

A Literature Review on Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intention of Luxury Products in China

Yang Yang^{a1}
Benjamin Chan Yin Fah^{b2}

^a Guangzhou City Construction College, China

^b Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK)

¹ yang.yang213@ur2.unirazak.edu.my

² benjamin_chan@unirazak.edu.my

Abstract

China's luxury consumer market is developing rapidly, and international luxury brands have successively entered the Chinese consumer market, which attracts the global attention. At present, China is in the new normal, and economic growth has changed from high speed to medium and low speed. Under this background, it is of great significance to explore the driving mechanism and influencing factors of luxury consumption intention to promote the development of independent luxury brands and sustainable economic growth in China. This article reviews the relevant literature and identifies the determinants of consumers' purchase intention and also presents a framework illustrating the variables that influence purchase intention of luxury products.

Keywords: Luxury products, Purchase Intention, Influencing factors, Framework

1. Introduction

The Chinese market became the world's largest luxury market for the first time, accounting for 30% of the global luxury market and 64% of the domestic luxury consumption of Chinese people. It has also made the Chinese market a major battleground for luxury brands (Hung, Zhang, Guillet & Wang, 2021).

Consumption is the starting point and destination of the economy. On the one hand, it is related to the well-being of the people of a country. On the other hand, consumption is also related to the quality of economic development. As the first driving force of economic growth, especially in the past two years, insufficient demand has become one of the main reasons for slow economic growth (Yu & Sapp, 2019).

Research on consumption intention behavior is beneficial to popularize consumption knowledge and improve the economic benefits in the consumption field. And correctly understand and deal with these different areas of economic benefits of mutual relations, and then improve the overall economic

benefits of the whole national economy. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the influence of consumers' purchase intention of luxury products in China, such as attitude, face consciousness, product knowledge, brand image and perceived risk.

2. Definition Of Terminology

Purchase Intention: Purchase intention refers to the probability that a consumer is willing to take a specific purchase behavior. Jain (2020) believes that consumers' attitude towards a certain product or brand, coupled with the role of external factors, constitutes consumers' purchase intention, which can be regarded as consumers' subjective tendency to choose a specific product and proved to be an important factor affecting consumers' purchase behavior. Kumar, Garg and Singh (2022) believe that purchase intention refers to the subjective probability or possibility of a consumer buying a specific product. Some scholars believe that purchase intention is a consumer's purchase plan for a specific product. Boobalan et al., (2021) believes that purchase intention refers to the possibility of consumers buying the product. According to Bangun and Handra (2021), purchase intention is a psychological consultant for consumers to buy goods that are suitable for their own needs. It is a manifestation of consumer psychology and a prelude to purchase behavior.

Attitude: Attitude refers to people's subjective perception, comprehensive perceptual evaluation and final expression of cognitive tendency on things based on their own values. Attitude is a concept with many definitions in social psychology, different scholars have different definitions. The representative concepts include the following three: Experience plays an important role in the formation of individual attitudes. Singh, Patel and Parayitam (2022) pointed out that attitude is a state of psychological preparation, which is organized through experience and affects individuals' responses to situations.

Face consciousness: American missionaries Arthur Smith (Smith, 1984) in its written by "the quality of the Chinese" will "face" as a concept, think as the Chinese first "urgent", "once a correct understanding, face is a key, can open the Chinese many important qualities that lock number". Among them, Goffman (1955), as a representative figure in the field of Western social psychology to discuss face, widely accepted and used the definition of face by the academic community: "face refers to the specific social interaction, The success of the individual in obtaining the positive social value that others think he should obtain is a kind of self-image depicted by the recognized social attributes." Face consciousness refers to the individual pursuit of others for their own image in social interaction, status and social recognition and respect of psychological state and motivation. It is the product of cultural and social context, and involves the individual's sense of self-worth and the maintenance of social relations (Hu, 1944).

Product knowledge: Product knowledge refers to the degree and ability of consumers to understand a certain product. It includes knowledge of a product's attributes, functions, characteristics, quality, use, manufacturing process, accessories, after-sales service, and comparison with other competitive products (Bronner & Hoog, 2022). This specific knowledge can help consumers better understand and appreciate luxury goods, so as to make appropriate purchase decisions (Peng & Chen, 2019).

Brand image: The brand image is inseparable from the brand. The image is the characteristic of the

brand and reflects the strength and essence of the brand. Specifically, to luxury goods, the construction of brand image is an important part of its transmission culture. For producers, the brand is not only to distinguish their products from other goods, but also to establish the relationship between goods and consumers with the support of technology and functions: consumers know, love and even respect, that is, brand image. For consumers, the role of a brand is not only to distinguish products, it is also a symbol, beyond the meaning of the text itself. For luxury goods, brand image is also a very important factor. Many luxury goods try to establish a strong and prominent brand image in their international marketing strategies to attract consumers (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2018).

Perceived risk: The original concept of perceived risk was derived from psychology by Bauer (1960) at Harvard University. He believes that consumers may not be sure whether the expected results of any purchase behavior are correct, and some of the results may be unpleasant to consumers. Therefore, the uncertainty of the result is implied in the consumer's purchase decision, and this uncertainty is the initial concept of risk.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Understanding Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the possibility that consumers want to buy a certain product or service, which is a subjective psychological probability. Martins (2019) pointed out purchase intention is that consumers will be the possibility of some kind of behavior, can effectively judge whether consumers will be a product of the purchase, purchase intention reflects the individual subjective probability judgment of a certain behavior, and points out that the response to the actions taken by individuals willing to willing to pay a money, time, and energy level. Purchase intention refers to the subjective probability or possibility of consumers buying a specific product, and some scholars believe that purchase intention is consumers' purchase plan for a specific product. Therefore, in this study, purchase intention refers to the possibility or tendency of consumers to buy luxuries. Luxury purchase intention refers to consumers' tendency, willingness or expectation to buy luxury goods in a certain period of time, which reflects their subjective views on the possibility and degree of luxury goods purchase. This concept focuses on consumers' intentions and decisions when purchasing luxury goods, and involves the influence of individual consumption preferences, psychological needs and other factors (Hennigs et al., 2012).

Social influence is another important factor that influences consumers' intention to buy luxury goods. The opinions and views of family, friends, and social circles play a pivotal role in shaping purchase intentions for luxury items. Some studies have demonstrated that the attitudes and behaviors of peers can significantly impact individual purchase decisions (Amatulli et al., 2019).

Brand is often a key consideration for consumers when buying luxury goods. Studies have shown that there is a close relationship between consumers' awareness of luxury brands and their purchase intentions. Consumers tend to choose luxury brands with high visibility, positive brand image and quality assurance (Park & Thavisay, 2021).

Luxury brands hold a significant sway over consumer purchase intentions. Consumers often gravitate toward well-established luxury brands known for their reputation, exclusivity, and quality (Phau &

Prendergast, 2000). A strong brand image can positively influence consumer attitudes and intentions to buy luxury products.

Pillai (2021) developed a scale of 28 items for self-directed motivation. According to the research on the purchase intention of 945 respondents in the Asia-Pacific region (Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan), Western Europe (Germany, France and The United Kingdom) and North America (The United States and Canada), it is found that there are four dimensions in self-directed purchase intention of luxury goods: Self-enjoyment, self-gift, inner self expression and quality assurance have put forward a new dimension for luxury individual-oriented motivation.

In terms of the structure of western consumers' luxury purchase intention, this paper proposes a revised model of Chinese luxury purchase intention, which divides Chinese luxury purchase intention into social purchase intention and individual purchase intention. Through empirical research, it is found that there is almost no motivation to lead and express the inner self in the consumption intention of Chinese luxury consumers, but there is a new luxury consumption motivation -- status symbol. Therefore, Shukla and Khalifa (2022) believed that social purchasing motives of Chinese consumers for luxury goods mainly include showing off, conformity, socializing and status symbol. The motivation of individual purchase includes fine quality, self-enjoyment and self-gift.

In conclusion, researching the purchase intention of luxury goods reveals a complex interplay of factors. Analyzing relevant literature not only provides insights into consumer behavior but also offers valuable guidance for businesses seeking to navigate the luxury market successfully.

3.2 Determinants of Purchase Intention in Empirical Studies

3.2.1 Attitude

Attitude toward a behavior refers to the positive or negative feelings individuals have toward a certain behavior, while the feelings were developed based on their experiences. The Theory of Planned Behavior posits that attitude toward a behavior is a direct predictor of individuals' behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). In this study, attitude toward a behavior refers to consumers' attitude toward buying luxury goods, which is derived from the feelings generated by their previous luxury goods consumption experience.

Attitude consists of both cognitive and affective components. The cognitive component involves beliefs and perceptions about the functional and symbolic attributes of luxury goods. Consumers may view luxury items as superior in quality, offering unique features that cannot be found in non-luxury alternatives (Jain, 2019). The affective component encompasses emotions and feelings evoked by luxury products. The desire to experience the luxury lifestyle, the pleasure derived from owning prestigious items, and the enhanced self-esteem associated with luxury consumption all contribute to the affective aspect of attitude.

Social factors, such as reference groups and societal norms, also play a substantial role in shaping consumers' attitudes towards luxury and, consequently, their purchase intentions. The desire to conform to social standards, as well as the influence of peers and aspirational groups, can contribute

to positive attitudes and intentions to purchase luxury items (Park & Thavisay, 2021). Luxury consumption often serves as a means of social distinction, allowing consumers to align with certain social groups.

Wang and Park (2019) believed that behavior is a process of judgment, decision making and obvious behavior sequence, and is the expression of potential attitude. It is pointed out that there is a relationship between consumers' attitude and intention. The respondents with positive attitude have clear intention to purchase, the respondents with negative attitude have no intention to purchase, and the consumers with indifferent attitude have vague and uncertain intention to purchase.

In conclusion, the relationship between attitude and purchase intention is reciprocal. Positive attitudes lead to higher purchase intentions, but engaging in the act of purchasing luxury goods can also reinforce and solidify positive attitudes. The relationship between attitude and purchase intention of luxury goods is intricate and multi-dimensional. A positive attitude towards luxury products significantly contributes to consumers' intentions to purchase these items. Understanding the interplay between attitude and purchase intention is crucial for luxury brands to formulate effective marketing strategies and maintain their appeal in a competitive market.

3.2.2 Face consciousness

The concept of face originated in ancient Chinese Confucian society! It is the most common psychology and behavior of Chinese people in social communication. In the past hundred years, all those who pay attention to the behavior of Chinese people, whether Chinese or foreigners, scholars or writers, almost believe that face is a core principle that governs Chinese social life (Fairbank, 1962; Smith, 1894; Lin, 1935; Lu, 1991). For example, in lashing the Chinese national character, Lu Xun said that face "is the program of the Chinese spirit", and the Chinese people, especially the "superior people", are particularly fond of face in everything (Lu, 1991). Lin Yutang also said in *My Country and My People* that face, although "abstract and impenetrable, is the most subtle standard of Chinese behavior (Lin, 1935)." Westerners often regard face as the key to understanding Chinese behavior when they get to know Chinese people. The first chapter of *The Chinese Characteristics*, which missionary Arthur Smith wrote more than 100 years ago to introduce Chinese behavior to the Western system, is about the Chinese face (Smith, 1894).

Face consciousness is an individual's perception of face (Zhang et al., 2020). Li and Cui (2021) first define the connotation of face consciousness from three aspects: In the context of consumption, consumers will have three different face consciousness: enhancing face, maintaining face and saving face. Liu and Chen (2023) believe that face consciousness is the desire to maintain face, improve face and avoid losing face in interpersonal communication.

To sum up, literature has confirmed the positive relationship between face consciousness and luxury purchase intention. The higher the consciousness of face, the more inclined to buy luxury goods to meet their face needs. An in-depth understanding of the relationship between face consciousness and luxury purchase intention is of great significance for the formulation of luxury brands and marketing.

3.2.3 Product knowledge

Singh (2022) emphasized the product knowledge in influencing the importance of consumer attitudes and behavior of luxury goods. Informed consumers are more likely to make informed purchasing decisions and show higher loyalty to luxury brands. Ngo et al. (2020) emphasized the product knowledge to raise the consumers to identify and evaluate the importance of the ability of luxury goods, so that consumers are more sensible, more confidently make buying decisions. The possession of luxury goods indicates that one also possesses the knowledge to purchase these items. Luxury knowledge provides cognitive control for the purchase of luxury goods (Zhang & Zhao, 2019). Consumers' luxury knowledge refers to consumers' recognition and understanding of different luxury brands in a specific product category (Salem & Chaichi, 2018). According to Kunz et al. (2020), Chinese luxury consumers have a good understanding of existing brands. Alba and Hutchinson (1987) found that people who like luxury goods are also people who have knowledge about luxury goods, both in terms of professional knowledge and familiarity. The research of Zhang and Cude (2018) shows that Chinese luxury consumers with more knowledge of luxury brands have a higher intention to buy luxury clothing.

In conclusion, a higher level of product knowledge will have a positive impact on consumers' sense of value and brand trust, and ultimately lead to a higher purchase intention of luxury goods.

3.2.4 Brand image

Luxury consumers often rely heavily on brand image as a marker of quality, status, and exclusivity (Lavuri et al., 2022). A positive brand image enhances consumers' perception of the value they receive when purchasing a luxury item (Yuanita & Marsasi, 2022). Consumers are more likely to buy from brands they trust and perceive as credible, which is closely tied to brand image (Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2019). Researchers have identified specific dimensions of luxury brand image that influence purchase intention. The perception of a luxury brand's prestige is a significant driver of purchase intention, as consumers seek social recognition and status (Kapferer, 2012). Luxury brands often leverage exclusivity, creating a sense of rarity and uniqueness that appeals to consumers (Jebarajakirthy et al., 2020). A favorable brand image increases consumers' trust in the brand, which in turn increases their willingness to buy luxury goods (Lee & Youn, 2021). Brand image in the luxury consumer brand loyalty plays a vital role. A strong and positive brand image enhances consumers' emotional connection and attachment to the brand, thereby increasing brand loyalty (Kapferer, 2012).

This paper also measures perceived behavioral control through brand image. The relationship between brand image and luxury purchase intention is a complex and multifaceted one, with several dimensions and factors at play. A positive brand image enhances perceived value, trust, and emotional connection, driving consumers' intentions to purchase luxury items. Understanding the nuances of this relationship is crucial for luxury brand management and consumers.

3.2.5 Perceived Risk

Consumers with high levels of product expertise are less likely to perceive risks because they can make more informed judgments (Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). Access to reliable sources of information, such as reviews, advice, and expert opinion, can reduce perceived risk and thus increase purchase intent behavior (Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021). Consumers weigh the risks of buying luxury goods against the benefits and rewards (Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). Individual differences will affect consumers' awareness and response to the risks of luxury consumption. Some people may be risk-averse, while others may seek the thrill of taking risks (Bhatti & Rehman, 2019). Trust in luxury brands can reduce perceived risk, because consumers believe that the brand with good reputation will live up to its promise (Jordan, Leskovar & Mari č, 2018). Luxury brands that consistently deliver on brand promises can reduce perceived risk because consumers will come to expect a certain level of quality (Kapferer, 2012).

The relationship between perceived risk and luxury purchase intention is complex and influenced by many factors, including the type of perceived risk, brand image, consumer expertise and cultural background. Understanding the dynamics of perceived risk in luxury consumption is critical for luxury marketers and researchers to navigate changing luxury consumption behaviors. Marketers need to consider consumers' risk perceptions and implement strategies to mitigate perceived risk. By addressing consumers' concerns, luxury brands can enhance consumers' desires and increase their willingness to buy.

Based on the discussion and the review of literature, the research propositions are as follows:

- P1: Attitude positively affects purchase intention of luxury products.
- P2: The face consciousness is positively correlated with purchase intention of luxury products.
- P3: The product knowledge is positively correlated with purchase intention of luxury products.
- P4: The brand image is positively correlated with purchase intention of luxury products.
- P5: The perceived risk is negatively correlated with purchase intention of luxury products.

4. Conclusion

This review of previous studies seeks to synthesize previous research findings and establish a coherent framework of purchase intention. Based on the literature review, five common factors are found to be related to purchase intention, i.e., attitude, face consciousness, product knowledge, brand image and perceived risk.

The purpose of this paper is to establish a framework for purchase intention based on previous research. The proposed relationships must be empirically examined to determine whether or not they continue to be significant turnover predictors regardless of the context of the study. Some factors may continue to serve as predictors, while others may serve as mediators or moderators for the primary relationship; thus, this relationship must be rigorously examined using the appropriate analyses. Future researchers must also choose the most valid and trustworthy research instrument to measure employee turnover intention due to the proliferation of such tools. Control variables such demographic variable (age, gender, education, tenure, employment position, etc.) and organizational

variables (business type or organization type) are recommended to guarantee that the results reflect the major factors that affect the phenomenon of interest as extraneous influences are inevitable.

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