

HERMÈS IN ASMR STYLE

A STUDY OF ASMR IN FASHION MARKETING FOOTAGE AND
ASSOCIATED EXPERIENCES OF LUXURY BRAND LOVERS

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TITLE: HERMÈS IN ASMR STYLE: A STUDY OF ASMR IN FASHION MARKETING FOOTAGE AND ASSOCIATED EXPERIENCES OF LUXURY BRAND LOVERS.

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: The study presented here delves into the integration of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) content into fashion marketing strategies, with a specific focus on the renowned luxury brand Hermès. ASMR is a perceptual phenomenon characterized by tingling sensations and feelings of relaxation triggered by certain audiovisual stimuli. This research investigates how luxury brand enthusiasts perceive and engage with ASMR content within the context of Hermès' marketing communications. By delving into the interplay between sensory experiences, brand perception, and consumer engagement. This study provides insights into the potential of ASMR as a marketing tool for luxury brands. The introduction introduces the concept of ASMR and its parallel with synesthesia in terms of individual variability. It also addresses scepticism toward non-universal experiences like ASMR and highlights people's divergent reactions towards it. The relevance of studying ASMR in the marketing context is outlined, with an emphasis on the challenge of integrating personal ASMR experiences into branding strategies.

Literature Review: The literature review examines existing research on ASMR, and its triggers in psychological and physiological contexts. It references scholars who assert that people respond differently to ASMR, and it can even be perceived as irritating by some individuals and associated physical and psychological effects related to ASMR. The concept of applying ASMR to marketing is introduced, highlighting its potential benefits and risks. Additionally, discuss the varieties of ASMR techniques available for the marketing landscape.

Research Purpose: The research purpose is to explore how luxury brand enthusiasts experience ASMR content within Hermès' marketing communications. It delves into luxury brand engagement and sensory marketing, seeking to understand how ASMR is being experienced in a marketing perspective.

Research Questions: The central research question asks, "How do luxury brand lovers experience the ASMR content in the marketing communication of Hermès?" This question aims to uncover how individuals with a strong affinity for luxury brand engagement, especially how experience and interact with ASMR content within the brand's marketing campaigns.

Methodology: The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing a single case study and qualitative interview as methodology. Hermès, as a leading luxury fashion brand known for its digital marketing innovations, serves as the case. Data is collected through content analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Findings: Traditional ASMR was not so fond of the participants thus association of ASMR elements in advertising is found to be interesting by the luxury brand lovers. They have experienced a living sensation in advertisements similar to real life due to the elevated effects associated with ASMR marketing. Sounds play a prominent role while motions capture the viewer's attention thoroughly. ASMR marketing could be a very sharp tool that is required to be used with the knowledge of customer perceptions due to extra sensitivity. Thus, ASMR marketing is capable of moulding, sensory marketing as an effective tool in digital platforms.

Implications and Conclusion: The study's implications are two-fold. First, it contributes to the growing field of sensory marketing by providing insights into how ASMR can be effectively integrated into luxury brand marketing. Second, it sheds light on the potential of ASMR-related strategies to enhance emotional connections with luxury brand consumers and create immersive, emotionally resonant experiences. The research concludes by underlining the significance of understanding sensory marketing's role in crafting unique brand interactions for luxury consumers and by suggesting directions for further research in this emerging domain.

KEYWORDS: ASMR, ASMR MARKETING, BRAND EXPERIENCES, HERMÈS, BRAND LOVE

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1. INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter introduces the reader to the background of luxury fashion brand Hermès, ASMR as a phenomenon and the association of ASMR in fashion marketing practice as an emerging trend. Thereafter, the problematization and research gap are presented, followed by the study's research purpose and research question. Finally, delimitations are discussed in this chapter.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

***Whisper:** “Hi... Welcome to ASMR videos. (tik,tik,tik, tik) Hello... today.. I am going to show youuu.. something very... exciting... (tap, tap,tap) Are you ready? To be get excited with me? (Receiving hearts) The excitement is in this box.. (tap,tap,tap) Yes, in this orange box.. (Showing the Hermès packaging) What you guaays guess, is right... Yess right... You guys don't know... how emotional I was... (deep breath) once I received the call from Hermès (tear in an eye) to let me know... the good news... that I am being offered my first Hermes Kelly.... (Receiving hearts) It was after five years of waiting... After all,... I am sooo happy... This is the best treat... I ever do in my life... for myself... (Scrach,scratch,scratch) Oh God! This is still a dream!”*

When hear ‘Hermès’, see the orange box or the horse logo, the first thing that comes to my mind is Birkin! I think it’s common for many undoubtedly due to the strong brand positioning (Wang 2021) and brand equity (Piiroinen 2014) of the brand Hermès. Hermès is a famous French luxury fashion brand in other words known as Hermès Paris. Hermès is established in France in 1837 (Wang 2021). First born as a seller of fine horse harnesses and diversified product lines to leather goods, silk, clothing, watches, perfumes and makeup (MartinRoll 2020). Birkin Kelly is the name of Hermès’s most popular handbag with a lifetime warranty (Tran 2012). According to global brand valuation from Brand Finance, Hermès came in 140th among the Best Global 500 Brands 2022 with a brand valuation of USD 13,499M (Haigh 2023). Hermès holds 6th place among the world’s best apparel market rankings (Brown 2022). Behind the success factors of Hermès, their unique marketing strategy supported to reach the highest in the market.

***Whisper continues:** “I want you guys to do me a favour. (Pfff.... Blowing some wind) Do not ever hurt me... by calling my BIRKIN, a BAG!! (Annoyed face) Not everr.. (Touch through the skin of the bag) Because it is not a baaaag. It’s a Birkin! (Tap,tap,tap,tap) Birkin made out of the rarest alligator skin (describes the origin)”*

Do you ever think a bag will not be a bag one day because the brand positioning is too strong to forget its functional value? This is due to emotional brand strategy and high rising second market along with a combination of rich heritage, exquisite craftsmanship, an eye for detail and high levels of quality and professionalism through the entire manufacturing process (Wang 2021). It gives Hermès a position of superiority in the very competitive and ruthless world of luxury (MartinRoll 2021). Hermès Birkin is an exceptional example of augmented value is higher to forget the functionality of the product. Due to this reason, many high-end customers consider purchasing a Birkin bag as an investment (Piiroinen 2014). People are showing their extended selves to be a customer of Hermès. Also being a customer of Hermès is a strong decision one may take in their lifetime to enter the customer journey of Hermès.

***Whisper:** “Today, I am going to share with you guys... (tik,tik,tik,tik) how.. I started my Hermès journey... (tap,tap,tap) First, I made that strong desire... one day I will get my Birkin (Closing the eyes) and start purchasing other Hermès items... (tapping 10-15 orange boxes in different shapes) Do you know how many did I purchase? Before letting Hermès know... that I am on the journey? (Hands with long nails moving around the boxes) Well, it’s a secret! (Hash.....) But I am going to reveal it today.. (Receiving hearts)”*

Directing to the focus, what are these narrated whisper sounds in social media in modern days? Some may know what this whispering style but some may only have heard the whisper without knowing the exact meaning. This style reflects how Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response content sounds in social media which is identified as ‘ASMR Style’. ASMR is a revolutionary change in the way of communication in social media with its unique behaviour (Barratt, Spence and Davis 2017). It is a phenomenon in which individuals experience a tingling sensation or euphoria in response to specific audio or visual triggers, such as whispering, close personal attention, tapping, and slow hand movements (Barratt and Davis 2015). In social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and YouTube content video sharing has become a popular approach for this technique.

Jennifer Allen was the first to present the definition that ‘ASMR is a specific sound that gives pleasure’ (Chae et al. 2021) which is used as a coined word in society lately. Del Campo and Kehle (2016) elaborated the term ASMR more precisely in their study the term **Autonomous** means individuals’ ability to voluntarily evoke this feeling; **Sensory** describes individuals’ perception of the feeling and “transmission of information through the nervous system and brain in response to an external trigger”; **Meridian** reflects the meaning of “highest point,” “apex,” or “euphoria”; while **Response** viewed as individuals’ reaction. Many ASMR videos are uploaded and searched daily containing simulations of specific sounds or caring scenarios intended to trigger pleasant sensations (Liang 2019). ASMR is believed to be a natural relaxation response that can help reduce stress and promote feelings of calm and well-being. Some people use ASMR videos as a form of therapy to help them relax and fall asleep (Poerio 2016). Many people find ASMR videos to be a helpful and enjoyable way to relax and destress (McGeoch and Rouw 2020). However, it is evident ASMR is capable of creating emotional arousal for the viewers with the available studies even though the scientific evidence behind ASMR is still limited. Rovira (2021) reflects a classification of the ASMR video types on YouTube as personal attention, sound and visual, roleplays, spa and massage treatments as traditional ASMR with the meaning of featuring an “ASMRtist” (ASMR creator) chatting with the audience while employing certain triggers like whispering, soft-spoken or visual movements. Further, their study identifies satisfying content and mukbang videos as alternative ASMR with the meaning of not customarily containing strong storytelling but causing a relaxing feeling through certain sounds and aesthetic visuals. Even though this classification supports to map of the concept based on features, there can be varieties of new concepts immersing with time and there is no proper classification or outline of ASMR at present as it is kept on growing with innovative features.

There are different views about ASMR in the scholar's background. The founders of the Whisper Community claimed that ASMR is a physiological experience of pure effects due to the interaction between sound waves and the brain (Andersen 2015). Liang (2019) claims ASMR tends to become a prevalent experience rather than a closed community that constantly circulates and (re)create ASMR videos on YouTube. It is evident YouTube made the basic foundation for ASMR as therapy (Barratt and Davis 2015) and later other social media platforms also introduced some options such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok in video

form and live form for this concept with greater interaction with the audience. Videos that are created by so-called ASMR artists are known as ‘ASMRtists’ according to the study of Rovira (2021). The ASMR video followers are identified as ‘ASMRers’ by Pilny, Papen and Niemand (2023) in their study. A variety of categories of ASMR videos are present in social media in various categories like food, product association, personal attention, intimate and emotional (Rovira 2021). However, considering the vast number of followers, who are termed ASMRers, and the rapid spread on social media platforms, the proportion of people, who are sensitive to ASMR, is assumed considerable (Pilny, Papen and Niemand 2023). Due to this high rising popularity and number of views was surprising for many marketers and the marketers started thinking of ASMR as a great platform for marketing.

1.2 PROBLEMATIZATION

ASMR represents an emerging research field, leading to a relatively new body of studies. This sensation is often described as a tingling feeling on the skin that starts on the scalp and travels down the back of the neck and into the spine (Poerio 2016). Recent investigations have predominantly situated within the domains of media analysis, psychology, social studies (del Campo and Kehle 2016; Barratt, Spence and Davis 2017; Zappavigna 2020) or neuroscience (McGeoch and Rouw 2020; Smith, Fredborg and Kornelsen 2020; Fredborg et al. 2021; Palmer-Cooper, McGuire and Wright 2022). Despite this, ASMR's exploration from a marketing perspective remains in its infancy, with only a handful of scholars venturing into its comprehension. As marketing is a behavioural science it may take time to fully understand how it operates as a marketing tool. Some scholars claim ASMR as an example of sensory marketing (Kim, B. 2020; Chae et al. 2021; Rovira 2021). Thus, there have not been identified the reason or what similarities are differences in scholarly background comparatively to sensory marketing either. But the sensations of sight, sound, feel, taste, and smell engage and trigger consumers in sensory marketing to shed light on this intriguing phenomenon.

The popularity of ASMR has risen within the last few years and has become so mainstream that even brands have started to use it in marketing communication cautiously such as Hermès, Saint Laurent, IKEA, Fenty Beauty and Prada (Atonova 2019; Rovira 2021). However, using ASMR in marketing, companies tend to leverage the phenomenon to create a more engaging and memorable brand experience. For example, some companies have used ASMR in their advertising campaigns to create a sense of relaxation and uniquely promote their products (Liang 2019). Very limited studies are being carried out (Valenti and Riviere 2008; Antonova 2019; Atonova 2019; Bachem S 2020; Kim, B. 2020; Chae et al. 2021; Rovira 2021; Portas Ruiz 2022; Pilny, Papen and Niemand 2023) to identify the marketing value of ASMR thus brands are already starting practising the ASMR as a marketing tool. So, a research gap can be identified to address the scope of ASMR as a marketing phenomenon to know the customer experiences for this content. However, exploring how to effectively employ ASMR for marketing communication requires a deep understanding and definition of its principles from customer perspectives. This entails uncovering the core strategies that can transform ASMR into a potent advertising tool, tapping into its potential to engage audiences in a distinct and sensory-driven manner.

A study conducted by Poerio (2016) reflects ASMR is only beginning to emerge into public awareness, but its scientific journey will follow the same historical path as synesthesia meaning that ASMR triggers can vary from person to person. According to Poerio (2016), scepticism is a common problem with non-universal or unusual experiences. However, many scholars

(Smith, Fredborg and Kornelsen 2020; Chae et al. 2021; Pilny, Papen and Niemand 2023) also suggests that not every individual feel the same and various person react to ASMR differently. Some experience it is irritating their minds. Therefore, the application of ASMR to a marketing context is required to be thoroughly studied as brands are practising. The personal nature of ASMR experiences challenges ASMR elements in marketing practices to shape a brand's image. It necessitates a thorough consideration of whether utilizing ASMR aligns with a brand's identity, values, and messaging, and whether it enhances or detracts from the desired brand image. Common triggers include soft, whispering voices, tapping, scratching, and crinkling sounds (Roberts, Beath and Boag 2020). Sometimes there can be a weight of triggers that is within the tolerance of most individuals that gives a pleasant feeling. It may generate very effective results or brands may end up with conservancy unless being used with careful attention. So knowing the customer reactions to the ASMR marketing content is required to be studied and identified with associated benefits and risk factors.

Marketing is a social science that can be studied by observing the behavioural patterns of consumers. Among the early adaptors of the ASMR marketing trend, Hermès is remarkable for being the second largest fashion brand (Tran 2012) to practice the phenomenon. Hermès is one of the best examples of a brand embracing digital marketing as their digital marketing campaigns consist of podcasts, documentaries and short videos (Aditya 2021). This becomes especially vital in the context of luxury branding, which often conveys exclusivity and prestige. As ASMR fosters intimate and sensory-rich encounters, understanding how its integration into luxury branding can influence consumer perceptions is becoming crucial. This involves comprehending how such an integration resonates with the expectations and emotions associated with luxury for consumers. ASMR association by Hermès can be identified with their recent social media marketing campaigns with different features and weights. Thus, Hermès is a leading luxury fashion brand and with their unique marketing strategy, there is a possibility of their marketing strategy being capable of influencing the whole luxury market. Due to this reason, this study is conducted to observe the association of ASMR with the brand as a case study to understand the luxury brand lovers' experiences with ASMR-associated marketing content.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

HOW DO LUXURY BRAND LOVERS EXPERIENCE, ASMR CONTENT IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION OF HERMÈS?

1.4 RESEARCH PURPOSE

This question delves into the realm of luxury brand engagement and sensory marketing. It seeks to understand the specific way in which individuals who have a strong affinity for luxury brands, particularly Hermès, perceive and interact with ASMR content. This has recently been practised in Hermès' marketing communications. ASMR content is characterized by its ability to trigger tingling sensations and feelings of relaxation in individuals who experience it (Roberts, Beath and Boag 2020). This phenomenon has been increasingly utilized in marketing strategies to engage consumers on a deeper sensory level (Chae et al. 2021). In the context of luxury brands like Hermès, which are known for their emphasis on exclusivity, craftsmanship, and aesthetics, the question aims to explore how the ASMR experience aligns with the brand's identity and how luxury enthusiasts interpret and respond to it. Further to understand this study

seeks insights into whether luxury brand lovers find ASMR content integrated into Hermès' marketing efforts appealing, resonant with their perceptions of luxury, and capable of enhancing their emotional connection to the brand. It also invites exploration of whether the ASMR experience can evoke a sense of heightened luxury, exclusivity, or sensory pleasure that aligns with Hermès' brand image. Understanding how luxury brand lovers engage with ASMR content in the context of Hermès' marketing communication can offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of sensory marketing strategies for high-end brands, shedding light on the potential to create immersive and emotionally resonant brand experiences for this specific consumer segment.

1.5 DELIMITATIONS

The researcher has chosen to examine the brand Hermès as a case study for ASMR marketing because it seems that Hermès is one of the few brands that has experimented with or utilized ASMR in their marketing efforts. This could be due to the fact that ASMR marketing is not commonly employed by many other brands on a large scale. In other words, while some brands may have dabbled in ASMR marketing to some degree, it seems that Hermès is notable for embracing this approach more prominently. Due to this reason, researchers have limited the scope of the examination to a single case study. Thus, the researcher does not limit this study specifically to the exact customer base of Hermès rather than broadens the scope to luxury brand lovers. This is due to Hermès remaining as an example case study in this research rather than specifically identifying the variations in the exact customer-based researcher is trying to understand the overall perspective of luxury brand lovers' sensitivity when a phenomenon such as ASMR is adopted into fashion marketing context.

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This chapter reviews existing literature on the topic of ASMR with a focus on the origin, identified benefits, and current trends in using ASMR in marketing footage with a special focus on traditional ASMR and ASMR triggers associated with marketing. Finally, this chapter reflects upon the brand experience in marketing.

2.1 AUTONOMOUS SENSORY MERIDIAN RESPONSE

There have been some recent studies published on ASMR that have shed light on this phenomenon. ASMR is a complex parameter that has been the subject of several areas of research. Further research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms underlying ASMR and its associated potential benefits. A study conducted by Poerio (2016) reflects, that ASMR in response to certain triggers such as whispering and tapping since childhood and the same sense has developed into ASMR in YouTube videos in the past decade. There are distinct themes that appear to be present in ASMR media such as crisp sounds, whispering, personal attention, vacuum noise, aeroplane noise, laughing, smiling, watching repetitive tasks, and slow movements (Barratt and Davis 2015). It can be asserted that one or more of these broadly recognized triggers can elicit a predictable reaction from ASMR experiencers (Anne and Campo 2019). Smith, Fredborg and Kornelsen (2020) discovered that typical triggers could be categorized into five dimensions; observing, tactile sensations, repetitive auditory stimuli,

simulations, and oral sounds. The book written by Łapińska (2023) named *Humanity In-Between and Beyond* explains ASMR culture is marked by the production of “post-cinematic effect,” which is focused on the fluidity and transience of impressions evoked by given stimuli and on their material and physiological provenance. This book further identified human-based experiences associating YouTube-related content with science fiction narrated scenarios by giving insides into how effectively ASMR aesthetics can play with human physical and psychological parameters.

Andersen (2015) suggested in his study that “video is secondary to audio”, meaning sound is key to catching attention and experiencing pleasure. Many scholars believe visual content is equally important in triggering pleasant sensations when combined with different sounds and effects. The role of visual content in the context of video constituted the aural experience and they altogether contributed to the aesthetics of ASMR. A scholar Liang (2019) conducted a study to explore the interaction effects of visual and auditory content in changing physiological states when watching ASMR videos. Results suggested the importance of certain types of ASMR and the preference of participants for various types of content. In November 2019, Sveriges Television, the public television broadcaster of Sweden, released a 30-minute documentary that explored this phenomenon and the Swedish Language Council, tasked with promoting and nurturing the Swedish language, introduced a fresh term into the dictionary in 2019: ASMR (Abdallah and Engström 2019). Due to this growing importance, ASMR is being classified based on its features and variances. However, ASMR is still in its early stages, these studies suggest that ASMR is a phenomenon that has both physiological and psychological effects for the main triggers according to Rivora (2021). Sub-chapters 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 describe the available scholarly background for those experience-based parameters. However, ASMR is present as a therapeutic nature thus using a very slow and calm nature identified negative results in a scientific nature are minimal by below previous research and mostly reflect most of the positive tingles.

2.1.1 PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF ASMR

ASMR has shown a tendency to help reduce stress and anxiety for some individuals as psychological effects. The soothing nature of ASMR triggers can lead to a sense of calm and emotional relief (Andersen, 2015; Barratt & Davis, 2015; Mileikowsky, 2022; Zappavigna, 2020). Among those stress reduction, improved mood, enhanced sleep, focus and concentration, empathy and social connection are mainly highlighted in various scholarly backgrounds. Engaging with ASMR content has the potential to uplift mood and amplify positive feelings (Barratt and Davis 2015). These enjoyable sensations and soft stimuli can play a role in fostering better emotional well-being (Lee 2022). ASMR uniquely establishes a sense of connection by linking whispers and listeners, bridging the gap between distant individuals through the act of whispering and observing (Liang 2019). ASMR frequently serves as a pre-sleep relaxation method (Poerio 2016). A significant number of individuals discovered that ASMR aids in relaxation and facilitates smoother transitions into slumber (Poerio 2016; Barratt, Spence and Davis 2017; Klausen 2019; Zappavigna 2020; Lee 2022). Those who consistently engage in activities that evoke ASMR often express experiencing diverse therapeutic outcomes, including improvements in sleep and mood, as well as relief from stress, anxiety, or chronic pain (Smith and Sinder 2019).

Some individuals use ASMR to improve focus and concentration, as the gentle and repetitive sounds can create an immersive environment that aids in staying attentive to a task (Poerio

2016). Moreover, a mutual connection to mindfulness emerges due to the need for concentrated awareness to engage with present sensory stimuli. Nonetheless, ASMR and frisson differ in terms of intensity, emotional resonance, intent, and similar factors (Liang 2019). Frisson is most effective when paired with favoured music and a reduced inclination to pursue potent stimuli, in contrast to ASMR where individuals intentionally induce and undergo tingling sensations as reflected in the study of Liang (2019). Therefore, ASMR experiences can evoke feelings of empathy and a sense of social connection (Ramirez 2017). The one-on-one, soft-spoken interactions in ASMR videos can create a sense of intimacy and closeness (Abdallah and Engström 2019). Cline (2018) cited by Flynn (2020) elaborated in their studies, it's worth noting that frequently, within ASMR videos, the participants are portraying scenarios with a therapeutic essence. These individuals adopt roles like that of a therapist, social worker, friends, or even a romantic partner for the viewers. The ultimate objective of these performers is to provide a sense of healing and care according to Cline (2018). This serves as a notable illustration of how modern society often transforms technology and media into tools for therapeutic purposes (Flynn 2020).

2.1.2 PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ASMR

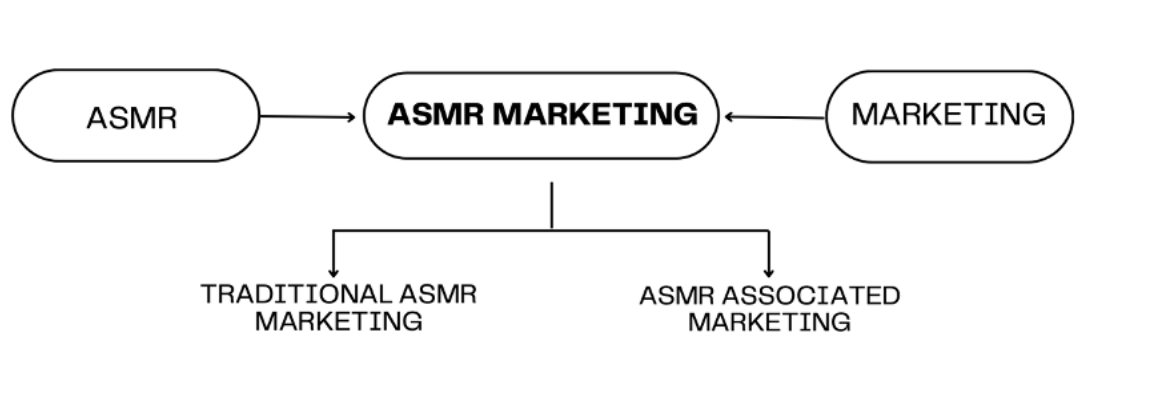
This sensation is widely reported to be accompanied by feelings of relaxation and well-being (Barratt and Davis 2015). ASMR is also associated with changes in physiological parameters, such as tingling sensation, relaxation and calm, lower heart rate, blood pressure, and increased skin conductance which discussed by many scholars (Smith and Sinder 2019; Andersen 2015; Barratt, Spence and Davis 2017; McGeoch and Rouw 2020; Zappavigna 2020). The hallmark of ASMR is the tingling sensation that often begins on the scalp and can travel down the spine (Barratt, Spence and Davis 2017). This tingling is sometimes described as a "brain massage" and is a distinct physical response associated with ASMR triggers. The tingling sensation experienced during ASMR sessions bears resemblance to frisson and aligns with Huron's Theory of Frisson (2006) according to Flynn (2020). Frisson can be induced through various forms of sensory stimulation, including auditory, visual, tactile, and gustatory. Both ASMR and frisson are pleasurable encounters linked to the pilomotor response, resulting in goosebumps. Research indicates that frisson tends to be perceived as stimulating and physiologically arousing, while ASMR elicits a more calming, soothing, and emotionally-centred response (Flynn 2020).

Links between the number of effective triggers and heightened flow state suggest that flow may be necessary to achieve sensations associated with ASMR (Barratt and Davis 2015). There is a suggestion that ASMR may be of use for providing temporary relief to individuals with depression, stress and chronic pain which leads to a sense of relaxation (Smith and Sinder 2019). Many individuals report feeling more at ease and less stressed after experiencing ASMR content (Barratt, Spence and Davis 2017; Roberts, Beath and Boag 2020). Some studies suggest that ASMR experiences may lead to a reduction in heart rate and blood pressure (Mileikowsky 2022). This physiological response contributes to the overall feeling of relaxation. ASMR engagement was associated with reduced heart rate and increased skin conductivity levels as well as promoting relaxation and sleep (Poerio 2016). Skin conductance, a measure of the skin's ability to conduct electricity, has been found to increase during ASMR experiences. This could be indicative of heightened emotional arousal or attentiveness. Flynn (2020) cited Poerio et al (2018) also suggests that the social context of these videos and the element of being soothed and calmed by another person may encourage feelings of social connectedness.

2.2 ASMR AS A MARKETING PHENOMENON

ASMR has emerged as a unique and intriguing marketing tool in recent years. Rooted in the subtle, yet powerful, experience of tingling sensations and heightened relaxation triggered by specific auditory and visual stimuli, ASMR has found its way into the realm of brand communication (Antonova 2019; Bachem S 2020; Kim 2020; Chae et al. 2021; Pilny, Papen and Niemand 2023). Marketers have recognized the potential of ASMR's ability to create an intimate and personal connection with consumers (Rovira 2021). By harnessing the soothing qualities of ASMR, brands can craft immersive and engaging content that captivates the audience's senses, fostering a deeper emotional resonance. It is also called 'White Noise' or sometimes referred to as 'Quiet Marketing' in the marketing field (Chae et al. 2021). The landscape of media content is constantly changing, audio-oriented content is gaining popularity over visual-oriented content, and ASMR is at the centre of that movement because of its originality and uniqueness (Jang et al., 2016). Whether it's through carefully orchestrated sounds, gentle whispers, or delicate visuals, ASMR marketing provides an innovative avenue for brands to establish a more profound and lasting rapport with their customers, inviting them into a sensory-rich world of products and experiences (Kim 2020). In an era where capturing consumer attention is paramount, ASMR stands out as an innovative approach that not only captures attention but also cultivates a sense of intimacy and authenticity in marketing endeavours.

A study conducted by (Antonova 2019) reflects there are several ways to use the technologies in advertising leading companies in the world apply first, the most obvious, is to advertise on YouTube channels of popular ASMR-enthusiasts which will be discussed as traditional ASMR marketing in this study. The commercials that are based on the usage of ASMR technologies seem to be more interesting in discussing ASMR-associated marketing in this study. The below Image (1) reflects the understanding of ASMR classification based on the purpose of ASMR.



(Image 1 – ASMR classification based on purpose)

2.2.1 TRADITIONAL ASMR ASSOCIATED MARKETING

Traditional ASMR videos are considered the original type of ASMR videos first created on YouTube. They typically feature an "ASMRtist" chatting with the audience while employing certain triggers like whispering, soft-spoken or visual movements which feature a person whispering or making soft, soothing sounds, and can include various triggers like tapping, scratching, or rustling sounds (Andersen 2015). Traditional ASMR videos can be divided into four subcategories due to their aesthetics as personal attention, sound/vision, roleplays and

massage/spa treatments according to the scholar (Rovira 2021). The goal of these videos is to help viewers relax, relieve stress, and experience the pleasant tingling sensation associated with ASMR. These types of videos can be highly effective in creating an emotional connection with the audience and driving engagement. This traditional ASMR marketing reflects all the properties being incorporated while making the content. This means ASMR is being used in a very relaxed nature while demonstrating or showcasing the product.

A study conducted by (Pilny, Papen and Niemand 2023) who address transferring ASMR to relationship marketing argue, ASMR may be a paradoxical approach that meaningfully utilizes technology to overcome challenges that arise due to technological advances, by reaching customers on a different level. It is also can be identified as an elevated sense. ASMRists, or individuals who create ASMR content, typically use a variety of marketing tactics to promote their content and grow their audience like influencer marketing. ASMRists often use social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok to share their content and engage with their followers. They may post teasers or previews of upcoming videos, behind-the-scenes content, or respond to comments and questions from their followers. ASMRists often optimize their videos for search engines by including relevant keywords and phrases in their titles, descriptions, and tags. This can help their videos rank higher in search results and make them more discoverable to new audiences (Chae et al. 2021) . IKEA Corporation shot a full ASMR video, which stands beyond the canon of commercial videos called "Oddly IKEA: IKEA ASMR". It was significant with all ASMR features that lasted for 25 minutes duration (Antonova 2019).

In the landscape of traditional ASMR marketing ASMRists collaborate with other ASMRists or influencers in their niche to create joint content and reach new audiences that are available on social media platforms to reach a wider audience in the ASMR community niche (Antonova 2019) . Collaborations can take many forms, from guest appearances in each other's videos to joint live streams or podcasts. ASMR videos can be used in social media marketing to create a sense of intimacy and engagement with the audience (Pilny, Papen and Niemand 2023). ASMRists may create and sell branded merchandise related to their content, such as t-shirts, mugs, or phone cases. This can not only help them generate additional income but also help them build brand recognition and loyalty among their fans. ASMRists with large and engaged audiences may attract sponsorships or brand deals from companies looking to reach their target demographic. These deals can include paid product placements, sponsored videos, or social media promotions.

In this scope of ASMR marketing, another trend is brands' and influencers' collaboration for ASMR-style unboxing videos, in which they slowly and carefully unbox a product while speaking in soft whispers or tapping on the packaging (Antonova 2019). This creates a relaxing and immersive experience for the viewer and can help to build anticipation and excitement around a product launch. ASMRists use a mix of traditional and digital marketing tactics to promote their content and grow their audience. Success often comes down to creating high-quality, engaging content, building a loyal fanbase, and leveraging different marketing channels to reach new audiences.

2.2.2 ASMR TRIGGERS ASSOCIATED MARKETING

ASMR techniques associated marketing begins with a deep understanding to ASMR triggers. These triggers can include the ASMR aesthetics such as soft spoken, whisper, gentle tapping. Some brands have incorporated ASMR elements into their commercials to create a calming, relaxing atmosphere for viewers (Chae et al. 2021). For example, a car commercial might feature the sound of rain on the windshield or a soft-spoken voiceover. Influencers with large ASMR followings have become valuable partners for brands looking to reach a more engaged and receptive audience (Pilny, Papen and Niemand 2023). Brands may sponsor ASMR content created by influencers, or partner with them to create branded ASMR content. With the rise of smart speakers and voice assistants, some marketers have begun experimenting with ASMR-style audio ads. These ads use soft whispers and gentle sounds to create a relaxing experience for listeners and can potentially increase brand recall and engagement. These ASMR techniques have provided marketers with a new way to connect with their audience on a deeper, more emotional level. By incorporating ASMR elements into their content and campaigns, brands can potentially increase engagement, build brand loyalty, and create a more memorable and impactful marketing experience for their audience. Nevertheless, the commercials centred around the utilization of ASMR technologies exhibit a higher level of fascination (Atonova 2019).

2.3 BRAND EXPERIENCE

Most of the research on experiences to date has focused on utilitarian product attributes and category experiences, not on experiences provided by brands (Şahin, Zehir and Kitapçı 2011). Brand experience refers to the comprehensive sum of interactions, emotions, perceptions, and sensations that a consumer undergoes when engaging with a particular brand (Tran and Nguyen 2022). Marketing practitioners have come to realize that understanding how consumers experience brands is critical for developing marketing strategies for goods and services (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello 2009). It encompasses every touchpoint and encounter a consumer has with a brand, whether through products, services, marketing, customer service, or any other form of interaction. Hence brand experience extends beyond just the functional attributes of a product or service. It encapsulates the emotional and psychological responses that a consumer associates with a brand, influenced by factors such as visual identity, messaging, values, and overall reputation (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello 2009). A positive brand experience can lead to strong customer loyalty, advocacy, and a deep sense of connection with the brand.

A brand experience can evoke a range of emotions, from joy and excitement to trust and security. Positive emotions associated with a brand can lead to a lasting and meaningful relationship with consumers (Şahin, Zehir and Kitapçı 2011). A consistent brand experience across various touchpoints and interactions helps reinforce the brand's identity and values, fostering familiarity and building consumer confidence. Engaging and interactive experiences, such as events, social media interactions, or immersive campaigns, contribute to a memorable and impactful brand experience. The brand experience shapes how consumers perceive the value of products or services. A positive experience can justify premium pricing and foster a willingness to invest in the brand for the long term.

Sensory stimuli, such as visual aesthetics, sound, touch, and even scent, play a role in creating a distinctive and memorable brand experience. Effective brand storytelling can create a compelling narrative that resonates with consumers on a personal level, deepening their connection to the brand. Brands that create unique, memorable experiences are more likely to

be remembered and recommended by consumers. In parallel, the idea of customer experience can be regarded as an ethereal entity, intangible in nature. It remains invisible to the eye, soundless to the ear, scentless to the nose, and impalpable to the touch. The human imagination struggles to precisely delineate the visual representation of an experience. To sum up, drawing from the discussions, the notion of brand experience is construed as an intangible augmentation to the brand, with a primary focus on the intricate interplay of consumers' sensory perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in relation to products and services (Tran and Nguyen 2022). High-quality customer service interactions contribute significantly to the overall brand experience. Positive interactions with customer service representatives can enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello 2009). Ultimately, a successful brand experience goes beyond transactional interactions and strives to create a holistic and meaningful relationship between the brand and its consumers. It is a critical factor in shaping consumer perceptions, driving loyalty, and influencing purchase decisions.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical background is divided into six chapters, overlaying four theories; theory of sensory marketing, self-congruity theory, self-expansion theory, and brand customer relationship theory to understand the ASMR behaviour and luxury brand lovers' perception and background..

3.1 THEORY OF SENSORY MARKETING

Sensory marketing is a marketing strategy that appeals to the senses of consumers to influence their purchasing behaviour (Krishna 2012). Sensory marketing engages and triggers consumers' senses through five doors (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body) such as sight, sound, feel, taste, and smell which play an important role in our understanding. Human senses, experiences and emotions of consumers are emerging as an important marketing paradigm and an alternative main phenomenon. It explains and measures emotional consumer decision-making by variability of products, concepts, packaging, and marketing mix scenarios to ensure long-lasting success for brands (Valenti and Riviere 2008). (Shabgou and Daryani 2014) used a model in their study derived from (Hult et al. 2012) to understand the relationship between sensors and consumer behaviours according to image (2) as shown below.

Fashion retailers have been successful in providing sensory experiences to consumers in their brick-and-mortar stores and, to a lesser extent, in online store environments (Shabgou and Daryani 2014). Sensory marketing has become increasingly important in the digital age, as more consumers shop online and interact with brands through digital media. Brands are truly innovative in engaging consumers' senses through digital channels, such as using 360-degree product images, virtual reality experiences, and interactive product demos. Overall, sensory marketing is a powerful tool for creating emotional connections with customers and can be used in a variety of industries, from retail and hospitality to food and beverage and beyond.

A study by Krishna (2012) titled "An integrative review of sensory marketing: Engaging the senses to affect perception, judgment and behaviour" found that sensory marketing can significantly impact consumer behaviour. The author argues that sensory stimuli can be used to influence consumers' perceptions of products, increase their willingness to pay, and create

emotional connections to brands. Additionally, sensory marketing has been shown to have a greater impact on consumers than traditional marketing strategies, such as advertising (Krishna 2012). Therefore, sensory marketing can be used to create a unique brand experience, improve the overall customer experience, and differentiate a brand from competitors.

In a study by Peck and Childers (2003) titled "To Have and to Hold: The Influence of Haptic Information on Product Judgments", the authors found that touch can significantly impact consumer behaviour. Specifically, the study demonstrated that consumers who were able to touch a product prior to purchasing it had more positive evaluations of the product and were willing to pay more for it. It suggests the physical experience of the product vision is missing in the digital platforms. To bring a similar experience to the digital age was required to be discovered in terms of online shopping less carbon associated with real-time shopping experiences. By engaging the senses, marketers can create emotional connections to brands and differentiate themselves from competitors. Research in the field of sensory marketing (Krishna 2012; Jiménez-Marín, Bellido-Pérez and López-Cortés 2019) has demonstrated that sensory stimuli can have a significant impact on consumer behaviours, including brand perception, purchasing decisions, and emotional responses which like ASMR. When considering the connection between sensory marketing and ASMR many scholars (Kim 2020; Chae et al. 2021; Rovira 2021) outline ASMR marketing could be a great example of sensory marketing in digital footage.

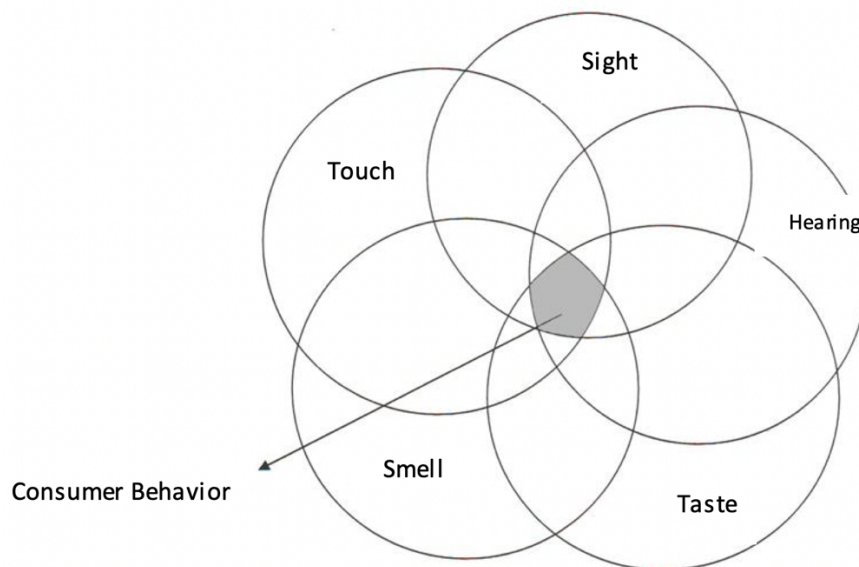


Image 2- Sensory Marketing and Consumer Behavior (Shabgou and Daryani 2014)

3.2 SELF-CONGRUITY THEORY

Self-congruity theory is a marketing theory that suggests that consumers are more likely to choose brands that are congruent with their self-image and personality traits. Xiao et al. (2021) suggest in their study that self-congruity proposes that consumers have a self-concept, which is the set of beliefs and attitudes that individuals hold about themselves. A study by Sirgy et al. (1991) made the ground concept for this study that self-congruity significantly influenced

brand choice thus from a marketing point of view marketing researcher uses the concepts of functional congruity and self-congruity for brand positioning. This study further demonstrated individuals are more likely to choose brands that are congruent with their self-image, regardless of the cultural context.

Tian, Bearden and Hunter (2001) discuss that consumers with a high need for uniqueness, or the desire to differentiate themselves from others, are more likely to choose brands that are congruent with their self-image. This inside matches with this study more closely as the brand Hermes is considered as the example case study. This need for uniqueness can impact self-congruity, as consumers seek to differentiate themselves from others through their brand choices (Sirgy et al. 1991; Tian, Bearden and Hunter 2001). By understanding consumers' self-concepts and self-image, marketers can create brand messaging and experiences that align with consumers' desired self-image, ultimately increasing brand preference and loyalty. Self-congruity theory supports that if individuals perceive a high degree of congruity between themselves and the ASMR stimuli they experience, they are more likely to have positive responses to the stimuli. A scholar Xiao et al. (2021) reflects very precisely in their study that when the consumer feels a similar self to a brand, the more that brand and its symbolic values emphasize their self-perception. This pattern indicates that consumer behaviour is influenced by the cognitive harmony between their self-concept and a brand's value-expressive characteristics. This concept helps the researcher to underline the behaviours of customers in the phase of marketing communication of Hermès and the behaviour of luxury brand lovers.

3.3 SELF-EXPANSION THEORY

Self-expansion theory is a psychological theory that proposes that people have a basic motivation to expand their self-concept by acquiring new experiences, skills, and relationships (Mattingly et al. 2019). The theory suggests that people seek out experiences that broaden and enhance their sense of self and that this self-expansion process can be facilitated by close relationships as reflected in image (3).

A study by Ximena and Caryl (1998) titled "Standing in my partner's shoes: Partner perspective-taking and reactions to accommodative dilemmas" found that individuals who engage in self-expansion through their close relationships experience greater relationship satisfaction and commitment. The study demonstrated that when individuals engage in partner perspective-taking, or the ability to see things from their partner's point of view, they feel that their sense of self is expanded by the relationship, leading to greater relationship satisfaction and commitment. Another study by Arriaga and Agnew (2001) found that self-expansion can lead to increased commitment to relationships. The study demonstrated that individuals who perceive that their relationship is facilitating their self-expansion are more committed to the relationship and more likely to maintain it over time.

Research in the field of self-expansion theory suggests that people have a basic motivation to expand their sense of self through new experiences, skills, and relationships. Close relationships can facilitate this self-expansion process, leading to increased relationship satisfaction and commitment. Additionally, self-expansion can impact attitudes toward brands, with individuals perceiving that brands that facilitate self-expansion are more positive and more likely to be loyal customers over time. This theory will support understanding how customers are experiencing the brand in ASMR style and its impact that can create brand Hermès in a precise nature.

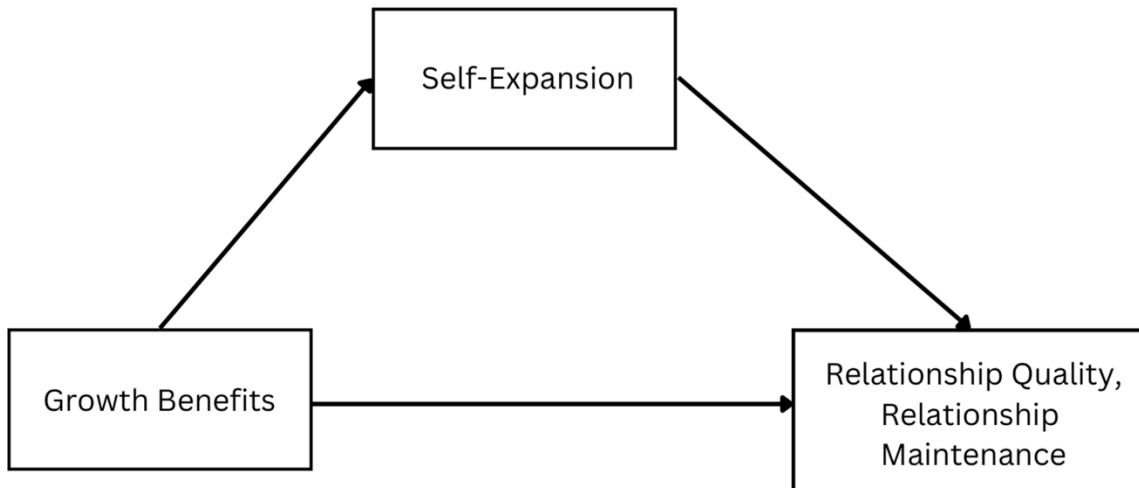


Image 3- Theory of Self-expansion (Mattingly et al. 2019)

3.4 BRAND-CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

Philip Kotler proposed an eight-stage model of customer relationship building in his book "Marketing Management" (1997). Scholars agree that the relationship marketing ladder encourages the transactional marketing interest to end with the sale, relationship marketing interest extends beyond this to the development and improvement of the customer relationship (Aka, Kehinde and Ogunnaike 2016). Below is a breakdown of the eight stages are shown in the Image (4):

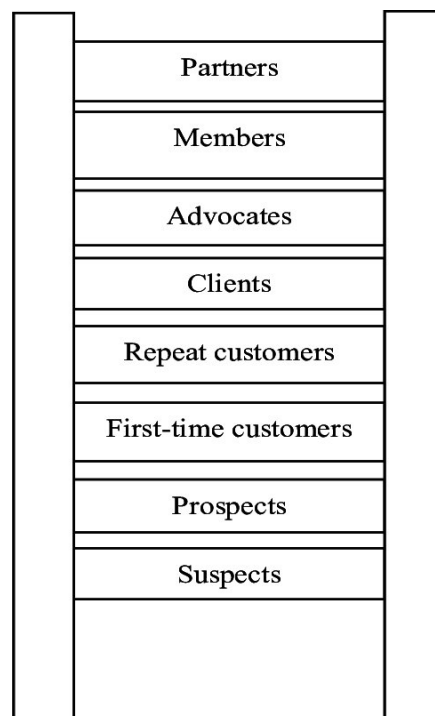


Image 4: Brand-Customer relationship ladder (Kotler 2000)

A suspect is a person or organization that may require the brand's products or services but has not yet been identified as a potential customer. Kotler's framework commences by identifying

"suspects," those who have the potential to become the organization's customers (Kotler 2000). A prospect is a suspect who has been identified as a potential customer through marketing efforts. As the process unfolds, suspects indicate their inclination to purchase the offered goods or services, transitioning them into "prospects." The first-time customer is someone who has made their first purchase from the brand. A repeat customer is someone who has made multiple purchases from the brand. Distinguishing between "first-time" and "repeat customers," the latter group attains an experiential foothold that facilitates ongoing interactions. Here, the relational marketer diverges from the traditional focus on singular transactions, instead honing the art of guiding customers through progressive relationship stages. Each stage represents an elevation in the company's rapport with its clientele.

A client is a repeat customer who has developed a relationship with the brand and has a level of loyalty to it. An advocate is a client who actively promotes the brand to others through word-of-mouth or other means. The model postulates a transformational journey, endeavouring to elevate repeat customers to the coveted status of "clients." These individuals hold esteemed standing and share a compelling psychological bond with the organization. A partner is an advocate who has developed a deeper relationship with the brand and may collaborate with it on projects or initiatives. A co-owner is a partner who has invested in the brand in some way, such as through stock ownership or a franchise agreement. Ascending further to the tier of "advocates," customers transition from passive responsiveness to active promotion, disseminating word-of-mouth recommendations. The term "members" designates those customers with an enhanced affinity for the organization. At the pinnacle of relationship cultivation lies the partnership tier, where customers metamorphose into integral collaborators in the organization's value-generation process (Kotler 2000). While this model has not been extensively studied in academic literature, it has been widely used in marketing practice as a framework for understanding the different stages of customer relationship building. By understanding these stages, researchers broaden the understanding of the customer journey of luxury brand enthusiasts to identify how ASMR marketing can be influential for them to be motivated to move up the customer relationship ladder.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The potential of ASMR as a tool for fashion marketing has been investigated using a qualitative approach to fulfil the purpose of this study. The selection of research methodology, data sources, data collection, and analysis process are further described in this chapter.

4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The chosen method for this thesis is anthropological nature to create a more in-depth understanding of this study of ASMR in the footage of fashion marketing. Research of an anthropological nature means the study of humans, past and present, drawing on knowledge from the social and biological sciences, humanities, and physical sciences (Research 2023). Researchers assume ASMR as a phenomenon that humans feel for their senses is suitable for a study of this nature. This research further employed a qualitative approach in terms of data collection. Qualitative data is in the form of words rather than numbers, and this includes rich descriptions and explanations about a particular process or event (Yin 2016). Qualitative

research is supportive of examining the behaviour and attitudes of people or a process in great depth that fits the aim of this study.

The extent to which research is concerned with theory testing or theory building raises an important question regarding the design of a research project (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2019). This approach to theory development is portrayed as contrasting approaches to reasoning as deductive or inductive approaches (Patton 2023). In the inductive approach, the research process begins with observations or data collection from the field and then develops a theory or hypothesis based on those observations (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019). In contrast to the deductive approach which starts with a theory or hypothesis that is tested through the collection and analysis of data. Thus inductive approach involves analyzing data and looking for patterns, which are then used to develop a theory or generalization (Ravitch and Mittenfelner 2020). Thereby inductive research is identified as the most suitable approach to ethnographic studies, where the focus is on exploring the experiences and perspectives of individuals or groups in terms of how they experience ASMR in the fashion marketing context concerning the case study of Hermès.

Methodological choice of qualitative research comes into practice when words are of greater importance rather than a large amount of data collection (Bryman 2016; Patton 2023). Qualitative research is an umbrella term that encompasses many approaches, a further explanation is required for which research approach and design has been used. What distinguishes and makes the method sought attractive is its ability to allow the researchers to be flexible and adaptable (Bryman 2016). To collect data that meets the purpose of the thesis, a suitable approach is qualitative interviews, which are the most commonly used methods in qualitative research. Quality criteria in qualitative research are focused on the importance of gathering rich data (Lavee and Itzchakov 2021) that can be supportive of generating a vast understanding of the experiences associated with ASMR in this study.

The qualitative approach follows various strategies to execute the research such as case studies, action research, and ethnography. This research aims to use the case study as a suitable research strategy. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and is considered the ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Yin, 2016). A case can be a situation, individual, group, or organization in which the researcher is interested. The focus of this study was to understand experiences related to ASMR-associated marketing content, which is a relatively new, contemporary, and little-known phenomenon, and therefore case study method is considered suitable to address the research problem. A researcher may use a single case study or multiple cases to collect data, depending on the research question. Single case studies are ideal for revelatory cases where the researcher may have to access a previously inaccessible phenomenon (Crowe 2011). Multi-case studies follow replication logic, and conclusions are drawn based on multiple studies (Yin, 2016). This study used a single case study approach to collect data. The selection of a single case was based on purposeful sampling, as described by Patton (2023), where the logic lies in selecting an information-rich case for an in-depth study, which allows the researcher to uncover valuable insights.

The selected case, Hermès, is one of the top luxury fashion brands renowned for its timeless elegance, impeccable craftsmanship, and commitment to quality (Aditya 2021). In this context, Hermes provides an information-rich case to answer the research question. ASMR is associated with Hermes which is drastically visible in their marketing communication specifically in the YouTube and Instagram-associated content. Among other high-end luxury brands such as Dior,

Pat McGrath, and Fenty Beauty those who associate ASMR triggers in their marketing communication, Hermès showcased a bigger role in this stage. In this context, Hermès stands as an information-rich and unique case to answer the research question.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION

The data that is analysed in this thesis is collected through multiple techniques and procedures. This thesis gathered both primary and secondary data to answer the ultimate research question. It allows each method to be strengthened by the other method as every method comes with its weaknesses (Patton 2023). Primary data is information that is collected through direct observation or experimentation while secondary data is the existing knowledge obtained from sources such as books, reports, and surveys (Cypris 2022). As the primary data collection method, content analysis and semi-structured interview techniques were employed due to the relative unavailability of scientific data in secondary data sources on the topic of ASMR in fashion marketing footage is being gathered in the literature review section just for an understanding to the phenomenon.

4.2.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS

In the first phase of data collection, a content analysis was conducted to identify Hermès as a suitable case to test the ASMR-associated marketing in this study. Content analysis is a widely used data collection method that involves the systematic examination and interpretation of data from secondary sources that can be used to quantify the occurrence of certain words, phrases, subjects or concepts in a set of historical or contemporary texts (Luo 2019). The selection of sources depends on the research aim and the nature of the data under investigation. Content analysis is used in a variety of fields, including marketing, media studies, anthropology, cognitive science, psychology, and many social science disciplines to find correlations and patterns in how concepts are communicated (Luo 2019). In this study, Hermès' social media content, and its videos posted on such as YouTube and Instagram were used to understand the approach to ASMR strategy and to identify key themes Hermès uses in their marketing communication. Secondly, the results of the content analysis were used to identify a sample of suitable videos created by Hermès to be used as materials when conducting interviews with the interviewees.

4.2.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Interviews are one of the most important methods of collecting data in qualitative research. These are guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2016), which allows the participant to provide rich, contextual descriptions of an event. The type of interview is determined by the type of research question and methodology used. The researcher may conduct individual face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews or focus group interviews by using structured, semi-structured or unstructured questions accordingly (Ravitch and Mittenfelner 2020). In this study most of the interviews are conducted via Zoom as face-to-face interviews. Interviews are useful in collecting data especially when the participants cannot be observed directly. As the interviewee is in direct contact, there is an opportunity to clarify questions and explore the topic in-depth, which enhances the usefulness of the data (Yin, 2016). This study uses semi-structured interviews as it provides flexibility in gathering rich content

data. Semi-structured interviews are a mix of structured and unstructured interviews while a few questions are predetermined, the others aren't planned (George 2022). The questions are mostly open-ended yet direct the interviewee to talk through relevant information. This method allows following the viewpoint of the participant that there are fewer restrictions on the kind of things that can be found (Bryman 2016).

The interview guide consisted of six structured demographically oriented questions, twenty open-ended main questions, and ten open-ended sub-questions. Sub-questions were asked only if a participant's response to the initial question did not cover certain topics of interest. All respondents were asked identical questions in the same sequence, but interviewers probed inductively on key responses. The guide was divided into the following four domains of inquiry in Table 1:

Research Question	Sections	Interview questions
How luxury brand lovers perceive Hermès in ASMR Style?	Demographics	Name (Real or Hypothetical)
		Age group
		Gender
		Country of the region you belong?
		Profession
	Fashion sense	How do you describe your fashion sense?
		Are you a luxury fashion freak?
		Do you own any of the luxury fashion brands below?
		What do you know about Hermès?
		Do you know about the customer journey of Hermès?
		Think you become super rich for a moment Or may be you already are ;) .. Will you buy a Hermès?
	Traditional ASMR	Have you experienced ASMR before? If so, how can you describe how it makes you feel?
		What are the closest matches in your mind about ASMR videos?
		When you encounter ASMR videos, what thoughts or feelings does it evoke for you?
		What are the physical and pshycological sensations? When did you get them?
		What aspects of the videos you found more appealing or effective? Why?
		Do you believe ASMR is a trend or a long-lasting phenomenon?
	ASMR associated marketing	When you encounter ASMR in advertising, what thoughts or feelings does it evoke for you?
		What are the physical and pshycological sensations? When you get them?
		What aspects of the videos you found more appealing or effective? Why?
		Do you find ASMR inspired videos of Hermès aesthetically different to traditional ASMR videos?
	Traditional advertising	When you encounter traditional advertising, what thoughts or feelings similar to ASMR does evoke? Or felt something missing in the feeling? What? Why?
	Hermès	Do you think ASMR marketing is appealing for luxury brand marketing such as Hermès? Does it feel intrusive or enjoyable?
		Do you find the ASMR videos of Hermes relaxing, soothing or reducing anxiety? Why
		Do you feel that a Hermès use of ASMR techniques in advertising influences your willingness to engage with the brand? Why or why not?

		Do you think ASMR has a positive or negative impact on the overall experience of using Hermes products?
		How do you suggest Hermes can improve the use of ASMR in their products or marketing?
		Do you evoke the feeling of love to Hermès when Hermès in ASMR style? Or not?

(Table 1: Research questionnaire)

4.3 SAMPLING AND PARTICIPATION SELECTION

Sampling was made in order to find appropriate participants for this study. Understanding ASMR as a phenomenon and attachment towards luxury brands were the key concentrated areas when selecting the sample population. Sampling is necessary to simplify and understand of a certain phenomenon within a population or specific context (Patton 2023). The aim of sampling is to represent a wide array in general by studying a smaller population or group, due to the complexity when including a wide array in a study as participants (Kirner and Mills 2020). Non-probability sampling methods are sampling techniques in which the probability of any particular unit being selected is unknown or not possible to identify individually (Nikolopoulou 2022). These sampling methods are used when the researcher wants to study a specific group or subgroup within the population, or when it is difficult or impractical to use a probability sampling method (Guest, Bunce and Johnson 2006) that would be suitable for the study. But in this method, the sample is selected using other considerations, such as convenience or a particular characteristic unlike the probability sampling method it does not have an equal chance of selection (Nikolopoulou 2022). Therefore purposive sampling is the main sampling method for this thesis, which is a form of non-probability sampling. Ravitch and Mittenfelner (2020) describe purposive sampling as finding participants who can answer the research questions as they have appropriate expertise or experience connected to the research area which is known as expert sampling. Purposive sampling is most appropriate to use when required to focus in-depth on relatively small samples (Nikolopoulou 2022). There the participants were selected based on a few criteria that fulfil the research needs. Using this technique, the researcher reaches a sample that deliberately selects participants based on two qualifying criteria luxury brand love and familiarity with ASMR.

As the study focuses on middle-aged adults, the authors wanted the participants to be between the ages of 20 and 40. The reason for selecting this age group was if the researcher focuses on only millennials their perception of the luxury brand image will not be accurate as price remains a constraint for them to be a prospect for a brand like Hermès. It was in line with the purpose of the study. Most of the participant was comfortable using their real biography so that no one remained anonymous in this study. As per the visual overview of the participants found in Table (2) 80% of from the 20-30 age category, whilst 20% are from the 30-40 age category.

Name	Age group	Gender	Country of Region	Profession or Education
Jannatul	21-30	Female	European region	Student (Fashion Marketing) + Production Coordinator
Klara	21-30	Female	European region	Student (Fashion Marketing)
Michelle	21-30	Female	European region	Student (Fashion Marketing)
Nicole	31-40	Female	European region	Student (Fashion Marketing) + Fashion Designer

Sebastian	21-30	Male	European region	Student (Fashion Marketing)
Nethmi	21-30	Female	European region	Graduate (Marketing Management) + Brand executive
Chamudi	21-30	Female	European region	Student (International Studies) + Research Assistant
Vindya	31-40	Female	Asian region	Student (Supply Chain) + Supply Chain Intern
Chrish	21-30	Female	Asian region	Student (Textile Engineering)
Shirly	21-30	Female	Asian region	Student (Fashion Marketing) + ASMR Artist

(Table 2: Demographics of participants)

The author of this thesis aimed to interview both males and females, as well as those having different socioeconomic backgrounds thus 70% of the participants find themselves as belonging to the European region and 30% found themselves as falling to the Asian region even though some of them live in Europe at the moment. The concept of Luxury fashion lover was grasped through a couple of strategic questions. First, they consider themselves as a luxury fashion-oriented person and the second stage to know what are luxury fashion brands they own at present. But just having a fashion background was not sufficient enough, so the participant was questioned about their luxury brand perception on a 1-5 scale (1-not at all, 2- minimalist, 3- moderate, 4- oriented, 5-die hard). If a person is above 2 and owns any of the listed luxury fashion brands, the researcher considered them as qualified to the category of a luxury brand lover. Since 9 participants are students at the moment, did not expect to own many luxury fashion brands and were considered qualified even if they have one from the listed brands as future potential luxury brand owners. Further willingness to be a prospective customer is also being traced as in a phase of reward would they love to be a customer of Hermès. Table (3) reflects their willingness. However, all 10 participants were above 2 and owned at least one luxury brand and some represented a strong affinity to the specific case study of Hermès. So all 10 participants were able to be considered as luxury brand enthusiasts who were a close match for the first qualifying criteria.

Name	Are you a luxury fashion freak?	Do you own any of the luxury fashion brands below?	In a phase of a reward, Will you buy a Hermès?
Jannatul	3	Gucci;Dolce Gabbana;Vercase	Yes
Klara	5	Louis Vuitton;Gucci;Prada;Dolce Gabbana;Yves Saint Laurent;Vercase;cavaliix	May be
Michelle	3	Gucci;Yves Saint Laurent	Yes
Nicole	4	Louis Vuitton;Burberry;Gucci;Dior;Channel;Prada;Dolce Gabbana;Yves Saint Laurent	May be
Sebastian	3	Burberry;Gucci	No
Nethmi	3	Dior;Yves Saint Laurent	Yes
Chamudi	2	Channel;Prada	Yes

Vindya	3	Channel	Yes
Chrish	4	Dior;Channel	Yes
Shirly	4	Louis Vuitton;Gucci;Balenciaga;Prada	No

(Table 3: Luxury brand association of participants)

Focusing the study on luxury fashion-oriented individuals the participants should preferably have watched an ASMR video to understand the triggers associated with the content previously. Generally, the term ASMR is not so popular even though the aesthetics of ASMR is readily available on social media. ASMR is a phenomenon anyone can sense through experiences as sensory stimuli are evoked for humans with the five doors (ear, eyes, nose, tongue and body) of sensors (Barratt, Spence and Davis 2017) which were grasped strategically by the researcher. The aim of the study was to interview at least 10 respondents for a rich outcome. Among 10 successful interviews, 9 participants were aware of the term ASMR whilst 1 participant was not aware of the term ASMR even though they had a familiarity with the content without the knowledge. When qualifying the participants due to the concern of having very rich inputs, first considered seven Master's students at the University of Borås, those who have learnt academic background of ASMR in their Master of Textile Management. Thereby criteria of ASMR background are capable of assuming very closely. Among them, one ASMR Artist is present which is considered very relevant for the study. Among the other three participants, two have specialized knowledge of Marketing and the remaining one is a social media personality that could give different perspectives to the study. Considering their knowledge of the sample group find as very relevant to the study. Further past familiarity with ASMR videos was also traced to get rich information about the triggers. Before conducting the interview, the researcher grasps the closest matches with some keywords in their mind about ASMR with their own experiences. The diagram below reflects the general perception of ASMR in Table (4). The strategy behind knowing the pre-perception about ASMR-related experiences was to identify when they reflect upon the ASMR-associated marketing techniques, they may have a different impression. It supported the researcher to further revise and question what caused the different perceptions of the ASMR-associated marketing content than what they had in their mind about ASMR previously. So based on their pre-exquisite knowledge or familiarity with ASMR, all 10 participants are considered qualified with knowledge of ASMR as a phenomenon.

Name	What are the closest matches in your mind about ASMR videos?
Jannatul	Triggers;Whisper;Rhythm;Attached
Klara	Triggers;Irritating
Michelle	Relaxing;Irritating;Attached;Time consuming;Thraputic
Nicole	Relaxing;Irritating;Attached;Time consuming;Thraputic
Sebastian	Whisper;Irritating
Nethmi	Relaxing;Thraputic
Chamudi	Relaxing;Whisper;Attached
Vindya	Triggers;Irritating;Stupid;Time consuming
Chrish	Relaxing;Whisper;Irritating;Rhythm
Shirly	Relaxing;Triggers;Whisper

(Table 4: Perception based on past experiences of ASMR of participants)

When the participants were reflecting on their perception of the example scenarios, the researcher was tactical in using the above keywords to revise and capture the reasons for the variability of perceptions which provided an in-depth overview of this study.

4.4 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Data was gathered and processed in two stages as mentioned in the above section. First content analysis was carried out to understand how brand Hermès practices ASMR in their marketing landscape with relevance to the scope identified in the literature review about ASMR and marketing footage of ASMR. Secondly, with a background understanding of Hermes' application of ASMR and the modern marketing landscape, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews to grasp the experiences of the interviewees to those selected types of content.

4.4.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is a systematic and rigorous method commonly employed in qualitative research to analyze textual, visual, or audio content which involves systematically examining and interpreting the content of data sources, such as interviews, documents, images, videos, social media posts, or any other form of communication (Luo 2019). The goal of content analysis is to investigate patterns, themes, and insights within the data, allowing researchers to gain underlying meanings, messages, and contexts present in those specific materials (Bengtsson 2016). Further Bengtsson (2016) mentions in their work, that content analysis has both a quantitative and a qualitative methodology and it can be used in an inductive or a deductive manner. In qualitative content analysis, data are presented in words and themes, which makes it possible to draw some interpretation of the results thus quantitative analysis focuses on counting and measuring data (Bengtsson 2016). The most appropriate method for this study is the qualitative method which focuses on interpreting and understanding the methods being used by Hermès in their marketing communication with the previously discussed patterns in the literature review. The choice of analysis method depends on how deep within the analysis the researcher attempts to reflect the information statements about a subject (Bengtsson 2016). Hence the requirement for this study is just to understand the outline of how Hermes uses ASMR in their social media content researcher is not thoroughly going into detail rather than identifying specific patterns that are presented in the results section.

One of the most commonly cited approaches to content analysis is the method developed by Krippendorff (2018). Krippendorff's approach has been widely used in fields such as communication studies, psychology, and sociology. This approach involves developing a coding scheme based on a theoretical framework, which is used to categorize the data. The codes are then used to identify patterns, themes, and other aspects of the data that are relevant to the research question. This study used a coding scheme to categorize data and identify patterns. A predefined set of codes presented by Rovira (2021) as vocal, noises, visual-tactical and communicative, was used to code the data obtained through the web page and videos. The analysis is present in the chapter 5.1 in this study.

4.4.2 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

Following each data collection point, the researchers promptly initiated data processing while the information remained recognized in the mind. To mitigate the risk of data loss, all interviews were audio recorded using the techniques of smartphone and via Zoom web application over the desktop. The interview transcription process involved the researcher taking turns to transcribe each interview immediately after its completion by using an AI software, scriptme (n.d). Further researcher listened to the audio adjusted what was not captured by the AI and corrected it to ensure the clarity of the data set. This approach enabled the researchers to immerse themselves deeply in the data, a practice advocated by Patton (2023) and to align with the nature of this qualitative study. Once the interviews had been transcribed the researcher embarked on a comprehensive process of multiple readings of the texts before commencing the coding phase. The coding and categorization are presented in Appendix (1).

Subsequently, a systematic review and organization of the amassed data unfolded by the researcher. Techniques and Procedures of the main elements of the identification of the theme were through coding each transcript (Bryman 2016). During coding, discernible patterns within the transcriptions were identified and designated as thematic labels. The iterative nature of coding often entails multiple attempts to ensure a thorough categorization of data. Patton (2014) reflects that manual coding cultivates a deeper immersion in the data when compared to software-based methods. So even though initial transcribing was done with the use of AI software coding was conducted manually for prioritizing a profound understanding. With distinct themes pinpointed, the researchers were able to delve into the analysis of outcomes and the exploration of research inquiries, within the framework. The amassed data were methodically labelled with pertinent interview details such as dates, as well as informant specifics like age and name. This meticulous approach facilitated thorough record-keeping of the conducted interviews. By housing, the transcriptions in a Google Drive folder and supplementary data are stored in a separate drive to mitigate the risk of information loss. Prioritizing participant anonymity, a principle underscored by Patton (2014), mandated the preservation of data confidentiality. Following the successful evaluation of the thesis, all recordings and transcriptions were permanently expunged from the researchers' laptops and Google Drive folders, in strict adherence to ethical research practices.

The selected approach for analyzing the collected data was driven by its alignment with the research methodology. Consequently, a thematic analysis was adopted. Numerous scholars concur that a thematic analysis stands as the prevalent and practical technique for dissecting qualitative data. This method serves as an overarching framework that offers a comprehensive, descriptive, and adaptable avenue for analysis (Bryman 2016; Fife 2005). Through a thematic analysis, researchers are empowered to discern pivotal patterns within the outcomes, thereby elucidating significant themes pertinent to the research inquiries.

4.5 RESEARCH QUALITY

A fundamental hallmark of high-quality qualitative research lies in its commitment to rigour and trustworthiness (Lavee and Itzchakov 2021). Rigour is achieved through careful attention to detail, methodological thoroughness, the precision of evaluation, and the generation of requisite variety regarding data richness and its complexity (Lavee and Itzchakov 2021). The researcher has meticulously designed and executed data collection methods, employing techniques such as purposive sampling, in-depth interviews, and comprehensive fieldwork in

order to achieve rigour. In this context, research quality refers to the degree of confidence and credibility that can be attributed to the findings and interpretations of this study. Credibility aims to show the trustworthiness of the findings, hence showing that the findings are credible (Ravitch and Mittenfelner 2020). One crucial aspect of research quality in qualitative research is the establishment of robust methodologies and clear procedures (Lavee and Itzchakov 2021).

The validity, on the other hand, relates to the accuracy of a method in measuring its intended target (Middleton 2019). When research exhibits high validity, its outcomes align with genuine properties, attributes, and fluctuations in the physical or social realm (Middleton 2019). According to Guba and Lincoln, (1989) benchmarks for validity, the principal parameters encompass credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Lavee and Itzchakov 2021). Credibility pertains to the qualitative researcher's confidence in the accuracy of the research study's findings to employ triangulation, utilizing multiple data sources or methods to validate the study's conclusions (Pallipedia 2020). Thus this study is equipped with literature from various scholars and in results consist of content analysis and interviews insides to strengthen the conclusion in a credible nature. In order to achieve the above qualities. First, a clear question was derived, and a robust research method has been derived. Secondly, an interview guide was prepared and used as the basis for each interview to maintain the consistency and reliability of the process. To ensure pin-pointed interpretation of the questions, a pre-test was performed with two individuals who were not participants in the study to correct the minor errors and to align the flow of the interviews. This attempt assures the validity of this study. Transferability involves the qualitative researcher's ability to demonstrate the relevance of the research study's findings to analogous scenarios, populations, and phenomena (Pallipedia 2020). Transferability requires thick description, which is essential for those interested in transferring the original findings to other contexts or individuals (Lavee and Itzchakov 2021). This is achieved through meticulous descriptions that illustrate how the findings can be applied across various contexts and situations in this study (Lavee and Itzchakov 2021). Participants were selected based on a pre-defined set of criteria to ensure their suitability to provide useful information to address the research question in this study about who can contribute to rich insides to ASMR and luxury fashion for thick description in their answers. By upholding these principles, qualitative research can attain a high standard of research quality, ensuring that its outcomes make meaningful and dependable contributions to the broader body of knowledge.

Confirmability addresses the impartiality of the research study's findings which ensures that the conclusions are derived from participants' perspectives rather than influenced by the researcher's biases or personal motivations (Pallipedia 2020). To establish confirmability, researchers construct documentation at every step of the data analysis process to provide a transparent rationale for their decisions which was assessed by a panel of lecturers and an opposition group of researchers. Finally, data were analysed systematically using coding and thematic analysis. Therefore for this study, the research quality was achieved in multiple ways. Moreover, reflexivity, where researchers critically examine their own biases and preconceptions, contributes to the credibility of interpretations. Dependability gauges the potential reproducibility of the study by other researchers, yielding consistent findings. To ensure dependability, the research report should offer sufficient information for replication, allowing others to replicate the study and obtain comparable results (Pallipedia 2020). Researchers can bolster dependability by employing an inquiry audit, an external review process that examines and validates the research procedure (Middleton 2019). Finally, the report goes through a panel of lecturers and opposition groups to defend and argue the insides of this study that trace the accuracy and logic behind the report.

4.6 RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics in qualitative research plays a paramount role in upholding the integrity, respect, and welfare of all individuals involved. Central to ethical practice is the principle of informed consent, ensuring that participants comprehend the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks before voluntarily participating. Privacy and confidentiality are essential safeguards, demanding that researchers protect participants' identities and sensitive information throughout the research process. Research ethics matter for scientific integrity, human rights and dignity, and collaboration between science and society (Bhandari 2021). While conducting the interviews researcher considers all possible sources of harm to participants that can happen while diving deep into the details of their own self-reflective answers to avoid psychological, social or legal harm to themselves.

Moreover, participants receive comprehensive information about the study's objectives and methodologies. Informed consent refers to a situation in which all potential participants receive and understand all the information they need to decide whether they want to participate (Bhandari 2021). They are assured of their anonymity and are granted access to the eventual research outcomes. All the participants were confident to disclose their real names and biography in this study and every participant volunteered to participate or to decline the invitation based on their will. When reaching out to potential participants, the researchers establish the study's purpose and underscore the significance of the respondents' viewpoints. Any inquiries raised are addressed meticulously, fostering an environment of comfort and trust. Furthermore, pertinent details regarding the University of Borås and the researchers' academic pursuits are shared with all participants. Consent forms are commonly employed to obtain participants' explicit agreement. Maintaining objectivity and minimizing biases is imperative to preserve the credibility of findings. Researchers navigate the delicate balance between their responsibilities to participants and the pursuit of knowledge, ensuring that potential harm is minimized, and benefits are maximized. Ethical considerations extend beyond the research phase, as the responsible dissemination of findings to both participants and the broader community is essential. By adhering to these ethical principles, qualitative researchers can contribute responsibly to the advancement of knowledge while upholding the rights and well-being of those who contribute to their studies.

4.7 ETHICAL DILEMMAS OF THE THESIS

There is a dilemma in using the content of a luxury fashion brand and reflecting upon it. Also generalizing the outcome to other luxury brands are a consideration researcher had in their mind. An ASMRtist video is being used to show for the discussion. Due to thorough critics of the aesthetics of that specific video researcher has a dilemma of harming their reputation as the Criticism of the content by the participants about the aesthetics of the videos is present in the transcription. Some participants shared their personal preferences of feelings in their lives. As this study dives to understand the experience-based perception there are some personal self-reported experiences and perceptions are exposed in the discussion to understand the phenomenon of ASMR. Exposing context related to human feelings is a dilemma for researcher concern due to the privacy of each individual.

4.8 METHOD CRITICISM

A common critique often directed at qualitative studies pertains to their perceived lack of systematic criteria for determining significance, alongside the close rapport researchers often establish with their participants (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019). Additional criticisms may encompass challenges related to reproducibility, issues surrounding generalizability, and a perceived lack of transparency (Middleton 2019). The challenge of replicating a qualitative study frequently emerges from the absence of standardized protocols, with researchers tending to shape data collection based on their individual interests (Aguinis and Solarino 2019).

Patton (2023), and Ravitch and Mittenfelner (2020) assert that issues of generalization can arise due to the typically limited number of participants in qualitative studies, making it intricate to extrapolate how these outcomes might manifest within a larger context. Nonetheless, Bryman (2016) contends that such studies are not necessarily designed for broad population generalization, but rather for theoretical application. Furthermore, ethical quandaries, as previously mentioned, can surface during the course of conducting a qualitative study. These ethical dilemmas encompass potential harm to participants, shortcomings in obtaining informed consent, encroachments upon privacy, and the question of whether deception is involved (Bryman 2016). To mitigate such dilemmas, the researchers have implemented a series of measures before, during, and after the data collection process, as elucidated in the ethics section.

4.9 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

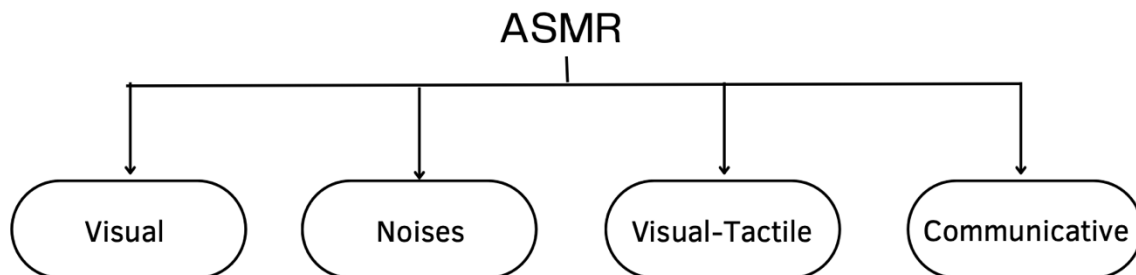
Although single case studies and semi-structured interviews are extensively utilized for data collection, it is imperative to recognize the inherent limitations of these approaches. In this study, the reliance on a sole case restricts the extent to which findings can be generalized. The chosen case's distinctive attributes and context-specific nature may hinder the seamless application of results to diverse scenarios. Furthermore, the study's participant pool was confined to a modest sample size of 10 individuals. This limited scope may compromise the representativeness required to accurately capture the perspectives of a wider consumer demographic. The employed method of purposive sampling may reflect a convenient sampling method as the researcher reaches to well-known participants even though they are being selected through two qualifying criteria. By focusing only on Hermès, the study aims to provide a detailed exploration of how ASMR marketing is being implemented within the context of luxury branding to a specific brand. The limited presence of ASMR marketing by other brands on a larger scale suggests that Hermès' approach could offer valuable insights into how ASMR aligns with luxury branding, how it impacts consumer perceptions, and how it may be distinctively effective in engaging audiences in the realm of luxury goods and experiences.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the empirical findings gathered from content analysis and interviews based on the theories and concepts from the conceptual framework. Through that, it is possible to answer the research questions that were stated at the beginning of the thesis.

5.1 RESULTS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

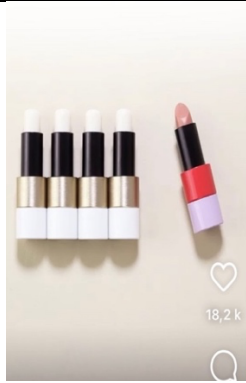
Content analysis is carried on to understand further how Hermès is present with ASMR-associated content in their social media platforms. Being a luxury fashion brand that is among the top five luxury fashion brands was visibly practicing the phenomenon in their marketing communication. It was captured in one attempt of them (Hermès Instagram 2022) presenting a Birkin bag with sort of a slogan ‘OH AH KOO ROO AH’ and spelling this style with the word called ‘LOW KEY ASMR’ at the end of the video clip in Instagram. The researcher was curious about what they meant by LOW KEY ASMR and identified some patterns, motions, sounds, and visuals to decode the ASMR association of Hermès in their Instagram and YouTube-associated content. The below analysis is based on the Instagram and YouTube content of Hermès with support of the classification presented by Rovira (2021) which is shown below diagram.



(Image 5: ASMR classification based on aesthetics)

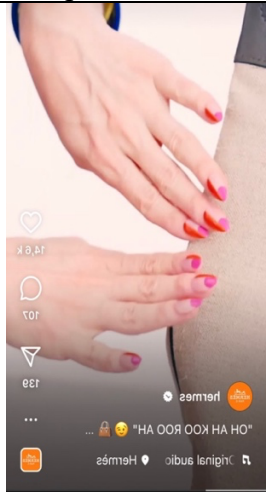
Vocal: Include whispering, soft and slow speech, breathing sounds, smacking lips and tongue which sounds associated with oral activities (Rovira 2021).

Example content 1

	Description	Color movement. Ever changing moods of Rouge Hermès seen through the eyes of artist.
	Triggers	The motion of a pendulum swing shows the color palette of the lipstick collection. This flows in a rhythm with the sound of a kiss.
	ASMR aesthetics	Kissing sound, rhythmic movement
	ASMR variations	Fast motion, short clip

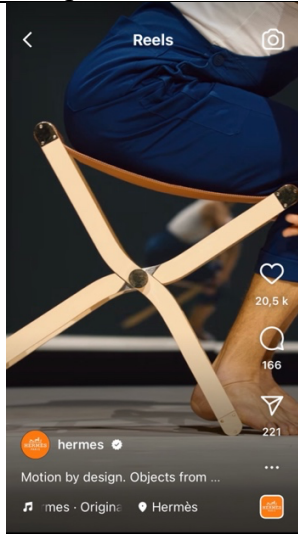
(Appendix 3)

Example content 2

 <p>(Appendix 3)</p>	Description	“OH AH KOO ROO AH” The Hsut à Courroies bag made life easier for riders by enabling them to transport their boots and saddle in style. With the arrival of the motor car, this trapezium-shaped model with a sculptural look was reappropriated as a travel bag. #whatshisname
	Triggers	Giving the history of the bag with associated sounds of texture and lip movement. They have named this style as “Low key ASMR” in the advert.
	ASMR aesthetics	Hand movements, Motions, Lip movement. Repeat same content over and over.
	ASMR variations	Fast motions, Fast talking in high voice.

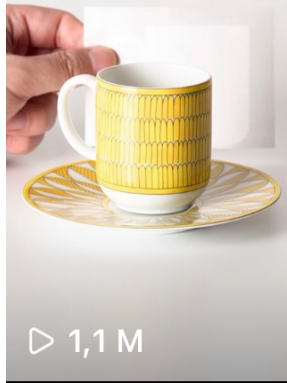
Noises: include interaction with objects, crunching, tapping, scratching, textured surfaces, the rustle of pages which are the associated familiar sounds which start with a movement (Rovira 2021).

Example content 3

 <p>(Appendix 3)</p>	Description	Motion by Design. Objects from the Hermès Home collection inspire the art of movement in ASMR style.
	Triggers	Prominent sounds with object movement in a varied motions with close personal attention. Typical furniture associated real sounds used to enhance the feeling in the movement of the actor in an impressive act of a gymnastic performer.
	ASMR aesthetics	Sounds of object movements, close personal attention
	ASMR exceptions	Fast movements, short clip, background sounds, fast motion


Example content 4

	Description	Just passing through. Magic trick. #artinmotion
	Triggers	Rustle of pages sounds appear when the magic trick of changing the designs of the tea cup to show up the tea cup collection.
	ASMR aesthetics	Rustle of pages, rhythm, hand movements, close personal attention. Concentrate to the sounds of movements.

 <p>(Appendix 3)</p>	ASMR variations	Short clip but when play as a reel in Instagram it plays without a stop. Fast motions.
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Visual-tactile: The triggers rise while showing the process of applying makeup, hair care, combing, smooth hand movements, and touching soft substances as naturally originated sounds (Rovira 2021).

Example content 5

 <p>(Appendix 3)</p>	Description	Brush hour. Listen to the soft music of brushes and braids are riders and grooms take care of their horse friends. #brushingiscaring
	Triggers	Combing the surface of horse skin in a slow movement with caring feeling.
	ASMR aesthetics	Close attention to the object of comb. Sounds of touching the horse skin with concentration, prominent sounds. Slow motion.
	ASMR variations	Short clip

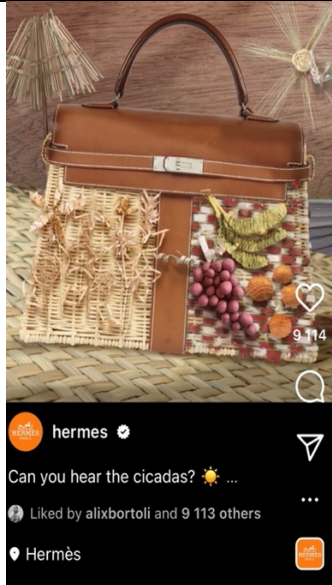
Example content 6

	Description	It's super slick, slick trick; It's fun and silky.. Look! A twilly! #magicsilk
	Triggers	Bringing a magic trick of grabbing more silk scarf from slow motion hand movement that demonstrate the scarf collection with silk fabric

 <p>▶ 422 k</p> <p>(Appendix 3)</p>		associate sounds with the feel of touching soft substances.
	ASMR aesthetics	Associating the natural sound of silk fabric, prominent sounds, close attention. Concentrate to the sounds of movements.
	ASMR variations	Short clip


Communicative: Elaborate a kind of role-play depicting communication situations where the ASMRtist acts and creating an intimate bonding situation (Rovira 2021).

Example content 7

 <p>(Appendix 3)</p>	Description	Can you hear the cicadas? The Kelly picnic bag is styled here with interwoven wicker reminiscent of traditional picnic hamper, and a leather handle top flap and belt arm. #vacationspirit
	Triggers	Elaborating nature sounds associated with the outdoor picnic atmosphere with bird singing, and water activities with a storyboard of a real picnic. The whole mood is visualizing the picnic bag.
	ASMR aesthetics	Roleplay of a situation, close camera attention to details, and various nature sounds connected to animations.
	ASMR variations	Short play, moderate fast motions.

Example content 8


	Description	Harmonious balance. Sillage d’Hermès armchair is an originally shaped, generously proportioned seat with district origin, designed by studio Mumbai.
	Triggers	Craftmanship-associated sounds are prominent and attention to detail with role play. Textured sounds of the surfaces

 (Appendix 3)	ASMR aesthetics	Close attention to the details of the process. Prominent sounds of objects and movement. The texture of the materials.
	ASMR variations	Fast motions, background music.

As a result of the content analysis, the researcher decided to select ASMR associated 4 videos that are prominent with the above four features of voices, noises, visual-tactile and communicative types to be used for the discussion along with the interview. The above classification and understanding of the patterns of ASMR-associated content lay the primary foundation for the interview guide in terms of what sort of content is feasible to discuss with the participants. It was an attempt of reminding them of the features and to capture their perceptions in three stages as for traditional ASMR, ASMR associated marketing with contrast to traditional marketing. All the videos selected are associated brand Hermès so knowing the variations of their luxury brand love could be visible.


*Below is a brief overview of the associated videos at the interview.

Scenario 1: Vocal prominent ASMR content

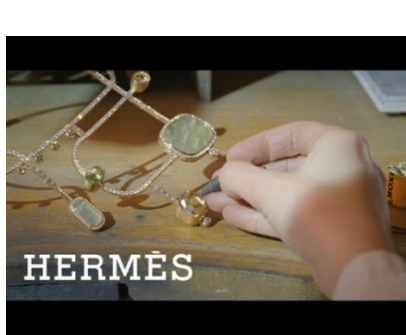
 (Appendix 4)	Description	Berkin bag
	Triggers	Nail movements and scratching, whispering
	ASMR aesthetics	Very slow, whispers, slow talking, slow motions, scratching, close personal attention, hand movement
	ASMR variations	Remains as a traditional ASMR content which ASMRist present a product and discuss with the audience. This YouTube video is from one of influencer.

Scenario 2: Noises prominent ASMR advert


	Description	Restoration of vintage Hermes bag
	Triggers	Brush strokes, cutting, sawing, slow movements
	ASMR aesthetics	Process driven ASMR

	ASMR variations	Remains as a traditional ASMR content over showing the craftsmanship associated with the restoration process.
(Appendix 4)		

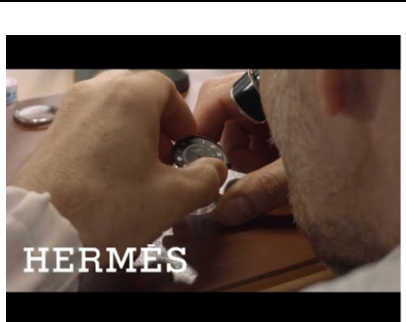
Scenario 3: **Visual-tactile** prominent

	Description	Jewelry piece		
(Appendix 4)				
			Triggers	Craftmanship-associated sounds are prominent and attention to detail with role play. Textured sounds of the surfaces.
			ASMR aesthetics	Process driven ASMR
ASMR variations	Music is playing in the background to change the aesthetics from traditional ASMR.			

Scenario 4: **communicative** prominent

	Description	Harmonious balance.		
(Appendix 4)				
			Triggers	Craftmanship-associated sounds are prominent and attention to detail with role play. Textured sounds of the surfaces
			ASMR aesthetics	Process driven ASMR
ASMR variations	Music is playing in the background to change the aesthetics from traditional ASMR.			

Scenario 5: **traditional advert**

	Description	Hermes Watch		
(Appendix 4)				
			Triggers	Traditional storytelling attempt.
			ASMR aesthetics	Only motions and visuals bit similar to ASMR with close personal attention
ASMR variations	No sound prominence in the rotation rather flat background music.			

(Discussion of the coming chapters is based on the aesthetics of the above-discussed videos.)

5.2 ASMR IMPRESSIONS

One central theme of the thesis is to understand how ASMR is pictured in the minds of luxury brand enthusiasts. Thereby researcher is analyzing the deep meanings of their thoughts on ASMR in this chapter. Participants described their different perceptions of ASMR during the interview. Those experiences are very personal to what type of ASMR they have previously been exposed to. Based on their overview different participants have varied experiences. Sebastian reflected “It depends on the type of ASMR”. As discussed in the content analysis various types of ASMR (Rovira 2021) are a consideration for the impressions.

Regarding the overall sensation, participants reflected on their ideas, and among the ideas, there were mixed feelings for most of the participants about their previous experiences and two example videos they viewed with typical ASMR aesthetics. Those can be discussed as positive and negative vibes for traditional ASMR. Psychologically some participants felt ASMR was a “sleep therapy” (Shirly, Chrish) and “psychologically connected” (Janatul), “fascinating” (Sebastian) and “comforting” (Chamudi) for them. As previously mentioned, these also could be varied on what sort of content is being watched. Psychologically they perceived as negative sensations “stressed,” (Vindya), “numb feeling” (Nethmi), “intense feeling” (Sebastian), and “creepy feeling” (Sebastian). In concentration to the negativity associated with physical sensations “sound was horrified” (Klara, Vindya), gives “goosebumps” (Sebastian, Nethmi, Vindya, Chrish) which is similar to “chill in the back” (Nethmi). These patterns of feelings reconfirm the findings of scholars in the previous research ().

There were not many noticed positive sensations thus negatively triggering sensations were over-discussed. It could be when a situation is comforting, they have not noticed the triggers unless they are over felt. This situation was described by Chrish as if a trigger has not been noticed which means they have tolerated those kinds, unintentionally.

[...] I think I tolerate those drilling sounds, that is why I may not have noticed that much (Chrish)

Among the example videos, ASMRist's presentation was not so fond of many and as the reason they realized the content was not informative enough to spend time for so long. Thus, there are very few who identified such as “sleep therapy” was found so interesting to them. It reflects the viewer is searching for some benefit to be associated with all that they view in their feed. The same perception was expressed by other participants “100% content matters” (Nethmi), and “Content is informative” (Sebastian), in a similar sense as “content matters” (Chamudi, Klara, Chrish).

[...] Hermes is such a luxury brand it should not be overconsumed and also needs to be repaired and restored. Likewise, the content of the video really matters to me. (Klara)

Further, there can be personal likings, values, cultural beliefs, and religious beliefs that come into the practice for reaction to the content positively or negatively. As an example, Michelle reflected the sounds of ASMRtis speaking so close to the mic with a soft voice makes her feel disgusting as it reminds her how noises rise when people eat with loud noises. With the values such as dine-in etiquettes the perception of those noises gives a negative impression to her. So that these impressions can find a connection with values and beliefs. Dine-in etiquette is a socially accepted way of fine dining. Society has set standards of etiquette. This sort of mind-based benchmark can impact the perception of the specific type of sounds associated with ASMR due to pre-defined standards in society. Further, the theory of self-congruity supports

that in this sense people are fonder of accepting content that relies upon their self-image or personality traits.

[...] I do not really like whispering as I am feeling it sounds like someone is like eating and I really don't like that sound. (Michelle)

In fact, many participants noticed they felt very close to the presenter or the presentation while watching ASMR videos. They have felt either they do it by themselves or they are really living in the movement. (Nicole, Nethmi, Vindya) The reason for this is due to the properties of ASMR are capable of creating the atmosphere that humans feel in real life in the exact distance to the object and to the prominent sounds or in a greater volume which brain triggered participants to identify it as an event that is happening in a closer length to them.

[..] I felt as, I felt it was a little bit close, closer to me, like something really close like something which is next to me, something like that.. (Chamudi)

[..] I can feel the craftsmanship and the effort of the manufacturer's effort. I really can feel it. So in this kind of thing, I prefer that I have the feeling that I'm in the production plant or with the artist who is doing the finishing touches. (Vindya)

In this sense, more surprisingly found a connection with the participants who had previously been exposed to the craftsmanship with similar experiences. They found a deeper connection to it with their own experiences by Nicole and Chrish with their background as a designer and textile engineer. During the craftsmanship, the motions of paint mixing and painting by the creator tend to give Nicole about how paint smells alike in her subconscious mind. So it can be found connection that ASMR is elevating their sense with their personal experiences and previous memories. In ASMR with prominences of sounds, smells and motions and connection to their memories, it tends to bring people to moments that they really liked or disliked in their early life. So that ASMR could stand as a memory reviser.

[...] This video I like a lot. I get feelings of the bag and structure. Even feeling the smell of paint reminds me. As a designer, I know how to make and it made really visible for me and all feelings of creation. (Nicole)

Thus, Klara pointed out that ASMR could have a connection to the lifestyle. She thinks as she wears earbuds in her ears most of the time, it could be sensible to her more effectively. Similarly ASMR like a concept being used in marketing needs to be associated by giving concern to the lifestyle habits of modern consumers.

[...] I am very sensitive to noise. So like for me it is not always a nice sound to hear. I am always sitting with the earplugs in my ears. I get triggers quite quickly (Klara)

5.3 AESTHETICS OF ASMR

ASMR originated in the YouTube platform prominently and most of the YouTube-associated content carries traditional ASMR content. The results reflected even though participants are not so fond of YouTube-associated very slow, lengthy content, they prefer ASMR-associated content to TikTok. So that channel is considered an important factor for viewers. One reason reflected by them as it is more interesting is because of the challenges and trends associated with TikTok. (Chrish, Michelle, shirly)

[...] I do not like YouTube content related to ASMR but TikTok trends of ASMR liked. (Michelle)

[...] Sound is more appealing. It is kind of satisfying. I can remember in TikTok and in some sort of apps, they give some videos arranging the food in the fridge, storing something and cleaning the room and arranging that sort of.. (Chrish)

However, process-driven ASMR was more positively perceived by the participants than ASMRist presentation in traditional ASMR. They have found when someone is working on a concentrated work it is very fascinating to be watched even though it is in slow or moderate motion as some process is happening. "Content matters" It reflects when concentration relies on the flow of the process, they have not identified it as they have stuck in one place like the presentation of slow ASMRists. In answers expressed as; "It is showing like producing something" (Chrish), "process driven contents I find it very relaxing" (Vindya). More expressions by Michelle and Nicole are shown below.

[...]. It is less fake. process-associated video is like a very relaxing feeling resting in your head. But the other video is like relaxing and seeing the process of this bag and associated sounds only. (Michelle)

[...] As a designer, I know how to make and it made really visible for me and all feelings of creation. (Nicole)

Sounds play very important role in traditional ASMR videos and it was described by Janatul as "unique sounds that can create sensitiveness in the brain" Thus, Nicole prefers "natural sounds are more appealing" rather than sounds that come along with an effort of scratching or tapping without a purpose. Chrish found "I feel more satisfied with those sounds". Most all the participants expressed that ASMR is a sound prominent concept that is capable of touching their feelings differently. Thus, sounds can be the reason for the capability of tolerating ASMR. From a scientific aspect, the human body is only capable of hearing sounds in the frequency range of 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz ()

[...] I would say the sound is effective because it like it really enhanced the feeling (Sebastian).

[..] unique sounds can create sensitiveness in the brain that brings a tingling sensation (Janatul)

Motions found in ASMR as a very slow concept by participants. Nethmi identified ASMR as "slow nail movements and slow stuff" while Vindya reflects it as a similar sense of patience as "I like the patience of taking back to the colour and the shape the way". ASMR artist, Shirly had a precise answer for slowness and from her words:

[...] For me, ASMR is like whispering and slow talking. When I do ASMR videos I concentrate on them.. (Shirly)

[...]I really get a real goosebump feeling when there is slow-talking, like whispering.. (Nethmi)

This slowness is a fact that caused to make of traditional ASMR for hours with a lengthy timeframe. Some find ASMR time-consuming and not so liked by them. So low volume and whisper is one of the most discussed properties of ASMR.

[...] Normally when such kind of people act, I skip the video. Most of the time her voice is not at a stable level and I have to put more effort into understanding what she is telling. This slowness is a fact that caused to make of traditional ASMR for hours with a lengthy timeframe. Some find ASMR time-consuming and not so liked by them.

Secondly concentrating on the properties of ASMR-associated adverts, Nethmi understood “It's short and one thing it's, it's kind of nice” while Vindya reflected the same feeling as “I like it is really short. I felt like relax and meditation”. This duration of the video could stand as a strategy to overcome the negative vibes associated with ASMR in ASMR associated marketing.

[...] I think the timing is good because when it's too long I often just klick because when it's short I usually play it over if I really like it. (Nethmi)

[...] preferred the shortness of the videos. (Klara)

[...] It's a long process but it's very short in this video. So, it like gives you a very summary of the product, how it is manufactured and then and who is involved and those kinds of things. So, I think the manufacturing aspect. Informative. (Chamudi)

Participants reflected on the aspects they felt about the quality of the art direction of the content of Hermès is advanced compared to most of the traditional ASMR. Klara had thought about traditional ASMR as “traditional ASMR videos, they are very cheap” and many others also agreed on the points of quality of the video and animations, angels, motions, actors, the personality of the actors, the message at a strong position with Hermès.

[...] It's good and the video wise it's also a clear approach not going much into detail (Vindya)

[...] I think the quality of Hermes videos was different. They were of good quality and then well like well, well designed (Chamudi)

Motions of the video and sounds play a big role in the ASMR-associated content in Scenarios 3 and 4. They describe it as like a moment of reality as every detail of the video flows in the exact same rhythm in real life. It is reflected by Nethmi as the “Natural Rhythm of everything” in scenario 4 “Very natural way of maybe doing things. Paintings, Brushstrokes”. It is not separatable motions from sounds in real life, both are happening in a parallel sequence. So when the rhythm of naturality can be read, the liveness within a concept like ASMR is capable of capturing. Further, it expressed by participants;

[...] It was very nice to watch and hear those sounds next to the creation process. Some of the motions felt so live in the video. (Klara)

[...] I liked it when there was like focus on details for example, like the drawing and I remember when he put the clay on it and then he was rubbing it, it was nice like a soothing effect. (Nethmi)

[...] but I think they give the like the like extreme similar like sounds of the manufacturing process. So it's kind of interesting. For the motions and sounds. (Shirly)

It reflects in some scenarios sounds are capable of elevating the sensation. In answer of Michelle, experiences it as “It is like slow and extra sounds make like it may be kind of make a sensation”. When referring to what are those “extra sounds” further elaborated;

[...] I think they have this with a mixture of the music and music is slow when these instruments come into existence and then you kind of feel those sensations. When in the videos of neckless when they attach diamonds, there we get a physical sensation. To higher sounds I guess. I felt the same relation as traditional ASMR. (Michelle)

Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents believed a moment relying on scenario 3 was grabbing their concentration. Sebastian describes it as “I like when they like, place the crystals stones” and Nicole felt it as “Very particular sounds and aesthetically pleasing”. It is sort of icebreaking for them when they sense some clicks and chick sounds in the flow of the advert of Hermes. Chrish understood that moment as a “wakeup call”.

- [...] It makes me wake up in the jewellery video they used very minor way of sounds that they have used to store stones in the jewellery. (Chrish)
- [...] Yeah, that was cool and you can really hear the sound of. Like the stone touching the metal, would you say like the metal metallic surface (Sebastian)
- [...] And I also like when in the jewellery one when they when they put the crystal gem. Yeah, Crystal inside it with the “click” sounds. I think those are quite nice. (Nethmi)

5.4 ASMR BRAND EXPERIENCE OF HERMÈS

The first impression expressed by the participants gives a very positive vibe and from their words; Sebastian expresses that it “was really amusing” whilst Kara felt “It also very thoughtful”. Jantul had thoughts like “curious and relaxed” (Janatul). Nethmi was also on the same page, she expressed from her words; “I like it, it's one thing it's short and one thing it's kind of nice”. Vindya felt as if she gets a “better feeling of.” Thus, Chrish concentrated on the background sounds more prominently as “background music makes me so energetic”. So overall first impression of the ASMR associated content of Hermès was positive. No negative thoughts as in traditional ASMR arose at the first glance.

- [...] It is super nicely made. I really like it. It is really nice...I could watch this like over again”.
- [...] I don't get it irritated as in the traditional ASMR (Klara)
- [...] I think other relaxing sensations are still similar to ASMR. (Michelle)

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- [...] I think the timing is good because when it's too long I often just klick because when it's short I usually play it over if I really like it. (Nethmi)
- [...] preferred the shortness of the videos. (Klara)
- [...] It's a long process but it's very short in this video. So, it like gives you a very summary of the product, how it is manufactured and then and who is involved and those kinds of things. So, I think the manufacturing aspect. Informative. (Chamudi)

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- [...] It's good and the video wise it's also a clear approach not going much into detail (Vindya)
- [...] I think the quality of Hermes videos was different. They were of good quality and then well like well, well designed (Chamudi)

As previously discussed in the traditional ASMR, the quality of the content of Hermès is figured by participants and it has helped to grasp the ultimate idea of an advertisement to decode the message effectively to luxury brand lovers.

[...] It shows it is really nice and goes hand in hand with craftsmanship. It really shows their items are really made with super hands and that is luxury products (Michelle)
[...] It shows the process without anyone speaking or explaining what's happening. (Chamudi)
[...] So, I think when I see it, I feel these products are very expensive because products are with a lot of effort (Michelle)

Proper communication in marketing is always capable of transferring a message to their audience effectively and keeping them engaged till the end.

[...] I think it's more effective because it's kind of attracts the audience and keeps us motivated to watch till the end. (Chamudi)
[...] liked when he was drawing the lines and it was straight, so it was, I was like, eager to see what's happening (Nethmi)

A sense of closeness was identified previously in traditional ASMR. ASMR techniques association in Scenario 3 and r was felt similarly by many respondents.

[...] like when they like, place the crystals stones. Yeah, that was cool and you can really hear the sound. Like the stone touching the metal, I would say like a metallic surface. Yeah, it was like you're close to the production process. (Sebastian)
[...] made me like participate to in the process of making the jewellery. I think it is very live in the process (Nicole)

The associated techniques for ASMR content by Hermès as highlighted by the participants in multiple ways as they experience. Showing transparency by brands is one of the strategies that brands practice for ethical considerations. Also, this works as a great marketing technique to show up the exclusivity of the production in luxury fashion brands. Many participants identified that watching the ASMR content related to storytelling is an eye-opener for them.

[...] It's kind of how they take care of stone and how precious is every work for them. It kind of shows how important each step is to make the jewellery at the endpoint. (Chrish)

Further, this storytelling technique by Hermes using ASMR is found to be an effective way of communication. Chamudi explained it as “it shows the process without anyone speaking or like explaining what's happening” but ASMR has various categories and mostly craftsmanship was disclosed by the brand without using vocals rather than appealing sounds associated with process and products.

[...] liked when he was drawing the lines and it was straight, so it was, I was like, eager to see what's happening with a curious mind (Nethni)
[...] It's a long process but it's very short in this video. So it like gives you a very summary of the product, how it is manufactured and then and who is involved and those kinds of things. So I think the manufacturing aspect. Informative. (Chamudi)

ASMR also could be a trend in the minds of participants. There are different fads that change the way of communication in social media. So ASMR aesthetics can be found to be a new trend by some participants. The traditional way of advertisements may be boring for the customers to look at in the same variation with some background music to a beat or song. In that nature, ASMR has won the attention of many participants.

[...] It felt, yeah, it felt kind of old school. I would say like a big passage in the production of the video. So I would say ASMR was more like a modern version of this one. Definitely, Yeah, something missing. Liveness within ASMR. (Sebastian)

[...] Just felt something is missing. It felt perfectly done also but just felt like an advertisement but when I see the content associated with ASMR I get the feeling like I am really being there in the process and watching them produce the stuff closely. And this was like just an advertisement. (Klara)

Some participants prominently describe the exclusivity associated with the attempts of some storytelling videos in ASMR style by Hermes. (Chamudi) expressed that “it's very appealing for luxury brand marketing” while Vindya, Nicole and Klara expressed their view as below:

[...] Yes then you are involved in the production process and feel this brand is like a part of you. I think it is enjoyable. I don't know why. It may be for me. They opened their atelier for me. I feel like I am a big person to see how they are making. I hear those sounds like particular sounds like that. I feel fulfilled after seeing it. (Nicole)

[...] I think ASMR marketing is an extra marketing technique to really like go more into the customer journey and customer feelings and loyalty. I think it is another aspect of creating loyalty besides the things they are doing with the brand community and bla bla bla.. I think it is a very good aspect of creating customer loyalty. (Klara)

[...] Because already a person who goes and buys a Hermes bucking. Or the specific accessory they have the mindset that ‘Oh we are going to do something remarkable’ because only a very few people in the society can afford or can go for such a thing by trying to give exclusiveness even with the marketing and the effect like the, this asthma.(Vindya)

Surprisingly three participants got the same impression about Hermès that brand Dior practices. This found that ASMR is in the market competition in luxury branding. Vindya, Nicole and Nethni got the example scenario about Dior practising the ASMR style attempts in their marketing communication. It is a point that confirms luxury brands' association of ASMR features in their marketing communication tend to memories similar feelings and memories about luxury brands.

[...] It gives a very nice feeling, especially I think. Dior also does things like this. I mostly see Dior stuff, yeah. And I think amazing. I love it, the stitchings and stuff like that. I think it's very pleasing to watch. It depends on how you use it, yeah. So I think it's very nice to have. I think it's very enjoyable. (Nethmi)

[...] I think that I have this feeling when it comes to Christian Dior when they use this kind of marketing strategy. I want to buy truly this Chris I I would. Buy that Lady Dior or the watch that they are making with the gems, I think the same will go match with the Hermes. (Vindya)

[...] If I see the advertisement of Hermès I do not wanna swipe off. But that first video I might swipe. As I told you, I follow Dior only for this kind of advertising.

ASMR is known to be therapeutic thus ASMR content associated with a fashion brand was found to be therapeutic to an extent but not similar to traditional ASMR which enhances benefits like sleep therapy. Most all the participants found this sort of content to be mind-relaxing and soothing but not noticeable for the properties like reducing anxiety.

[...] It's definitely relaxing and soothing. But I'm not sure if it will reduce anxiety. But for instance, if I'm really stressed and if I'm a loyal customer of this brand, then I would like to go and watch some videos of this brand. So it will be it will reduce my anxiety, yeah, but if I'm like a random customer then I don't think so. (Chamudi)

[...] I really liked it. I think it was really calming and very soothing with all the lighting and everything. It was really nice (Nethmi)

5.5 SENSORY EXPERIENCE

Besides the fact that the majority of the respondents could not relate to the first impression of Chamudi. She had a different first impression that this sort of concept would never make sense for a disabled person. It could be obvious, as we discussed in the theory of sensory marketing the sensors of the five doors of the eyes, nose, ears, tongue and body are the centres that can grasp the information in the human body. So if any of those organs are in malfunction, this sensation would not be capable of capturing the correct sense. So human organs' functionality and the level of functionality (i.e. poor eyesight) could also play a vital role in the sensitivity of a concept like ASMR.

[...] OK, the first one I like, what came to my mind was like one of the drawbacks of ASMR would be it won't give any like any message to a disabled person. That is what I thought when I was watching but for me it was. (Chamudi)

In this section, the traditional advertisement of Scenario 5 which is over a traditional advertisement without ASMR aesthetics is being discussed with participants to know the variance in their sensations. Again when concentrating on the first impression of participants all had a very singular taste about the content as “empty”. Eight of them were quick to grasp the variation very quick with the first impression. Janatul felt “No emotional curve” while Klara felt “I felt a bit boring like of a feeling now.. Just felt something is missing.” Michelle is surprised by her own thoughts “Oh wow! If you put those two videos together, I really can see there is missing something now”. In the eye of Sebastian, it read as “felt kind of old school” and Nethmi reflects it as “In one straight line if you pick if you picture it.” The same feeling Chrish understood as “same kind of music it is repeating.” Nicole was clueless to find the missing factor but she felt just missing.

[...] Okay I think music irritates me more than health. Yeah, I see the process but I don't know why it does not touch me. I am not feeling I am in the process. I think I feel a distance. Previously it was very close to me. Sometimes I felt like a craftsman was just in front of me. but now not here. (Nicole)

[...] Oh wow! If you put those two videos like together I really can see there is missing something now. And there is that music going in the background. That is very loud music and I was waiting to see what those sounds like in the ASMR-inspired advertisement. I then felt like it was less authentic. (Michelle)

Besides the fact that the majority of the respondents could not relate to Chamudi and Vindya. They capture the variance with a delay. First thought about the music and how music can motivate and then suddenly awake as “But in the ASMR it's like the process, it's also motivating. I think that's one thing that I felt like very similar to something missing”. Vindya was completely negative to the variance and then realized the missing factor.

[...] I don't feel something is missing. This is what? Maybe I'm too old. This is what my ears and eyes are used to when I'm looking at advertisements. I said, but like you didn't get that like maybe that crystal attachment sounds, that sort of live sounds, yeah. ASMR is missing.

Reasons for the negativity could not compromise as something felt by participants as negative sensations thus what felt missing was the ASMR-related feeling of living in the moment. So the researcher tries to discover here by going into details to know what is missing in action.

This situation Klara explained “It felt too like perfectly done also but just felt like an advertisement”

[...] I would say like a big passage in the production of the video. So I would say ASMR was more like a modern version of this one. Definitely, Yeah, something missing. Liveness within ASMR. Yeah, for sure. (Sebastian)

5.6 SUCCESS OF ASMR AS A MARKETING TOOL

Overall Hermés strategy and the scope they have used ASMR aesthetics in their marketing communication were found to be positively appealing to all participants.

[...] Positive impact on it, but of course I need to also see what the brand is a little bit about, what are their direction. (Nethmi)

[...] I think the more curiosity that the consumer builds in their mind. So I think it would definitely positively impact the consumer's mind more or less in my opinion. (Vindya)

[...] But also I am not ASMR into the very deep end. Because I don't watch traditional ASMR often as I don't feel them so nice. But I enjoy how Hermés is doing it. (Michelle)

A successful advertisement is capable of motivating a customer to make a purchase. The results of this study prove that ASMR-associated content is capable of motivating the customer base. In this essence, ASMR marketing is capable of reaching customers with a memorandum.

[...] Because it's the first thing, first one is like it's different from other marketing like traditional marketing and then I think it like. And then the third video that we watched with the sound with ASMR style but not in ASMR technique, but it really motivated me to like watch the whole process from beginning to end. So yes, it definitely like allows me to allow the product. Yes, I would definitely like, if I have like 10 brands, then I would definitely like to try Hermés one day. (Chamudi)

[...] As we started speaking I was not into Hermés. But now I want to go and have the look of Hermés. And maybe in future, I buy it. (Nicole)

[...] Okay If I could consider I am a rich person and I can afford this brand, I think it would influence me a bit. Because it makes me like, If you are planning to buy some stuff from Hermés you look at these advertisement videos and you feel like really calming and nice and authentic feeling it gives. So I think it would influence me. As it gives a positive influence on you. (Klara)

The effectiveness of ASMR as a marketing tool was pinpointed by the participants. They express the deeper connection that they associate with the ASMR marketing attempts that bring a positive vibe and more willingness to engage in this sort of content. This could be a similar sense of soap opera which was characterized by a permanent cast of actors, a continuing story, an emphasis on dialogue instead of action, a slower-than-life pace, and a consistently sentimental or melodramatic treatment. This set of broadcasts was famous between 1930 and 1970 in television and radio broadcasts. Similarly, ASMR marketing can bring the same vibe as soap opera in the sense of marketing in the digital age.

[...] As I said earlier it made me feel more connected with the product. And increase my intention to own some (Janatul)

[...] If I could consider I am a rich person and I can afford this brand, I think it would influence me a bit. Because it makes me like, If you are planning to buy some stuff from Hermes you look at these advertisement videos and you feel like really calming

and nice and authentic feeling it gives. So I think it would influence me. As it has a positive influence on you. (Michelle)

[...]I've not actually been a Hermès person, to be honest. So that's what I probably have not seen so much, Yeah. But I like it. Now that I've seen or got a glimpse of it, I would like to engage a little bit more. (Sebastian)

[...] If I really have money and I have a desire to buy like ohh I think I want this kind of brand then I will buy Hermes. Yes, this will inspire me. Because it is like without knowing to my knowledge, it is already going to my mind. (Deeper connection yes) it is all about how they present. (Chrish)

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter discusses the main outcomes of the thesis resulted in. First of all, a conclusion is presented, followed by a section where the research questions are answered. To conclude the chapter, research contributions and managerial implications along with limitations and future research are presented.

6.1 DISCUSSION

ASMR is spread over time with unique features and the type of ASMR is a consideration for a viewer to decide whether they would like to tolerate or like such content. In general, due to the history of how ASMR was generated as a style and how it spread over society, has pictured positive and negative impressions equally based on the viewers' sensations. A sensation is mostly felt and taken into consideration when it is being over-felt by participants. Unless they consider the variations in the frequency of communication as normal. A study by Liang (2019) suggested that participants' personal preferences for ASMR content, were found to be a fact of the type of ASMR videos for effective in engaging participants. This study reflects despite the type of ASMR, content associated with the videos was expected to be informative enough for a viewer to spend time for so long. Unless a viewer expected another type of relaxation benefit associated with the ASMR content even though the information is not rich enough to be engaged.

Further, the complexity lying with ASMR is the link with their personal likings, values, cultural beliefs, and religious beliefs that come into consideration for reaction positively or negatively to ASMR content. This factor could be common for any sort of marketing content thus this study identified a higher sensitivity of ASMR being a force to be over felt these vibes. Similarly, the theory of self-congruity supports the fact that self-image and personality traits are a factor for motivation to engage with a brand for a customer (Tian, Bearden and Hunter 2001). In this essence, ASMR marketing carries an extra sensitivity that a customer may influence themselves in a similar nature.

The feeling of closeness is overly identified in this study by participants due to the properties of ASMR is capable of creating the atmosphere that humans feel in real life. It captures by the brain the closer distance to the object in real life and also the prominent sounds in a greater sense that caused to brain triggered participants to identify it as an event that is happening at a closer length to them. A study by Klausen (2019) according to Smith and Snider also reflects, that the fact that most ASMR videos come with a recommendation to listen with headphones also adds to the closeness as it brings the situation nearer as sound is highlighted and increased

volume and more closely experienced through the use of headphone. But from the marketing point of view using ASMR in marketing communication is pinpointed in the current study modern lifestyle has a connection with the sensitivity of ASMR content. Wearing earbuds or headphones can reach the sounds on a greater scale and sound-prominent ASMR content is required to be shared with precaution to the viewer in this sort of situation to avoid any sort of bad brand experience. Therefore a marketer always needs to well-known about whom they are reaching out to what their audience looks like and what lifestyle concerns are required to be predetermined in creating the marketing communication. ASMR is a sound prominent concept that is capable of touching their feelings differently and the quality of sounds is the key to effective results of ASMR content.

This study suggested ASMR elevates the sense of viewers with personal experiences and prior memories with a deeper connection to their own experiences. Poerio (2016) also reflects that ASMR is in response to certain triggers such as whispering and tapping since childhood and the same sense is developed in ASMR on YouTube but this finding touches touching the experience base fact. The current study suggests ASMR with prominences of sounds, and motions has a connection to the memories of viewers, which tends to bring people to strong memories that they really liked or disliked in their early life. It broadens the understanding as ASMR is capable of accessing strong memories with its live sensation that even awakens the sensation of smells.

Channel plays an important role in ASMR-related content as the platform gives different features and a new face to ASMR, especially TikTok-related trends are more memorable for participants than YouTube-related content. Further process-driven ASMR is found to be more interesting than ASMRist presentation with interaction in the current study. A previous study by Liang (2019) explores the interaction effects of visual and auditory content in changing physiological states when watching ASMR videos. His results suggested participants are fonder of engaging with the ASMR videos with partial face visibility or without face visibility than the videos that reveal the ASMRist's face. Thus, the current study broadens the idea that more than the ASMRist presentation, process-driven are fonder of spending time with the participants. This feature of the video is identified to feel a flow without feeling stuck in a place compared to traditional extremely slow-motion content. Slow motions and an extremely slow nature is a very prominent features of ASMR. This also caused the fact that ASMR is a time-consuming phenomenon. However, this time-consuming nature is being overcome by the marketing content of Hermès to keep the customer engaged continuously.

ASMR featured marketing content by Hermès was identified exciting factor for the viewer due to its variations. It fulfils the previously requested properties of quality content and an informative nature to decode the brand message successfully to the luxury brand enthusiast. Proper communication in marketing is always capable of transferring a message to their audience effectively and keeping them engaged till the end. Also, the study highlighted the quality of the art direction of the content of Hermès is advanced compared to most traditional ASMR videos. Motions of the video and sounds associated with Hermès marketing communication play a big role like “a moment of reality” as every detail of the video flows in the same rhythm in real life to keep the content live for the viewer. This feature was very interesting to many participants. This fact was strengthened by the factors of the book *Humanity In-Between and Beyond* written by Łapińska (2023) about the science of fiction in ASMR. This book mentions the sensations of viewers-listeners feel in their bodies appear to be caused by the factor of biological and cultural factors. Łapińska (2023) elaborate these sensations arise in the body in response to a mixture of stimuli in a setting where cognition and

estrangement are balanced. Further other synchronizes of music along with ASMR prominent sounds were also found interesting by the participants in Hermès marketing content. Some moments were found to be extremely capable of grabbing the attention and concentration of the viewer like an ice-breaking sensation in their mind to keep them engaged in ASMR.

Showing transparency by brands is one of the strategies that fashion brands practice for ethical considerations. Also, this works as a great marketing technique to show the exclusivity of the production in luxury fashion brands. Further, this storytelling technique by Hermès using ASMR is found to be an effective way of communication while disclosing the uniqueness of Hermès through exquisite craftsmanship and design. The traditional way of advertisements may be boring for the customers thus finding ASMR as a new trend in the way of communication. Some participants prominently describe the exclusivity associated with the attempts of some storytelling videos in ASMR style by Hermès which appealing for luxury brand marketing. Surprisingly similar attempts by the competitor brand Dior were also recognised in luxury brand marketing attempts with ASMR that suggest ASMR marketing could be a greater platform for luxury branding. ASMR marketing communication attempts of Hermès were found to be mind-relaxing and soothing but not noticeable for the properties like reducing anxiety-like in traditional ASMR. No negatively impacted experiences were disclosed in the study by participants as reactions to the five scenarios.

The theory of sensory marketing suggests the sensors of the five doors of the eyes, nose, ears, tongue and body are the centres that can grasp the information in the human body. So if any of those organs malfunction, this sensation of ASMR would not be capable of capturing the correct sense. After understanding ASMR aesthetics and sensations participants had a very singular taste for traditional marketing attempts by the same brand Hermès. They found that the liveness they felt in ASMR associated content was missing the feeling in traditional advertisements. Also, ASMR was not being felt by participants in an equal speed sense. This is found to vary from person to person. This missing feeling was not a negative sensation thus lower evoked feelings occur. Self-expansion theory suggests that proposes that people have a basic motivation to expand their self-concept by acquiring new experiences, skills, and relationships (Mattingly et al. 2019). Thereby a new range of experiences that can be brought by ASMR content was found to be fonder for self-expansion of individuals. Brands are extremely capable of giving a digital experience to their customers using ASMR in a memorable and engaging manner. Furthermore, sensory marketing is found to be more effective in the physical environment thus ASMR is capable of bringing this sensory marketing to a digital platform to improve customer experiences.

A successful advertisement is capable of motivating a customer to make a purchase. Ultimately for a brand like Hermès, their prospective customers are very likely to be motivated to move up in the customer-brand relationship ladder. ASMR is capable of motivating them for successful engagement with the brand which may lead to a loyal customer in the long term. The results of this study prove that ASMR-associated content is capable of motivating the customer base as the majority confirmed they evoke feelings of love towards the brand Hermès. ASMR tend to evoke a sense of heightened luxury, and exclusivity, with a sensory pleasure that resonates with Hermès' branding.

6.2 CONCLUSION

Lastly in order to answer the ultimate research question, ASMR-associated marketing by Hermès was found to be interesting in nature by the respondents. They reflected a very positive experience more than how they knew traditional ASMR. Traditional ASMR was not so fond of the participants thus association of ASMR elements in advertising is found to be interesting by the luxury brand lovers. They have experienced a living sensation in advertisements similar to real life due to the elevated effects associated with ASMR marketing. Sounds play a prominent role while motions capture the viewer's attention thoroughly. The research concludes by underlining the significance of understanding sensory marketing in the digital age carries a future for ASMR as a marketing phenomenon. ASMR marketing could be a very sharp tool that is required to be used with the knowledge of customer perceptions due to its extra sensitivity. The wise versa, due to the above sensitivity, ASMR marketing could be a harmful tool if it was being operated in a proper manner with an understanding to its principles. If the tool of marketing can be identified as a knife, ASMR marketing can be considered an extra sharp weapon due to the elevated sense of its nature. Also, this tool is capable of carrying very deep messages and talking to human feelings and thoughts even without verbal communication. There can be dark sides associated with this tool in dealing with humans and influencing them to be reactive for the purpose of marketing. The ethical consideration of human rights and how brands are required to do the best practices are required to think thoroughly in this nature for best practices in marketing landscape.

6.3 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS & MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study serves as a valuable resource for marketers and luxury fashion brands by shedding light on the unique perspectives of customers regarding ASMR aesthetics. By delving into the sensory experiences and emotional responses triggered by ASMR-related content, marketers can gain insights into customer preferences and expectations. This enhanced understanding can guide the development of marketing campaigns that resonate deeply with target audiences, leading to more impactful and engaging promotional efforts.

One of the major contributions of this research is its potential to empower marketers with the knowledge required to design and execute effective campaigns using ASMR aesthetics. By exploring the variations in ASMR content and their impact on customer perceptions, this study aids marketers in tailoring their strategies to create content that captivates, intrigues, and establishes emotional connections. This newfound understanding can guide luxury fashion brands in crafting campaigns that align with the intricate sensory experiences of ASMR, resulting in a more compelling and persuasive brand narrative.

Through comprehensive analysis, this study quantifies the degree of sensitivity associated with the ASMR tool in the context of marketing. Understanding the nuances of ASMR aesthetics enables marketers to navigate the delicate balance between creating immersive sensory experiences and avoiding potential pitfalls. By gauging the extent to which ASMR aesthetics can influence customer perceptions, brands can make informed decisions about incorporating ASMR elements into their campaigns, minimizing the risk of detrimental effects on brand image.

This research contributes to the identification and elucidation of the success factors underlying Hermes' ASMR marketing strategy. By dissecting the elements that have contributed to the

luxury brand's effective utilization of ASMR-related content, emerging brands can gain valuable insights into the key features to integrate into their marketing communications. This understanding facilitates the adoption of proven strategies, enabling new brands to leverage ASMR aesthetics to create impactful and resonant promotional content.

One of the significant contributions of this study lies in its revelation of the inherent capability of ASMR content to leave a lasting message in the minds of customers. By exploring how ASMR aesthetics evoke sensory experiences and emotional responses, this research underscores the potential of ASMR-related content to imprint brand messages more deeply into the customer's consciousness. This insight empowers marketers to craft narratives that not only capture attention but also establish enduring connections, enhancing the overall effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

In this study, the researcher observes a set of samples from who are luxury brand enthusiasts. Almost all of them fell into the category of suspects or prospects according to the Kotler model of the brand-customer relationship ladder in relation to the brand Hermès. Particularly no participant is at least a one-time buyer of the Hermès brand. This is due to the brand position being way too high as Hermès stands as a brand of elites. This could lead to limiting the generalizability of the findings to a specific brand rather broader luxury brand consumer base.

The research relies on participants' self-reported experiences and perceptions. This introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses that align with societal norms or expectations rather than their true feelings and behaviours. The study might not capture the full range of sensory responses that individuals might have to ASMR content of this nature.

ASMR experiences are highly subjective and can vary significantly from person to person. Participants may have different levels of exposure to ASMR content or varying degrees of sensitivity to ASMR triggers, which could influence their responses and perceptions. ASMR measurements were taken about their physical and psychological through questioning but in the aspect of neurosciences, this kind of study could have carried with a greater depth to know their actual feelings with scientific parameters. So researcher identified it limits to verbal interview answers to judge the outcome of this study as a limitation.

6.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

From the marketing perspective of ASMR, there are many other undiscovered areas of ASMR such as content creation, consumer engagement, and ASMR Influencer marketing. Future research can analyze the factors that contribute to successful ASMR-related marketing practices that lead to better formalization of the ASMR marketing landscape.

Available studies into ASMR in general put effort into understanding the nature of ASMR and the benefits associated with ASMR. Rather I find a gap in the availability of scientific studies to identify the reasons behind the irritation and negative reactions or intolerance of the individuals. Therefore it can be suggested as future research to understand the scientific reasons behind the negative results of ASMR.

Further to overcome the above-mentioned technical deficiency to track true human feelings future research can be conducted in collaboration with neuroscientists to study the neural mechanisms underlying ASMR experiences and how they relate to consumer behaviour. Use neuroimaging techniques to understand the brain's responses to ASMR marketing stimuli and their impact on consumer decision-making.

6.6 FINAL WORDS

ASMR is a relatively new phenomenon that was coined in recent years and thus got vast popularity for its features. As this subject is at the research level, I have put my effort into outlining the area with the available knowledge. I assume this concept of ASMR has roots in many scientific areas that will develop in future. This research was written solely with my understanding and the gathered knowledge from all sorts of sources. I enjoyed the journey I made to successfully outline these parameters with lots of effort. I envy your kindness if any of the perspectives or assumptions do not fulfil the readers' expectations in any circumstances.

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8. APPENDIX

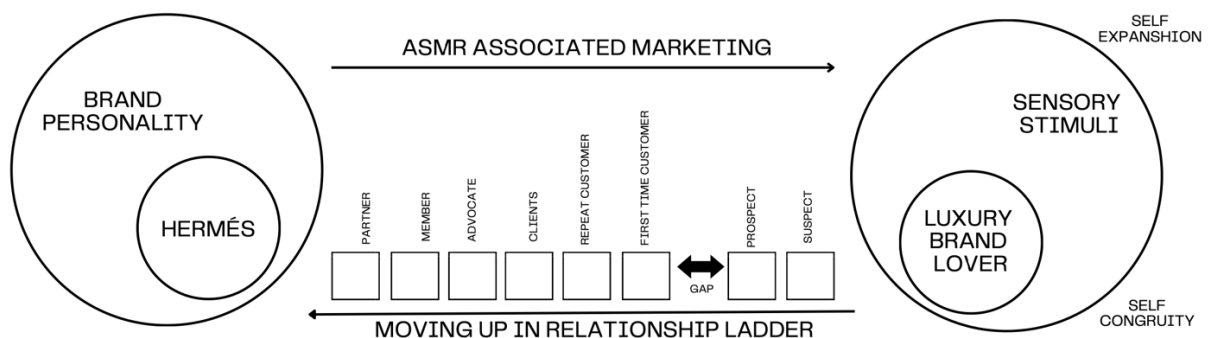
1. Interview guide:

Sections	Interview questions
Demographics	Name (Real or Hypothetical)
	Age group
	Gender
	Country you live?
	Profession
Fashion sense	How do you describe your fashion sense?
	Are you a luxury fashion freak?
	Do you own any of the luxury fashion brands below?
	What do you know about Hermès?
	Do you know about the customer journey of Hermès?
	Think you become super rich for a moment Or may be you already are ;) .. Will you buy a Hermès?
Traditional ASMR	Have you experienced ASMR before? If so, how can you describe how it makes you feel?
	What are the closest matches in your mind about ASMR videos?
	When you encounter ASMR videos, what thoughts or feelings does it evoke for you?
	What are the physical and pshycological sensations? When did you get them?
	What aspects of the videos you found more appealing or effective? Why?
	Do you believe ASMR is a trend or a long-lasting phenomenon?
ASMR associated Marketing	When you encounter ASMR in advertising, what thoughts or feelings does it evoke for you?
	What are the physical and pshycological sensations? When you get them?
	What aspects of the videos you found more appealing or effective? Why?
	Do you find ASMR inspired videos of Hermés aesthetically different to traditional ASMR videos?
Traditional advertising	When you encounter traditional advertising, what thoughts or feelings similar to ASMR does evoke? Or felt something missing in the feeling? What? Why?
Hermes	Do you think ASMR marketing is appealing for luxury brand marketing such as Hermès? Does it feel intrusive or enjoyable?

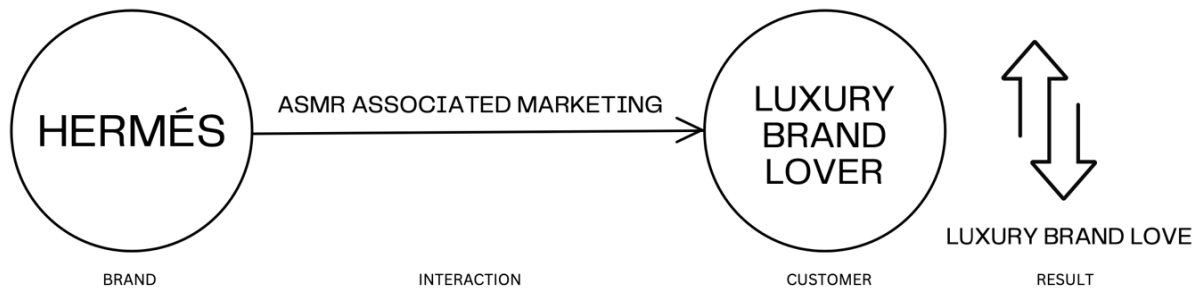
	Do you find the ASMR videos of Hermès relaxing, soothing or reducing anxiety? Why
	Do you feel that a Hermès use of ASMR techniques in advertising influences your willingness to engage with the brand? Why or why not?
	Do you think ASMR has a positive or negative impact on the overall experience of using Hermès products?
	How do you suggest Hermes can improve the use of ASMR in their products or marketing?
	Do you evoke the feeling of love to Hermès when Hermès in ASMR style? Or not?

2. Conceptualization of theories:

In understanding an undiscovered area, the researcher is using various theories to lay the foundation for the scope of the research with the theories discussed in Chapter 3. Below conceptual map presented in (Image 5) is supported to form a framework for the research. On one hand, Hermès is associated with the brand personality that customers are obsessed with associating. They are using ASMR-associated marketing in their marketing communication to enhance the sensory marketing approaches. On the other hand luxury brand lovers who are present in the various levels of the brand-customer relationship ladder, sense their sense which we explain in Chapter 3.1. Researchers assume due to the sensitivity of the content it evokes the self-congruity and self-expansion of the brand lovers and could motivate them to move up or down the brand-customer relationship ladder. Further, the presented gap in the ladder is due to the behaviour of luxury brands, affordability has relied on elite customers specifically concerning the brand Hermès.



The main objective of answering the research question of “How do luxury brand lovers experience the ASMR content in the marketing communication of Hermès?” With relevance to the loop of Hermès, below research framework below is proposed by the researcher.



3. Video Links:

Example content 1 : <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CdTVzexgb9s/>

Example content 2 : <https://www.instagram.com/reel/ChMUzhlALpk/>

Example content 3 : https://www.instagram.com/reel/Crk73JkAl_b/

Example content 4 : <https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cn6htMCIGVn/>

Example content 5 : <https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cp5PAr4MRq8/>

Example content 6 : <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CS1erczglf4/>

Example content 7 : <https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cg6-XMyoavN/>

Example content 8 : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XXIQePVeHU&t=2s>

4. Video Links in the interview discussion:

Scenario 1: https://youtu.be/AlBnBnowDf4?si=YkSsqC_qazt5vVYZ

Scenario 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-7RopWjacl>

Scenario 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szNH5o-B2mQ>

Scenario 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XXIQePVeHU&t=2s>

Scenario 5: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_ORnWgVe7A