	Niehm et al. (2006); Kim et al. (2010)

Table 4: Respondents' perceptual changes arising from visiting the pop-up shop.

Respondent	Brand Perception before Visit	Brand Perception after Visit	Change
1	Variety of high-end brands; Good campaigns; Innovative	Same perception as before; Awaits next concept	→
2	Luxury department store with a good brand mix	Same perception as before	→
3	Traditional luxury department store; No experiential retailer	Brand perceived as more experiential, creative, and innovative; Less traditional than before	↑
4	No prior knowledge	Limited time of pop-up did not change brand perception	→
5	Prestigious and luxurious; Targets certain clientele	Brand perceived as targeting a younger, different market; New brand aspects identified; New and better image	↑
6	Traditional luxury feel; Not experiential	Brand perceived as now appealing to younger and more internationally-oriented customer	↑
7	No prior knowledge	Brand perceived as good quality and store layout; Clear brand image	↑
8	No prior knowledge	Brand perceived positively in terms of aesthetically pleaseing products and store layout; Now aware of brand connection to famous designer	↑
9	No prior knowledge	Brand perceived as having a good store layout and service	↑
10	No prior knowledge	Now has a clear picture of brand image and identity; Favourable perception of store environment	↑
11	Trendy eyewear brand coming to the city; Different style	Clear perception on brand image and brand identity; Great physical store experience	↑
12	Very elegant and chic; Classic brand; Good image	Perceived brand image deteriorated; Perceived bad interior and poor service	↓
13	Good brand perception; Nice fashion; Good quality	Perceived brand image deteriorated; Perceived 'cheap' store layout; Garments did not fit brand image	↓

14	Fancy and elegant designer; High media attention; Distinct character but respectable	Store layout did not match previously held brand image; Pop-up perceived to be just about profit	⬇
15	Luxury designer brand; Elegant, fashionable; High price range	Positive brand and store evaluation; Not like typical luxury brand; More accessible	⬆
16	No prior knowledge	No previous brand connection; No stronger relationship after	➡