

# The ambivalence of adolescents regarding the consumption of luxury goods

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## Abstract

- **Objective**

The objective of this article is to better understand adolescents' ambivalence toward luxury consumption by taking into account its occasional and regular nature and by distinguishing between personal and interpersonal luxury.

- **Methodology**

Based on the concept of ambivalence and the opposition between personal and interpersonal luxury, a qualitative study was implemented. It was based on 24 semi-structured interviews with adolescents aged 12 to 18. A thematic and dynamic content analysis based on a semiotic grid was conducted.

- **Results**

Four dimensions of ambivalence toward the consumption of luxury products were identified: hedonism (between the desire to please oneself and the fear of lack of pleasure), sociality (between the desire to feel superior and the fear of having a pretentious image), singularity (between the desire to feel unique and the fear of attracting attention), and conformity (between the desire to belong to a group and the fear of lacking personality). The analyses also show that, unlike adolescents with an occasional luxury consumption, adolescents with a regular luxury consumption tend to have a complex ambivalence, combining several motivations and intra- and inter-dimensional brakes or obstacles.

- **Managerial implications**

This article sheds light on the discourse to be adopted by professionals to better communicate with adolescents.

- **Originality**

The originality of this article lies in the use of semiotics and the dynamic approach of its semiotic square to better understand ambivalent motivations toward luxury.

- **Keywords:** luxury, motivations, brakes, personal luxury, interpersonal luxury, adolescents, ambivalence.

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