

The Impact of Luxury Brand Live
Streaming Commerce (LuxLSC) on
Brand Loyalty: The Moderating Roles of
Brand Awareness, Perceived Brand
Luxuriousness, and Self-Materialism

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ABSTRACT

Live streaming commerce (LSC) has emerged as a significant digital marketing phenomenon, with extensive research in fashion, cosmetics, food, and tourism sectors. However, despite substantial business interest from luxury brands, there is little research on LSC in luxury contexts, representing a critical knowledge gap in understanding how this innovative marketing tool affects luxury brand relationships.

This research investigates how luxury brand live streaming commerce (LuxLSC) affect brand loyalty through the mediating effects of brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control among Chinese consumers. Specific attention is also paid to the moderating roles of perceived brand luxuriousness, brand awareness and self-materialism.

Following a comprehensive literature review, a conceptual model was proposed based on the Brand Value Chain and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted using an online survey of 168 Chinese luxury consumers aged 18+ with experience in Burberry's live streaming commerce. Data were analysed using partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM).

Results demonstrate that LuxLSC significantly and positively influences brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control, with the strongest effect on brand attitudes. All three mediating variables significantly predict brand loyalty, confirming the proposed mediation mechanisms. However, the three proposed moderators (perceived brand luxuriousness, brand awareness, and self-materialism) showed no significant moderating effects on the LuxLSC-brand attitudes relationship.

This research makes several novel contributions to luxury marketing and digital commerce literature. Theoretically, it provides the first empirical evidence of LSC's effectiveness in luxury contexts, extends TPB application to luxury digital commerce, and introduces a higher-order LuxLSC construct capturing configurational effects of streamer, content, and platform factors. Practically, the findings provide luxury brand managers with empirical support for LSC adoption and insights into the psychological mechanisms driving consumer loyalty in luxury digital environments.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Although the COVID-19 pandemic caused a sharp drop in demand for luxury goods in 2020, the market has witnessed a rapid recovery (Statista, 2024f). In the post-pandemic era, despite significant challenges such as geopolitical tensions and the inflationary environment, the luxury industry is expected to maintain steady growth over the next few years. This growth is fuelled by China's economic resurgence, the increased spending power of younger generations (i.e., 'Millennials' and 'Generation Z'), and robust online sales channels. According to Statista (2023), the revenue of the global luxury market is estimated to reach \$368.9 billion (approximately £276.7 billion) in 2024 and \$418.8 billion (approximately £314.1 billion) in 2028. China, in particular, has emerged as a pivotal player in the luxury market. The country's rapid economic growth and increasing affluence have fuelled a burgeoning demand for luxury goods. Chinese consumers now account for a substantial share of global luxury spending, making China a critical market for luxury brands. This trend is expected to continue, with the Chinese luxury market projected to grow steadily over the next decade. Meanwhile, although the luxury industry, traditionally rooted in exclusivity and personalised experiences, has been slower in adopting digitalisation than other sectors, the pressure to innovate and stay relevant has driven it to embrace digital strategies, from e-commerce and digital marketing to customer relationship management and brand storytelling, and more. Research has shown that nearly 80% of luxury sales are influenced by at least one digital touchpoint, indicating the critical role of digital interactions in the luxury customer journey (McKinsey, 2018). The increasing share of online luxury sales—from 12.6% in 2017 to a projected 26% by 2025—also highlights the growing importance of digital channels (Statista, 2023). Undoubtedly, the younger generation's increasing purchasing power and their digital savviness present significant opportunities for luxury brands to tap into this lucrative market.

One of the most notable trends in the general digital shift in retailing is the increasing adoption of social commerce. Social commerce involves the delivery of

e-commerce activities and transactions through social media platforms, enabling people to actively participate in the marketing and selling of products and services in online market places and communities (Liang and Turban, 2011). This approach not only enhances customer engagement but also leverages the power of social networks to drive sales. A more recent phenomenon within this realm is live streaming commerce (LSC) which has gained tremendous popularity, particularly in China. This format involves real-time, interactive broadcasts where hosts showcase products, engage with viewers, and facilitate immediate purchases, reflecting its substantial impact on consumer behaviour and its potential to dominate future e-commerce landscapes. According to Statista (2024b), in 2023, China's LSC market soared to nearly five trillion yuan (approximately £550 billion), and around 60% of Chinese online shoppers participated in LSC, with the number of users expected to exceed 430 million by 2026. Under such circumstances, luxury brands are also increasingly exploring live streaming to create immersive, authentic experiences that resonate with digital-native consumers. Some leading luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton (Zhang, T., 2024) and Burberry (Hall, 2020) have paid attention to this emerging phenomenon and already took actions.

Digitalisation of the luxury industry has also sparked considerable scholarly interest. Despite initial reluctance, luxury brands have also embraced digital platforms, recognising their potential to enhance customer engagement and loyalty, which have been confirmed by many studies. Through social media, luxury brands can create engaging, customised content that enhances brand awareness and maintains constant brand exposure, which in turn drive brand loyalty (Godey et al., 2016). The high interactivity of social media helps the formation of online brand communities where consumers can sense belongingness and strong bonds with the brands (Fetis et al., 2023). Moreover, Generation Z, the youngest and largest future consumer group, is found to be the most tech-savvy, innovative, and diverse generation (Priporas et al., 2017) whose purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by social media and online interactions (Duffett, 2017; Liu, J. et al., 2022), especially making digital engagement strategies vital for luxury brands targeting this

demographics. However, digitalisation presents challenges as well as opportunities for luxury brands. Despite the potential benefits of digital engagement, over 50% of luxury consumers report dissatisfaction with their online shopping experiences (BCG and AltaGamma, 2023), indicating a need for continuous improvement in digital strategies of luxury brands. While digital platforms can enhance customer engagement, they potentially dilute the exclusivity of luxury (Okonkwo, 2009; Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). Park, M. et al. (2020) demonstrated how excessive interactions between brand and consumers on social media can dilute brand value perceptions. This tension requires luxury brands to balance digital presence with the maintenance of their brand image, also calls for in-depth investigations by academic researchers to continuously explore these dynamics.

Meanwhile, LSC represents a dynamic and rapidly evolving area of study in the marketing field. Existing studies have primarily discussed LSC from the following perspectives: (1) consumer behaviours and psychology, such as purchase intention (Lu and Chen, 2021), customer engagement (Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020), and impulsive buying (Lo et al., 2022); (2) the development of conceptual framework of (Xie et al., 2022); (3) marketing communication and strategies, such as influencer marketing (Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020); (5) technological aspects (Hua et al., 2024); and (6) operational and supply chain management (Ji et al., 2023). The theories frequently adopted in these studies include affordance theory, SOR model, social presence theory, signalling theory, and uses and gratifications theory. Previous studies underscore the effectiveness of LSC in driving sales and enhancing engagement. However, most of them have concentrated on fashion and apparel industry, food industry or tourism. Despite many industrial practices, there remains a notable gap in the academic literature regarding the application of LSC in the luxury industry.

Additionally, as a key element of the Brand Value Chain, brand loyalty, tightly related to brand equity, ensures repeat purchases and fosters a long-term emotional connection between brands and customers (Aaker, 1992). Not only do they contribute to sustained revenue generation, but loyal customers can also become

brand ambassadors who help deliver brands' message and influence others through word-of-mouth. Hence, it is crucial for the luxury marketers to keep enhancing their understanding of optimal strategies for leveraging digital tools to build and sustain brand loyalty.

Overall, recognising the significant potential and opportunities of LSC for luxury brands, as well as a growing attention to the intersection between digitalisation strategies and brand loyalty in the field of marketing, this study aims to investigate the impact LSC on brand loyalty in the context of the luxury industry.

1.2 Industrial Background

1.2.1 Luxury market in China

The luxury goods industry has always been one of the most profitable sectors, with overall market revenue projected to reach £290.30 billion in 2024, anticipated to grow at an annual rate of 1.14% over the following four years (Statista, 2024d). In particular, the market for personal luxury goods (i.e., apparel, leather goods, accessories, jewellery and watches and beauty products), the heart of the entire luxury industry, has had a significant impact on overall industry trends. According to Bain (2024), despite several turbulences (e.g., economic crisis, COVID-19 pandemic) between 1999 and 2023, the global personal luxury goods sector has consistently shown a growth trend, estimated to reach €362 billion (approximately £307.7 billion) in 2023 which accounts for over 24% of the total market (See Figure 1-1).

Global personal luxury goods market (€ billions)

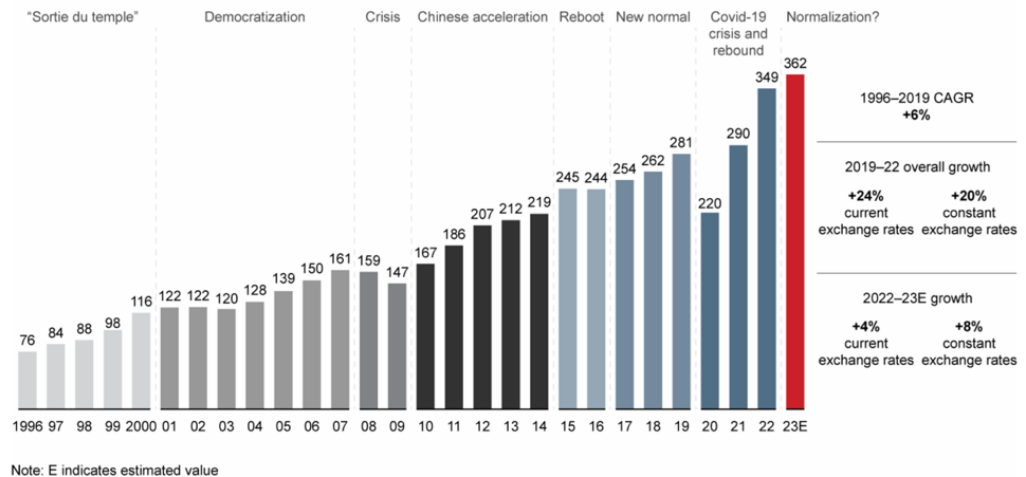


Figure 1-1 Global personal luxury goods market from 1999 to 2023

Source: (Bain, 2024)

Meanwhile, since entering the 21st century, the world has witnessed the tremendous growth of China's economy. China has been recognised as a pivotal player in the global luxury goods market over past two decades, and Chinese consumers have become one of the biggest force in global luxury consumption (BCG and AltaGamma, 2023; McKinsey, 2023b; PwC, 2024; Statista, 2024e). Luxury watches and jewellery, cosmetics and beauty, clothing and accessories, and handbags represent the most purchased luxury goods by Chinese consumers (Fortune, 2019). Therefore, this study will focus on the personal luxury goods segment in China. According to a report from PwC (2024), over the past few years, China's luxury market has been on a remarkable bull run, particularly between 2017 and 2021, when the market size of personal luxury goods doubled over one and a half times, marking a golden era for the China's luxury market, as well as the global market. However, this growth streak came to an abrupt halt in 2022 due to the strict lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed by the Chinese government's 'Zero-Covid policy'. The lockdowns led to the closure of major cities in China, significantly disrupting foot traffic and the performance of offline luxury stores, whereas segments with strong online penetration, such as luxury beauty products, experienced relatively less impact. Despite the overall decline during the pandemic, the luxury market in China is expected to recover as the country gradually returns

to normal. As shown in Figure 1-2 below, the personal luxury goods market size is likely to reach \$69 billion (approximately £54.5 billion), accounting for 19% of the global market. Moreover, with the encouragement of Hainan's 'seal-off' policy, China is expected to overtake the US and Europe to become the world's largest personal luxury market by 2030, accounting for a quarter of the global market (Bain, 2024; PwC, 2024).



Figure 1-2 China's personal luxury goods market size from 2017 to 2022, with forecasts until 2030

Adapted from PwC (2024)

One of the key reasons that the Chinese market has become the driving engine of global luxury spending is the rapid rise of middle-class population and a small, yet very wealthy elite, who are increasingly willing to spend on luxury goods and services. As the world's second-largest wealth market, China is reported to have 46,060 ultra high net worth individuals (those with a net worth of over \$30 million) in 2023, collectively holding a net worth \$5,202 billion (Altrata, 2024). Additionally, there are 6,013,282 individuals with a net worth over \$1million in 2023 (UBS, 2024). Apart from the wealthy class, the rise of China's middle class has stimulated the rapid growth of luxury consumption. Moreover, according to a report by BCG (2023), China's middle-class and affluent consumer population are expected to increase by

80 million by 2030, and over 70% of this group will be from tier-3 cities and below, highlighting an increasing importance of low-tier cities in China's market (See Figure 1-3). The group of consumers tends to seek a high quality of life and is willing to pay a premium for quality. Luxury spending has seemingly become a regular expense among these people. Also, self-use is reported to be the predominant reason for purchasing luxury goods, which again reflects the increasing demand for quality of life among the middle-class (Fortune, 2019).

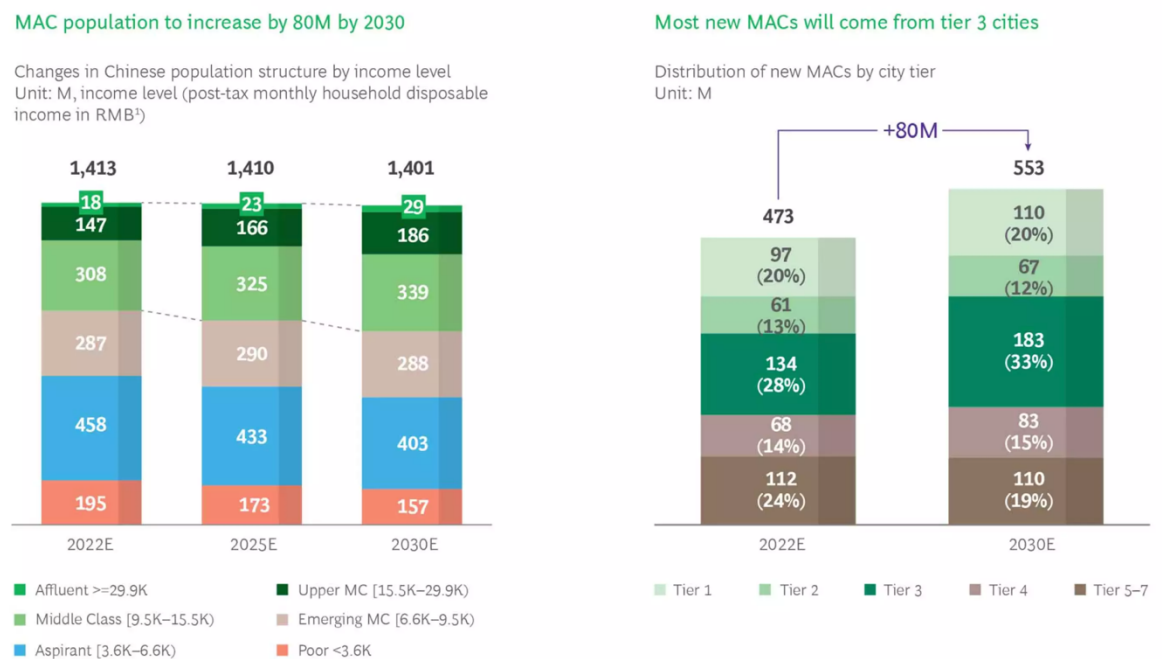


Figure 1-3 China expects to add 80 million middle-class and affluent consumers by 2030

Source: (BCG, 2023)

In China, there is an unofficial yet commonly used city ranking system that categorises cities into different tiers based on factors such as population size and level of economic development. It typically serves as a reference point for various purposes, including commerce, education, and tourism, among others (Wikipedia, 2024). In the context of marketing research, this system is frequently employed to dissect the vast and diverse Chinese market and consumer base into more manageable and actionable segments. For example, the traditional tier-1 cities include Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, which are the most influential and developed cities in China. Also, with the rapid economic growth and urbanisation in recent years, some tier-2 cities have emerged as new tier-1 cities,

such as Chengdu, Hangzhou, Chongqing, Nanjing. These higher-tier cities have been the luxury hotspots for many years, boasting the most luxury resources (LuxeCO Intelligence, 2024; NetEase, 2022) and consumers (Ruder Finn, 2023; Ta Kung Pao, 2024), contributing more than half of all luxury spending in 2023 (TMI, 2023). However, lower-tier cities (e.g., tier-3, tier-4 cities) are reported to be the new growth engine for luxury consumption in China, particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the sharp increase of living costs in big cities and the trend of working from home, a migration of a large portion of the working-age population from tier-1, tier-2 cities to smaller cities has been spotted in China (BCG and AltaGamma, 2023; Statista, 2023). Correspondingly, luxury brands have paid more attention to the lower-tier cities, such as increasing point-of-sale and enhancing online distribution to reach customers in smaller cities (LuxeCO Intelligence, 2024; PwC, 2024).

In terms of Chinese luxury consumers, 'young and rich' have become the new keywords of consumer demographics in China. Millennials and Gen Z are increasingly contributing to luxury spending in China (McKinsey, 2019a; PwC, 2024). According to Statista (2023), China has around 400 million millennials, five times that of the US. Millennials and Gen Z consumers have been recognised as one of the dominant driving forces of luxury goods consumption in China and globally. These younger generations were born and raised during China's one-child policy era, and are often spoiled by their parents and grandparents (Ellwood, 2019). Having grown up during the booming period of the global luxury market, they were exposed to luxury brands at an early age and therefore started buying luxury goods at a much younger age and more frequently than their counterparts in other countries (Statista, 2023). A survey conducted by TMI (2023) reported that 25% of Chinese luxury consumers made their first luxury purchase before the age of 22; 90% said they bought their first luxury products when they were under 30 years old. As shown in the Figure 1-4, the average age of Chinese luxury consumers was reported to be younger than those of Western countries (i.e., the US and France). Additionally, Millennials and Gen Z, as digital-native, tech-savvy generations, spend

more time on the Internet and social media than anyone else. Unlike older generations, they are heavily influenced by opinion leaders and are more likely to be swayed by what they consider trendy, with brand or product pricing taking a back seat. As luxury consumers, they are more sophisticated, appreciating more about nuanced elements (e.g., design, textile, production) of luxury products, not just brand itself (Fortune, 2019; McKinsey, 2019b).

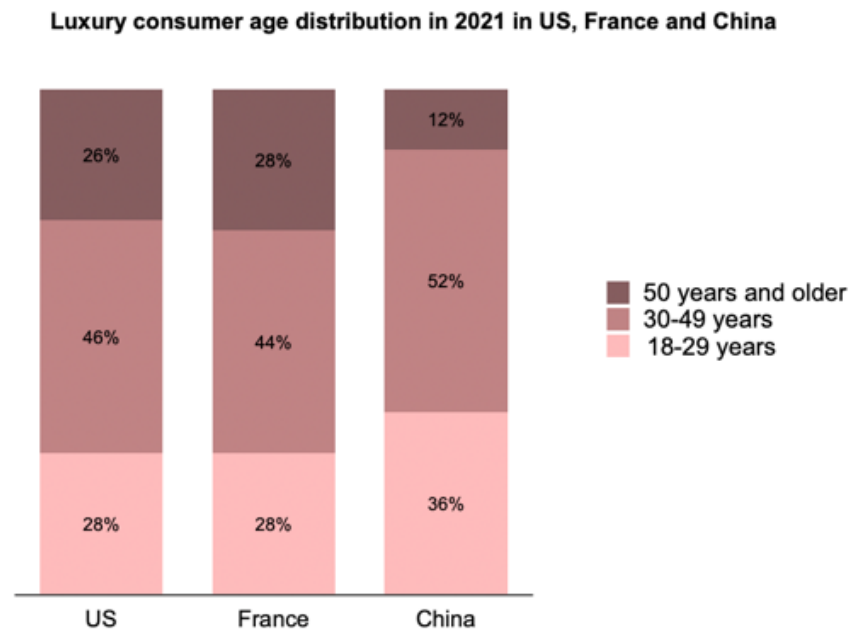


Figure 1-4 Chinese luxury consumers' age distribution compared with US and France

Adapted from (Statista, 2021a; 2021b; 2021c)

Regarding how Chinese consumers learn about luxury brands and products, Ruder Finn (2023) reported that over the past two years, Chinese luxury consumers have increasingly turned to digital methods for information gaining, as the top six channels for acquiring information are all online-based. Consistent with previous findings, official brand channels remain the most important sources of information; Meanwhile, third-party sources, such as social media platforms like Xiaohongshu, and friends' recommendations, also hold significant influence (See Figure 1-5). These channels play a crucial role in shaping luxury consumer purchase decisions.

Leading information sources for luxury goods among consumers in China as of January 2023

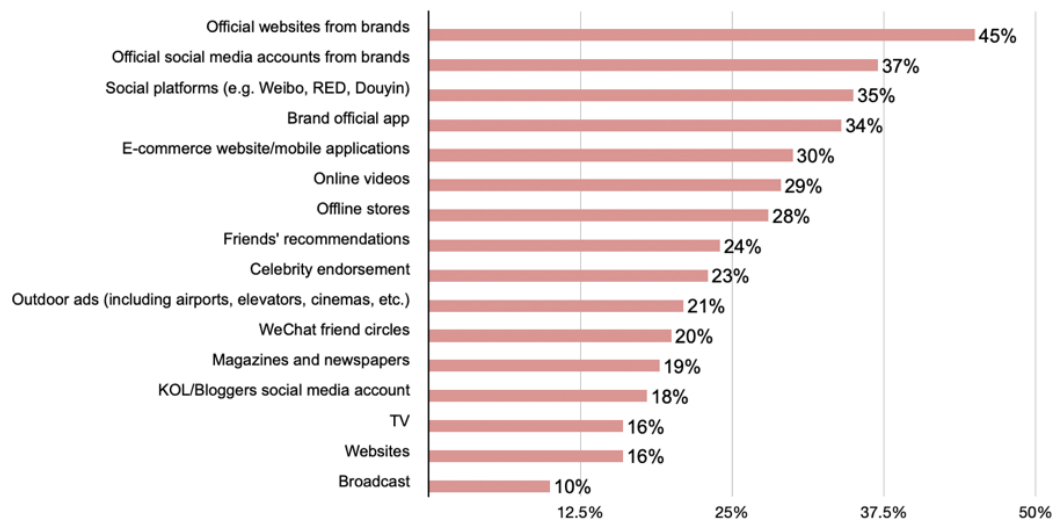


Figure 1-5 Major sources of information for consumers about luxury goods in China 2023

Adapted from Ruder Finn (2023).

As seen in Figure 1-6 below, in addition to official brand sources, social media and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) have a substantial impact on the decision-making process of Chinese luxury consumers. Nearly one-third of respondents indicated that live streaming (e.g., KOL/celebrities-related try-on, fashion show) is one of their favourite content types, especially among Gen Z consumers (TMI, 2023). Although offline stores are somewhat less influential as information sources in the purchasing decision, they remain the most preferred channels for buying luxury goods.

Leading information sources influencing consumers' decision to purchase luxury goods in China

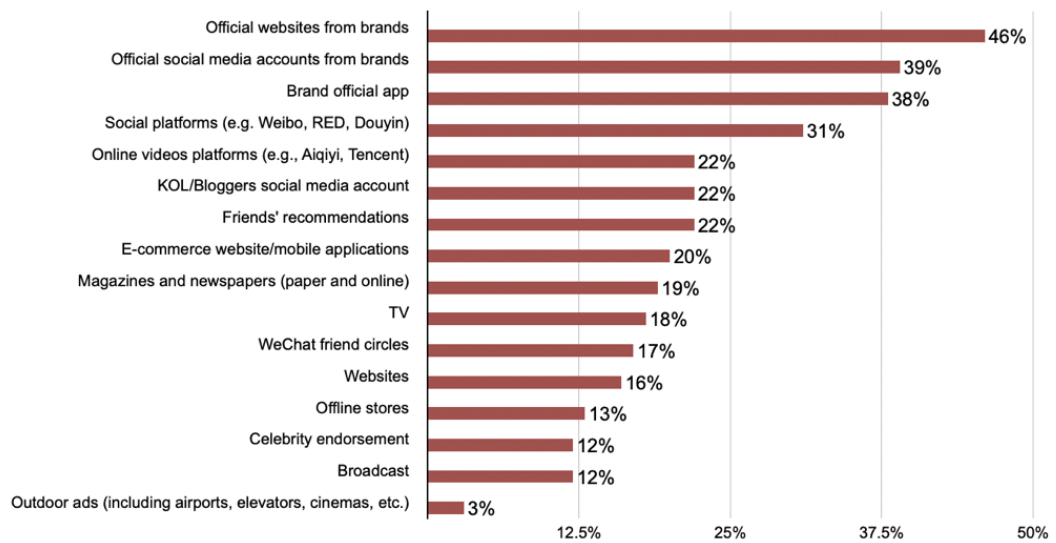


Figure 1-6 Major sources of information for consumers about luxury goods in China 2023
Adapted from Ruder Finn (2023).

On the other hand, online luxury shopping continues to accelerate, and digital penetration has reached 46% in 2023 (See Figure 1-7). This is mainly driven by the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns and the rise of younger generation consumers (TMI, 2023).

Distribution of luxury goods shopping channels in China in 2023Q1

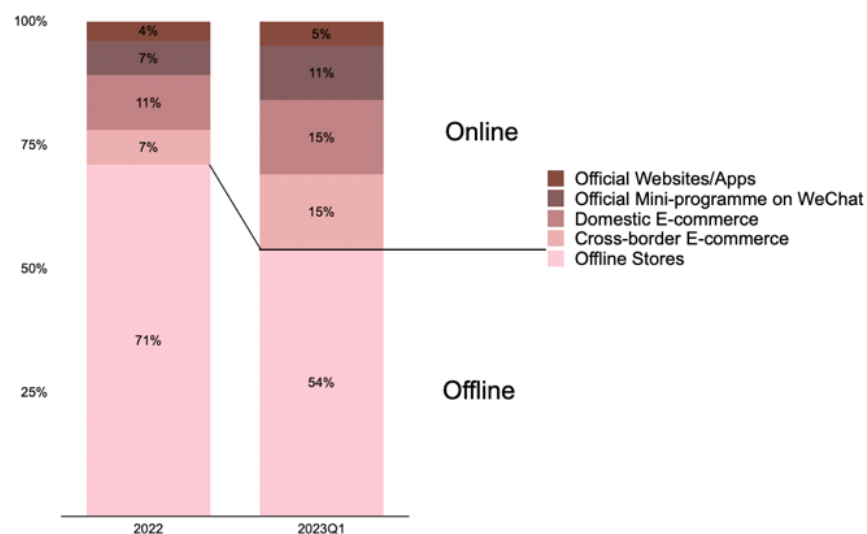


Figure 1-7 Most preferred luxury goods shopping channels in China in 2023Q1
Adapted from TMI (2023)

Among various online shopping platforms, China's two e-commerce giants, JD.com and Taobao, and the official websites of luxury brands are the most favoured channels for Chinese consumers to purchase luxury goods online (See Figure 1-8).

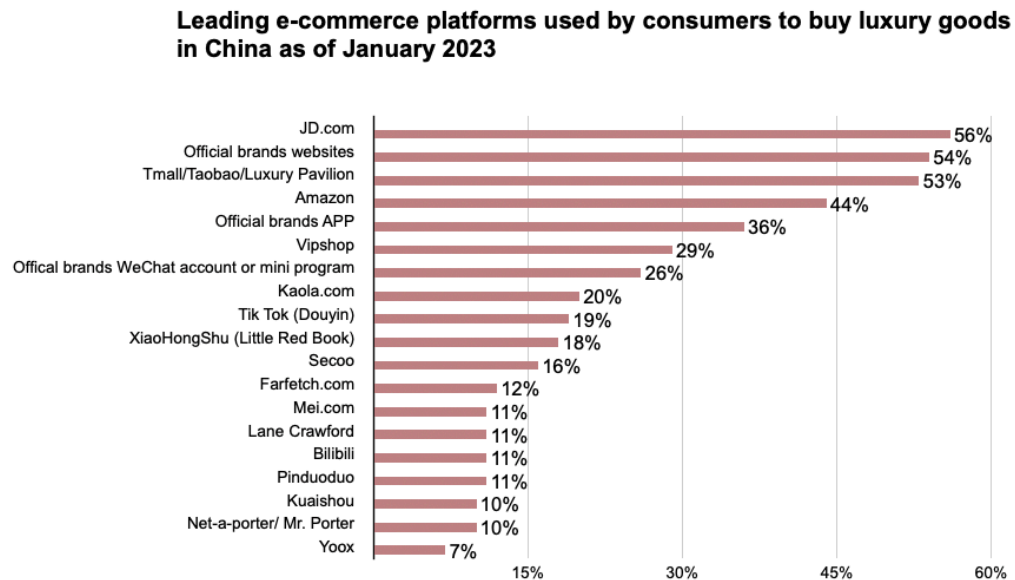


Figure 1-8 Most used online shopping platforms for buying luxury goods in China 2023

Adapted from Ruder Finn (2023).

It is also worth noting that the China's government is actively encouraging the development of e-commerce channels, specifically emphasising the promotion of digital consumption, support the healthy development of LSC, social commerce and other business modes (The State Council, 2024). The next section will introduce LSC and its development in detail.

1.2.2 Live streaming commerce (LSC)

Live Streaming Commerce (LSC) is a dynamic fusion that merges real-time video streaming with e-commerce functionalities, allowing consumers to engage in a highly interactive and immersive shopping experience. At its core, LSC blends entertainment with instant purchasing, where streamers/sellers promote products in live video sessions. Viewers/consumers can interact through live chats, reaction buttons, and polls, and, more importantly, purchase products instantly through embedded e-commerce links. Specifically, brands or retailers typically set up LSC

events by partnering with a key opinion leader (KOL) or celebrity to present products and engage with the audience, aiming to boost sales. Common formats include (1) tutorials, such as makeup demonstrations that not only show how to use product but also encourage cross-selling; (2) interviews with influencers, which add an authentic, personal touch, thereby raising awareness and attracting viewers; and (3) behind-the-scenes videos that strengthen brand image by showcasing values such as sustainability, appealing particularly to socially conscious consumers. To further enhance the appeal and effectiveness of LSC events, brands frequently incorporate interactive features such as games, quizzes, and giveaways, while ensuring professional production quality. Crucially, the content is kept engaging and not overly product-focused, helping to retain viewer interest (McKinsey, 2021).

Broadly speaking, LSC can benefit brands and retailers in two ways. First, it helps accelerating conversion, moving consumers from awareness directly to purchase within a single session. This is often achieved by creating a sense of urgency through limited time offers, flash sales, and exclusive discounts. According to McKinsey (2021), LSC can drive conversion rates up to 30%, ten times higher than conventional e-commerce channels. Second, it helps deepening brand-consumer relationships by transforming the way brands connect with their consumers. It offers distinctive and innovative brand experiences to consumers, such as entertaining interactions and customised services during livestreams, which have proven particularly successful in reaching younger, tech-savvy consumers (McKinsey, 2021).

Focusing on the development of LSC in China, the figures below indicate that since its launch with Alibaba's Taobao Live in 2016, the industry has experienced remarkable growth over the past seven years, becoming mainstream in China. This growth was further accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic between 2021 and 2023. The market value of LSC in China is expected to continue its rapid expansion, reaching 8.16 trillion yuan by 2026, along with a sustained growth in the number of LSC users (See Figure 1-9, 1-10, 1-11). In terms of product categories, apparel and fashion product are the most often showcased items in LSC, followed by beauty and

food products (McKinsey, 2021). With regard to platforms, McKinsey (2023a) reported that Taobao Live (61%) and Doujin (the Chinese version of TikTok) (88%) are the dominant platforms, far surpassing others. The next closest contender is Xiaohongshu (Red), with 22% of users.

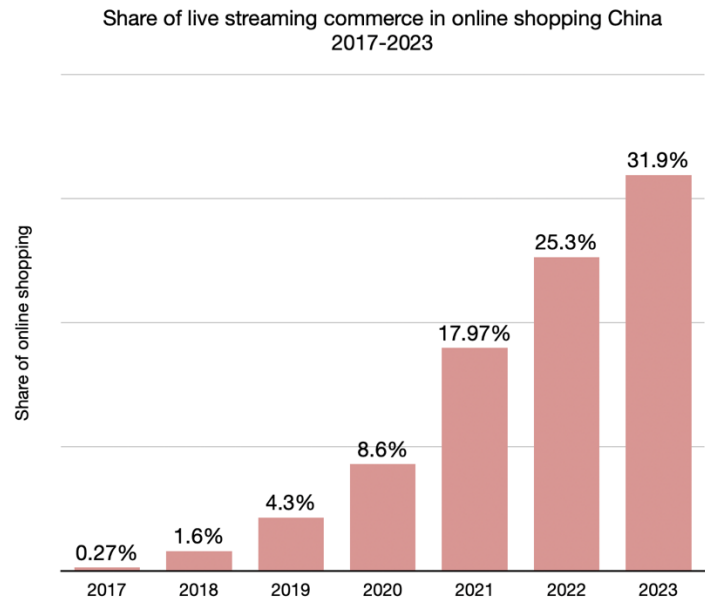


Figure 1-9 Share of LSC in online shopping in China

Source: (Statista, 2024b)

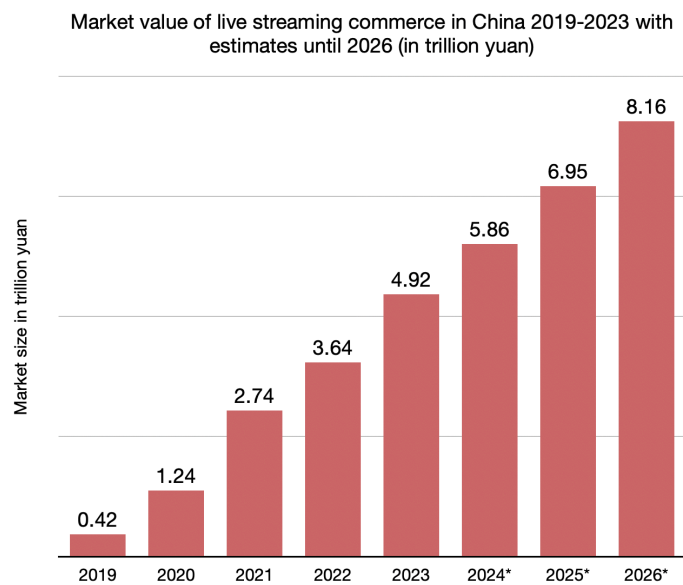


Figure 1-10 Market value of LSC in China 2019-2023 with estimates until 2026

Source: (Statista, 2024b).

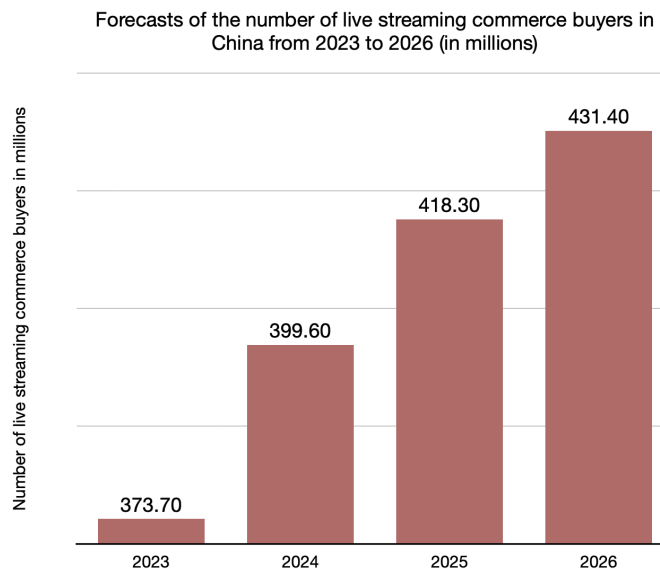


Figure 1-11 Forecasts of the number of LSC buyers in China 2023-2026

Source: (Statista, 2024b).

In comparison with the rest of the world, China remains at the forefront of LSC being as the largest and most mature of all LSC markets, outperforming other regions such as the US and Europe. According to a survey conducted by McKinsey (2023a) covering over 2000 LSC users across China, the US, Europe (comprising France, Germany, Poland, and the UK), and Latin America, in 2022 China had the highest proportion of frequent live-shopping attendees, with 87% of respondents participating in LSC events at least once per month. This significantly outpaced the US at 43%, Europe at 52%, and Latin America at 64%. The Figure 1-12 and Figure 1-13 below further indicate the maturity of China's LSC market, where both engagement (number of shows attended) and consumer spending are far higher than in other regions. Despite its advanced development, China's LSC market still holds significant growth potential, with 72% of users wanting to buy more via LSC and 67% expressing a desire to spend more. This compares favourably with Latin America, where 49% of users wanted to increase their purchases, while the US (39%) and Europe (33%) lagged behind (McKinsey, 2023a). Additionally, McKinsey (2023a) also emphasised the notable distinctions across different markets regarding consumers' profile and preferences. In China, most frequent users are younger (18-34 years old), with females comprising the majority (58%). This contrasts with other

regions: in the US, LSC users are distributed evenly across age groups, while in Latin America, users are predominantly aged between 25 and 44. Furthermore, in the US (59%), Latin America (58%), and Europe (53%), men constitute the majority of frequent LSC participants, differing from the female-dominated demographic in China. Additionally, consumer motivations for engaging with LSC also vary significantly across regions. In China, practicality drives participation, with users citing convenience, better deals, and access to exclusive products as key factors—64% of respondents highlighted ease of shopping for their preferred brands. In contrast, consumers in the US (42%) and Europe (38%) are more motivated by the entertainment and enjoyment associated with LSC events.

These insights suggest that compared with their counterparts in other markets, Chinese LSC consumers exhibit greater confidence and comfort when shopping through LSC channels and tend to buy products on a daily basis directly during livestreams, rather than waiting until later. The rapid rise of LSC in China presents substantial opportunities for businesses to enhance sales performance and strengthen consumer relationships. However, as McKinsey (2023a) pointed out, ‘there is no one-size-fits-all approach to determining the optimal live-commerce strategy—solutions must be tailored to each market’ (p.8). Especially, the massive success of LSC in China’s market is strongly driven by the seamless, fully integrated shopping experience facilitated by technological maturity and infrastructure, that other markets have yet to fully achieve. Thus, for brands and retailers seeking to capitalise on this opportunity, it is essential to recognise the distinct differences between markets, industries, and consumer segments, and to develop strategies that align with the specific ways in which their target customers engage with and utilise LSC.

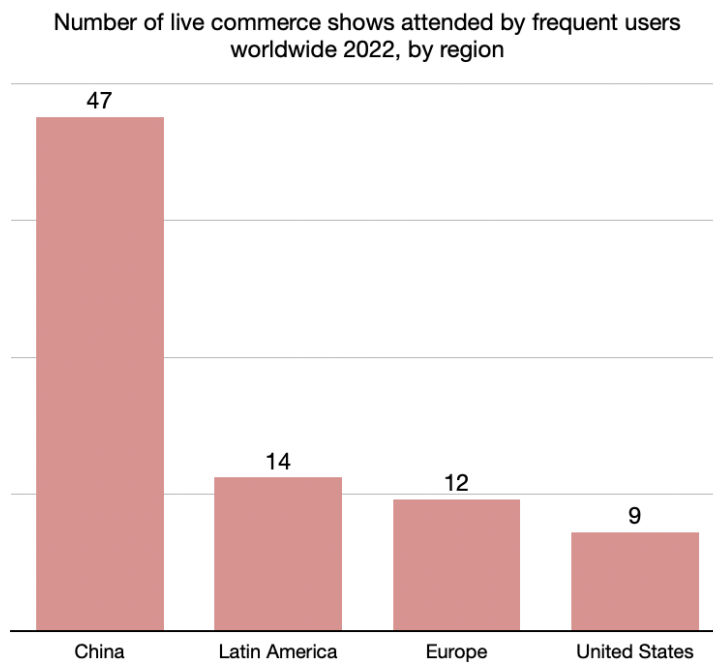


Figure 1-12 Number of LSC shows attended by frequent users in China, Latin America, the US, and Europe

Source: (McKinsey, 2023a)

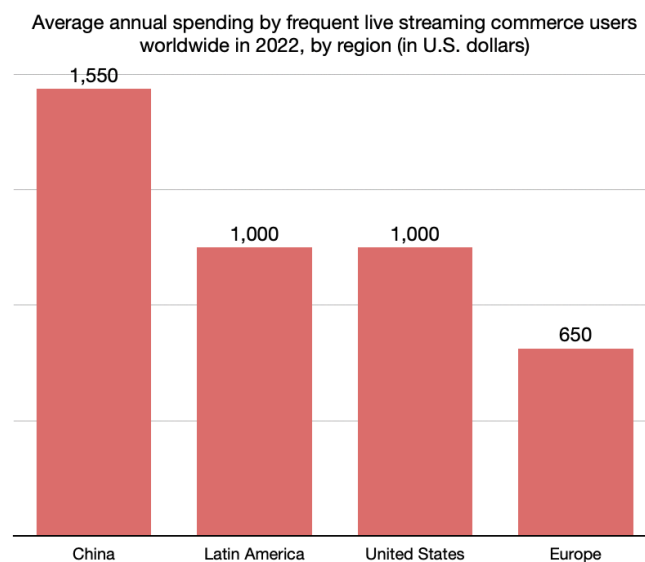


Figure 1-13 Average annual spending by frequent LSC users in China, Latin America, the US, and Europe

Source: (McKinsey, 2023a)

Additionally, in China, the most mature market for LSC, several types of LSC have evolved. Based on the underlying platforms, LSC can be categorised into two primary types: (1) e-commerce platforms with integrated live streaming features, such as Taobao Live and JD.com; and (2) social media platforms equipped with online shopping capabilities, such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu (Red). Each of these types has distinct characteristics that influence their applicability. For example, The Luxury Conversation (2020) suggested that Taobao Live is particularly ideal for driving direct sales, as it allows brands to livestream through their own store pages, offering seamless shopping through the platform's robust e-commerce infrastructure. In contrast, Xiaohongshu is more suitable for increasing brand exposure, although brands are required to set up a store and checkout process specific to this platform as Xiaohongshu builds its own e-commerce credentials. Douyin initially partnered with Taobao (taking commissions in the process, has since established its own integrated e-commerce functionalities. It is found to be particularly effective to attract younger consumers through fast-paced short videos (Barger, 2020).

In addition to platform distinctions, LSC can also be classified based on the type of streamers who host the live sessions: (1) influencer-operated channels, and (2) brand/retailer self-operated channels. In influencer-operated livestream channels, the influencer serves as the host, promoting and selling products from one or multiple brands via their own live streaming channel. In contrast, while in a brand/retailer self-operated channel, the streamer is often an employee of the brand or retailer, typically presenting only the products or service offered by that brand or retailer. However, in certain instances, brands and retailers may invite influencers or celebrities to host their livestreams to increase public attention, a strategy often employed by luxury brands.

1.2.3 Luxury brands' live streaming commerce (LuxLSC) in China

Although being a late adopter of LSC strategy, luxury brands have been cautiously testing the water in this area through various platforms and formats. 2020 marked the entry of luxury brands into the LSC arena, with Louis Vuitton becoming the first to evaluate live streaming selling in China. This attempt took place on

Xiaohongshu, hosted by a famous fashion blogger Yvonne Ching and an actress Zhong Chuxi (Zheng, 2020) through Louis Vuitton's official account on Xiaohongshu (See Figure 1-14). However, Louis Vuitton's debut livestream show was not as successful as expected, receiving criticism for being 'too low-end for the luxury brand' (Hall, 2020; Zheng, 2020). Despite the initial setbacks, Louis Vuitton did not give up on this digital innovation journey and hosted another livestream event on Xiaohongshu in 2024, which attracted 470,000 reviewers and set a new viewership record for luxury brands' livestream shows (Nan, 2024).

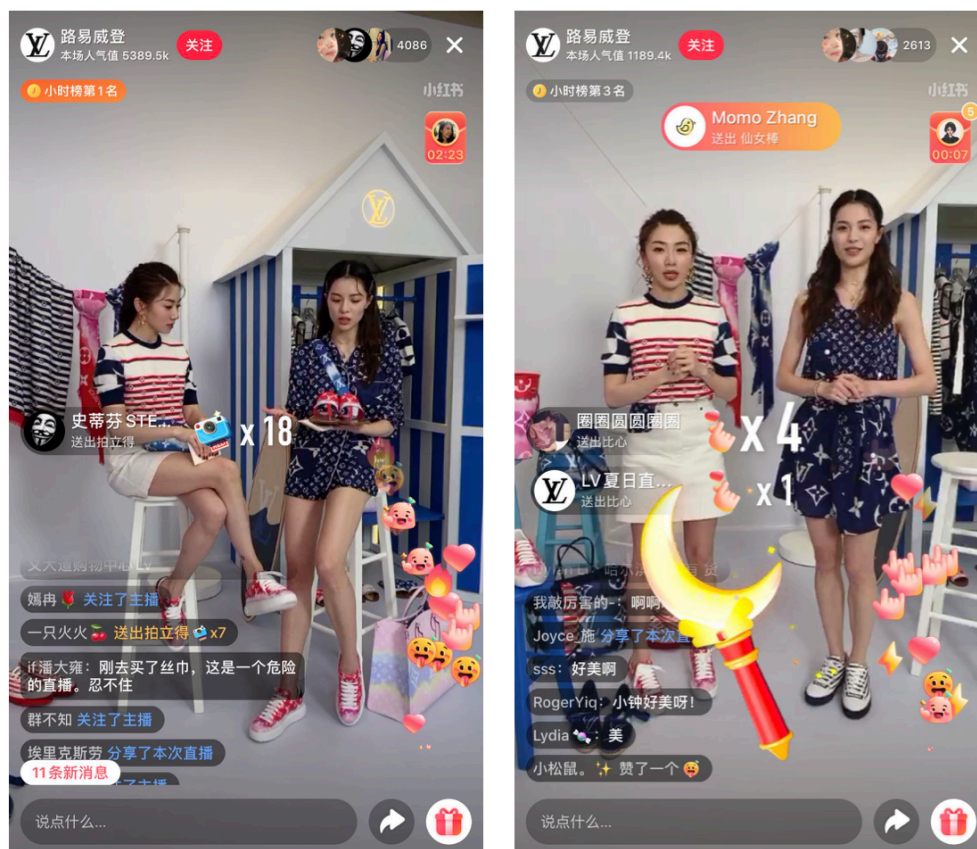


Figure 1-14 Screenshot of Louis Vuitton's debut livestream on Xiaohongshu in 2020

Source: (Zheng, 2020)

In addition to Louis Vuitton, Givenchy also ventured into livestream selling via Xiaohongshu in 2020 to showcase its collections in collaboration with influencers, KOLs, and celebrities. The brand's livestream was set in one of the offline flagship stores in Shanghai, offering an immersive luxury experience. Following this event, Givenchy saw a fivefold increase in followers on its official Xiaohongshu account, underscoring the platform's effectiveness in expanding brand reach and exposure.

Dior, another leading luxury brand, conducted its first live stream on Weibo Live to present its Spring 2021 Couture collection, featuring a celebrity discussion panel (See Figure 1-15). Learning from the critiques of Louis Vuitton's debut, which was described as 'unprepared' with a 'cheap-looking setting,' Dior made improvements to its production quality. Nevertheless, its event still faced criticism for its 'boring' and 'awkward' panel discussions (Booker, 2021; Williams, G.A., 2021).



Figure 1-15 Screenshot of Dior's livestream event on Weibo in 2021 featured by the panel Source: (Williams, G.A., 2021).

In addition to using their own official channels, luxury brands have also collaborated with prominent influencers. Bottega Veneta, for instance, partnered with Li Jiaqi, who is the 'most talked-about live streamer' in China, and sold 230 units of its Mini Pouch bag at ¥123,000 (approximately £1353) each in just 10 seconds via Taobao Live (Zhang, T. and AP, 2021). This collaboration shows the significant potential of influencer driven LSC for luxury brands.

Unlike some of its peers, Burberry, who is seen as a brave luxury player on digital innovation, has been regularly active in livestream selling through its official store on Taobao (See Figure 1-16), since its debut livestream in 2020, partnering with the KOL Yvonne Ching who hosted Louis Vuitton's debut show too. To date, Burberry has built a strong presence in LSC, amassing over 3 million followers on its Taobao livestream channel (Burberry, 2024). More specifically, Burberry's

livestreams feature diverse contents by partnering with fashion KOLs, including offline flagship store visiting, runway shows broadcasting, and studio selling (DAO, 2022) (See Figure 1-17, 1-18, 1-19).



Figure 1-16 Burberry is active in livestreams on Taobao, examples in 2022

Source: (DAO, 2022)

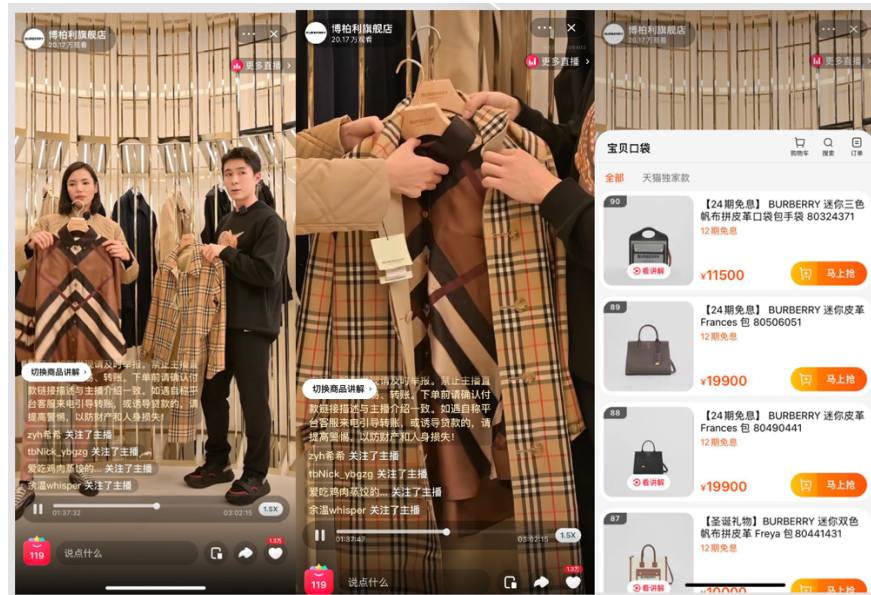


Figure 1-17 Screenshot of Burberry's flagship store visiting session on Taobao Live in 2023

Source: (Burberry, 2024)

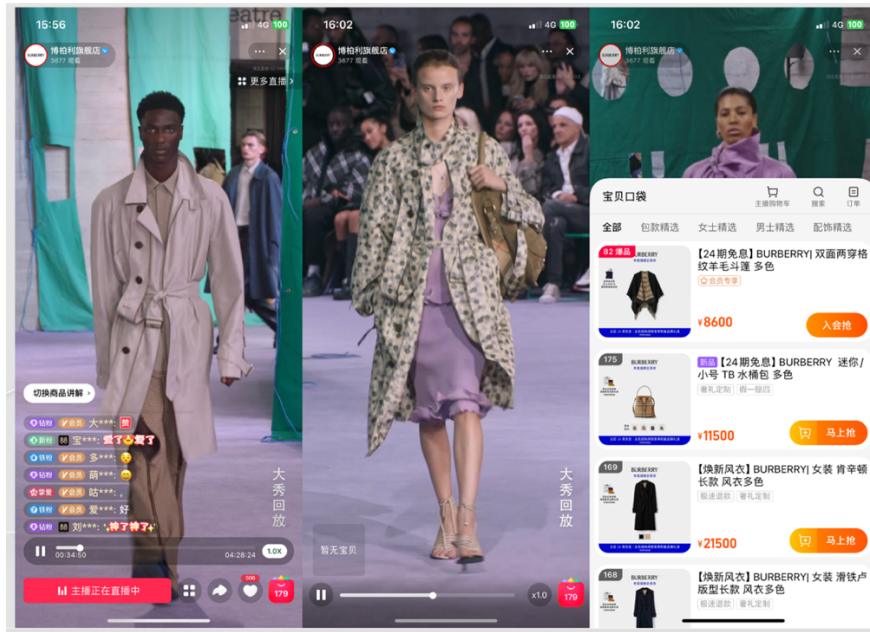


Figure 1-18 Screenshot of Burberry's runway show session on Taobao Live in 2024

Source: (Burberry, 2024)

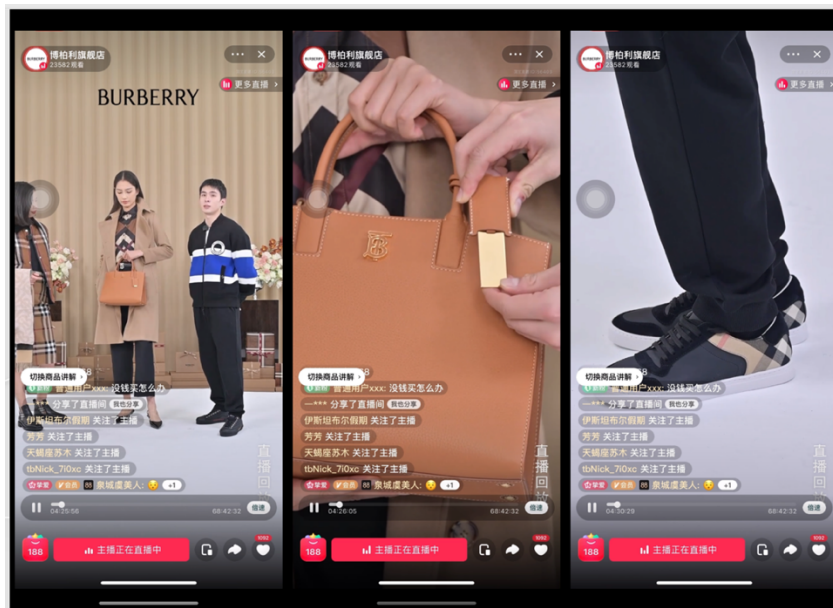


Figure 1-19 Screenshot of Burberry's studio selling session on Taobao Live in 2023

Source: (Burberry, 2024)

While LSC is continuously growing globally, driven largely by affordable, non-luxury products and brands, the luxury industry has recognised the need to embrace this trend. As Booker (2021) noted, 'brands that create authentic bonds with audiences through live content will be the ones who are able to continue to forge meaningful relationships with their followers beyond the pandemic'. For luxury

brands, however, leveraging LSC is not merely a matter of adopting innovative technology; it requires a carefully structured approach that encompasses a deep, nuanced understanding of both the brand and its target consumers. Chinese consumers have grown increasingly used to seeing high-quality and professionally executed livestreams and have elevated expectations when engaging with luxury brands. This places added pressure on luxury brands to deliver sophisticated and seamless experiences through LSC.

Despite the rising significance of LSC in the luxury sector, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding, both among industry practitioners and academic researchers, regarding its full impact. As such, this study seeks to fill this gap by focusing primarily on the consumer perspective, examining how LSC influences the decision-making process for luxury brand consumers.

1.2.4 Burberry as research focus

Given this landscape of luxury brands' LSC adoption, Burberry emerges as a particularly suitable case for examining LuxLSC dynamics. Unlike other luxury brands that have approached LSC sporadically or experimentally, Burberry has demonstrated consistent engagement with systematic LSC implementation since 2020. This sustained activity provides sufficient consumer touchpoints for meaningful analysis of LSC's impact on luxury brands.

Furthermore, Burberry's diverse LSC formats—from flagship store tours to runway shows and studio selling—encompass the full spectrum of current LuxLSC practices, making it representative of broader industry approaches rather than a single tactical implementation. With over 3 million followers on its Taobao Live channel, Burberry has also achieved significant scale in the Chinese LuxLSC market, ensuring access to consumers with substantial LSC experience for this research.

1.3 Research Problem

A review of the industrial background reveals that LSC has been widely applied across various sectors, with its benefits well-recognised. Luxury brands have also taken notice of this emerging phenomenon and have begun to cautiously explore its

potential. However, unlike other industries, within the context of the luxury-internet paradox, luxury brands, as late adopters, still face uncertainty regarding whether the benefits of adopting LSC outweigh the potential drawbacks for luxury brands, and how best to leverage this strategy. Despite the growing interest, there is a notable lack of research focusing on the impact of LSC on consumer decision-making in the luxury sector. To date, no studies have specifically examined LSC within the context of luxury brands, highlighting a significant gap in the literature. Additionally, a mind map of this study is presented in **Appendix I**, demonstrating the author's thoughts from discovering the research problem to establishing research objectives.

1.4 Research Aims and Questions

To address these gaps, this study aims to investigate the impact of LSC on luxury consumers' brand loyalty in the Chinese market. Accordingly, the following research questions have been formulated:

RQ1: Does live streaming commerce positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers?

RQ2: Does existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers?

1.5 Research Objectives

To answer above research questions, there are four research objectives identified as follows:

1. To identify the influencing factors of LSC in the context of the luxury sector from the perspectives of streamer, content and platform, and to formulate these factors into a comprehensive understanding of the overall impact of LuxLSC.
2. To examine the overall impact of LuxLSC on Chinese consumers' brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control.

3. To analyse the influence of brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control on brand loyalty.
4. To assess the moderating effects of existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism.

1.6 Research Methodology

A positivist research philosophy is adopted in this study, and building on this philosophy a theoretical model of hypothesised relationships between key conceptual variables was constructed to explore the research questions addressed above. Empirical data to test the hypotheses was collected by Qualtrics via an online survey, which used Burberry's Livestreams as a representative case, to enable specific questions in a questionnaire to be developed to operationalise the model. Burberry was chosen as the sample brand, because it is a well-known luxury brand for its digital innovations and has been regularly active in LSC activities in China's market. A purposive sample of the Chinese consumers who had experience in engaging with Burberry's LSC provided the data.

Testing of the hypotheses with the data was undertaken using *Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)*, conducted with SMART PLS 4 software.

1.7 Research Outcomes

The outcomes of this thesis are as follow.

1. The identification of gaps in the academic literature about LSC and luxury marketing.
2. The establishment of a systematic review of literature on LSC.
3. The identification of influencing factors of LuxLSC.
4. The development of a research framework illustrating how LuxLSC affect brand loyalty in Chinese market.
5. An understanding of how consumers-related factors affect the effectiveness of LuxLSC.

6. The development of practical recommendations and suggestions on the adoption of LSC for luxury brands in Chinese market.

1.8 Research Contributions

Theoretically, this research makes five novel contributions to extending the existing body of knowledge in the field of luxury branding and digital marketing.

Firstly, this study is one of the first to investigate the impact of LSC in the luxury sector, filling the research gap in the luxury branding research and LSC research while most of existing studies of LSC focused on non-luxury contexts.

Secondly, this study contributes to the knowledge of LSC strategy particularly in the luxury sector by identifying the influencing factors of LuxLSC and examining the impact of LuxLSC on consumer behaviour.

Thirdly, this study makes contributions to the LSC literature by conceptualising the impact of LuxLSC as a higher-order construct, an approach that had not been previously applied in LSC research.

The fourth contribution lies in using the Theory of Planned Behavior to link the impact of LuxLSC and brand loyalty, which provides a new theoretical lens for LSC research.

Finally, this study enriches LSC literature by proposing three novel moderators to explore how consumer-related factors influence the effectiveness of LSC particularly in the luxury sector, contributing to the knowledge of LuxLSC strategy.

Practically, for luxury brand marketers who are seeking to leverage LSC as part of their digital marketing efforts, this research provides actionable insights into how to tailor their LSC strategies to engage with the Chinese audience, by examining the impact of LuxLSC on Chinese consumers' brand loyalty.

1.9 Thesis Structure

This thesis will begin by reviewing the existing literature on luxury digital marketing, LSC, brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism to establish the research context and identify gaps in relevant domains. This will inform the development of specific research questions and

objectives. Next, the research methodology will be outlined in detail, including the data collection and analysis methods employed. The results will then be presented through tables and figures, followed by a thorough discussion of the research findings. Finally, the thesis will conclude by demonstrating how the research aims and objectives have been achieved, summarising the key findings, discussing the theoretical and practical implications, and addressing the limitations of the study while suggesting directions for future research.

This thesis is organised into seven chapters, each begins with an introduction to outline the content of the chapter and ends with a summary that highlights the key points and findings of the chapter.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter provides an overview of the industrial contexts of this study, outlining the current state of China's luxury market and the significance of LSC within the luxury sector. It also presents the research aims, objectives, and questions, offering a clear direction for the study. This chapter concludes with a brief outline of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2: Integrative Literature Review

The integrative literature review examines existing research on key topics related to LSC, luxury digital marketing, and brand loyalty. This chapter identifies knowledge gaps and synthesises relevant studies to provide a foundation for the development of the conceptual framework.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Underpinning and Model Development

In this chapter, the theoretical framework for the study is developed, drawing on the Brand Value Chain and the Theory of Planned Behavior. This chapter also details the relationships between key variables, such as LSC characteristics, consumer attitudes, and brand loyalty. Hypotheses are formulated based on the proposed model.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter details the research philosophy, design, and data collection and analysis methods used in the study, providing justifications for the chosen

approaches. Adopting a positivist perspective, a quantitative approach is implemented, with data collected through an online survey using a purposive sampling strategy. The data is then analysed using PLS-SEM. The rationale for adopting a higher-order construct model is also discussed. Finally, the chapter addresses ethical considerations and acknowledges the limitations of the methodology.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the process and results of data analysis through tables and figures. Each hypothesis is subsequently evaluated and identified as either supported or unsupported.

Chapter 6: Findings and Discussion

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. The relationships between all variables will be interpreted and discussed.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The concluding chapter summarises how research aims and objectives are achieved and addresses the research contributions from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the limitations of the study and suggests directions for future research.

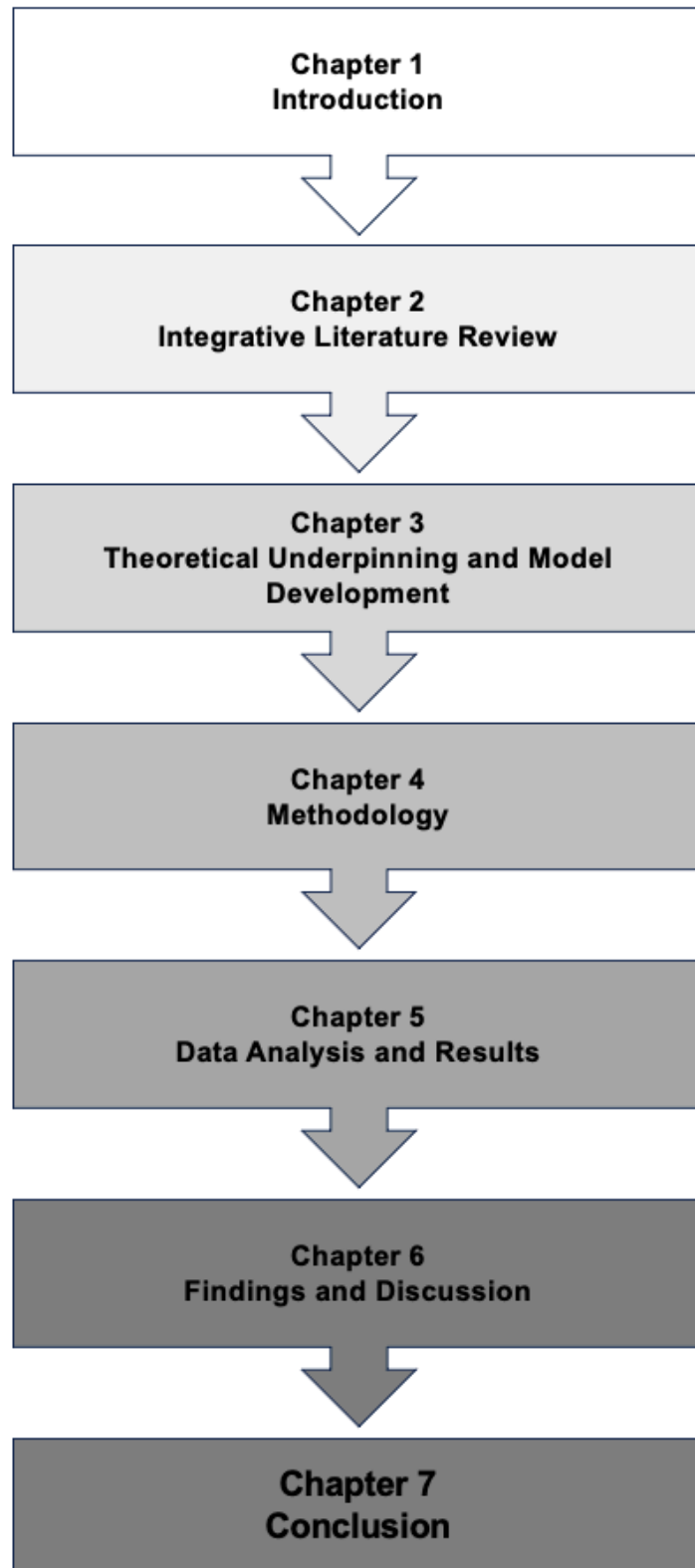


Figure 1-20 Thesis structure

Source: The author

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter sets the foundation for the thesis by outlining the background and significance of the study. It begins by providing an overview of China's luxury market and a detailed introduction of LSC within luxury industry, highlighting the research context and the significance of exploring this phenomenon. The chapter then defines the research problem, identifying the existing knowledge gaps in social media marketing and luxury branding, particularly in the areas of LuxLSC. This chapter also introduces the research aims and objectives, clearly stating the purpose of the study, which is to explore the impact of LSC on luxury consumers' perceptions and loyalty. An outline of the research methodology is provided, followed by a summary of the expected research outcomes and contributions. Finally, a thesis structure is presented.

2 INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Live streaming commerce (LSC), as an emerging phenomenon, has been applied across various sectors, including the luxury industry. Luxury brands have cautiously begun exploring its potential. However, unlike other industries, within the context of the luxury-internet paradox, luxury brands, as late adopters, still face uncertainty regarding the adoption of this strategy. At the same time, academic researchers have yet to fully explore this area. Hence, this study aims to specifically investigate the impact of LSC on brand loyalty within the context of luxury brands. To achieve this aim, this chapter undertakes an integrative review of the literature on luxury digital marketing, LSC, and brand loyalty to gain an in-depth understanding of these three concepts, their interactions, and to identify the research gaps in the focused area.

The remainder of this chapter is structured into six main sections.

Section 2.2 introduces the literature review strategy and justifies the adoption of an integrative literature review approach.

Section 2.3 focuses on the literature related to luxury brands and digitalisation. First, the concept of 'brand' and 'luxury brands' are introduced to clarify the research context. The literature on luxury consumption particularly focusing on the value-based drivers of luxury consumption and the shifts in consumption pattern, is discussed to highlight the uniqueness of this industry compared with non-luxury ones and to emphasise the importance to exploring LSC in this specific context. Then, to understand how LSC may affect luxury brands, it is crucial to learn about the mechanisms of social media and e-commerce in the luxury sector, as LSC is a combination of these two. Hence, the literature on luxury brands' social media marketing and online distribution is reviewed, suggesting how luxury brands may benefit from LSC and indicating its positive effects on luxury consumers' behaviour. In addition, an in-depth discussion on China's luxury market and Chinese luxury consumers is conducted to further complement the understanding of the research context and to underscore the research importance.

Section 2.4 concentrates on the literature of LSC, by conducting a systematic literature review. Following the SPAR-4-SLR protocol (Paul et al., 2021), 37 studies on LSC with a focus on consumer behaviours are selected and reviewed, in ordering to identify the research gaps in this area, and help developing the influencing factors of LSC that affect luxury consumers' decision-making process.

Section 2.5 discusses the literature on brand loyalty, focusing on its definitions and its role in the Brand Value Chain (Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, 2003), helping to establish the relationship between LSC as a marketing tactic and brand loyalty through the mediation of brand attitude.

Section 2.6 introduces three factors (i.e., existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism) that may moderate the effectiveness of LSC on luxury consumers' attitudes,

Finally, two major research gaps identified through reviewing all literature are summarised in the Section 2.7.

2.2 An Integrative Literature Review Approach

According to Torraco (2005), an integrative literature review (ILR) is a comprehensive and critical literature review approach that synthesises representative literature on a topic in an integrated way, generating new insights, theoretical frameworks, or perspectives on the topic. Unlike traditional review methods (e.g., narrative review, or systematic review) that may simply recapitulate existing knowledge, the ILR provides a flexible framework for dealing with complex and interdisciplinary topics, offering fresh insights into a mature or emerging topic. Most importantly, this approach is especially beneficial for new, emerging topics. For these topics, rather than covering all literature and reviewing old and models, the purpose of conducting a literature view is to create initial conceptualisations or theoretical frameworks, which makes the ILR particularly suitable (Snyder, 2019).

The present study focuses on the impact of LSC, the emerging phenomenon, on brand loyalty in the context of luxury brands. It specifically aims to investigate the mediating role of brand attitude, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control in shaping brand loyalty, as well as the moderating effects of brand

awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism on the relationship between LSC and brand attitude. Given the innovative and interdisciplinary nature of this study, the adoption of an ILR in this study is considered the most suitable. The ILR allows for the integration of findings from several domains as follows.

- (1) Luxury brand marketing and the specific challenges of branding in the digital era.
- (2) LSC, the emerging domain, and its influence on consumer decision-making.
- (3) Consumer loyalty theories, particularly in relation to luxury brands.
- (4) Moderating variables such as brand awareness and self-materialism, which have not been extensively studied in the LSC context.

Given the relative newness of LSC in luxury brand marketing, an ILR is necessary to synthesise insights from diverse fields, including social media marketing, luxury brand research, and consumer behaviour studies. By combining critical reviews of established literature (e.g., luxury digital marketing and brand loyalty) with systematic analyses of LSC and consumer behaviour, the ILR can create a comprehensive framework for understanding how LSC affects luxury consumers' attitudes and loyalty. Additionally, given that there are limited studies on the impact of LSC particularly in the luxury sector, this gap in the literature reinforces the need for an ILR to critically synthesise current knowledge and offer new theoretical insights into how LSC influences luxury consumers.

Accordingly, aligned with the proposed research questions, an ILR will be conducted in this study, aiming to

- (1) bring together literature from multiple domains, i.e., luxury brand marketing, LSC and consumer loyalty, to provide a comprehensive understanding of each domain and identify the connection among them.
- (2) identify the research gaps regarding how LSC affects consumer behaviour in the context of luxury brands.
- (3) develop a conceptual framework that explains how LSC influences consumer attitudes and loyalty in luxury sector, to guide further empirical

research and provide theoretical foundations for understanding LSC's impact on consumer behaviour.

- (4) identify and discuss how moderating variables may affect consumer attitudes in the context of LSC, to provide deeper insights into how they shape the LSC-brand loyalty relationship.
- (5) highlight the areas that require further empirical investigation in this domain.

To achieve these aims, the ILR will include the following topics to critically synthesise the literature.

- (1) Luxury digital marketing: This part will critically review the relevant concepts of luxury brands, and the literature on luxury consumption and social media marketing, focusing on the challenges and opportunities that digitalisation has brought to luxury brands for building brand loyalty.
- (2) LSC: A systematic review of empirical studies on LSC will be conducted in this part, focusing on how LSC influences consumer decision-making, in order to identify the research gaps in this domain and develop the influencing factors of LSC particularly in the luxury brand context.
- (3) Brand loyalty: This part will review the literature on brand loyalty definitions and existing frameworks related to it, such as the Brand Value Chain, in order to build up the relationship between LSC and brand loyalty in the luxury brand context.
- (4) Moderators: This section will critically review the literature related to the proposed moderators, to explain how they may impact consumer behaviour within the research context.

Despite the strengths of the ILR approach, there may be some limitations too. First, as the ILR is inherently selective, it may result in over-representation of certain perspectives while under-representing others. Also, due to its flexibility ILRs sometimes can be criticised as lack of methodological rigour, potentially impacting the replicability of the study (Snyder, 2019). However, the flexibility of the ILR approach allows the study to adapt to the emerging nature of LSC research in the

luxury sector, making it suitable for exploring this area where empirical studies are still limited.

2.3 Luxury Brands in the Digital Age

2.3.1 Introduction

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, the intersection of luxury branding and technology has become a focal point of academic and industry discussions. Luxury brands, traditionally associated with exclusivity, craftsmanship, and a strong heritage, are now navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age. The rise of digital platforms, particularly LSC has revolutionised how consumers interact with luxury brands, offering new avenues for engagement, personalisation, and real-time interaction. This research delves into the intricate dynamics of luxury brands in the digital era, particularly exploring whether luxury brands can maintain their prestige and consumer loyalty while embracing LSC innovation in the Chinese context. Therefore, an in-depth examination of the literature on luxury brands, China's luxury market and Chinese luxury consumer behaviours is necessary for understanding the context within which this research is conducted. In addition, reviewing the relevant literature and industrial knowledge also contributes to the identification of research gaps addressed in Section 2.7 in Chapter 2.

This section begins with a thorough examination of the fundamental concepts of 'brand' and 'luxury brands', which are essential concepts to be clarified to understand the uniqueness of the luxury sector and to differentiate it from other sectors, as well as helping to understand the evolution of these concepts over time. Then, the value perception of luxury and the shifting patterns of luxury consumption are presented. Moreover, the digitalisation of luxury brands is explained with a focus on social media marketing and online retailing of luxury brands. Finally, an in-depth analysis of China's luxury market and Chinese luxury consumption is conducted based on the previous studies and industrial reports. It provides a comprehensive understanding of importance of China's luxury market, as well as the trends and

issues that luxury brands are currently encountering in China, which explains the choice of China as the context for the study.

2.3.2 What is a brand?

Before we explain what a brand is, it is necessary to distinguish between a 'product' and a 'brand', as these are two distinct yet sometimes intertwined concepts that can be complex for consumers to evaluate (Gardner and Levy, 1999). For academic researchers, making a clear distinction between these two concepts is primary for conducting rigorous research. From a generic view, a product is defined as 'anything can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need' (Kotler et al., 2019, p.233). In contrast, a brand represents the identity of a product, distinguishing it from those of other sellers (Aaker, 1991; Gardner and Levy, 1999; Kotler et al., 2019). For consumers, the distinction between purchasing an item due to the functional attributes of the product or due to a commitment to a specific brand often becomes blurred in practice. The final outcome, such as the price they pay, remains the same regardless of their underlying motivations. However, for brand managers and marketing researchers, understanding the nuances of why consumers choose a particular product—whether due to its inherent qualities or the brand's influence—is crucial for developing effective marketing strategies.

Regarding the concept of a brand, Kotler et al., (2019, p.251) highlight that 'brands are more than just names and symbols'. The concept of a brand is dynamic and complex, evolving over times and in different contexts, making it difficult to fully explain in just a few lines. Therefore, I will succinctly but precisely interpret the concept of brand here, in order to clarify the subject matter of this research and lay the conceptual groundwork for the subsequent studies.

A brand can sometimes be simply seen as a legal statement of ownership (André and Fournier, 2017), a distinctive trademark protected under law (Mercer, 2010), or 'a name, term, design, symbol, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from competitors'(AMA, 1960). This old definition from AMA (1960) has been

cited in various works (Aaker, 1991; Keller, K.L., 1993; Kotler et al., 2019). However, this perspective is more aligned with a company's viewpoint and does not fully capture the essence of a brand, as it overlooks the role of consumers in constructing the meaning of a brand. Consumers are not merely passive recipients of brand meaning; they actively assign meaning to it based on their experiences with the brand. In other words, a brand is not only about what a firm projects but also about what consumers perceive. In this vein, some researchers consider the consumer's perspective when interpreting the concept of brand. Pitcher (1985, p.241) describes a brand as 'the consumer's idea of the product'. Kotler et al. (2019) emphasises in their book that 'brands represent consumers' perceptions and feelings about a product and its performance – everything that the product or the service means to consumers'. Several other researchers consider brands as images and association in consumers' minds (e.g., Kapferer, 1992; Keller, K.L., 1993). Associations about a brand are essentially the perceived values that consumers attach to the brand, that is, what consumers think the brand can offer them (Keller, K.L., 1993). Thus, a brand can be considered as the sum of perceived values, representing all the mental associations that people have around it. Marketing researchers have also pointed out that, in some cases, brands can serve as memory shortcuts when consumers are making purchase decisions, helping them quickly recall and recognise products and the associated attributes, experiences, or emotions (Jacoby et al., 1977; Keller, K.L., 1993).

Furthermore, it is important to note that, in addition to the association derived from a product's inherent characteristics, consumers tend to assign non-functional associations to the brand as well, such as experiential and symbolic association (Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, 2003). As Doyle and Stern (2006) state, a basic brand must encompass the core product and the elements (e.g., brand name, packaging, design, colour and logo) that differentiate it in the marketplace; while a successful brand must offer added values that meet consumers' psychological needs, in addition to their functional needs. According to Sheth et al. (1991), these added values can be emotional, conditional, social and epistemic. The meaning of brands

is to enhance the appeal of the product by adding these values (Park, C.S. and Srinivasan, 1994). In this vein, creating 'added values' for brands is at the heart of developing marketing strategies. Keller, K.L. (1993, p.5) reveals an indicator of a successful marketing program: 'the success of a marketing program is reflected in the creation of favourable brand associations – that is, consumers believe the brand has attributes and benefits that satisfy their needs and wants such that a positive overall brand attitude is formed'. In other words, given that brand associations, or perceived values are essentially consumers' subjective beliefs (Doyle and Stern, 2006; Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, 2003), the core of a marketing activity is to create positive beliefs about the brand in consumers' minds.

2.3.3 What is a luxury brand?

2.3.3.1 Luxury brand definitions

The idea of 'luxury' is complex and has a long history (Gurzki, 2020a). For example, if you search for the definition of luxury brand, the Cambridge Dictionary would tell you that it refers to 'an expensive product or service provided by a particular company that has a reputation for being of high quality'. Adam Smith (1776), the 'Father of Economics', describes luxury goods as limited in supply, difficult to procure and/or very expensive. Defining a 'luxury brand' has always been a challenge, especially due to the fact that it can be very subjective and relative; it can 'refer to almost anything to nothing depending on whom you ask' (Heine, 2012, p.9). Berthon et al. (2009, p.56) also assert that '... the same luxury good can mean different things at different times to the same or different people is one of the nuanced paradoxes of luxury brands.

A glance at the academic literature reveals that researchers across different disciplines and ages have produced with a wide variety of definitions of luxury and luxury brand from various perspectives. Luxury can be either tangible products or intangible experiences. It is a multi-faceted concept, and an ever-lasting subject of philosophy, history, economics, sociology, psychology, marketing and more over the last centuries (e.g., Cristini et al., 2017; Gurzki, 2020a; Heine, 2012). Moreover, it is

also a relative concept that 'has more than one meaning depending in the context' (Cristini et al., 2017), such as different 'regional, temporal, economic, cultural and situational' settings (Heine, 2012,p.43). This complexity explains why there is no common definition of luxury emerged yet, and why terms and definitions of 'luxury' and 'luxury brands' have been used inconsistently in both business and academic studies. Given these nuances, the question 'What is a luxury brand?' is a fundamental and must be clarified before further discussions on any related phenomena. In this section, we review the literature and summarise the existing body of knowledge on the conceptualisation of luxury and luxury brands, to lay a solid foundation for this study.

Firstly, the concept of luxury is inherently complex and divisive (Berthon et al., 2009). From a philosophical lens, luxury is about dream, extraordinariness, and something that creates desire amongst the social, cultural, and individual sphere (Gurzki, 2020b; Heine, 2012). Some scholars put their focus on the economic element of luxury brand and define luxury as 'something that has a high absolute and relative price and a high perceived value, as well as positive income and price elasticities of demand' (Gurzki, 2020a, p.114). Keller (2009) also noted that price is a major indicator of quality and prestige. However, others argue that the absolute price alone is not what really counts for identifying a luxury brand, and luxury is not merely about premium prices (Kapferer, 1997; Nueno and Quelch, 1998). In addition to premium price and high quality, researchers also proposed other essential elements that constitute a luxury brand. Dubois et al. (2001) identified six facets that structure a luxury brand, including (1) excellent quality (2) high price (3) scarcity and uniqueness (4) aesthetics and polysensuality (5) ancestral heritage and personal history (6) superfluousness. On this basis, Keller, K.L. (2009) proposed ten characteristics of luxury brands which are more specific, as follows: (1) a premium image; (2) the creation of intangible brand associations; (3) products/services with high quality and pleasurable consumer experiences; (4) brand elements such as logos, symbols etc.; (5) secondary associations from linked personalities, events, countries, and other entities; (6) limited and controlled distribution; (7) premium

pricing strategy; (8) well-managed brand architecture; (9) broadly defined competition; (10) legal protection of trademarks.

However, 'luxury is more than a characteristic or set of attributes' (Berthon et al., 2009, p.47). Although a brand can label itself as 'luxury' through some marketing tactics, such as premium pricing or limited distribution, there is no guarantee that consumers will perceive it as such. Therefore, some scholars suggest that the concept of a luxury brand is associated with consumer's perception and evaluations of this brand (Ko et al., 2019) and is about whether the images of consumers having in their minds about this brand is 'luxury' (Heine, 2012). For instance, Ko et al. (2019, p.406), from the perspective of consumer, define a luxury brand as 'a branded product or service that consumers perceive to: (1) be high quality; (2) offer authentic value via desired benefits, whether functional or emotional; (3) have a prestigious image within the market built on qualities such as artisanship, craftsmanship, or service quality; (4) be worthy of commanding a premium price; and (5) be capable of inspiring a deep connection, or resonance, with the consumer'. Furthermore, the concept of luxury brands can also be understood through value-based dimensions, that is, perceived value of luxury goods subsequently form the concept of luxury brands (e.g., Vickers and Renand, 2003). For example, Berthon et al. (2009, p.49) defined a luxury brand as 'a differentiated offering that delivers high levels of symbolic, experiential and functional value at the extreme luxury end of the utilitarian-luxury continuum'.

Secondly, the meaning of luxury is dynamic and transformative (Cristini et al., 2017; Gurzki, 2020b; Wang, Y., 2022). For example, mobile phones, once considered as luxury goods, exclusive to the wealthy, have been transcended to absolute necessities nowadays. Conversely, items that were once common and easy to obtain, such as antique fine china, may now be considered luxury goods due to their rarity. As Heine (2012, p.46) argued, 'the definition of luxury should refer to the present'. The burgeoning development of the global economy and technology standing as an instrumental catalyst has led to the growth of individual incomes, driving the increase of purchasing power and expanding the consumer base for

luxury goods. Nowadays, not just exclusive to the upper class and the wealthy anymore, the luxury consumption is increasingly penetrating the lower classes. Meanwhile, luxury today also includes a much wider range of goods and services. Under this circumstance, the global luxury market has experienced a remarkable increase over the past two decades. Along with the growth, the meaning of luxury is constantly extending in scope and complexity and being re-defined, particularly leading to the emergence of the concept of 'new luxury'. Silverstein and Fiske (2003) categorise new luxury into three major types: (1) the brands that offer goods top priced in their category but relatively affordable for middle-market consumers, such as Starbucks; (2) brand extensions of traditional luxury brands offering more affordable products lines, such as Hermès's cosmetics; and (3) mass prestige brands, or 'masstige brands', which sits in a sweet spot between mass and premium, offering more affordable product to attract a broader range of consumers, plus a certain level of prestige to differentiate itself from mass market brands, such as Coach and Michael Kors. Simply speaking, the meaning of luxury has thus been democratised due to the global surge in demand. Some researchers also referred to 'new luxury' as 'contemporary luxury', 'affordable luxury' or 'luxury democratisation' (Dall'Omo Riley et al., 2013; Mundel et al., 2017; Paul, 2019; Shukla et al., 2022; Silverstein and Fiske, 2003; Truong et al., 2009).

Despite the different voices on defining luxury, each perspective contributes valuable insights to a comprehensive understanding of what it means to be a luxury brand. As a result, the interpretation of 'luxury' not merely lies in how luxury brands define themselves from a conventional, wealth-centric perspective, but has become more personal and consumer-centric, whereby consumers contributing their own understanding of 'luxury' to the definition of 'luxury brands' based on their feelings, emotions and needs.

Given the complexity and subjectivity inherent in luxury brand conceptualisation, as well as the diverse theoretical perspectives reviewed above, it is essential to establish a clear and explicit working definition to guide this research. While the literature demonstrates that luxury encompasses both traditional luxury brands and

new luxury brands across a broad spectrum, and that consumer perceptions play a crucial role in defining luxury experiences, a specific definitional framework is necessary to ensure theoretical coherence and empirical precision. The consumer-centric approach established through this review provides the foundation for selecting an appropriate working definition that captures both the complexity of luxury brand perceptions and the specific research focus on brand loyalty formation. By considering the full spectrum of luxury brands while maintaining definitional clarity, this study is positioned to capture nuances in consumer behavior across different luxury segments, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of how LSC affects consumer attitudes and loyalty towards luxury brands. The following section establishes the specific working definition adopted for this research, with clear rationale for its selection and explicit connections to brand loyalty concepts examined in this study.

2.3.3.2 Working definition adopted for this study

Based on this comprehensive review, this study adopts Ko et al.'s (2019) consumer-centric definition of luxury brands as its working definition. A luxury brand is defined as "a branded product or service that consumers perceive to: (1) be high quality; (2) offer authentic value via desired benefits, whether functional or emotional; (3) have a prestigious image within the market built on qualities such as artisanship, craftsmanship, or service quality; (4) be worthy of commanding a premium price; and (5) be capable of inspiring a deep connection, or resonance, with the consumer" (Ko et al., 2019, p.406).

This definition was selected over alternatives for several theoretical and methodological reasons. First, it emphasises consumer perception rather than objective brand characteristics, aligning with this study's focus on consumer attitudes and loyalty formation rather than brand attributes per se. Second, the definition's emphasis on "deep connection" and "resonance" directly relates to brand loyalty concepts, as emotional attachment and psychological connection are fundamental to loyalty development (Oliver, 1999). Third, the multi-dimensional nature of Ko et al.'s definition (quality, value, prestige, premium pricing, emotional

connection) captures the complexity of luxury brand evaluation that consumers engage in when forming loyalty intentions.

Critically, this definition's focus on emotional resonance and deep connection bridges directly to brand loyalty theory. Ko et al.'s emphasis on brands being "capable of inspiring a deep connection" aligns with the notion of emotional commitment that characterises brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999), as discussed in Section 2.5.2. This connection suggests that luxury brands, by definition, should be particularly capable of generating the emotional attachment and psychological commitment that constitute brand loyalty. Therefore, examining how live streaming commerce influences this connection and commitment represents a theoretically coherent research focus.

This consumer-centric, perception-based definition also accommodates the spectrum from traditional luxury to "new luxury" brands, enabling this study to capture diverse luxury brand experiences while maintaining definitional coherence around the core concept of consumer-perceived luxury value and emotional connection.

2.3.4 Understanding luxury consumption

2.3.4.1 Understanding the drivers of luxury consumption

The Marketing Science Institute stated that 'One of the most important tasks in marketing is to create and communicate value to customers to drive their satisfaction, loyalty, and profitability. Any insights in this area have significant implications for the long-term financial health of an organisation. It truly is at the heart of what marketing is all about' (MSI, 2014, p.9). In fact, the important role of customer value has long been recognised by business researchers. Woodruff (1997) considered customer value as a central element in marketing field. Holbrook (1999) mentioned that customer value is a key driver of customers' satisfaction and loyalty, and the creation of customer values is the fundamental basis for all marketing practices. With regard to what customer value is, most scholars agree that it refers to the perception of what consumers 'receive' relative to what they 'give' towards the

purchase process (Zeithaml, 1988). For example, according to Smith, J.B. and Colgate (2007, p.8), customer value refers to 'what customers get (benefits, quality, worth, utility) from the purchase and use of a product versus what they pay (price, costs, sacrifices), resulting in an attitude toward, or an emotional bond with the product'. Also, worthy to note, this definition highlights the attitudinal or emotional consequences resulted from value perception.

Specific to luxury consumption, consumers' perception of luxury brand values implies the reason and desire that consumers seek through the brands or products, which is considered as one of the major motives for luxury consumption (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999; 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009). While expecting consumers to pay a premium price, luxury brands also need to ensure that consumers can perceive the corresponding values that they seek (Keller, K.L., 1993). Hence, it is critical for researchers and luxury brand marketers to understand what values consumers seek from luxury brands, how consumers' perception of these values affect their decision-making, and how marketing practices serve for value creation.

Regarding what values that luxury brands present, much of the literature on luxury brand values has attempted to identify and synthesise these values. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) developed a conceptual framework from the socioeconomic perspective to identify five types of perceived values of luxury brands, including perceived emotional value, perceived social value, perceived quality value, perceived unique value and perceived conspicuous value, which correspondingly explain five prestige-seeking motivations of consumers to purchase luxury brands. Moreover, the researchers further separated these five motivations and values into two groups based on two types of self-consciousness (i.e., private self-consciousness and public self-consciousness) proposed by Fenigstein et al. (1975). Public self-consciousness refers to the concerns of individuals on how they appear to other people, while private self-consciousness are how individuals think of and feel themselves (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Accordingly, perceived conspicuous value, perceived unique value and perceived social value are considered as the interpersonal motivations of consumers to purchase luxury brands under the effects

of social interactions, which also consistent with the three traditional motivational effects on consumption proposed by Leibenstein (1950), namely the Veblen effect, the snob effect, and the bandwagon effect. To be specific, luxury consumers driven by the conspicuous value of luxury brands are so-called the Veblenian consumers. They usually value price as an important indicator of prestige, and believe the possession of luxury goods signals wealth, status and power. Some consumers seek uniqueness and exclusivity through purchasing and consuming luxury goods as they desire to distinguish themselves from others. This type of consumer refers to the snob consumers who consider price as an indicator of exclusivity. The bandwagon consumers also believe that possessing luxury goods represents high social status and is a symbol of affluent groups. Unlike the Veblenian, however, they desire to enhance their self-concept and imitate the affluent and prestige groups by consuming the same luxury brands and goods, then distinguish themselves from non-affluent reference groups.

In addition to the interpersonal effects, Vigneron and Johnson (1999) also identified and emphasised two personal motivations that drive luxury consumption, namely perceived emotional (hedonic) value and perceived quality value. Considering that luxury or premium brands also tend to speak for their exceptional quality and aesthetic appeals, consumers may be driven by the superior product features and performance of the brands, and/or positive emotional states (e.g., self-fulfilment and self-esteem) aroused by purchasing or consuming luxury goods. Later on, Vigneron and Johnson (2004) revisited these five value dimensions when exploring the measures of perceived brand luxury, but switched the bandwagon effect to personal aspect and the perfectionism to non-personal aspect (See Figure 2-1).

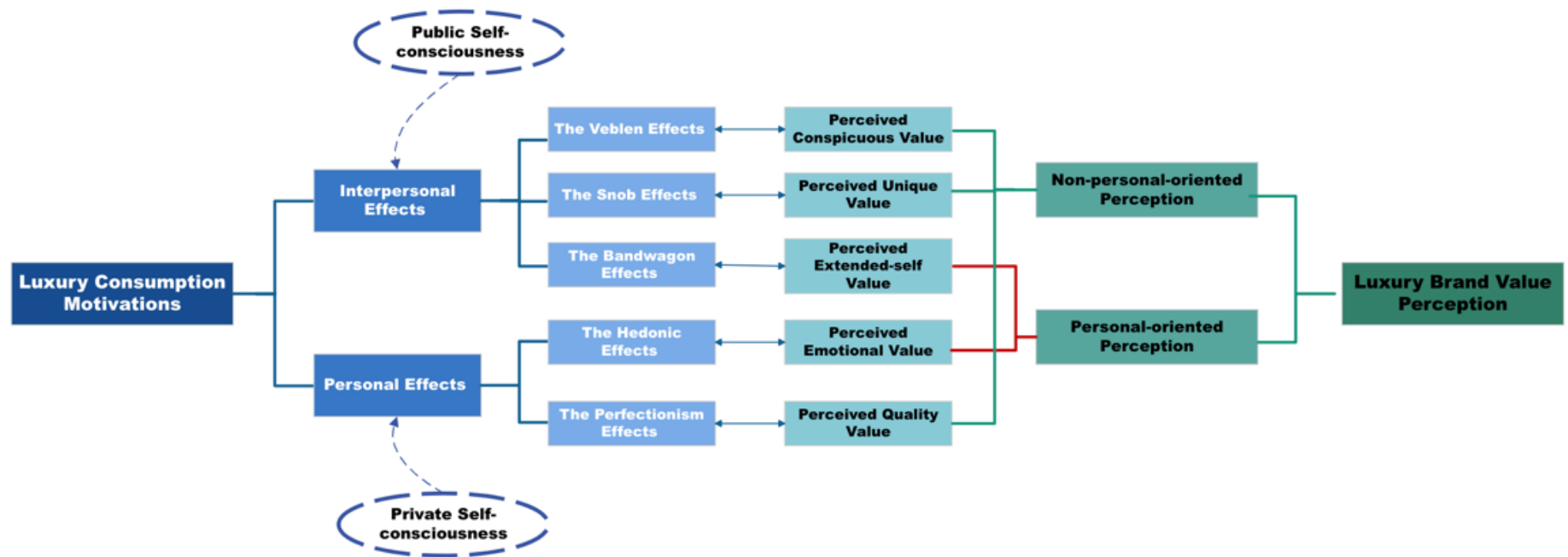


Figure 2-1 Five dimensions of luxury brand value

Adapted from Vigneron and Johnson (1999;2004)

Wiedmann et al. (2007) extended Vigneron and Johnson's luxury value framework with a broader view. The researchers pointed out that the consumers' perceptions of luxury brands are complex and multifaceted, not just simply tied to the notion of 'showing off prestige' or 'impressing others'. As luxury consumption has become a global phenomenon, it is not sufficient to understand luxury value perception merely focusing on personal and social motives, whilst some macro-factors should be taken into consideration too, such as economic, political or cultural factors. Hence, Wiedmann et al. (2007) developed a comprehensive, cross-cultural model of luxury value that integrates financial, functional, individual and social dimensions. Specifically, the financial dimension of luxury value perception refers to the monetary value of the product (e.g., price, discount, investment etc.), while the functional dimension refers to product features and utilities (e.g., quality, uniqueness etc.). The individual and social dimensions are inherited from Vigneron and Johnson (2004). That is, the individual dimension addressed a customer's personal oriented perceptions such as self-identity, hedonic and materialistic values. Finally, the social dimension includes the values that consumers perceive from social reference groups when purchasing and consuming luxury products, including conspicuous and prestige values.

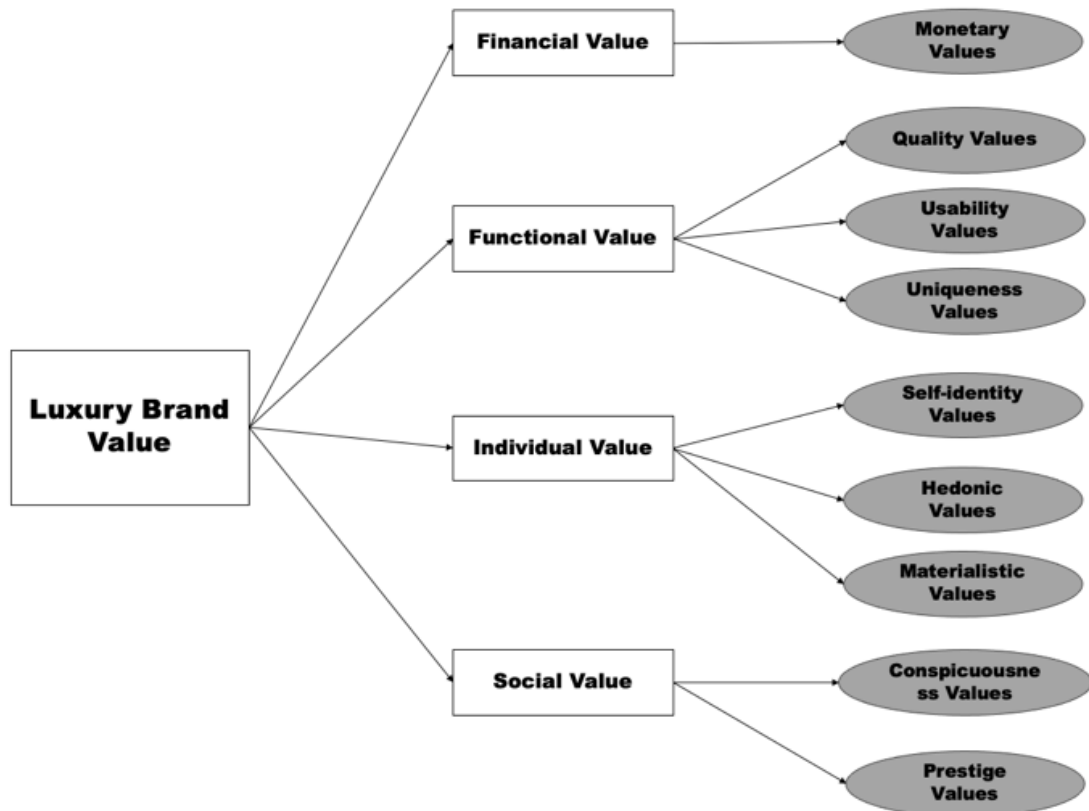


Figure 2-2 Four dimensions of luxury brand value

Source: (Wiedmann et al., 2007)

When discussing customer values, some scholars realised that apart from brand created values, consumers also could co-create values through their interactions with the organisations during consumption, such as interactions with salespeople, or transaction processes (Heard, 1993; Smith, J.B. and Colgate, 2007), particularly in the retail and service industries. Accordingly, Smith, J.B. and Colgate (2007) developed a generic customer value framework containing four major types of values including functional/instrumental value, experiential/hedonic value, symbolic/expressive value, and cost/sacrifice value. To make the framework better fit in the luxury industry, Tynan et al. (2010) further extended the Smith and Colgate's work by integrating the unique elements of luxury brands into each value dimension, as well as adding the relational value dimension. Relational value refers to the values perceived from consumer-brand relationships, the brand community, and/or service providers, which is considered as a crucial element for luxury value creation as consumers tend to have high expectations for luxury goods and services.

Despite the lack of consensus on what constitutes the luxury brand value, there is agreement among researchers that these value dimensions are interrelated while operating independently of each other. It has also been empirically confirmed by many studies that perceived values from luxury brands significantly affect luxury consumers' decision-making, such as purchase behaviour (Li, G. et al., 2012; Shukla, 2012; Shukla and Purani, 2012) and brand-consumer relationships (Yoo, J. and Park, 2016). However, these value dimensions may work differently under different scenarios, then resulting in various levels of impacts on consumer behaviours. Some consumers may maximise all value dimensions, while others may place more weight on one dimension than the rest, even if the overall value of a brand may be perceived equally (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2007).

When it comes to luxury consumption behaviour, conspicuous consumption has always been a keen interest of marketing researchers, as conspicuous considerations (e.g., status and prestige) play a dominating role in driving luxury consumption (Mason, 1984). However, with the globalisation and democratisation of the luxury market, luxury consumption patterns are also undergoing substantial shifts, which will be explained specifically in the next section.

2.3.4.2 Understanding the shift of luxury consumption

Following the review of the perceived values of luxury brands above, this section addresses the shifts of luxury consumption pattern over the years, from conspicuous consumption to inconspicuous consumption.

Traditionally, owning luxury goods has been seen as a symbol of status and power, as the high absolute and relative values of luxury goods symbolise prestige and exclusivity (Keller, K.L., 2009). Many years ago, luxury goods seemed to be only a matter of the upper class and the affluent few, who could use expensive goods to signal their social status and prestige, and distinguish themselves from others. Veblen (1899), an economist and sociologist, introduced the concept of 'conspicuous consumption' to describe this type of consumption behaviour. According to the researcher, conspicuous consumers tend to prioritise the prices of goods other than the utilities, because they believe the products with higher prices

are bearing higher prestige. Hence, purchasing luxury goods are considered as an important mean of showcasing wealth and power (Mason, 1984). However, Leibenstein (1950) pointed out that the phenomenon proposed by Veblen only focused on the function of price, and he further extended Veblen's theory by mathematically demonstrating that, in addition to price, the consumption behaviour of social others could also be a determinant of conspicuous consumption. Specifically, Leibenstein (1950) claimed that consumption are resulted from the demand for commodity, including functional demand and non-functional demand. The former refers to the demand for the inherent attributes of the commodity, while the demand for attributes other than inherent ones that the commodity provides is the latter. Conspicuous consumption is considered as a consequence of non-functional demand. In addition to the Veblen effect, therefore, Leibenstein (1950) proposed the other two types of conspicuous consumption, namely bandwagon effect and snob effect. When purchase intention is driven by the product being purchased by others, it refers to the bandwagon effect, implying the desire of social approval; When purchase intention is diminished due to the product being purchased by others, it refers to the snob effect, reflecting the desire of being unique and exclusive. Since Veblen, much of the literature in the field of marketing has, to some extent, considered and discussed luxury consumption as equivalent to conspicuous consumption (Mason, 1998; Sirgy et al., 2015; Sundie et al., 2011; Wang, Y. and Griskevicius, 2013). Kumar, B. et al. (2022) stated that most of luxury consumption is conspicuous. Many scholars tried to understand luxury consumer behaviours through this theoretical lens. For example, researchers have discovered the signalling effect of conspicuous luxury possessions on interpersonal relationships, such as males using luxury goods as a 'sexual signalling system' to attract females (Griskevicius et al., 2007), and women using luxury goods as an 'intrasexual signalling system' to show off their partners' devotion in front of other women (Wang, Y. and Griskevicius, 2013).

However, with the expansion of the luxury market and the growth of luxury goods production, nowadays, purchasing and conspicuously consuming luxury goods has become an important part of the lifestyle in both developed and developing countries (Bian and Forsythe, 2012; Li, G. et al., 2012), and is no longer

a privilege of the upper classes solely. More and more people have gained the access to luxury goods and had a taste of the 'luxury' that once were only available for the elites (Kastanakis and Balabanis, 2014), adding complexity to luxury consumption and luxury marketing. Under this context, less about being a symbol of social status, luxury nowadays is more about high quality of goods and experiences that can offer consumers more personal (hedonic) values, other than conspicuous meanings (Silverstein and Fiske, 2003). The focus of luxury consumption has been seen to shift from social purposes to individual gratification, and as Kapferer and Bastien (2009) described it, from 'luxury for others' to 'luxury for oneself'.

Firstly, a rapidly expanding consumer base has been driving the shift in luxury consumption patterns. The middle-class consumers are 'trading up to higher levels of quality and taste' (Silverstein and Fiske, 2003). At the same time, a growing wealthy consumer group in emerging countries has also been showing an unprecedented desire and purchasing power for luxury goods (Truong et al., 2009). These middle class consumers usually are younger, well-educated, well-paid, having good tastes and willing to spend more efforts on enhancing life quality (Silverstein and Fiske, 2003; Truong et al., 2009). While they are buying more luxury goods, the reasons for their purchases have become more diverse and less conspicuous than ever in the old days. Beyond the pursuit of prestige and status, they are buying for the superior quality of the product, the desire for an upper-class lifestyle, or self-reward and self-pleasure (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2019; Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2019; Wu, Z. et al., 2017). Furthermore, as one of the main forces driving luxury consumption, consumers in emerging markets are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their perceptions, attitudes, and preferences towards luxury goods. For example, Perry et al. (2020) emphasised the significant changes in China's market where Chinese luxury consumers have gradually evolved from buying luxury fashion goods for the sake of showing-off and conforming to the lifestyles of their Western peers, to becoming more sophisticated, brand-savvy shoppers who can really appreciate the aesthetics of luxury fashion.

Meanwhile, the democratisation of luxury has also contributed to the rise of inconspicuous luxury consumption. To seize the fast-growing market and broader

consumer segments, luxury brands have created 'new luxury' or 'mass luxury', which has re-defined the concept of luxury, as well as re-shaped the luxury consumption. Luxury goods are taking off their mythical veil and stepping into the life of masses. More people have started seeing luxury goods more as objects with practical meanings, not just as a sign of social class. However, some scholars argue that the emergence of new luxury goods has made the traditional luxury goods lose their glamour. As mentioned by Eckhardt et al. (2015, p.4), 'the signalling ability of traditional luxury good is diluted'. Some researchers have confirmed the major influence of luxury democratisation on consumers' perception of luxury brand values and purchase intention. The findings of Shukla et al. (2022) point out that under the impact of a certain degree of democratisation, the effect of self-oriented symbolic/expressive values and experiential/hedonic values on luxury consumption are very likely to be enhanced. However, at the same time, researchers have also identified the inhibiting effect of the democratisation of luxury on the purchase intentions especially for traditional luxury consumers who tend to seek prestige and exclusivity through the consumption of luxury goods (Rosendo-Rios and Shukla, 2023). In this case, as a result, the dominance of conspicuous consumption in the luxury consumption is expected to be decreased.

Overall, conspicuous consumption still plays a dominating role in shaping preferences and driving luxury consumption, as it does for luxury consumers across the world (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2021), but new minimalist and less conspicuous luxury consumption are gaining more attention (Rathi et al., 2022). Besides, there is another major shift in luxury consumption that has been increasingly discussed by researchers and marketers, that is, the digitisation of luxury. It will be addressed in the following section.

2.3.5 Luxury brands in digital age

2.3.5.1 Introduction

'Over the past 15 years, digital media platforms have revolutionised marketing, offering new ways to reach, inform, engage, sell to, learn about, and provide service to customer'- Lamberton and Stephen (2016, p.146)

The digitalisation is an extreme trend that has involved all facets of social and economic life. As luxury has become a part of people's social and economic life, it is undoubtedly and inevitably affected by this phenomenon. However, even though luxury covers a wide range of products and services such as clothing and accessories, food and wine, automobiles, tourism, etc., it has always been regarded as a distinctive and unconventional sector due to its unique business model. Likewise, when it comes to luxury marketing, as emphasised by Kapferer and Bastien (2012), traditional marketing principles cannot readily be applied to the luxury sector either. Hence, although digitalisation presents more opportunities than challenges for most of the businesses, it might play a different role in the luxury sector.

Since the early stage of Internet era, the experts in the luxury field have shown their concerns about challenges and threats that the Internet brings to the luxury brands (Dall'Omo Riley and Lacroix, 2003; Kapferer, 2000; 2014; Okonkwo, 2009). Internet seems to go against the nature of luxury. Especially, with the advent of Web 2.0, the social media has swept in with its accessibility to anyone, anywhere, anytime, its unrestricted user-generated content, and its uncontrollable viral dissemination, which all seem to be opposite to the concept of luxury brands, who are expected to be in full control of their image and contents, and always maintain a distance from their consumers. On the other hand, when it comes to e-commerce, people often associate it with 'discounts' or 'sales'; Conversely, for luxury brands, to keep raising the average prices is deemed as one of the key principles of luxury brand marketing (Bastien and Kapferer, 2012). Plus, the counterfeit issues in online marketplaces have also resulted in extra challenges for luxury brands, as 'the internet is the kingdom of counterfeiters' (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012, p.106).

As digitalisation becomes an unstoppable global trend, rather than devising strategies to evade it, most luxury brands have been looking for solutions to cope with it. Meanwhile, marketing researchers have also paid more attention to this field. Rathi et al. (2022) conducted an in-depth literature review related to luxury marketing research, which covers nearly 900 studies published from 1986 to 2020 and identified seven major research streams in this field over the past three decades (i.e., responsible luxury, luxury consumer behaviour, luxury brand management,

luxury social media marketing, conspicuous consumption, consumer perceived value and counterfeiting) and made suggestions for the future research priorities. They highlighted that research in luxury social media marketing is facing a constant need, as social media has also become the most important marketing tool for luxury brands. Moreover, they also suggested that how to balance between maintaining the aura of luxury and building connection with the masses in the digital environment remains one of the major tasks for luxury marketing researchers. More relevantly, it is highlighted by Rathi et al. (2022) that live streaming has become a 'new normal' and more investigation into the subject is needed, with particular attention to the double-edged impact of live streaming from the perspective of both brands and consumers, which is exactly what the present study is pursuing. Meanwhile, Creevey et al. (2022) systematically reviewed studies in the luxury and social media domain, and identified five main research themes (i.e. brand strategy, social media communication, consumer attitudes and perceptions, engagement, and brand performance-related outcomes). Consumer attitudes and perception is the largest theme in this area, expected to remain a central focus in future studies. It is also the focus of the present study, as positive attitudes and perceptions can lead to a deep commitment between consumers and brands through engaging in social media activities over time.

Furthermore, due to the rise of online luxury consumption, studies on how online distribution channels shape luxury consumer perceptions and behaviours have been gaining more attention too. With the integration of advanced information technologies and e-commerce, online selling channels have been found to offer luxury consumers novel and unique experiences that may not be attainable through traditional offline channels (Javornik et al., 2021; Seringhaus, 2005), and reduce perceived risks (Bonnin, 2020; Kim, Jiyeon and Forsythe, 2009), thereby fostering positive attitudes and perceptions towards the brands.

Therefore, to fulfil the research aim of this study, which is to explore the impact of LSC on luxury consumers' attitudes and perception towards the brands, it is necessary to look into how the social media and e-commerce attributes of LSC can respectively affect luxury consumers by reviewing existing studies on luxury social media marketing and e-commerce.

2.3.5.2 Luxury brand and social media marketing

2.3.5.2.1 Social media and social media marketing

4.9 billion people are using social media platforms worldwide (Forbes, 2024). Using social media is increasingly seen as an important part of people's daily lives. Since its widespread popularity in the early 2000s, social media has always been one of the hottest topics in both business and academia. From a general viewpoint, social media refers to new media technologies which allow users to interact with each other, to create and share information and/or sentiments (Filo et al., 2015; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Specific to the marketing perspective, social media is regarded as a platform where firms and consumers can mutually co-create values and benefit from each other by facilitating communication, engagement and information exchange (Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2018).

The emergence of social media has unlocked more possibilities for businesses. On the one hand, social media enables business to reach a broader range of audiences with tailored message beyond the limits of time and space and gain valuable insights into consumer behaviours. On the other hand, consumers, increasingly empowered by social media, can conveniently search for information, freely share their opinions and experiences, and connect with brands and other like-minded peers. In this vein, social media has been well recognised as an effective mechanism and developed as a marketing tool which has become an integral component of contemporary business strategies. In parallel, academic researchers defined social media marketing as the practices of using social media to achieve marketing objectives by creating values for stakeholders (Felix et al., 2017). Li, F. et al. (2023) have identified five major ways that firms can leverage social media to create values and boost their businesses: (1) using social media as a selling and promotion tool to drive traffics and direct sales; (2) using social media as communication and branding channel to build brand identity and foster brand loyalty; (3) using social media for customer relationship management and value co-creation to enhance engagement and relationship with consumers; (4) using social media as a monitoring and intelligence tool to gather information about consumers, markets and competitors; (5) and using social media used as a general marketing and

strategic tool to support overall business goals, driving long-term success. Correspondingly, social media creates five types of values for firms, namely transactional, media, relational, informational and strategic value, which have been demonstrated by extensive studies. Specifically, it has long been discovered that social media is a powerful driver of consumers' purchase intention (Kumar, V. and Rajan, 2012; Naylor et al., 2012). It brings new technologies into sales, which has changed the way of communication and interaction between buyers and sellers (Marshall et al., 2012). The efficiency of communication in a transaction has been improved by social media as it enables buyers and sellers to interact in a timely manner and gain more information about each other and product/services (Rodriguez et al., 2012), which in turn positively affect firms' financial performance (Paniagua and Sapena, 2014). Researchers also emphasise the significance of social media for brand communication. Scholars have also emphasised the significant role of social media in the transformation of advertising and marketing communications. The marketing channels commonly used by companies and brands have evolved from traditional print media and television to online social media platforms where brands can disseminate more vibrant brand-related content without the restrictions of time and location, and at a relatively low cost (De Vries et al., 2012; Liu-Thompkins, 2012). In addition, social media allows the integration of innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, or the newly buzzed *Metaverse*, which can significantly enhance the interactivity and entertainment of brands' marketing content, further facilitating consumer engagement and loyalty (Bazi et al., 2020; Bozkurt et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2023; Godey et al., 2016). Speaking of consumer engagement, the significance of social media as a CRM tool and value co-creation platform is well understood by researchers. As social media encourages user-generated content (UGC) and two-way communication, consumers are no longer just passive recipients of brand messages, but also active contributors of content and values (Labrecque et al., 2013; Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2018). Research has shown that this shift strengthens the connection between consumers and brands and enhance consumers' commitment to the brand (Hajli et al., 2017; Sohaib and Han, 2023; Wang, X. et al., 2020). Additionally, considering billions of people are sharing personal information,

emotions, social activities, etc. on a daily basis through various social media platforms, social media is an important source of big data, where companies can extract huge amounts of unstructured data and turn it into meaningful insights to help capture consumer preferences and behaviours, market trends and dynamics (Ghani et al., 2019). For example, through capturing and analysing data about consumers' sentiment on social media, companies can learn about consumers' opinions towards firms, products or brands (Kauffmann et al., 2020; Liu, Xia et al., 2021).

Social media marketing can benefit business in a number of ways, including promoting consumer purchase intention and engagement, as well as enhancing their understanding of consumers. In this regard, LSC, as a new social media marketing tool, may also bring the same benefits to businesses. Research in this area can provide insights into how businesses can better use this tactic.

2.3.5.2.2 Luxury brand social media marketing

The considerable influence of social media marketing in the non-luxury sectors have been widely discussed. Interestingly, when it comes to the luxury industry, it becomes more complex, and even 'paradoxical'. To some extent, luxury brands and social media are considered to fundamentally clash in their core principles. (Dall'Olmo Riley and Lacroix, 2003; Hennigs et al., 2012; Kapferer, 2000; Kapferer and Bastien, 2012; Okonkwo, 2009). As addressed above, with its ubiquity, accessibility and broad engagement, social media has rapidly evolved to be the most popular marketing tool. On the contrary, luxury brands thrive on scarcity, exclusivity, and a deliberate distance between themselves and the masses, therefore fostering an aura of rarity and prestige. Stressed by Kapferer and Valette-Florence (2018), the principle of rarity is always the fundamental for luxury brands to sustain their aura and their dream value, regardless of the cross-national or cross-cultural contexts.

Yet, despite these contradictions, the remarkable growth and powerful capabilities of social media have led to its increasing popularity in luxury brand marketing. Luxury brands are using more and investing more in social media marketing to connect with their clients while balancing the 'disharmony' with social

media. At the same time, academic interest in this area is surging. Studies have shown that the mechanisms of social media marketing in the luxury sector bear similarities to those in non-luxury sectors. For instance, from the consumer perspective, social media has also been found to enhance consumers' trust, engagement, and purchase intention in the luxury brand context (Chu et al., 2013; Kim, A.J. and Ko, 2010). From the brand perspective, social media marketing is positively associated with brand-related outcomes, including brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand image, and brand equity (Godey et al., 2016; Kim, A.J. and Ko, 2012).

However, it is important to stress that luxury brands have a unique appeal and are consumed differently compared to other sectors, which requires distinct marketing strategies to fulfil the specific needs associated with luxury brands (Choi, Y.K. et al., 2020; Kapferer and Bastien, 2009; Kong et al., 2021; Romaniuk and Huang, 2019). Bazi et al. (2020) also emphasise that it is irrational to assume that social media marketing in the context of the luxury and non-luxury sectors work on the same mechanism. Thus, luxury marketers are calling for more investigation into social media marketing in the context of luxury brands, especially as new phenomena emerge (Creevey et al., 2022; Rathi et al., 2022).

Research in the field of social media marketing for luxury brands, according to Creevey et al. (2022), emerged in 2010 and has shown a consistent upward trajectory, with a notable surge in 2017. Nowadays, it constitutes a significant and influential branch of luxury marketing research. Creevey et al. (2022) have identified that existing research in this domain is centred around five core categories, i.e., *Luxury Brand Strategy*, *Luxury Brand Social Media Communications*, *Luxury Consumer Attitudes and Perceptions*, *Customer Engagement* and *The Influence of Social Media On Brand Performance*. The first category includes the research that discusses the integration of social media into business strategy of luxury brands. It is worth noting that it refers to the integration into overall brand strategy, instead of just a particular department function of the company, which may involve everything from internal management (e.g., branding and human resources management) to external customer touchpoints (e.g., omni-channel distribution and customer services (Arrington, 2021; Gibbs et al., 2015; Heine and Berghaus, 2014;

Kapferer and Bastien, 2012; Phan et al., 2011). The second category *Social Media Communications* theme focuses on the influence of social media from information and communication perspective. Researchers suggest that luxury brands' marketing activities on social media are mainly based on five characteristic dimensions of social media: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customisation, and word-of-mouth (WOM) (Godey et al., 2016; Kim, A.J. and Ko, 2012). The studies in this theme typically focus on how marketing content created by luxury brands using these five dimensions influences consumer behaviour (e.g., purchase intention, customer satisfaction) and brand equity (Chung et al., 2020; Godey et al., 2016; Kim, A.J. and Ko, 2012). Researchers have shown the most interest in the *Consumer Attitude and Perception* theme, where luxury consumers' attitude and perception toward luxury brands on social media are discussed, such as how social media affecting materialism orientation and luxury consumption (Kamal et al., 2013). Consumers' attitudes and perception towards a brand's social media communications are important indicators of their attitudes towards the brand (Lee, E.-B. et al., 2017; Silvera and Austad, 2004). When effectively shaped by social media efforts, these favourable attitudes are likely to foster a deeper, more sustained relationship between consumers and the brand, by engaging in the brand's social media activities over time. The fourth research theme highlights the engaging experiences that luxury brands offer consumers through social media, which includes cognitive, affective and behavioural engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Research topics in this theme mainly include how social media affect engagement (Bazi et al., 2020; Dhaoui, 2014; Liu, Xia et al., 2021), how digital engagement affect luxury consumer behaviours (Burnasheva et al., 2019; Kefi and Maar, 2020) and brand-related outcomes (Essamri et al., 2019; Pentina et al., 2018), and how to build engagement on social media (Straker and Wrigley, 2016). The last theme is about the influence of social media marketing on business performance of luxury brands, demonstrating the tangible value that social media brings to luxury brands, such as revenues (Kim, W.-H. and Chae, 2018). Researchers have also stressed that with constant technological innovation and evolving consumer preferences, there are always knowledge gaps to be filled in each research theme. More importantly, these five research themes are all inter-related and overlapping,

indicating the current research process in the field of luxury brand social media marketing, as well as suggesting a landscape for the future research avenues (See Figure 2-3).

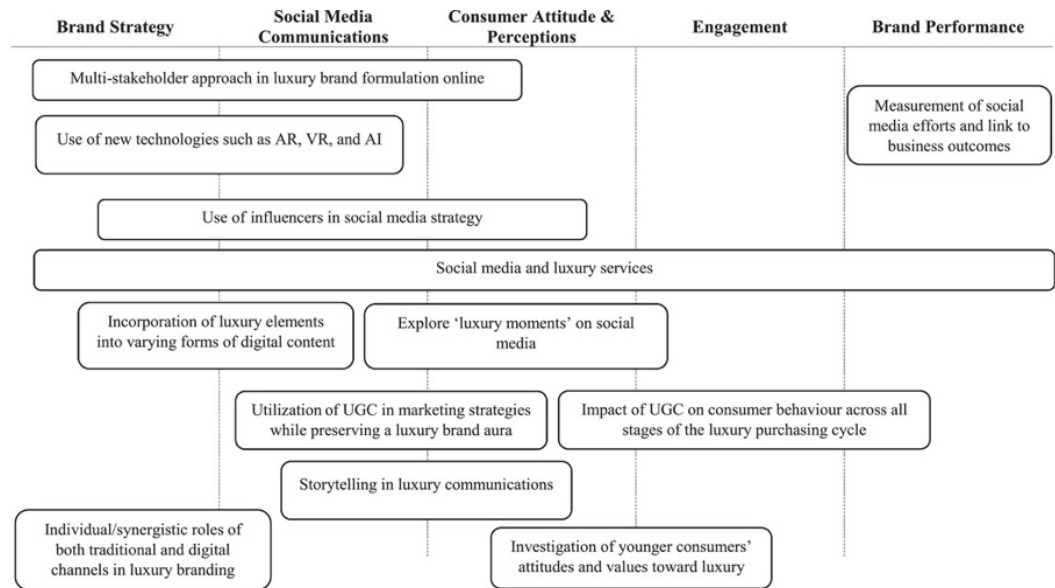


Figure 2-3 The future research directions in the field of luxury brand social media marketing

Source: (Creevey et al., 2022).

Relative to the present study, on the one hand, the relationships between social media marketing and luxury brand loyalty have been identified and examined by researchers from various aspects. Fetais et al. (2023) identified four dimensions of luxury brands' social media marketing activities (i.e., customisation, trendiness, interaction and entertainment) based on information system and marketing theory and confirmed that social media marketing positively affects luxury brand loyalty through enhancing customer engagement; However, there was no direct effect of social media marketing activities on luxury brand loyalty. Also, given that luxury brand marketers are now paying increasing attention to virtual brand communities (Essamri et al., 2019), social media has provided channels and platforms for building online communities where luxury consumers can share brand stories and shopping experiences, interact with brands and others, thus fostering engagement and loyalty (Brogi et al., 2013; Kim, Juran and Lee, 2019). In addition, previous study has shown that the interactivity and openness facilitated by social media can enhance trust and foster a para-social relationship between luxury brands and their consumers, in turn driving brand loyalty (Zha et al., 2023). On the other hand, LSC, as a new form of

social media, has richer features than the traditional social media, which provides more possibilities for luxury brands to interact with consumers and create appealing and engaging brand contents. Thus, more empirical research on this phenomenon is needed to understand whether LSC works the same way as other forms of social media do for luxury consumers. Rathi et al. (2022) also echoed that, in the future, social media-related topics will become increasingly important in the luxury marketing field; in the meantime, live streaming will become the 'new normal' in social media industry, and exploring its impact on brands and consumers will be a must on the research agenda. In response to this, this study will examine how LSC can enhance brand loyalty through affecting consumers' attitudes, perceived social norms and behavioural control in the context of luxury brands.

2.3.5.3 Luxury brands and E-commerce

2.3.5.3.1 E-commerce and related studies

E-commerce, short for electronic commerce, does not have a uniform definition as it involves almost all sectors and is often used with varying meanings depending on different contexts. From a broad viewpoint, it 'includes any form of economic activity conducted via electronic connection' (Wigand, 1997). Since its advent during the late 20th century, e-commerce has evolved from an online store that only allowed for simple transactions to a complex ecosystem that encompasses a wide range of business models, including business-to-business, business-to-consumer and consumer-to-business. E-commerce has become an integral part of modern business, which for enterprises drives innovation in marketing strategies and extends market penetration, and for consumers offers unparalleled convenience and choices. Here, we discuss e-commerce by focusing on its online shopping application, as well as understanding its impact from the marketing strategy and consumer behaviour perspectives. In this case, e-commerce simply refers to buying and selling goods and services by using the internet. To date, constant updates in technology, such as secure payment gateways, big data solutions and artificial intelligence, have revolutionised the online shopping experience, making it more convenient, efficient and customised.

Given that e-commerce has brought a profound impact on our lives, academic scholars have been trying to study and understand this phenomenon by combining various disciplines and research angles, including information systems, psychology, and marketing. For example, there are indications that e-commerce is appealing to consumers because its integration with mobile devices removes geographic and temporal constraints, allowing people to do shopping anytime and anywhere (Jarvenpaa and Todd, 1996). E-commerce improves the efficiency of information retrieval for consumers, enabling them to access more information than just product information, such as reviews and recommendations from other consumers, to help reduce perceived risk and make better purchasing decisions (Dabholkar and Sheng, 2012). E-commerce also offers multiple ways of interactions by using different technologies (e.g., AI and AR), which enhances consumer trust and engagement (Dabholkar and Sheng, 2012; Gefen et al., 2003; Qin et al., 2021). As the core of e-commerce, the shopping websites are the online portals where everything occurs (e.g., acquiring product information, communicating between sellers and buyers, completing transactions, etc.), which is one of the determinants of achieving success in e-commerce. Previous studies have proven that the design of shopping websites is significantly associated with consumer attitude and behaviours. Such as, an aesthetic and clear interface design can make consumers feel entertained and increase their intention to revisit the site (Al-Qeisi et al., 2014). Moreover, online consumers also show concerns about the security of transactions, usability and privacy protection features of e-commerce websites (Kim, Y. and Peterson, 2017; Parasuraman et al., 2005). Hence, some researchers have summarised the determinants of e-commerce quality. Yoo, B. and Donthu (2001) identified four dimensions used for measuring the quality of online shopping websites, including ease of use, aesthetic design, processing speed and security. Collier and Bienstock (2006) pointed out the importance of information presented on a website which also affect how consumers judge e-commerce quality, in addition to functionality, design, privacy and ease of use.

2.3.5.3.2 Luxury brands on E-commerce

‘...the sale of luxury goods online has been the subject of constant debate.’

While e-commerce has gradually penetrated almost every industry over the past decade or so, luxury brands have remained wary of online selling, believing that 'selling a luxury product on the internet is extremely dangerous' (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012; p. 104). Traditionally, while luxury boutiques and shops may appear to allow anyone to walk in, the scene setting of entrance, however, usually gives the feeling that access is restricted, and only qualified people are allowed in (Dion and Arnould, 2011). Now, imagine, with the help of e-commerce, that with a simple click, anyone can get a glimpse of the magics of luxury creation, making those once out-of-reach 'dreams' no longer secret treasures for the privileged few! Hence, brand managers claimed that internet is a great tool for luxury marketing communication, but e-commerce should be restrained (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012). Specifically, their uncertainty about selling luxury goods online centres on three key issues. As is known, an individual's desire for luxury goods greatly stems from the fact that the scarcity of luxury goods makes them difficult to obtain. In this case, the first and the biggest concern is that online sales will reduce the perceived scarcity of their products while expanding sales reach, thus diminishing the appeal of their brands. Kapferer and Bastien (2012) refer to this as the 'internet dilemma', indicating a mismatch between the accessibility of the internet and the exclusivity of luxury brands. Normally, one of the strategies that luxury brands use to maintain their 'luxury aura' is to restrict the availability of their products (Dubois and Paternault, 1995), i.e., to control the extent to which they are easily accessible to consumers. It is often managed by strictly limiting production volumes and having a high degree of control over distribution channels (Brun and Castelli, 2013). However, the use of e-commerce as a distribution channel means opening up the product availability to almost anyone, although it also allows luxury brands to expand their markets quickly at a lower cost, reaching more new customers and sustaining long-term growth (Chevalier and Gutsatz, 2012). Accordingly, this makes e-commerce a challenge unique to the luxury sector. Secondly, another concern luxury brands have with e-commerce is the lack of physical contact in the online environment. Luxury goods are regarded as multi-sensory commodities, offering luxurious experiences for sight, smell, sound, touch and feel (Wiedmann et al., 2013). Luxury marketers suggests

that compared to other sectors, the presentation of these sensory elements is more imperative for luxury brands to provide a whole consumer experience (Okonkwo, 2009; Wiedmann et al., 2013). Additionally, the role of salespeople in luxury retailing cannot be ignored as they are closely related to consumer satisfaction with the shopping experience (Alavi et al., 2021; Baker, Julie et al., 1994), whereas communication and interaction between salespeople and consumers is limited by the online retail channel. Thus, it leads to the concern that whether luxury brands' online channels can recreate the characteristics and atmosphere their traditional stores present and provide customers with the same level of shopping experience. The last concern is the counterfeiting of luxury goods and their sales through unauthorised online grey market channels. As we know, while international and global brands have been facing many difficulties in the fight against counterfeit products, the accessibility of the internet has even created more opportunities for counterfeiters to produce, promote and distribute counterfeit goods (Wilson and Kinghorn, 2016). Although there may be no direct financial loss to luxury brands, the easily accessibility and widespread distribution through the Internet may damage the reputation and image of luxury brands, especially when the brands rely heavily on originality and scarcity (WTR, 2020).

However, despite the above concerns, the rapid global expansion of the Internet and e-commerce has recognised the huge potential of the online consumer base. Selling luxury goods online is no longer seen as a 'dilemma'. Most luxury brands have already embraced E-commerce, by launching their own online portals and/or partnering with third-party online luxury retailers. So did those top luxury brands (e.g., Chanel and Hermès) that were once very resistant to e-commerce. In addition, flexible online payment methods and upgraded transaction security have greatly contributed to consumer trust in luxury online retailing, fuelling the growth of the online luxury market (Yoon, 2002). This digital move of luxury brands has led to an unprecedented desire for luxury goods by a growing number of affluent consumers who previously had no access to luxury goods/services and were unable to experience them first hand. Especially, the outbreak of the pandemic has brought luxury online sales to a new level, with online pure-play retailers such as Farfetch, Tmall Luxury and others standing out as the new winners (Statista, 2023).

Accordingly, the key question for luxury marketers today is not whether online selling is necessary, rather how to better leverage online channels to benefit brands.

In response to the fears of brand managers, academic researchers have given some indications through empirical studies. The findings of Kluge and Fassnacht (2015), to a certain extent, dispelled the first concern. The researchers interviewed seven experts in the luxury industry and conducted two experiments to respectively investigate the perceptions of luxury consumers from the USA who have a certain level of knowledge and positive attitudes towards luxury goods, and high-income earners from Germany about online luxury shopping. The results did not show a negative impact of online accessibility of luxury brands websites on consumer perceived scarcity. In other words, online accessibility may not be a determining factor of perceived scarcity, and therefore will not significantly diminish the luxury brand's appeal. Conversely, online accessibility can effectively enhance consumer perceived convenience, consequently driving their willingness to buy luxury goods online. In terms of the lack of sensory experience, in fact, the adoption of e-commerce has opened more possibilities for luxury brands and other luxury retailers to integrate multiple forms of media and advanced technologies into their sites, complementing and even enhancing the multi-sensory consumer experience. As BOF (2022) stated, 'the digital tools and touchpoints that are becoming part of the luxury customer experience, ranging from apps to online channels to virtual reality, are no substitute for personal, face-to-face service in physical stores. Instead, they are enabling brands and retailers to enhance the experience.' Traditionally, to align with the brand identity and enhance brand image, luxury brands often design their shop interiors to be 'magical' and 'artistic' (Dion and Arnould, 2011). The product displays in boutiques also demonstrate the brand's unique aesthetic and essence. Thus, entering a luxury brand's boutique tends to be part of the customer experience offered by the brand as well (Atwal and Williams, 2017). The sumptuous and exciting atmosphere of luxury boutiques can evoke positive sentiments and stimulate purchasing behaviour, especially among hedonistic consumers (Holmqvist and Lunardo, 2015). Hence, there was a concern that online sites would not be able to provide the same experience. However, academic research has argued that the integration of digital technologies (e.g., image interactivity technology) into e-

commerce sites can, to some extent, compensate for sensory loss (Beuckels and Hudders, 2016; Fiore et al., 2005; Kim, Jihyun et al., 2007), even enhancing luxury perception (Togawa and Sugitani, 2022). Furthermore, researchers also emphasise that rather than replicating the atmospheres of offline stores, it is more important for luxury brands to innovate and create novel and unique experiences for consumers through their online channels (Seringhaus, 2005). For example, AR/VR fitting room was found to be a sales driver for online luxury sales in the UK in 2021 (Klarna, 2022). Gucci has revolutionised the online shopping experience by integrating an AR (augmented reality) try-on feature into their iOS app in 2019 (Preuss, 2019); In 2022, Farfetch acquired Wanna, the AR tech company behind Gucci's AR try-on campaign, to integrate this technology into its e-commerce platform to enhance customer experience (BOF, 2022). Researchers have also proven that the integration of e-commerce and AR technology can help luxury brands grow brand equity (Javornik et al., 2021). Regarding the concern of counterfeiting, luxury brands may have realised that it is a long-lasting, nagging problem and prepared to consistently invest their efforts in dealing with it (Kapferer and Michaut, 2014). Academics, meanwhile, are ongoing their research on the impact of luxury counterfeits, as there is debate. Given that the 'booming' of the counterfeit market mirrors the desire for genuine luxury brands, the early research found out that the fakers had only a marginal impact on the originals (Hieke, 2010; Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000), and interestingly, they might even contribute to increasing sales of the real luxury goods (Romani et al., 2012). However, Commuri (2009) argues that 'genuine-item consumers are not indifferent to the proliferation of counterfeits' (p.95), and they are likely to abandon the original brands and switch to others when seeing the brands are widely counterfeited. Additionally, more studies have reported the positive influences of e-commerce on luxury brands in various aspects. Kim, J.-H. and Kim (2020) suggest that high-quality online retail services can enhance consumer loyalty to luxury brands. Liu, Xia et al. (2013) mention that consumers may enjoy buying luxury goods online more than in a brick-and-mortar store because there is no pressure from salespeople. Researchers have also emphasised that among many luxury categories, the luxury fashion sector is considered to be a type of category that is well suited for online selling, because

fashion trends are constantly changing over time, and fashion products such as clothes and accessories are usually highly subjected to seasonality, which require quick rotation of inventory (Baker, Jeff et al., 2018).

The advantages that online selling channels bring to luxury brands are undeniable. As one of the newest e-commerce types, LSC is based on traditional e-commerce embedded with live streaming, a dynamic, real-time marketing communication tool, which enriches online shopping experience with multiple real-time, interactive elements. In fact, since 2016 LSC has witnessed a remarkable growth, especially driven by the pandemic (Statista, 2024c). Notably, this type of e-commerce has developed quite mature in China and is widely adopted in a variety of industries. According to CNNIC (2024), as of December 2023, the number of live streaming users in China has reached 650.1 million, accounting for 74.7% of the total internet users. Meanwhile, many academic research has investigated this phenomenon and confirmed that the integration of live streaming feature can greatly improve e-commerce in terms of its entertaining, utilitarian and social interaction attributes, which consequently enhance consumer engagement (Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020; Xue et al., 2020) and purchase intention (Cai et al., 2018; Guo, Y. et al., 2022; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Wu, D. et al., 2023). To be specific, live streamers are considered as one of the key drivers of LSC's success, who can partially fill the role of salespeople that is lacking in traditional online shopping environments (Guo, Y. et al., 2022). It has been found that live streamers (e.g., physical attractiveness, emotions, cognitive competence, social skills, etc.) are positively associated with consumers' willingness to buy and the performance of LSC (Bharadwaj et al., 2022; Chen, H. et al., 2023; Gao, X. et al., 2021; Liao, M. et al., 2023). In addition, supported by real-time interactive technology, LSC can facilitate the formation of para-social relationship (Liao, J. et al., 2022), which has been shown to influence consumer engagement and loyalty in online environment (Kim, E.-H. et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2020; Zhong, Yunying et al., 2021).

Most recently the luxury industry has also recognised the remarkable success of live streaming e-commerce and has begun their exploration of this new sector, yet academic research on this phenomenon is still limited. Besides, both industry and academia have highlighted that one of the top concerns for luxury brands in the

current digital context is to understand how to enhance consumer loyalty by satisfying consumer needs in e-commerce sites (Kim, J.-H., 2019), especially considering the fact that the majority of luxury consumers are dissatisfied with their online luxury shopping experience (BCG and AltaGamma, 2023). Therefore, based on the above discussion, we propose the focal argument of this research, that is, whether LSC can also enhance luxury consumers' perception about online shopping experience (as it does in other industries) and, in turn, lead to positive brand outcomes for luxury brands, specifically regarding brand loyalty.

2.3.6 The Chinese context of luxury consumption

2.3.6.1 Introduction

'Marketing editions work best when they are localized to bring in stories and ideas appropriate to those markets.'

- Philip Kotler

Kotler's insight underscores the necessity of tailoring marketing efforts to the specific target market. Beyond the examination of marketing campaigns themselves, it is crucial to consider the context within which these campaigns are executed. In this study, when referring to China's market, the focus is exclusively on mainland China, which differs significantly from other regions (i.e., Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan) in terms of social patterns, economic environment, distribution, and promotional channels, among other factors.

But why does this study focus on China's market and Chinese luxury consumers? There are three primary reasons. First, since 2012, China has emerged as the second-largest market for luxury goods and is projected to become the world's largest personal luxury market by 2030 (PwC, 2024). China ranks second globally in the number of ultra-high net worth individuals (Altrata, 2024). The growing number of wealthy individuals with substantial spending power reflects the significant growth potential of the luxury goods market. Second, compared to other counterparts (e.g., western countries), China's unique social and cultural contexts result in distinct consumer preferences and behaviours, necessitating an in-depth understanding for luxury brands to develop effective marketing strategies. Lastly,

China's digital luxury market has been expanding rapidly, where luxury brands have been increasingly establishing their online presence and vying for market shares. Notably, since the COVID-19 pandemic, LSC has become a considerable phenomenon in China and has begun spreading across the Asia-Pacific region, despite facing challenges in gaining traction in Europe and America. In this case, currently, China remains the only market where luxury brands have embraced LSC strategies.

To deepen the understanding of the research context for this study, the following section will address the trends and challenges that luxury brands currently encounter in China's market, through reviewing previous studies and industry reports on Chinese luxury consumption.

2.3.6.2 China's luxury fashion consumption: trends and issues

As the second largest luxury market, China has emerged as a pivotal force in the global luxury market. With a rapidly expanding middle class and a rising affluent population, China's market has significantly reshaped the global luxury consumption landscape. Despite the downturn during the pandemic, China's market has shown its resilience and gradually regained momentum since 2023, and is expected to continuously grow between 2024 and 2028 by a total of \$9.3 billion (+16.64%) (Statista, 2024f). This forecast reflects not only the sheer size of China's market, but also the changing preferences and behaviours of Chinese luxury consumers, who are becoming more sophisticated and demanding in their consumption of luxury goods. In addition, more Chinese luxury consumers turned to domestic market over the past three years as international travel was restricted during the lockdowns, driving growth in domestic luxury spending (Ruder Finn, 2023; TMI, 2023). This shift underscores the importance of localising strategies to capture the growing demands within China. Another fact that cannot be overlooked is China's role as a trend-setter in the global luxury market. Along with a well-developed e-commerce industry and advanced digital technologies, China's market has become one of the testing grounds for luxury brands for digital innovations and marketing strategies, and the trends generated here often influence global practices (Deloitte, 2023). Understanding the unique characteristics and trends of the Chinese market and

consumers is therefore crucial for luxury brands to sustain growth and relevance in this competitive landscape. Given the fact that the factors shaping the luxury market as a whole are diverse and complex, such as external political tensions and economic climate, instead of discussing the commercial ups and downs of China's luxury market, we will look at the consumers behind the industry, focusing on their evolving demographics, preferences and motivations for luxury consumption, in order to gain insights for luxury marketers on how to tailor marketing strategies to the local market. Specifically, there are three observable trends in China's market from a consumer perspective.

2.3.6.2.1 The evolving Chinese luxury consumers

One of the most notable transformations in Chinese luxury consumption is the evaluation of consumer preferences. In the past, Chinese luxury consumers were often driven by conspicuous consumption, where the display of wealth and social status was the main purchasing motivation. However, today, there has been a significant shift towards inconspicuous, personal-oriented motivations, such as self-gratification (Eckhardt et al., 2015; McKinsey, 2019a; Perry et al., 2020; TMI, 2023; Wu, Z. et al., 2017). The reasons behind this shift can be understood from social and cultural perspectives. Since luxury brands entered mainland China in the 1990s, with rapid socio-economic and cultural changes, Chinese consumer behaviour has always been shaped by both the admiration of western lifestyle and traditional Chinese culture (Zhan and He, 2012). On one hand, Chinese luxury consumers have been significantly affected by collectivistic culture. According to Hofstede (1991) and (Triandis, 1998), generally, social culture can be categorised as individualist and collectivist. China is considered to be solidly rooted in a collectivistic culture; As a contrast, most western countries, represented by the US, are generally individualistic. Simply put, individualism emphasises that an individual is an independent entity with unique personalities. They make decisions mainly depending on self-identity and self-esteem enhancement. Conversely, collectivists usually think of themselves as part of the social relational networks. They value more 'social self' and social group esteem maintenance, and desire to gain social acceptance and recognition. Accordingly, with the impact of collective culture, a

Chinese person tends to act in accordance more with social norms, than with personal integrity, to ensure the social self can fit in the collective community. Scholars have found out that Chinese consumers are more likely to be influenced by social norms and significant others (e.g., families, friends and colleagues) during the decision-making process, than their western peers (Bao et al., 2003; Li, J.J. and Su, 2007). Therefore, Chinese luxury consumers used to play extra importance on luxury brands' social values and symbolic meaning (Zhan and He, 2012). Moreover, previous studies have pointed out that consumers in the collectivist cultures are often more materialistic than those in the individualist cultures (Tatzel, 2002; Wong and Ahuvia, 1998). Materialists believe that the possession of material goods is a way to gain happiness and social status, and they are more likely to purchase and own expensive items, such as luxury goods, to publicly display their wealth and social status (Belk, 1985; Richins, 1994). Many studies have shown that materialism also plays an important role in driving luxury consumption of Chinese consumers (Chen, J. and Kim, 2013; Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2019; Li, J. et al., 2015; Mainolfi, 2020; Zhang, L. and Zhao, 2019). On the other hand, given that 'the leisure class' in western countries emerged and introduced a bourgeois lifestyle, western lifestyle became popular and influential in China with the opening of the economy in the late 1970s, indicating the images of the wealthy, upper classes; At the same time, western luxury goods became the symbols of success and social standing (Chevalier and Lu, 2010). Motivated by the desire for an upper-class, luxurious lifestyle, Chinese people sought to imitate their western peers and considered the purchasing and using luxury products as a way to display their upscale and wealthy lifestyle (Chadha and Husband, 2010; Perry et al., 2020; Zhan and He, 2012). However, despite the rapid growth of luxury goods demand since the late 90s, Chinese consumers were generally considered to lack knowledge about luxury brands, compared to their counterparts in the developed luxury markets (Zhan and He, 2012), and initially were attracted more to big name brands and highly conspicuous designs (e.g., loud logos) that enable them to impress others by displaying recognisable luxury products (Eckhardt et al., 2015). Overall, under the influence of multiple social and cultural factors, conspicuous consumption was

considered as the prevailing consumption pattern of Chinese luxury consumption in the past two decades (Chadha and Husband, 2010; Li, G. et al., 2012).

In recent years, however, the rapid development of digitalisation and globalisation enables Chinese people to have a closer look at western lifestyles, as well as to have greater access to information and a better understanding of luxury brands and products. Consequently, it has been recognised that Chinese luxury consumers have become more sophisticated and discerning, and their brand knowledge and tastes have significantly evolved (Eckhardt et al., 2015; McKinsey, 2019a; Perry et al., 2020; TMI, 2023). They are increasingly turning their attention to luxury goods' inherent characteristics, exclusivity and uniqueness (Ruder Finn, 2023; TMI, 2023). Academic researchers have also found out that Chinese luxury consumption have been increasingly driven by inconspicuous values of luxury brands, such as hedonic, functional and experiential values (Diaz Ruiz and Cruz, 2023; Jiang, L. and Shan, 2018; Zhan and He, 2012; Zhang, L. and Zhao, 2019). Meanwhile, China's traditional societal norms are being challenged by the rising younger generations, who are unwilling to be restrained by traditional collectivistic values. It has been reported that Chinese luxury consumers are increasingly influenced by individualism and hedonism (Atwal, 2022; Jiang, L. and Shan, 2018). When choosing a luxury product, they expect it has 'good design and styling' and 'good quality and workmanship'; They purchase luxury products as a way of 'self-rewarding' and to 'express personality and uniqueness' (TMI, 2023). Jiang, L. and Shan (2018) have pointed out that instead of social values of luxury goods, young Chinese consumers care more about the hedonic experience, personal aspiration, and the exceptional quality brought by luxury goods.

While the growth of inconspicuous consumption, conspicuousness still exists. Various consumption patterns indicate highly diverse and fragmented consumer segments with varying preferences, attitudes and behaviours, which presents both opportunities and challenges for luxury brands. On a positive note, it offers brands the chance to tap into a broader and more varied customer base. However, it makes it more challenging to devise marketing strategies to target Chinese consumers (Chevalier and Lu, 2010).

2.3.6.2.2 The rising online luxury market in China

Online luxury shopping is another significant trend shaping China's luxury consumption. Over the past decade, China has shown its remarkable progress in e-commerce, becoming a forerunner in this domain. According to Statista (2024a), China is set to become the world's largest e-commerce market by revenue, with gross merchandise value (GMV) expected to reach £1,156.00 billion in 2024, surpassing the £194 billion of the US. This growth is attributed to the rapid proliferation of the internet across China and the surge in online shopping users. According to the CNNIC (2014;2024), the number of internet users in China increased from 618 million in 2013 to 1.092 billion by the end of 2023, representing 77.5% of the total population. Among these users, 915 million engage in online shopping, accounting for 83.8% of the whole internet population. China, today, has the world's largest digital buyer population. As home to several of the world's largest e-retailers (i.e., Alibaba, JD.com, Pinduoduo, TikTok/Douyin), China's e-commerce infrastructure, including consumer protection, online payment systems, and logistics, has developed significantly, bolstering consumer confidence in online shopping. In addition, with the integration of new features such as live streaming and rapid delivery, the e-commerce landscape in China has been further enhanced, significantly improving consumers' online shopping experience. Coupled with the restriction of offline shopping channels during the past three years of the pandemic, the penetration rate of online shopping within the China's market has grown even further. Consequently, online shopping has become an indispensable part of the majority of Chinese consumers' daily life.

When it comes to online luxury purchases, although the majority of luxury consumption still occurs through offline channels, nearly half (46%) of Chinese luxury consumers buy luxury goods online, with young heavy spenders (under 30 years old, annual spending over ¥300,000 RMB) making up a significant portion (TMI, 2023). Online luxury shopping channels have enabled consumers from tier-2 and lower-tier cities to easily buy luxury goods from home. This demographic has substantially contributed to the growth of online luxury consumption in China, accounting for nearly 50% of total luxury spending in 2023, with an expected growth

rate of 11% in the future (TMI, 2023). Furthermore, the growth of online luxury consumption is also attributed to luxury brands' investment in online presence and distribution. In response to the vast Chinese market, many luxury brands have increasingly invested in digital marketing and e-commerce platforms specifically targeting China. For example, brands have opened flagship stores on Taobao/Tmall, collaborated with third-party mono-brands luxury retailers such as Secoo, or engaged in live streaming selling through official brand accounts on social media platforms. Additionally, luxury brands have placed more emphasis on enhancement of the digital innovation in China's market, such as virtual try-ons and live fashion shows (LVMH, 2024; Nan, 2024) , which have significantly increased Chinese consumer engagement and the overall shopping experience(Diaz Ruiz and Cruz, 2023; Liu, Xiuting, 2022; Zhu, 2023). The integration of social media and e-commerce platforms, known as social commerce, has also been a crucial factor driving the growth of online luxury consumption in China. Numerous studies have shown that social media greatly influences the purchasing decisions of Chinese luxury consumers (Creevey et al., 2022; Godey et al., 2016; Jin and Ryu, 2020; Liu, S. et al., 2019). Social commerce platforms like Xiaohongshu, Douyin (TikTok), and WeChat have also been essential channels for Chinese consumers to access luxury brand information, interact with brands, and communicate with other consumers (Ruder Finn, 2023; TMI, 2023). The combination of social and e-commerce functionalities has significantly enhanced the instant conversion from online presence to sales.

Under this trend, the primary challenge for luxury brands lies in understanding the distinctive online distribution channels in China's market. Unlike other markets, Chinese luxury consumers have their own preferred online channels to buy luxury goods, in addition to brand websites and Apps. As shown in Figure 8, Taobao/Tmall and JD.com are the two most prominent third-party e-commerce platforms in China. In contrast, luxury consumers in Hong Kong tend to use internationally popular e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Net-A-Porter, and Farfetch (Ruder Finn, 2023). Moreover, in recent years, Xiaohongshu and Douyin have begun to emerge, becoming one of the most utilised channels by Chinese consumers to shop luxury goods, as well as to obtain information about luxury brands and products (Nan, 2024;

Ruder Finn, 2023). Each channel has its own differentiating proposition, correspondingly targeting consumers with different preferences. According to TMI (2023), consumers who choose to purchase through official online channels do so mainly because of the more comprehensive product selection; those who buy luxury goods through third-party e-commerce platforms are primarily motivated by convenience and the rich product offerings provided by platforms; and consumers who purchase via social commerce are often interest-oriented, attracted by marketing content such as influencer/celebrity live streams. But, regardless of the channel, product authenticity and detailed information are always the top concerns for Chinese luxury consumers when purchasing online. In addition, notably, luxury brand live streaming e-commerce, currently unique to China's market, is a phenomenon that cannot be overlooked, which is particularly popular among younger consumers and those from tier-2 and below cities (Fastdata, 2022; TMI, 2023). Therefore, luxury brands should consider placing more emphasis on this digital tactic and explore how it can enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty. It is also the purpose of conducting this study, which is to provide insights for the adoption of LSC for luxury brands.

2.3.6.2.3 The rising Gen Z luxury consumers in China

The third key trend shaping the future of Chinese luxury consumption is the rise of Generation Z (Gen Z). This generation, born between 1996 and 2010, has been profoundly influenced by economic shifts, the digital age, climate crises, and the Covid-19 (McKinsey, 2023c), who are gradually emerging as a major driving force in the global luxury market. As discussed in Section, luxury consumption in China is increasingly shifting away from conspicuous consumption, and Gen Z, as a critical consumer segment, is at the forefront of this shift, with their luxury purchases primarily driven by self-fulfilment and esteem-related motivations. Previous research has confirmed that, compared to older generations, Chinese Gen Z consumers place greater emphasis on the hedonic values, self-identity representation, and functional details of luxury brands, rather than on social values (Jiang, L. and Shan, 2018). This is because they have become more sophisticated and knowledgeable as luxury consumers, aligning more closely with mature luxury consumers in

Western developed markets, who appreciate the finer details of luxury brands and products, such as design, materials, and heritage (McKinsey, 2019a). A survey by Daxue Consulting (2022) that the primary motivation for luxury purchases among China's Gen Z is self-rewarding, followed by the pursuit of fashion, with signalling social status being the least important. More importantly, this generation is also digital-savvy and already accustomed to online luxury shopping, as the internet and e-commerce have become an integral part of their daily lives. Their luxury purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by social media, opinion leaders, and their peers (McKinsey, 2019b; TMI, 2023), while traditional advertising seems to have less impact on them (Sun, Yan et al., 2022). As a digital-native generation, Gen Z exhibits a strong interest in various media formats and has higher expectations for content quality and creativity. Not just traditional text and images, they are also keen on short videos, animations and other digital formats. Consequently, they have a higher level of acceptance towards advertisements presented in the form of short videos, animation and live streams (TalkingData, 2021).

Although China's Gen Z shares some similarities with their peers in other countries, such as being digitally savvy, studies have identified unique characteristics that luxury brands must consider. Despite their pursuit of individualism and hedonism, Chinese Gen Z is still influenced by traditional Chinese culture and collectivism. For example, under the influence of collectivist social norms, they place greater importance on the opinions of family and friends when making purchase or return decisions, compared to their Western peers (Serravalle et al., 2022; Shin et al., 2022). Moreover, Chinese Gen Z is sometimes referred to as the 'nationalistic generation' (Lau, 2022). They are particularly sensitive to topics related to racism and national sovereignty, which sometimes have significant impacts on their purchase decision-making (Mawaddah, 2019; Wang, W., 2021). While they are more globally influenced and more open to diverse cultures, they tend to exhibit strong national pride and a desire to connect with their cultural heritage. Accordingly, luxury products that incorporate localised Chinese elements are likely to capture their interest (Daxue Consulting, 2022; McKinsey, 2019a; TMI, 2023). However, given China's profound and complex culture, which is vastly different from Western

cultures, luxury brands must be cautious and strategic when incorporating Chinese elements into their products. Missteps in this regard can potentially damage a brand's reputation and image in China's market (Hills, 2021; Pan, 2018).

The rise of Gen Z consumers also presents certain challenges for luxury brands. The most significant one is that this generation of luxury consumers is reported to have high engagement but low loyalty. On one hand, as they are more likely to be influenced by social media, open to new concepts, and prone to impulsive purchases, the constant influx of new information easily distracts their attention (TMI, 2023; Yang, Z. et al., 2020). For instance, since Gen Z consumes short videos as one of their main sources of information, capturing their interest within such a brief period is challenging for luxury brand marketers. On the other hand, because this generation's luxury consumption is primarily driven by self-oriented needs, when making purchasing decisions they are concerned more with questions like 'What can this brand do for me?' or 'How does this brand make me feel?' rather than a deep passion for the brand itself. Consequently, Shin et al. (2022) suggest that the attachment most Gen Z consumers have to luxury brands is at the level of 'like', which is often not deep enough to foster true love and loyalty

2.3.7 Summary

In this section, the research context was explained and analysed in depth. First of all, the definition of luxury brands has been changing over time and has taken on a wider meaning. Especially due to the democratisation of luxury brands, the concept of 'New luxury' has emerged. Then, the literature related to luxury consumption was reviewed, which helped identify two major trends in luxury consumption. The first one is the shift in consumer preference towards the value of luxury brands. The perception of luxury brand value is considered the primary driver of luxury consumption. Historically, the main motivation for purchasing luxury goods was their social values (e.g., prestige, status signalling). However, contemporary luxury consumers are increasingly valuing non-conspicuous aspects of luxury brands, such as functional value and personal oriented values. The other shift is that luxury brands are going digital. Given the nature of LSC as a combination of social media and e-commerce, the literature focused on digital marketing and e-commerce

was extensively discussed. Despite the 'paradox' between luxury brands and the internet posited by marketers earlier, research now widely acknowledges the benefits of social media and e-commerce for luxury brands, recognising them as indispensable for enhancing online presence and brand competitiveness. Moreover, numerous studies have underscored the importance of building brand loyalty in the digital environment. Scholars have also highlighted the need for greater attention to the application of LSC in the luxury sector.

This section also recapped the key figures of China's luxury market to highlight its importance to luxury brands and help justify the adoption of it as research context. It has been shown that with the rapid economic development in China leading to a significant increase in the affluent population, China's market has become pivotal for the global luxury industry. Then, the consumer-related trends and challenges that luxury brands are currently facing in China's market were identified and discussed based on relevant literature. It can be seen that Chinese consumers are becoming more sophisticated and knowledgeable in their luxury consumption. Aligning with the general trend, luxury consumption in China is also increasingly driven by personal values. Furthermore, as the rise of a digitally native but less loyal generation gains momentum, maintaining a strong online presence is crucial for luxury brands to succeed in China's market. This highlights the importance of developing digital and localised strategies for targeting Chinese consumers. In this scenario, LSC, as a digital innovation that caters to Chinese consumer preferences, deserves greater attention from both scholars and industry practitioners. However, there is a knowledge gap in the impact of LSC on luxury consumers' behaviours. Thus, this study is conducted, in order to explore whether LSC can enhance consumers' attitudes towards luxury brands, in turn driving their brand loyalty.

The following section will systematically review the literature related to LSC to identify main research findings and gaps in this field.

2.4 Live Streaming Commerce

2.4.1 Introduction

Over the past few years, the world has been witnessing the fast growth of live streaming industry, particularly its application in e-commerce industry. LSC has emerged as a significant phenomenon in recent years, garnering increasing attention in academic community. The earliest academic research related to LSC dates back to 2018 (Cai et al., 2018). Since then, LSC has attracted the interest of the researchers in various disciplines, and the relevant academic publications are rapidly increasing. However, there is still no unified terminology or definition for this relatively new concept. Moreover, most systematic literature reviews (SLRs) on LSC to date have only covered studies published up until 2024 (Bai et al., 2024; Chao et al., 2022; Cui, X. et al., 2024; Ki et al., 2024; Mai et al., 2023; Xi et al., 2022), whereas more recent literature published in high-quality journals after 2024 also needs to be reviewed. In this respect, a systematic review approach was adopted to review and analyse the key studies pertaining to this research area. The purpose of conducting a systematic review is to summarise the existing body of knowledge on LSC, identify the knowledge gaps, and, most importantly, inform the research design of the present study.

2.4.2 The purpose of conducting this review

LSC has gained increasing attention in recent years, yet the academic community lacks a consensus on a unified term for this phenomenon. Different terms such as 'live streaming e-commerce', 'livestream commerce', 'live streaming shopping', 'live streaming sales' and 'live commerce' have been used interchangeably across various studies. While these terms refer to similar concepts, the absence of a standardised terminology presents a challenge for researchers, particularly those unfamiliar with the field. This inconsistency not only causes confusion but also risks the exclusion of critical studies during literature searches, thus limiting the scope of review. A systematic literature review (SLR) is, therefore, needed to consolidate these varying terminologies and offer clarity for both emerging and established scholars in this domain.

Moreover, while there have been reviews on LSC, most existing literature reviews only encompass the studies published before 2024 (Bai et al., 2024; Chao et al., 2022; Cui, X. et al., 2024; Ki et al., 2024; Mai et al., 2023; Xi et al., 2022). However, starting from 2024, there has been a marked surge in LSC-related studies, including several publications from high-impact journals. These publications may reflect new developments and insights that have yet to be captured by earlier reviews. To ensure that the current understanding of LSC remains comprehensive and up to date, it is essential to conduct a new review that includes literature up to September 2024. This updated review will provide a more accurate reflection of the latest findings and trends in LSC domain, ensuring that researchers have access to the most relevant and recent research.

Most importantly, conducting this SLR is crucial for the author to gain a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the research subject. By systematically reviewing the extant literature, it enables the author to identify key knowledge gaps in the LSC field, which lays the groundwork for the development of the research topic in this study. A comprehensive SLR will not only refine the existing knowledge of the author in this domain, but also highlight potential areas for future research, guiding the direction of the author's subsequent investigations in this rapidly evolving field.

Specifically, the objectives of this SLR are as follows.

- (1) To utilise a broad set of terms related to LSC to ensure an inclusive and thorough collection of all relevant publications, thus capturing the full breadth of studies on this topic.
- (2) To conduct a comprehensive review of publications related to LSC up to September 2024, focusing on ones from high-impact journals listed in the Academic Journal Guide (AJG) 2021 by the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS).
- (3) To categorise the characteristics of LSC, theoretical perspectives, and methodologies used in LSC studies, identifying dominant trends and findings in this field.

- (4) To identify knowledge gaps and areas that have not been sufficiently explored, providing a foundation for the subsequent investigation of the present study.
- (5) To identify the characteristics of LSC that may affect attitudes and perceptions of luxury consumers, in order to develop the research design of the present study.

2.4.3 A systematic review of LSC literature

2.4.3.1 Approach to the review

The objective of this review is to investigate the existing literature on LSC to gain an overview of the current research landscape and trends in this field. Given that the focus of the overall research project is on the influence of LSC on consumer decision-making, particular emphasis will be placed on analysing and discussing literature related to consumer behaviour. This will help to identify existing knowledge gaps within this research direction and assist in developing the aims of the current study. The methodology of this systematic review is adapted from the SPAR-4-SLR protocol framework proposed by Paul et al. (2021). The SPAR approach's focus on rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria helps mitigate the risk of missing critical studies, especially in a field with inconsistent terminology. Ki et al. (2024) also applied this protocol in their systematic review of LSC and TV home shopping to enable a comparative analysis of the two domains.

According to Paul et al. (2021), the SPAR-4-SLR protocol is structured into three key stages: Assembling, Arranging, and Assessing, each designed to ensure a systematic and transparent literature review. (1) The first stage, Assembling, begins with Identification, where the domain, research questions, and source types are defined, followed by Acquisition, which involves collecting relevant literature using specific search mechanisms, such as databases (e.g., Web of Science and Scopus), and carefully selected keywords. (2) In the second stage, Arranging, the literature is organised in the Organisation phase, using codes (e.g., consumer behaviour, antecedents, outcomes) and frameworks like ADO (Antecedent-Decision-Outcome) or TCCM (Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology) to structure the studies. This is followed by Purification, where the literature is filtered

based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, retaining only high-quality and relevant research. (3) The final stage, Assessing, consists of Evaluation, where the selected studies are analysed through methods such as content or bibliometric analysis to identify key trends and knowledge gaps. This stage concludes with Reporting, where the findings are summarised, providing insights and recommendations for future research. This systematic process ensures that the review is thorough, replicable, and methodologically robust.

(1)Assembling and (2) Arranging.

Based on the instruction from Paul et al. (2021), the review process for this SLR comprises three steps. During the Assembling stage, the collection of publications on LSC experienced two phases. The first collection took place on October 29th, 2023, using Google Scholar as the search engine to gather a comprehensive collection of literature on LSC, given the lack of a unified term for this phenomenon. A set of frequently used keywords such as 'live streaming commerce,' 'livestream shopping,' 'e-commerce livestream,' and 'live broadcasting shopping' were used for the search. Although LSC began to gain traction after 2016, to ensure comprehensive coverage, the time frame for the search was set to ten years, starting from 2013 to 2023, in alignment with the typical time period used in other literature reviews (Bocconcelli et al., 2018). The first screening retrieved all relevant English-language publications within the specified period that contained any of the selected keywords, yielding a total of 1,950 articles. Notably, the earliest identified LSC study was a conference paper published in 2018 (Cai et al., 2018). The second screening was to select the publications from the 'high impact' journals listed in Academic Journal Guide (AJG) 2021 by Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS), resulting in a total of 132 publications, of which 33 were published in 3- and 4-star journals.

Then, to capture the most up-to-date research, a second collection of publications was conducted in September 2024. Given the significant increase in LSC studies in 2024, this phase aimed to supplement the first collection with more recent and rigorous studies. Unlike the first collection, which used Google Scholar, this second collection employed more specialised academic databases, including Web of Science, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect and Scopus, for a more refined search.

This second search yielded 696 English-language journal articles published by September 2024. After a manual content check, 193 duplicates and 95 irrelevant studies (e.g., a study on live streaming instead of LSC (Hou et al., 2020)) were excluded, while 408 publications were remained, of which 51 were from 3- and 4-star journals.

To validate the accuracy of the data coverage, a cross-check with Google Scholar results from the first collection was performed, removing 25 duplicates and retaining 59 publications. Further refinement was carried out based on the research objective to review LSC literature in the context of consumer behaviour, leading to the exclusion of 32 publications, including a literature review (Ki et al., 2024), a theoretical framework study (Xie et al., 2022), and 30 articles focused on unrelated contexts such as supply chain management (Cui, Xueqing et al., 2023; Liu, W. et al., 2023a) and marketing strategy (Gu, X. et al., 2024; Ji et al., 2023). Additionally, 10 highly cited studies with more than two hundred citations were added to ensure the inclusion of impactful research. Ultimately, 37 publications were retained for the final review. Figure 2-4 presents the detailed procedures of these two phrases of the literature search.

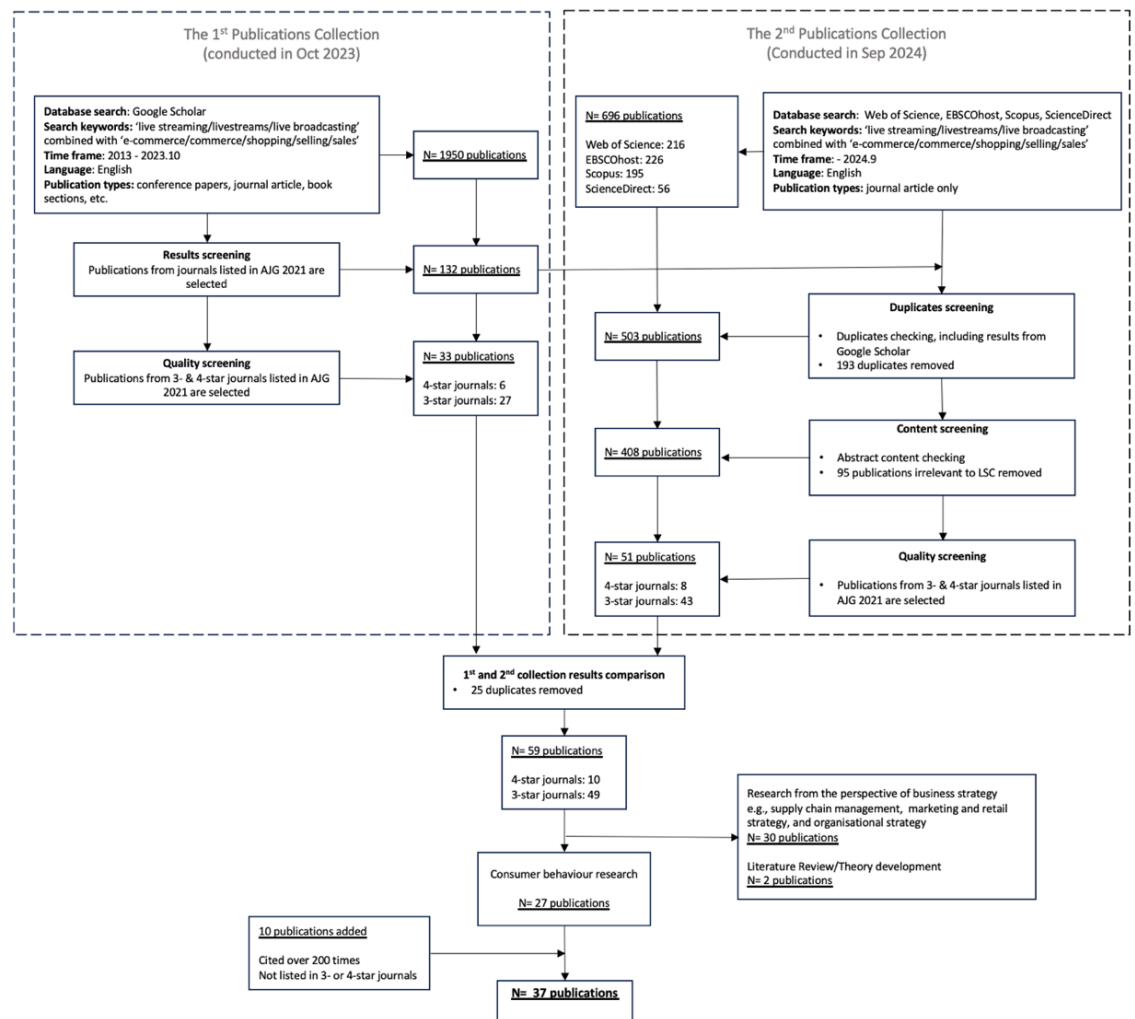


Figure 2-4 The detailed procedure of two-phase publication collection

Source: The author

Following the collection and purification, the literature was organised using the TCCM (Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology) framework. Publications were classified based on their underlying theories, contexts (i.e., platforms, countries, and industrial contexts), characteristics (years, journals, antecedents, mediators, moderators, and consequences), and methods. This structured organisation facilitated a clear understanding of the literature and ensured that the studies could be systematically compared and analysed in the subsequent stages.

(3)Assessing.

In the Assessing stage, the selected studies were evaluated using both content analysis and descriptive analysis. A descriptive analysis was conducted, categorising the studies based on their publication years, journals, methods, and research contexts. This provided a comprehensive overview of the literature and

revealed patterns and trends in LSC research over time. Additionally, the content analysis focused on identifying key theories and key variables used in the LSC studies, particularly in the context of consumer behaviour. This helped to draw connections between the studies and highlight the major findings and knowledge gaps within the field.

(4)Reporting.

The findings were then synthesised in the *Reporting* phase, where the results were presented using figures, tables, and textual descriptions. This ensured that the key insights and gaps in the literature were clearly communicated, providing a robust foundation for further research in the field of LSC. **Appendix II** presents all 37 selected studies with full details.

Figure 2-5 provides an overview of the three stages of this SLR.

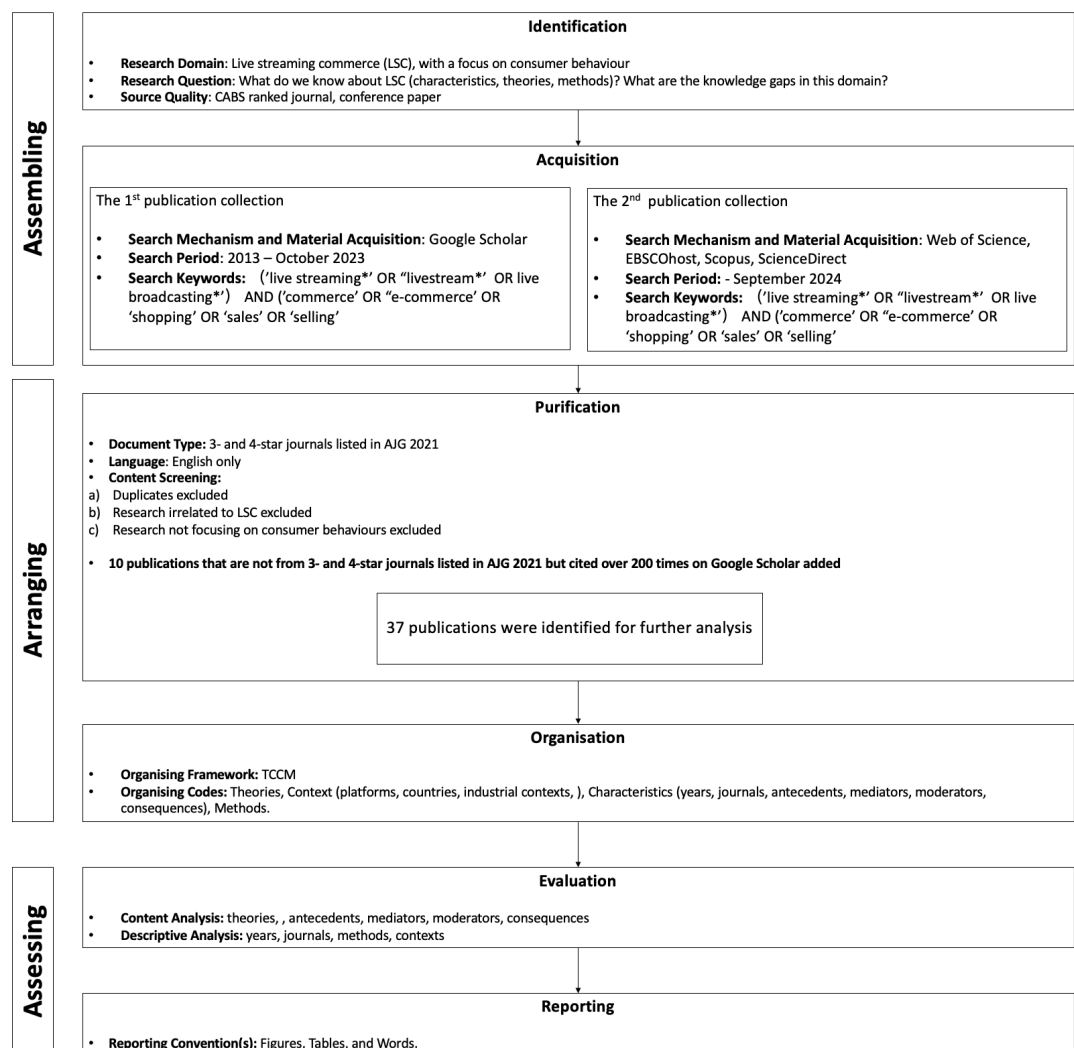


Figure 2-5 The three-stage procedure of SLR

Source: The author

2.4.3.2 Descriptive analysis of the results

The analysis of the selected literature can be divided into two key sections: descriptive analysis and in-depth content analysis. The descriptive analysis outlines the publication years, journals, research contexts (i.e., LSC platforms, countries, and industrial sectors), and research methods used in the 37 selected publications, which are presented in below tables and figures.

(1) Journals and Publication years

Table 2-1 illustrates the number of publications categorised by journal and year. The journals listed in the table span cross several research domains, suggesting that the relevance of LSC research is evidenced across various fields, including information systems (e.g., *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Information Systems Frontiers*), business management (e.g., *Journal of Business Research*), e-commerce (e.g., *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*), marketing (e.g., *Journal of Interactive Marketing*), consumer psychology (e.g., *Psychology & Marketing*), technology (e.g., *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *Internet Research*), and service (e.g., *Current Issues in Tourism*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*). This diversity underscores the multidisciplinary nature of LSC research, which intersects with technology, business, psychology and social science fields.

Regarding the years of publications, however, since the final review list predominantly includes publications from 3- and 4-star journals, it does not fully reflect the broader publication trends in LSC research. Therefore, to capture a more comprehensive landscape of LSC research trends, the author classified the 408 journal articles identified in the second literature search—after content screening—according to their year of publication, which offers an overview of the evolution of LSC research over time (See Figure 2-6). While the earliest literature on LSC appeared in 2018 as a conference paper, as mentioned in last section, Figure 2-6 shows that the first journal paper of LSC emerged in 2019. This was followed by a clear upward trend in the number of LSC literature over the past four years, particularly between 2020 and 2023. In 2021, 21 publications on LSC were identified, followed by a dramatic rise to 74 in 2022, and this figure more than doubled in 2023,

reaching 152 publications. This upward trend may be partly explained by the global impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns, which accelerated the adoption of LSC as a commercial and shopping tool, specifically in China. By September 2024, there were already 154 publications, surpassing the total for 2023, suggesting a continued and rapid growth of interest in this domain, with more studies expected to emerge throughout the rest of the year.

Table 2-1 Number of final list publications by journal and year of publication

| | Journal Names | Number of publications | Year | Number of publications |
|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 4-Star journal | <i>European Journal of Information Systems</i> | 1 | 2018 | 1 |
| 3-Star Journals | <i>Internet Research</i> | 6 | 2019 | 2 |
| | <i>Journal of Business Research</i> | 5 | 2020 | 5 |
| | <i>Decision Support Systems</i> | 2 | 2021 | 7 |
| | <i>IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management</i> | 1 | 2022 | 3 |
| | <i>Annals of Operations Research</i> | 1 | 2023 | 13 |
| | <i>Information & Management</i> | 3 | 2024 | 6 |
| | <i>Psychology & Marketing</i> | 2 | | |
| | <i>Information Systems Frontiers</i> | 2 | | |
| | <i>Current Issues in Tourism</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>Journal of Interactive Marketing</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>Technological Forecasting and Social Change</i> | 1 | | |
| Added Publications (Cited over two hundred times) | <i>Electronic Commerce Research and Applications</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>Computers in Human Behavior</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>International Journal of Information Management</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>Journal of Electronic Commerce Research</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>International Journal of Web Information Systems</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>Telematics and Informatics</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>Information</i> | 1 | | |
| | <i>Conference paper</i> | 2 | | |
| Total | | 37 | | 37 |

Source: The author

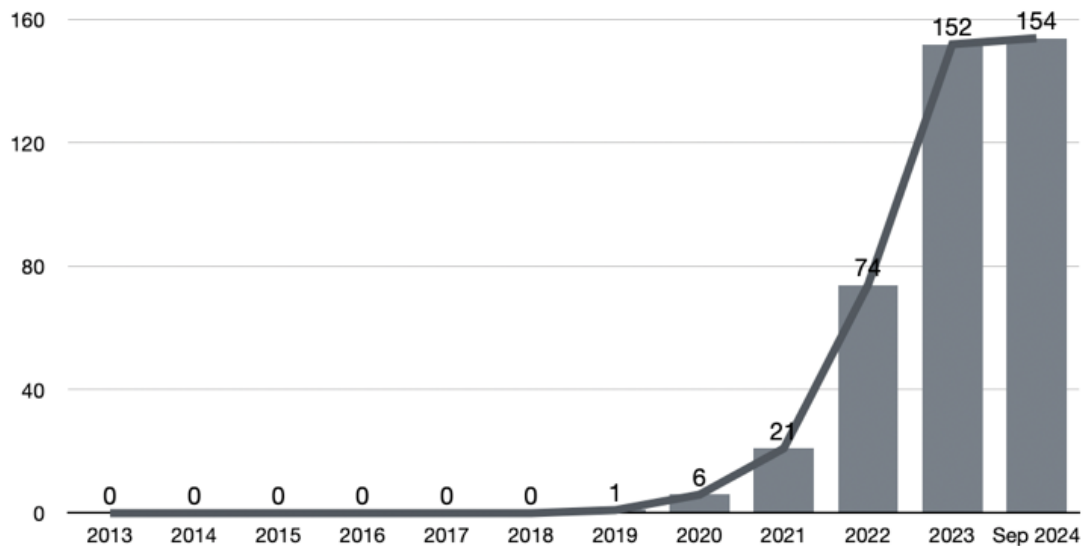


Figure 2-6 Number of journal articles on LSC by year of publication

Source: The author

(2) Countries, Platforms, and industrial contexts

In term of geographic coverage of LSC research, Table 2-2 shows that the consumer market in the LSC studies mainly lied in Asian markets, with a particular focus on China. Most research was conducted by focusing on Chinese LSC consumers, including 32 out of the 37 publications. Considering its vast LSC market, China provides an ideal environment for extensive research in this domain. For the rest, one publication focused on Thailand (Bangkok) (Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020), two focused on Malaysia (Alam et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2022), and the last two publications explored the impact of LSC in a cross-national context, involving consumers from over ten countries such as the US and India (Cai and Wohn, 2019; Cai et al., 2018). Moreover, researchers pointed out that in Asian markets, the main purpose of people using live streaming is to promote brands and products (Sun, Yuan et al., 2019). Especially, LSC was launched in 2016 by Taobao, the China's e-commerce giant, highlighting the e-commerce nature of LSC; In contrast, western consumers (e.g., American) use live streaming more for watching events such as live concerts or sports but less for shopping (Cai et al., 2018).

Table 2-2 Number of publications by LSC platforms, countries, and industrial contexts

| Countries | Number of publications | LSC platforms | Number of publications | Industrial context | Number of publications |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|
| China | 32 | <i>Not specified/Multiple platforms</i> | 25 | <i>Not specified</i> | 29 |
| Malaysia | 2 | <i>Taobao(Alibaba)</i> | 6 | <i>Fashion product</i> | 3 |
| Cross-countries | 2 | <i>Facebook</i> | 2 | <i>Clothing and cosmetics</i> | 1 |
| Bangkok | 1 | <i>Weibo Live</i> | 1 | <i>Food</i> | 1 |
| | | <i>Douyin (TikTok)</i> | 1 | <i>Tourism</i> | 1 |
| | | <i>WeChat</i> | 1 | <i>Hospitality</i> | 1 |
| | | <i>Mogujie</i> | 1 | <i>Experiential products (e.g., clothing, beauty) & Search products (e.g., electronic appliances)</i> | 1 |
| Total | 37 | | 37 | | 37 |

Source: The author

Regarding LSC platforms as research contexts, as shown in Table 2-2, most of the selected publications did not focus on a specific LSC platform but instead explored the broader coverage of LSC context. For example, Zhang, X. and Zhang (2024) investigated the impact of LSC on Chinese consumers behaviour by recruiting survey participants who had experiences on any LSC channels , resulting in data collected from Taobao, JD.com, Doyin (TikTok), Mogujie, Red, Weibo, which are the leading LSC platforms in China. In the Western market, the most commonly adopted LSC platforms includes Amazon (Style Code Live), Facebook, Instagram, Live.me, Livby and so on. (Cai and Wohn, 2019; Cai et al., 2018). The remaining publications (12 articles, 32%) focused on a single type of LSC platform, whit Taobao receiving the most of attention as the research context (See Figure 2-7).

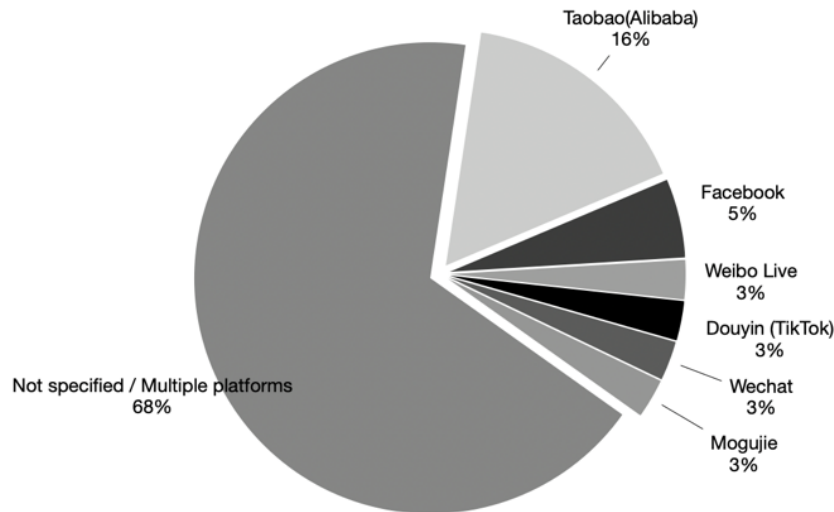


Figure 2-7 Percentage of LSC platforms adopted as research context

Source: The author

As presented in Figure 2-8 below, in terms of industrial sectors, most of the publications (29 studies, 78%) adopted a general approach, without specifying a particular industry context. Among the specified industries, the fashion industry was the most prevalent, with 3 studies focusing exclusively on fashion products, such as clothing, shoes, and accessories, and one study examining both clothing and cosmetics. Additionally, one study compared the effect of LSC on two distinct product categories, namely experiential products (e.g., clothing and beauty) and search products (e.g., electronic appliances) (Zeng et al., 2023). Other studies focused on single industries, such as food, tourism, and hospitality. The existing literature investigates LSC in the context of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), particularly clothing and cosmetics. This focus aligns with global trends, as fashion and beauty are the most purchased product categories through LSC (Statista, 2024b). However, research on industries such as luxury and automobiles remain scarce, despite their presence in LSC practices, highlighting potential avenues for future exploration.

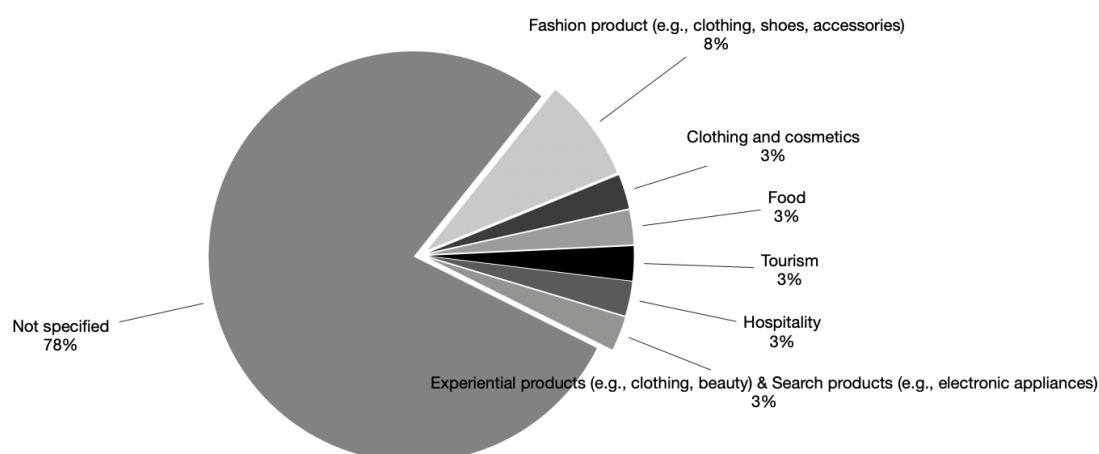


Figure 2-8 Percentage of product category adopted as research context

Source: The author

(3) Research methods

The descriptive analysis further identified the research methods employed in the selected publications, specifically focusing on the data collection techniques. As shown in Table 2-3 and Figure 2-9, most of the studies on LSC (32 articles, 86%) adopted a purely quantitative research approach, while the remaining 5 articles (14%) utilised a mixed-methods approach. Among the quantitative studies, self-reported surveys were the predominant data collection method, accounting for 26 articles (70%). Other quantitative studies used data crawling (3 articles, 8%), experiments (2 articles, 5%), or a combination of surveys and experiments (1 article, 3%).

In terms of mixed-methods research, three studies combined surveys with semi-structured interviews, one study employed a survey with open-ended questions, and another used both surveys and document analysis as the primary data collection techniques. This distribution highlights the dominance of survey-based quantitative methods in the field. Since the focus of this SLR lies in consumer behaviour, which often seeks generalisable results to understand large-scale consumer trend and predict their future behaviour, this may explain why quantitative approach are more prevalent among the selected publications. However, qualitative data can still provide valuable insights, particularly in understanding deeper psychological and emotional drivers of consumer behaviour. Thus, some research

has adopted a mixed method, complementing quantitative findings by analysing qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of LSC phenomenon.

Table 2-3 Number of publications by research methods

| Research method | Data collection techniques | Number of publications |
|---------------------|---|------------------------|
| Quantitative | <i>Survey</i> | 26 |
| | <i>Data crawling</i> | 3 |
| | <i>Experiment</i> | 2 |
| | <i>Experiment + Survey</i> | 1 |
| Mixed method | <i>Survey + Semi-structured interview</i> | 3 |
| | <i>Survey with open-ended questions</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Survey + Document analysis</i> | 1 |
| Total | | 37 |

Source: The author

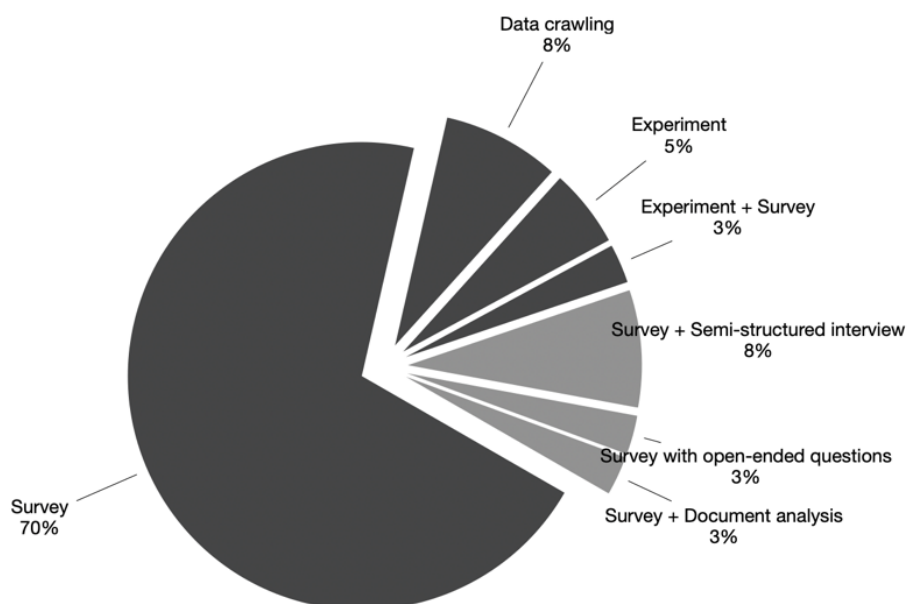


Figure 2-9 Percentage of research methods adopted by LSC studies

Source: The author

2.4.3.3 Content analysis of the results

In the in-depth content analysis, the selected publications of LSC were organised according to six parts, including definitions and types of LSC, theoretical frameworks, antecedents, mediators, moderators, and consequences.

2.4.3.3.1 Definitions and types of LSC

Of the 37 selected publications, 16 more explicitly provided the definitions of LSC, presented in Table 2-4 below. These definitions of LSC highlight its integration of real-time interaction and social engagement within the e-commerce landscape. Cai and Wohn (2019) emphasised the unique social interaction aspect, which differentiates LSC from traditional e-commerce by enabling real-time communication between consumers and broadcasters. This definition, however, lacks detail on the technological features or commercial strategies involved. In contrast, (Wang, D. et al., 2022) and Zhang, W. et al. (2022) expanded on the technological components, noting that LSC not only integrates live streaming and social media but also transforms consumer behaviours through synchronous interactions. Wu, D. et al. (2023) further highlighted the role of influencers and real-time engagement with a mass audience, stressing the social commerce element. However, it is worth noting that LSC has a distinctive feature compared with other types of social commerce, which is the seamless integration of social and shopping functions. LSC allows consumers to complete the shopping process within the same interface they use to engage with real-time events, whereas traditional forms of social commerce require consumers to interrupt their social interactions on social media and visit e-commerce platforms to carry out the act of shopping (Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Sun, Yuan et al., 2019).

Overall, while the adopted terms and definitions slightly vary, the core elements of real-time interaction and the seamless integration of social and commercial components are central to LSC. Researchers agree that LSC can be considered as a combination of social media and e-commerce, specifically the integration of live streaming features with online shopping, enabling real-time interactions between streamers (or sellers) and viewers (or consumers).

In addition, LSC can be further categorised into several types based on platforms and streamer types. Based on the underlying platform, LSC can broadly be categorised into two types. The first type includes e-commerce platforms with integrated live streaming features, such as Taobao Live, JD.com, and Amazon Live, which aim to enhance interaction between buyers and sellers. The second type consists of social media platforms embedded with online shopping functionalities, with the aim of facilitating the conversion of social traffic to sales (Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020). Different types of LSC channels may appeal to different user groups based on their inherent characteristics. E-commerce-based LSC platforms, typically with established infrastructure such as secure payments and logistics, cater to users who trust them as reliable shopping channels and often visit with the intention to purchase. On the other hand, social media based LSC may primarily serve users engaging for social purposes, with relatively weaker initial purchase intent. However, their shopping interest is likely to be increased through engaging social interactions, especially when these platforms feature influential opinion leaders who can shape consumers' behaviours and potentially lead them to make purchases, even if they did not originally plan to shop. However, there is currently no academic research specifically addressing the subtle differences between these two types of platforms, or how they influence consumers behaviours which could serve as a potential direction for future studies in this field, and potentially offer insights into tailored marketing strategies for each platform type.

Moreover, LSC can be broadly classified into two types based on the types of streamers. (1) Influencer/KOL streamers. Influencers, often well-known figures with large followings on social media, conduct live streams to promote products, typically through partnerships with brands. This type of streamer usually leverages their personal attractiveness and influence to create a more relatable and engaging shopping experience via livestreams. For example, Austin Li Jiaqi, a well-known influencer and LSC streamer in China, whose persuasive, engaging personality and expert product knowledge have earned him a massive following, making his live streams highly effective in driving sales (Miranda et al., 2024). Additionally, it is worth noting that, with this type of streamers, a single livestream session may showcase products from multiple brands and products categories such as cosmetics, food or

fashion products. On one hand, it allows multiple brands to benefit from the influencer's large and engaged audience, increasing visibility and potential sales for each product featured; However, on the other hand, the individual brand's message may get diluted as the attention of the audience is distracted by various products. Brands may have limited control over how their products are presented, potentially leading to inconsistent brand alignment. Also, brands can be tied to the reputation of the influencer, which may lead to the brand image being harmed by the negative reputation of the influencer (Shao et al., 2024). (2) Brand or retailer streamers. These are official brand representatives (e.g., firms' employees or salespeople) who host live streaming sessions to showcase their products directly to consumers. This type of LSC is defined as brands' self-built live streaming e-commerce (BLSE), which allows brands to communicate directly with consumers through their own employees or salespeople to deliver a consistent brand narrative and more tailored responses to consumer inquiries (Wang, D. et al., 2022; 2023). This type of LSC can reduce the reliance on third-party influencers and provides a more authoritative and controlled communication channel. However, compared to the influencer-based livestreams, this type of streamers' attractiveness and social influence are limited (Wang, D. et al., 2023). Hence, to bridge the gap in social influence, some brands tend to invite celebrities or KOLs to host brand-led livestreams to leverage their popularity, which is typically adopted by luxury brands' LSC strategy (Nan, 2024; Zhang, T., 2024).

While there are studies that have identified different types of LSC based on streamer types, the in-depth comparative research on how these types of LSC influence consumer decisions is still limited, and more studies are needed to fully understand the nuanced differences in effectiveness across different product categories or consumer segments.

Table 2-4 Terms and definitions of LSC adopted in the selected publications

| Authors | Terms | Definitions |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Cai et al. (2018) | Live streaming shopping | live streaming shopping has attributes of social commerce that integrates real-time social interaction into e-commerce. |
| Cai and Wohn (2019) | Live streaming commerce | Live streaming commerce is defined as a subset of ecommerce embedded with real-time social interaction; a feature unique to live streams |
| Xue et al. (2020) | Live social shopping/Live broadcast social commerce | Live social shopping is seen as a novel marketing model consisting of 'live broadcast + social + e-commerce. |
| Guo, L. et al. (2021) | Live streaming commerce | Live streaming commerce, a new form of social commerce where firms integrate with broadcasters, community members and customers in live chat rooms for real-time interaction to help sell products. |
| Wang, D. et al. (2022) | Live-streaming e-commerce | Live streaming e-commerce (LSE) is an innovative type of e-commerce that features real-time visibility and synchronous interactivity characteristics. BLSE is LSE with a salesperson as the broadcaster. |
| Lo et al. (2022) | Livestreaming commerce | Livestreaming commerce is a new shopping channel grounded in electronic social commerce that leverages the feature of livestreaming to foster an interactive, informative, and immersive online shopping experience. |
| Zhang, W. et al. (2022) | Live-streaming commerce | Live-streaming commerce, as its name implies, is a combination of live-streaming services and e-commerce on social media platforms, joining other social technologies to transform viewers' behaviors and consumption patterns. |
| Yang, Q. et al. (2023) | Live-streaming commerce | Live-streaming commerce is a subset of e-commerce based on real-time social interaction via real-time streaming video and text-based chat channels. |
| Wu, D. et al. (2023) | Live stream shopping | Live stream shopping is a new form of social commerce that integrates social media, live streaming, and real-time chats and enables individual streamers (i.e., influencers) to publicly promote products while interacting with millions of viewers (i.e., consumers) to sell products simultaneously. |

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Zeng et al. (2023) | Live streaming commerce | Live streaming commerce is a novel e-commerce model that allows sellers to sell various products by broadcasting in real time. |
| Wang, D. et al. (2023) | Live streaming e-commerce | Brands' self-built live streaming e-commerce (BLSE), a new type of e-commerce that features synchronous interactivity, real-time visibility, and non-middleman-based promotion (direct retailing), and firms' employees/salespeople take the role of broadcasters. |
| Men et al. (2024) | Live-streaming shopping | As the integration of social commerce attributes with live streaming technology, live-streaming shopping provides consumers with various communication technologies, enabling them to instantaneously interact with live streamers. |
| Hua et al. (2024) | Live streaming e-commerce (LSE) | Live streaming e-commerce (LSE), an innovative e-commerce model featuring real-time visualisation and synchronous interaction. Brand's self-built live streaming e-commerce (BLSE), a new form of LSE, is an emerging online business paradigm in which middlemen (e.g., KOLs) are eliminated, enabling firms to respond to customers' brand related concerns directly and promptly. |
| Luo et al. (2024) | Live-streaming commerce (LSC) | Live-streaming commerce (LSC) is a new form of e-commerce platform, which works by establishing a temporary virtual community shared by streamers and customers in real-time. |
| Miranda et al. (2024) | Livestream shopping | Livestream shopping is a type of livestreaming involved with commercial activities. |
| Zhang, X. and Zhang (2024) | Live streaming e-commerce (LSE) | Live streaming e-commerce (LSE) is a powerful new retail model fusing with live streaming. |

Source: The author

2.4.3.4 Theories adopted in LSC studies

In the domain of LSC, a diverse array of theoretical frameworks has been employed to understand the dynamics of consumer behaviours, platform design, and influencer marketing. A review of the 37 studies in this SLR revealed a broad spectrum of theories employed to understand LSC's unique attributes, ranging from media-oriented to social-oriented and mixed theoretical lenses. Specifically, media-oriented theories were adopted to underpin the examination how LSC's technical attributes shape consumer behaviours, such as *Elaboration Likelihood Model*, and *Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)*. Social-oriented theories, such as *Trust Transfer Theory*, and *Social Exchange Theory*, were applied to explore streamer related attributes of LSC. Theories from a mixed orientation focused on a combination of streamer-, content-, technological-related factors of LSC, such as *Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model*, *Affordance Theory*, *Signalling Theory*, And *Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)*.

Overall, as presented in Table 2-5 below, the *SOR* model emerged as the most dominant framework, appearing in 12 studies, indicating its prevalence in understanding how stimuli from LSC environments drive consumer responses. *Affordance theory* was used in 4 studies, highlight the technological features of LSC. Other theoretical frameworks, such as *UGT* (2 studies), *Flow Theory* (2 studies), *Value Theory* (2 studies), *Information Forging Theory* (2 studies), *Vicarious Learning Theory* (2 studies), and *Signalling Theory* (2 studies) were frequently used to explain different facets of LSC phenomenon. A variety of other theories, such as *Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)*, *TAM*, *Trust Transfer Theory*, and *Uncertainty Reduction Theory*, were used in individual studies, adding diversity to the theoretical landscape.

(1) *Mixed orientation*

Eleven theories were adopted to explain the mechanisms of LSC from a mixed-orientation perspective. *SOR* framework was the most frequently cited theory (e.g., Fei et al., 2021; Hu and Chaudhry, 2020; Kang et al., 2021), which posits that external environmental stimuli (S) influence individuals' internal states, whether cognitive or emotional (O), subsequently leading to specific behavioural responses (R) (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). In the context of LSC, its dynamic nature offers

rich sensory and social stimuli through several perspectives, such as the physical attractiveness of streamers, entertaining content, or interactivity facilitated by the platforms' technological feature, all of which have potential to shape the consumer's cognitive or emotional reactions, such as trust, engagement, or excitement, ultimately influencing behaviours like making a purchase. For example, Xue et al. (2020) applied *SOR* theory to explore how LSC drives consumption and social sharing behaviours, finding that streamer attractiveness, the quality of information provided, and para-social interactions between streamers and audiences act as stimuli that directly affect consumers' cognitive assimilation and arousal (the organism), which subsequently led to consumption and sharing behaviour (the response). Similarly, Lee, C.-H. and Chen (2021) identified LSC provides stimuli from three sources, including streamers (i.e., attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise), product (i.e., product price and product usefulness) and platform aspects (i.e., purchase convenience), all of which can shape consumers' perceived enjoyment and usefulness, in turn leading to the urge of impulsive consumption.

In addition to the *SOR* model, other theories such as *Signalling Theory*, *UGT*, *Flow Theory*, *Socio-Technical Systems Theory*, and *Value Theory* were also adopted to underscore LSC studies from a mixed orientation (Cai and Wohn, 2019; Lu and Chen, 2021; Ma, Y., 2021b; Ming et al., 2021; Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020; Ye and Ching, 2023; Yu et al., 2023). For example, drawing on *Socio-Technical Systems Theory*, Zhang, M. et al. (2022) investigated the social and technical dimensions of LSC, i.e., social interaction and IT affordance, and their positive associations with consumers' intentions to continuously use LSC platforms. Moreover, by integrating *SOR theory* and *Flow Theory*, Ye and Ching (2023) demonstrated that LSC facilitates consumers' trust, enjoyment and flow experience by providing multiple flow state drivers related to personal (i.e., personal innovativeness and compulsive buying tendency), platform (i.e., utilitarian values), and social aspect (i.e., social values and social influence). These elements consequently influence consumer loyalty and compulsive buying behaviour.

(2) Media orientation

Eleven theories were used to explore IT- related mechanism of LSC from a media-oriented perspective (Alam et al., 2023; Hua et al., 2024; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Ma, Y., 2021b; Men et al., 2024; Sun, Yuan et al., 2019; Wang, D. et al., 2023; Wu, D. et al., 2023; Zeng et al., 2023; Zhang, N. and Ruan, 2024). Among these, *Affordance Theory* is frequently adopted in information system research to examine a wide array of information technologies and the effect of IT features on consumer behaviour (Sun, Yuan et al., 2019). Specifically, this theory was adopted in 4 selected studies that focused on technical dimensions of LSC (Hua et al., 2024; Sun, Yuan et al., 2019; Wang, D. et al., 2022; 2023). In the context of LSC, affordances refer to the perceived possibilities for action provided by the functionalities and interactive features of LSC platforms. Sun, Yuan et al. (2019) identified three key IT affordance in LSC, including visibility, metavoicing, and guidance shopping, all of which were found to positively affect purchase intention. These affordances demonstrate how platform design and interactive capabilities can shape consumer decision-making and engagement in real time. Additionally, *Information Forging Theory* and *Vicarious Learning Theory* were each used in 2 studies focusing on the IT aspects of LSC. For example, Wu, D. et al. (2023) drew on *Information Forging Theory*, concentrating on the impact of LSC's interactivity from both a utilitarian value view and a hedonic value view on purchase intention. Zeng et al. (2023) employed the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* to explain that LSC positively affect purchase intention through the central (i.e., bullet screen quality and bullet screen sentiment) and peripheral cues (i.e., the number of bullet screen, source credibility, and popularity).

(3) Social orientation

Six theories were employed in the selected studies that focused on social mechanisms of LSC (Dang-Van et al., 2023; Luo et al., 2024; Yang, Q. et al., 2023; Zhang, N. and Ruan, 2024; Zhang, X. et al., 2023). Grounded in Attention Theory, Yang, Q. et al. (2023) revealed an inverted U-shaped relationship between social interaction-oriented content and consumers' purchasing behaviour in the LSC context. Dang-Van et al. (2023) integrated the Theory of Emotion and Regulatory

Focus Theory to examine the influence of streamers' physical attractiveness on consumer engagement, indicating that physically attractive streamers enhance consumer engagement by fostering their emotional attachment and promoting a promotion focus mindset on consumers, encouraging goal-driven behaviour. Using Social Exchange Theory, Luo et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of reciprocal relationships between streamers and consumers, suggesting that consumer engagement could be enhanced when they perceive the streamers and the provided information as credible and useful, subsequently heightening the likelihood of impulsive purchases. In addition, Psychological Reactance Theory (PRT), which explains how people react when they perceived their freedom or choices are being threatened or restricted (Brehm, 1989), was applied by Zhang, N. and Ruan (2024). They pointed out that PRT is particularly relevant because of the high-pressure and real-time environment in the LSC context and indicated that when consumers feel that they were being pushed too hard to make immediate purchases, they may experience reactance, resulting in lower purchase intention. Lastly, Zhang, X. et al. (2023) employed Appraisal-Emotion-Action Model as its theoretical lens to explore how persuasive attributes of virtual AI streamers (i.e., coolness, congruence, and mind perception) influence consumers' parasocial interaction intention and urge to buy impulsively, through triggering their emotional arousal.

Table 2-5 Theories adopted in the selected publications

| | Theories | Number of publications |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Mixed | <i>Stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model</i> | 12 |
| | <i>Uses and gratifications theory (UGT)</i> | 2 |
| | <i>Signalling theory</i> | 2 |
| | <i>Flow theory</i> | 2 |
| | <i>Value theory</i> | 2 |
| | <i>Socio-technical systems theory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Trust transfer theory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Cognitive-affective framework</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Theory of reasoned action (TRA)</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Uncertainty reduction theory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Technology acceptance model (TAM)</i> | 1 |
| Media oriented | <i>Affordance theory</i> | 4 |
| | <i>information foraging theory</i> | 2 |
| | <i>Vicarious learning theory</i> | 2 |
| | <i>Elaboration Likelihood Model</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Cognitive load theory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Cognitive emotion theory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Theory of pleasure-arousal-dominance</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Heuristic-systematic model</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Means-end chain (MEC) framework</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Information richness theory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Network externality theory</i> | 1 |
| Social oriented | <i>Attention theory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Theory of emotions</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Regulatory focus theory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Social exchange theory</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Psychological reactance theory (PRT)</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Appraisal-emotion-action model</i> | 1 |

Source: The author

2.4.3.4.1 Antecedents

Table 2-6 presents the antecedents documented in the selected publications of this SLR. Among 37 studies, all variables are categorised into internal and external factors. Internal factors refer to those variables directly associated with consumers themselves, such as consumer motivations, perceptions and personality traits, which can affect consumer behaviours in the context of LSC. On the contrary,

external factors are those originating outside of the consumers but related to LSC attributes, further classified into four sub-categories, encompassing streamer-related, content-related, platform-related factors and mixed factors.

In terms of internal consumer related antecedents, the value perceptions of consumers often play an important role in shaping their behaviour in the LSC context. Researchers have identified various types of value existed in LSC. For example, Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut (2020) pointed out that consumers can perceive utilitarian value, hedonic value and symbolic value from the adopted of LSC, such as usefulness, efficiency, enjoyment or pleasure, which can enhance consumer trust. Meanwhile, perceived trust is also considered an antecedent associated with consumer engagement in LSC (Guo, L. et al., 2021). Psychological proximity has been found to positively affect consumers' perceived credibility of LSC as this real-time immersive technology can effectively decrease the psychological distance (Men et al., 2024). In addition, consumers tend to experience a change in their emotional and psychological state while engaging with LSC. Hence, Alam et al. (2023) identified arousal and pleasure as key antecedents shaping consumers' emotion in LSC settings, subsequently affecting impulsive hotel consumption. Moreover, consumers' personal traits have also been recognised as playing a key role in sustaining their interest in LSC. For example, when exploring consumers' compulsive buying behaviour in LSC, Ye and Ching (2023) suggested that since LSC is a relatively new phenomenon, individuals with higher levels of personal innovativeness are more likely to derive greater enjoyment from the LSC experience, which in turn fosters loyalty and compulsive consumption; Additionally, a strong compulsive buying tendency also contributes to compulsive buying behaviour in this context.

In terms of LSC related antecedents, streamer-related factors are significantly important for shaping consumer behaviour and decision-making. The selected studies have identified several key factors, such as streamers' congruence with products and consumers, attractiveness, credibility, and social interaction. Research by Lu and Chen (2021) highlighted the importance of streamer-consumer fit in building consumer trust, while Zhang, N. and Ruan (2024) and others focused on the streamer-product fit. In addition, streamers' attractiveness and credibility have

been found to foster hedonic and utilitarian value perceptions (Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023) and enhance consumer engagement (Luo et al., 2024). The quality of interaction between streamers and consumers also positively associated with consumer engagement (Luo et al., 2024) and perceptions (Xue et al., 2020). Yan et al. (2023) conceptualised celebrity effect as streamers' ability to influence others, finding that it positively affects consumers' attitudes towards ads. Moreover, Zhang, X. et al. (2023) specifically explored the persuasive attributes of virtual AI influencers as streamers and identified coolness, mind perception, and congruence as key determinants of consumers' emotional arousal and behavioural intention.

Regarding content related antecedents, the factors related to live content, product attributes and bullet screen are classified within this category, as they can all fundamentally be considered as the information generated and conveyed during the livestreams. Firstly, live content's quality, interaction and congruence were investigated frequently in the selected studies. For example, research by Xu, X. et al. (2020) and Gu, Y. et al. (2023), found out that information quality and richness is positively associated with consumers' cognitive and affective perception. The alignment between live content and product also influences consumers perception and attitudes towards LSC (Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Zhang, X. and Zhang, 2024). Additionally, as LSC is mainly a shopping channel, product and promotion information can act as stimuli to drive consumers purchase intention, such as price, usefulness (Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021), scarcity and sales (Miranda et al., 2024). Moreover, some researchers focused on the impact of bullet screen, by which consumers interact with streamers and other viewers. For example, Zeng et al. (2023) pointed out that the number, quality and sentiment of bullet screen can positively affect consumers' purchase intention. However, in some cases, the bullet screen (i.e., the number of words comprising interaction text) can show a negative distracting effect, which decreases consumers' attention to the product and streamer (Fei et al., 2021).

Platform related antecedents largely pertain to IT features of LSC. For example, some studies emphasised the vicarious experience provided by LSC, such as synchronicity, two-way communication, virtual presence, personalisation and

visibility, which affect consumers' cognitive and affective reactions (Hua et al., 2024; Lo et al., 2022), and enhance consumers' trust and perceived credibility (Men et al., 2024; Zhang, M. et al., 2022). Lee, C.-H. and Chen (2021) and Lee, D. and Wan (2023) pointed out the e-commerce attribute of LSC, i.e., purchase convenience, as a key determinant influencing consumers' impulsive purchase intention. Telepresence refers to the sensation of being present created through the use of technology in a remote or virtual environment, which is found to significantly enhance consumers' trust and flow state in the context of LSC too (Ming et al., 2021). Sun, Yuan et al. (2019) identified the IT affordance of LSC (i.e., visibility, metavoicing, and guidance shopping) as key determinants influencing consumers' purchase intention through creating the immersion and presence. Hua et al. (2024) conceptualised the synchronous interactivity, real-time visibility, entertainment as LSC's positive affordances while broadcasting (i.e., the possibility of consumers continuously receiving communal interaction information) and source diversity (i.e., the potential of customers to receive similar information from multiple sources) as negative affordances, which are found to affect consumers' purchase intention and brand citizenship behaviours.

Lastly, there are also mixed factors identified as antecedents, which are difficult to classify solely under the categories of streamer-related, content-related or platform related factors, as they may emerge from the interplay of all three elements of LSC. For example, Zeng et al. (2023) identified channel popularity is an important influencing factor of consumers' purchase intention. Gu, Y. et al. (2023) noted that newness, referring to the degree to which LSC is outside the consumer's experience, has a positive effect on consumers' perceived enjoyment. In addition, social presence of LSC (i.e., the sense of others' presence during the interactions in LSC) is identified as a key stimuli to activate consumers' cognitive and affective perceptions, such as trust, flow state (Ming et al., 2021), perceived enjoyment and social support (Gu, Y. et al., 2023). Researchers also pointed out social influence can be fostered through all kinds of interactions in the context of LSC, which shapes trust level of consumers (Ye and Ching, 2023). Furthermore, parasocial interaction is also a well-studied influencing factor in LSC, which can foster a one-way sense of intimacy and closeness generated by streamers through the real-time, interactive

nature of LSC (Xu, X. et al., 2020). Research suggests that this interaction is positively associated with consumers' cognition and affection (Lo et al., 2022; Wang, D. et al., 2022; Xu, X. et al., 2020). Finally, it is worth noting that, unlike the interactivity discussed in above platform-related antecedents, research by Wu, D. et al. (2023), Kang et al. (2021) and Gu, Y. et al. (2023) focused on the overall interactivity of LSC, which refers to the full interactive experience in LSC, involving not just technological capability of the platform but also the social interaction between streamers and viewers fostered by content and platform. It encompasses responsiveness, personalisation, timely feedback, streamer-viewer interaction and viewer-viewer interaction.

Table 2-6 Antecedents adopted in selected publications

| Antecedent | | Studies |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Internal factors | | |
| Consumer related factors | Consumer motivation (e.g., hedonic motivation, utilitarian motivation, enjoyment of interaction, substitutability of personal examination, need for community, and trend setting) | (Cai and Wohn, 2019; Cai et al., 2018) |
| | Perceived rational bonds (e.g., financial bonds, social bonds, structural bonds) | (Hu and Chaudhry, 2020) |
| | Perceived congruence (e.g., self-product fit) | (Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Zhang, X. and Zhang, 2024) |
| | Perceived values (e.g., utilitarian value, hedonic value, symbolic value, social value, perceived entertainment, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived price value, emotional transmission, perceived place identity, perceived place dependence) | (Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020; Yan et al., 2023; Ye and Ching, 2023; Yu et al., 2023) |
| | Perceived trust (e.g., trust in community members, trust in broadcaster, trust in product) | (Guo, L. et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2023) |
| | Perceived network size | (Ma, Y., 2021b) |
| | Social contagion | (Lo et al., 2022) |
| | Perceived emotional states (e.g., arousal, pleasure) | (Alam et al., 2023) |
| | Psychological proximity | (Men et al., 2024) |
| | Perceived attachment to LSC platform | (Yu et al., 2023) |
| | Personal traits (e.g., personal innovativeness, compulsive buying tendency) | (Ye and Ching, 2023) |
| | Perceived platform control (e.g., perceived control, active control) | (Miranda et al., 2024; Xue et al., 2020; Zhang, M. et al., 2022) |
| External factors | | |
| Streamer related factors | Streamer congruence (e.g., streamer-product fit, physical characteristic similarity, value similarity) | (Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Lu and Chen, 2021; Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Zhang, X. and Zhang, 2024) |
| | Streamer attractiveness (e.g., physical attractiveness, interpersonal attractiveness, social attractiveness, vividness) | (Cai et al., 2018; Dang-Van et al., 2023; Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Miranda et al., 2024; Xu, X. et al., 2020) |
| | Streamer interaction (e.g., personalisation, responsiveness, entertainment, parasocial relationship, streamer interaction quality) | (Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Luo et al., 2024; Xue et al., 2020) |
| | Streamer credibility (e.g., trustworthiness, expertise) | (Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Luo et al., 2024; Yan et al., 2023) |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | Streamers' influence ability (e.g., celebrity effect) | (Yan et al., 2023) |
| | Persuasive attributes of virtual AI streamers (i.e., coolness, mind perception, congruence) | (Zhang, X. et al., 2023) |
| Content related factors | Live content congruence (e.g., live content-product-fit) | (Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Zhang, X. and Zhang, 2024) |
| | Live content quality (e.g., information quality, information richness, vividness) | (Alam et al., 2023; Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Luo et al., 2024; Xu, X. et al., 2020) |
| | Live content interaction (e.g., mutuality, frequency of social words in live speech) | (Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Xue et al., 2020; Yang, Q. et al., 2023) |
| | Bullet screen information (e.g., frequency of herding message, number of words comprising interaction text, bullet screen quality, bullet screen sentiment, the number of bullet screen; danmaku consistency) | (Fei et al., 2021; Wang, D. et al., 2022; Zeng et al., 2023; Zhang, N. and Ruan, 2024) |
| | Product attributes (e.g., product usefulness, product price, price perception) | (Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2022) |
| | Promotion content (e.g., scarcity persuasion, offerings, monetary savings, sales promotion, price discount) | (Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Lo et al., 2022; Miranda et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2023) |
| | Live content types (e.g., junk food vs. regular food, ASMR vs. Non-ASMR) | (Lee, D. and Wan, 2023) |
| Platform related factors | Affordances (e.g., visibility, metavoicing, guidance shopping, guidance information, personalisation affordance, source diversity, synchronous interactivity, entertainment, broadcasting) | (Alam et al., 2023; Hua et al., 2024; Sun, Yuan et al., 2019; Wang, D. et al., 2022; 2023; Zhang, M. et al., 2022) |
| | E-commerce attributes (e.g., purchase convenience) | (Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023) |
| | Vicarious experience (e.g., two-way communication, synchronicity, vividness, telepresence, virtual presence) | (Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2022; Men et al., 2024; Ming et al., 2021; Miranda et al., 2024; Zhang, M. et al., 2022) |
| Mixed factors | Parasocial interaction | (Lo et al., 2022; Wang, D. et al., 2022; Xu, X. et al., 2020) |
| | Interactivity (e.g., responsiveness, personalisation, timely feedback, streamer-viewer interaction, viewer-viewer interaction) | (Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2021; Wu, D. et al., 2023) |
| | Social presence (e.g., social presence of streamers, social presence of viewers, social presence of live streaming platform) | (Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Ming et al., 2021) |
| | Channel popularity | (Zeng et al., 2023) |
| | Newness | (Gu, Y. et al., 2023) |
| | Social influence | (Ye and Ching, 2023) |

Source: The author

2.4.3.4.2 Mediators

Mediators play a crucial role in explaining how different factors influence consumer engagement and behaviour. Among 37 selected publications, 32 include mediators. As shown in Table 2-7, all mediators can be categorised into seven groups: cognitive, affective/emotional, attitudinal/motivational/behavioural, relational, experience-based, value perception-based, and trust-related mediators.

Cognitive mediators relate to consumers' mental processes during LSC, including cognitive assimilation, cognitive reactions and cognitive load. For example, Hua et al. (2024) pointed out cognitive load mediates the relationship between LSC affordance and purchase intention. When consumers receive too much information or face conflicting messages, it can cause cognitive overload, negatively affecting consumers' purchase intention in LSC.

Affective/emotional mediators involve consumers' emotional responses to LSC. Emotions such as affective commitment to the broadcaster, arousal and emotional attachment can mediate between the impact of LSC and consumer behaviour. For instance, Zhang, X. et al. (2023) demonstrated that the positive relationship between persuasive attributes of virtual AI streamers and consumers' intention is fully mediated by arousal. Hu and Chaudhry (2020) found that affective commitment to the broadcaster and the online marketplace mediated the relationship between relational bonds and consumer engagement.

Attitudinal/motivational/behavioural mediators emphasise the mediating roles of consumers' attitudes, motivations, attention and behavioural intention. Park, H.J. and Lin (2020) explained the impact of utilitarian and hedonic attitudes on purchase intention. Luo et al. (2024) demonstrated the positive effect of consumer engagement on impulsive buying tendency. Fei et al. (2021) conducted an eye-tracking experiment and found out that consumers' attention allocation (i.e., endogenous attention and exogenous attention) mediates the relationship between bullet screen impact and purchase intention.

Relational mediators include swift guanxi (i.e., mutual understanding and relationship harmony) and tie strength (i.e., the closeness and breadth of the

relationship among social actors), which have been found to positively affect consumer engagement in the context of LSC (Guo, L. et al., 2021; Kang et al., 2021).

Experience-based mediators related to the consumers' experience when they infused in LSC, covering immersion, presence, flow state, dynamic brand experience, vicarious learning experience, psychological distance and psychological reactance. For example, Ming et al. (2021) and Ye and Ching (2023) both proved that flow experience can drive impulsive buying behaviour.

Value perception-based mediators have gained the most attention of researchers, which involve all kinds of perceptions related values and risk that consumer gain from LSC engagement. Perceived value can vary, covering utilitarian value, hedonic value, social value, perceived enjoyment, perceived usefulness, perceived risk and product uncertainty, perceived social interaction and so on.

Trust is also a frequently used mediator, which includes trust in streamer, products and overall trust in LSC. Research by Zhang, M. et al. (2022) and Lu and Chen (2021) demonstrated that trust is positively associated with consumers' purchase intention and continuous use intention.

Table 2-7 Mediators adopted in the selected publications

| | Mediators | Studies |
|---|---|--|
| Cognitive | Cognitive assimilation, Cognitive reactions, Cognitive load | (Hua et al., 2024; Lo et al., 2022; Xu, X. et al., 2020) |
| Affective/Emotional | Affective commitment to the broadcaster, Affective commitment to the online marketplace, Arousal, Affective reactions, Emotional attachment, Positive emotion, Negative emotion, Affective intensity | (Alam et al., 2023; Dang-Van et al., 2023; Hu and Chaudhry, 2020; Lo et al., 2022; Xu, X. et al., 2020; Zhang, X. et al., 2023; Zhang, X. and Zhang, 2024) |
| Attitudinal/motivational/behavioural | Utilitarian attitude, Hedonic attitude, Endogenous attention, Exogenous attention, Impulsive buying urge, Promotional focus, Attitude towards influencer Ads, Consumer engagement | (Dang-Van et al., 2023; Fei et al., 2021; Lo et al., 2022; Luo et al., 2024; Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Yan et al., 2023) |
| Relational | Swift guanxi, Tie strength | (Guo, L. et al., 2021; Kang et al., 2021) |
| Experience-based | Immersion, Presence, Social presence, Flow state, Dynamic brand experience, Flow experience, Vicarious learning, Psychological distance, Psychological reactance | (Hua et al., 2024; Ma, Y., 2021b; Ming et al., 2021; Sun, Yuan et al., 2019; Wang, D. et al., 2022; Xue et al., 2020; Ye and Ching, 2023; Zhang, N. and Ruan, 2024) |
| Value perception-based | Wanghong trustworthiness, Wanghong attractiveness, Perceived usefulness, Perceived risk, Perceived enjoyment, Perceived social interaction, Product fit uncertainty, Product quality uncertainty, Perceived utility, Self-presentation, Utilitarian value, Hedonic value, Social value, Product diagnosticity, Product serendipity, Sensory appeal, Entertainingness, Perceived source credibility, Perceived social support, Consumer enjoyment, Consumer's positive perception of live streamer's credibility, Information richness | (Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Lu and Chen, 2021; Ma, Y., 2021b; Men et al., 2024; Miranda et al., 2024; Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Wang, D. et al., 2023; Wu, D. et al., 2023; Xue et al., 2020; Ye and Ching, 2023; Zhang, N. and Ruan, 2024; Zhang, X. and Zhang, 2024) |
| Trust-related | Trust in products, Trust in sellers, Trust, Consumer trust | (Lu and Chen, 2021; Ming et al., 2021; Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020; Ye and Ching, 2023; Zhang, M. et al., 2022) |

Source: The author

2.4.3.4.3 Moderators

To further understand the key factors shaping the impact of LSC on consumer behaviour, the moderators adopted in the selected publications are also identified in this review. Among the 37 studies, 16 include moderators, which can be categorised into consumer-related and LSC-related types (See Table 2-8).

Table 2-8 Moderators adopted in the selected publication

| | Moderators | Studies |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Consumer related | Liking streamer, Liking product, Needing product | (Cai et al., 2018) |
| | Susceptibility to informative influence | (Xue et al., 2020) |
| | Tenure of membership | (Kang et al., 2021) |
| | Shopping orientation (task focused vs. experience focused) | (Ma, Y., 2021b) |
| | The personal sense of power | (Ming et al., 2021) |
| | Susceptibility to social influence, Impulsive buying tendency | (Lo et al., 2022) |
| | Consumer types (autonomous help-seeking vs. dependent help-seeking) | (Wang, D. et al., 2023) |
| | Prevention focus, Positive emotion | (Dang-Van et al., 2023) |
| | Impulsive consumption tendency | (Alam et al., 2023) |
| | Mindset, impulsiveness | (Zhang, X. et al., 2023) |
| | Guanxi orientation | (Luo et al., 2024) |
| | Perceived motivation to post danmaku | (Zhang, N. and Ruan, 2024) |
| LSC related | Anchor attractiveness | (Fei et al., 2021) |
| | LSC channel popularity | (Kang et al., 2021) |
| | Perception of digital celebrities | (Ma, Y., 2021b) |
| | Live streaming genre (fixed brand streamers vs. multi-brand streamers) | (Zhang, M. et al., 2022) |
| | Broadcaster popularity | (Yang, Q. et al., 2023) |
| | Product type (search product vs. experience product) | (Zeng et al., 2023) |

Source: The author

2.4.3.4.4 Consequences

As presented in Table 2-9, the selected LSC studies largely focused on consumers' buying behaviours, such as purchase intention and impulsive buying intention. Additionally, consumer engagement as a significant consequence also gained a lot of attention.

Table 2-9 Consequences adopted in the selected publication

| Consequences | Studies |
|--|---|
| Hedonic intention to watch/use, Utilitarian intention to watch/use | (Cai et al., 2018; Xu, X. et al., 2020) |
| Purchase intention, Purchase behaviour | (Fei et al., 2021; Hua et al., 2024; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Lu and Chen, 2021; Ma, Y., 2021b; Men et al., 2024; Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Sun, Yuan et al., 2019; Wang, D. et al., 2023; Wu, D. et al., 2023; Yang, Q. et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2023; Zeng et al., 2023; Zhang, N. and Ruan, 2024) |
| Consumer engagement | (Dang-Van et al., 2023; Guo, L. et al., 2021; Hu and Chaudhry, 2020; Kang et al., 2021; Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020; Xue et al., 2020) |
| Urge to buy impulsively, Impulsive consumption intention | (Alam et al., 2023; Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Lo et al., 2022; Luo et al., 2024; Ming et al., 2021; Miranda et al., 2024; Wang, D. et al., 2022; Xu, X. et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2023; Zhang, X. et al., 2023; Zhang, X. and Zhang, 2024) |
| Social sharing | (Xu, X. et al., 2020) |
| Continuous watch/use intention | (Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Zhang, M. et al., 2022) |
| Gift-giving behaviour | (Yang, Q. et al., 2023) |
| Memorable experience | (Gu, Y. et al., 2023) |
| Parasocial interaction | (Zhang, X. et al., 2023) |
| Consumer addiction to LSC, Consumer loyalty, Compulsive buying | (Ye and Ching, 2023) |
| Brand citizenship behaviours | (Hua et al., 2024) |

Source: The author

2.4.3.5 Findings of this review

Following the SPAR-4-SLR protocol, this review utilised a range of LSC-related terms to conduct an extensive literature search across multiple academic databases, resulting in the identification of 37 high-quality, up-to-date LSC studies focusing on consumer behaviour, all published in 3-star or higher journals listed in AJG 2021. The process ensured a rigorous and transparent methodology, and the findings were presented through tables and figures for clarity and ease of understanding. This approach successfully addressed the objective (1) and (2) outlined in Section 2.4.2.

To address review objective (3), (4) and (5), a comprehensive descriptive and content analysis of the selected 37 studies was conducted. The descriptive analysis revealed a steady increase in the number of publications in this field in recent years, highlighting that LSC is a valuable and promising area of research, garnering interest across multiple disciplines. Additionally, a majority of the LSC studies are based on the Chinese market and consumers, indicating the advanced development and high acceptance of LSC in China. Given the large consumer base and rapid economic growth in China, this reinforces the idea that LSC is a highly promising phenomenon, warranting further academic attention and in-depth exploration. In terms of industry context, existing research predominantly focuses on fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), particularly in sectors like fashion, beauty, and hospitality. However, LSC has extended into various other sectors in practice, such as luxury industry, which remain underexplored in academic research. Furthermore, potential environmental factors, including differences across LSC platforms, cultural influences, lifestyle changes, and behavioural differences among generational cohorts, may all impact the effectiveness of LSC. Future LSC research should integrate these factors into their design to capture a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.

Additionally, this review discussed the theoretical frameworks guiding LSC studies and adopted research methods. The 37 papers incorporated twenty-eight different theories, which were applied in LSC studies with varying emphases on social orientation, media orientation, or a combination of both. These theories

originate from diverse disciplines, including marketing, psychology, information systems, and technology, underscoring the complex and multifaceted nature of LSC. Considering the broad research potential of the LSC field, future scholars may explore the application of other existing theories or even develop new theoretical models to examine this evolving domain. In terms of research methods, quantitative survey research appears to dominate this field, with a smaller proportion of studies employing experimental and qualitative methods. This diversity in research design suggests significant potential for further investigation. The lack of qualitative research implies that current understanding of LSC is primarily deductive rather than inductive, with a tendency towards validating existing theories rather than developing new ones based on observation. From an empirical perspective, more experimental studies are needed to delve deeper into the complex relationships in LSC, particularly regarding interactivity and consumer decision-making. For instance, experiments could be designed to test the influence of LSC design elements (e.g., stream length, setting, and interaction formats) on consumer decision-making by controlling different variables. At the same time, further quantitative studies with diverse samples and research contexts are also required in order to revealing how LSC operates across various sectors, cultures and markets, providing broader perspectives for future research in this field.

Most importantly, the content analysis revealed the multidimensional nature of LSC factors that influence consumer behaviour. Various LSC-related factors impact attitudes, perceptions, and experiences, which in turn shape consumers' psychological and behavioural outcomes. However, these relationships may be conditional due to personal or contextual factors. Specifically, the antecedents influencing consumer behaviour and decision-making in LSC contexts can be categorised into internal customer-related factors and external LSC-related factors. LSC-related factors can further be divided into four categories: streamers, content, platform, and their configurational combinations. This categorisation indicates that LSC's influence mechanisms are complex and multidimensional, with each dimension potentially producing different types or levels of impact either independently or through interactive effects. Consequently, the systematic review identified three key research directions that warrant further investigation.

First, despite recognition of LSC's multidimensional nature, limited research has explored the configurational effects of multiple LSC dimensions operating simultaneously. Future research should examine how these multi-dimensional elements jointly influence consumer decision-making processes, particularly through integrated approaches that capture the overall impact of LSC rather than isolated factor effects.

Second, while existing research extensively examines how LSC drives immediate purchase intentions and impulsive buying behaviours, there is insufficient attention to brand-focused outcomes. Although some studies have investigated continuous platform usage intentions (Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Zhang, M. et al., 2022), these primarily emphasise consumers' intentions toward continuing to watch or use LSC channels rather than their relationships with the brands employing LSC strategies. Research examining how LSC influences consumer attitudes and loyalty intentions toward brands or retailers adopting this strategy remains limited, representing a significant gap in understanding LSC's broader relational impact.

Third, the relationship between LSC mechanisms and consumer behaviour may be moderated by contextual and individual factors, suggesting that these relationships are not universally applicable but vary across different contexts and individual differences. Consumer traits (e.g., materialism, brand awareness) and LSC characteristics (e.g., platform types, brand categories) may moderate the impact of LSC on consumer behaviour. Therefore, future research should focus on identifying and analysing these moderating factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of LSC's mechanisms.

Based on these findings, the following section develops luxury-specific LSC factors that address these identified research gaps particularly focusing on configurational effects, brand relationship outcomes, and contextual moderating factors relevant to luxury consumption contexts.

2.4.3.6 The development of LuxLSC factors of the present study

Based on the analysis of the SLR results and Section 2.2 of this chapter, a significant knowledge gap has been identified: existing LSC research has predominantly focused on general contexts, with limited investigation of luxury brand

environments. Several scholars have highlighted the necessity of investigating LSC specifically within luxury contexts (Creevey et al., 2022; Rathí et al., 2022), as luxury brands present unique challenges and opportunities that may not be adequately captured by established LSC measurement approaches.

While LSC and LuxLSC share fundamental characteristics such as real-time interaction, product demonstration, and social commerce integration, luxury brand contexts impose distinct requirements that necessitate adapted measurement approaches. Luxury brands must leverage LSC as an effective digital tool while preserving the exclusivity and aspirational appeal that defines the luxury experience (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012). Moreover, this study's focus on brand loyalty as the primary outcome, rather than immediate transactional behaviours emphasised in much LSC research, requires measurement of factors that specifically influence consumer relationship development and emotional attachment.

Consequently, rather than directly adopting established LSC dimensions developed for general contexts, this study systematically adapts and develops factors specifically tailored to luxury brand environments and loyalty formation objectives. This approach ensures theoretical appropriateness while addressing the unique dynamics of luxury brand-consumer relationships in digital streaming environments.

2.4.3.6.1 Streamer-related factors: source attractiveness over alternative approaches

Streamers are the hosts of livestreams who demonstrate brands and products information and interact with consumers in real-time (Dang-Van et al., 2023). The SLR revealed that streamer roles vary significantly across contexts. Wang, D. et al. (2022) distinguished between influencer-based streamers who can generate endorsement and conformity effects, and non-influencer streamers (usually are salespeople) who typically function as information providers with limited social influence. In luxury brand contexts, this distinction becomes particularly important.

Luxury brands typically engage celebrities or influencers as streamers due to their social attractiveness (Hall, 2020; Zhang, T., 2024). These individuals possess qualities such as physical beauty, charm, and strong social presence that align with

luxury brands' aspirational positioning (Schimmelpfennig and Hunt, 2020). The primary role of streamers is not to educate consumers about product specifications but to evoke emotional responses by embodying the status and exclusivity that the brand represents (McCracken, 1989). In contrast, for brands that use their own salespeople as streamers, the streamers are acting as product educators and information sources, emphasising information credibility and trust (Wang, D. et al., 2022).

Given these distinct role requirements in luxury contexts, the *Source Attractiveness Model* (McGuire, 1985) is adopted in this study over alternative models such as source credibility or interaction quality models. McGuire (1985) emphasises that sources considered most attractive by target audiences are known, liked and perceived as similar to the target. This model highlights the importance of the source's similarity, familiarity, and likeability in enhancing consumer attitudes towards both advertising and brands.

In this study, **similarity** refers to the perceived congruence between the streamer, the endorsed brand, and the target audience in the LuxLSC context. On the one hand, consumer-streamer similarity captures perceived commonality in taste, preferences, and values between the consumers and streamer, reflecting the traditional source attractiveness focus on audience-endorser alignment (Siegrist et al., 2000). On the other hand, brand-streamer fit assesses how well the streamer's image, characteristics, and positioning align with the luxury brand's identity and values (Breves et al., 2019). This dual conceptualisation recognises that effective LSC streamers must achieve congruence with both their target audience and the brand they represent (Lu and Chen, 2021; Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Zhang, X. and Zhang, 2024). Research consistently demonstrates that endorser effectiveness increases with perceived congruence between endorser, brand, and target audience (Choi, S.M. and Rifon, 2012; Mowen et al., 1979), with existing LSC studies confirming positive associations between streamer-consumer similarity and consumers' attitudes (Lu and Chen, 2021; Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020). **Familiarity** in this context represents how well-known or recognisable the streamer is to the target audience, encompassing both streamer recognition and established reputation. Research suggests that regardless of the actual physical looks, celebrities'

recognition and popularity make them appear attractive to consumers, consequently enhancing consumer attitudes towards brands (Choi, S.M. and Rifon, 2012). **Likeability** captures the audience's positive attitude or affection towards the streamer, based on the streamer's traits such as personal attractiveness, charm, and overall capability to engage and connect with viewers through livestreams. Extensive research confirms the determining role of source likeability in advertising effectiveness and brand attitude formation (De Veirman et al., 2017; Reinhard and Messner, 2009; Yilmaz et al., 2011).

2.4.3.6.2 Content-related factors: information and aesthetic integration

Live content-related factors address both informational and experiential elements crucial for luxury brand evaluation. The SLR consistently identified information quality as fundamental across LSC contexts, while revealing inadequate attention to aesthetic dimensions particularly relevant to luxury brands.

Information quality captures both the engagement value and practical utility of LSC content, reflecting the dual informational needs of luxury consumers in digital contexts (Balabanis and Chatzopoulou, 2025; Bazi et al., 2020). This factor encompasses the extent to which live content is interesting and engaging for viewers, creating compelling viewing experiences that sustain attention and emotional involvement. Research on digital content marketing demonstrates that engaging content plays a crucial role in fostering consumer engagement and enhancing perceived value (Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). Meanwhile, information quality address the practical utility dimension, measuring whether the live content provides helpful and useful information about products and brands that facilitates informed evaluation (Häubl and Trifts, 2000). LSC enable consumers to gain information while engaging in communication and interaction with streamers and other viewers, significantly enhancing consumers' perceived utilitarian and hedonic values while reducing perceived risk (Xue et al., 2020). Information quality particularly influences consumers' evaluation of products and brands (Gao, X. et al., 2021; Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Xu, X. et al., 2020), subsequently affecting consumer engagement (Luo et al., 2024). In luxury contexts, this dual nature is particularly important because consumers require both engaging presentation that reflects the

brands' hedonic values and substantive information that supports high-involvement purchase decisions characteristic of luxury consumption, where consumers engage in complex value perception processes (Hennigs et al., 2015).

Visual display quality emerges as a luxury-specific requirement that has received limited attention in existing LSC studies. The factor encompasses two key elements of luxury brand presentation in LSC contexts. First, it captures the aesthetic appeal and visual enjoyment provided by the streaming presentation, reflecting the fundamental importance of aesthetic value in luxury brand positioning (Dubois et al., 2001). Second, it addresses brand-environment congruence, measuring how well the visual presentation aligns with and reinforces the luxury brand's image and positioning. This dual conceptualisation recognises that luxury consumers evaluate both the inherent visual quality of the presentation and its consistency with brand expectations, as visual authenticity is crucial for maintaining luxury brand credibility, with aesthetics playing a fundamental role in luxury brand preservation (Berthon et al., 2009), particularly in digital environments where visual presentation affects consumer authenticity perceptions (Kim, Jungkeun et al., 2025).

2.4.3.6.3 Platform-related factors: IT affordances and luxury specific requirements

Platform-related factors build upon established IT affordance theory while incorporating luxury-specific technological and contextual requirements. Given LSC's IT-dependent nature, platform technical features significantly affect consumer perceptions about luxury brands, necessitating integration of technological affordances with streamer and content attributes.

Building on Sun, Yuan et al. (2019), three established IT affordance are retained for their fundamental importance. **Visibility** refers to LSC platforms' ability to provide consumers with detailed, clear, and immersive visual access to products. This feature enables luxury consumers to vividly examine products through real-time livestreams, helping reduce perceived risk and product uncertainty (Cenfetelli and Benbasat, 2019; Chen, H. et al., 2022). **Metavoicing** refers to the platform's capability to facilitate real-time communication and interactive feedback between consumers, streamers, and other viewers during livestreams. This technological affordance enables consumers to communicate with streamers and fellow viewers

to gain additional product and brand information in real-time, while also providing opportunities to share opinions about products and brands during the streaming experience (Sun, Yuan et al., 2019). This feature also facilitates social interactions that enhances trust in streamers and products (Zhang, M. et al., 2022) while increasing perceived values (Wu, D. et al., 2023). Research suggests that social interaction capabilities help luxury brands form online brand communities, shaping consumer attitudes and maintain brand relationships (Burnasheva et al., 2019).

Guidance shopping refers to the platform's ability to support personalised consultation and customised information delivery based on individual consumer needs and preferences. this affordance enables streamers to provide customised information about products and brands based on viewers' specific personal requirements, while also helping consumers identify which products best fit their individual needs. In luxury contexts, this feature is particularly valuable because it replicates the high-touch, personalised service experience that luxury consumers expect from traditional retail environments (Alavi et al., 2021), translated into digital streaming contexts through streamer-mediated personal consultation and recommendation services, similar to how luxury brands have successfully implemented digital service technologies to maintain personalised customer experiences (Chung et al., 2020).

Trading affordance addresses luxury-specific feature requirements extending beyond general LSC contexts. This factor encompassed both transaction security considerations and geographic accessibility capabilities. Given that luxury brand's physical stores are predominantly located in major cities, geographic restrictions limit access for consumers in remote areas (Zhang, B. and Kim, 2013). LSC provides unique opportunities to bridge this gap by offering greater accessibility and convenience, allowing consumers to experience luxury products regardless of geographic location. Additionally, considering that luxury consumption typically involves high-value transactions where security concerns may be heightened. Perceived transaction safety plays a critical role in shaping consumer attitudes, making trading features necessary to be taken into consideration. It may influence consumer perception about online luxury consumption and potentially enhance brand loyalty.

2.4.4 Summary

This section has conducted a comprehensive systematic literature review of existing research on live streaming commerce, with particular focus on consumer behaviour outcomes. Through rigorous selection criteria, 37 studies were identified and systematically analysed using both descriptive and content analysis approaches. The descriptive analysis examined publication trends, journal distributions, research contexts (including LSC platforms, geographic locations, and industry sectors), and methodological approaches employed across the selected publications. Subsequently, content analysis systematically categorised the theoretical foundations, antecedent factors, mediating and moderating variables, and outcome measures adopted in existing LSC research.

The systematic literature review revealed two significant knowledge gaps that justify the present research investigation. First, despite the growing importance of luxury brands in digital commerce, existing LSC research has demonstrated limited focus on luxury industry contexts, with most studies concentrating on general goods sectors. Second, while existing research has extensively examined immediate transactional behaviours such as purchase intention and impulsive buying behaviours, considerably less attention has been devoted to understanding how LSC influences consumers' brand relationship outcomes, particularly regarding loyalty formation and maintenance.

To address these identified gaps, this section systematically developed a comprehensive framework of luxury-specific influencing factors tailored to capture the unique dynamics of LSC within luxury brand contexts. Rather than directly adopting established LSC dimensions developed for general contexts, this study developed factors specifically tailored to luxury brand environments and loyalty formation objectives. The framework encompasses streamer-related factors operationalised through source attractiveness dimensions (similarity, familiarity, and likeability), content-related factors incorporating both informational and aesthetic elements (information quality and visual display quality), and platform-related factors integrating technological affordances with luxury-specific requirements (visibility, metavoicing, guidance shopping, and trading affordance).

Additionally, to capture a more holistic understanding of how these factors work together to influence consumer perceptions and loyalty formation, this research proposes a configurational construct representing the overall impact of LuxLSC. This high-order construct emerges from the combined and cumulative effects of all underlying factors, recognising that luxury consumers' responses to LSC likely result from the integrated experience rather than isolated factor influences. The justification of this configurational approach will be detailed in Section 3.3.1.

The luxury-specific factor framework developed in this section provides the theoretical foundation for the conceptual model construction presented in Chapter 3, which will integrate these factors with established consumer behaviour theories to explicate the mechanisms through which LSC influences luxury brand loyalty. This systematic progression from literature analysis to factor development to theoretical framework construction ensures that the subsequent empirical investigation addresses genuine research gaps while maintaining strong theoretical grounding.

2.5 Brand Loyalty

2.5.1 Introduction

'Keeping customers loyal makes good economic sense. Loyal customers spend more and stay around longer.'

- Kotler et al. (2019, p.20)

Good consumer relationship is the intangible asset of brands, closely related to business outcomes metrics such as managerial decisions (Blattberg and Deighton, 1996; Min et al., 2016; Reinartz et al., 2005) and financial performance (Gupta et al., 2004; Gupta and Zeithaml, 2006; Livne et al., 2011). Building loyalty with customers and other stakeholders, especially, is the 'biggest opportunity' for firms to enhance their profitability (Reichheld, 2001). Reported by Harvard Business Review, companies leading in brand loyalty grow revenue more than twice as fast as their industry peers (HBR, 2020). In addition, existing customers who are loyal to a brand not only make purchases much more frequently than new customers, but retaining this loyal segment is also significantly more cost-effective than attracting

new customers. It has been reported that the cost of acquiring a new customer could be five to twenty-five times (depending on various industries) more expensive than retaining an existing one (Gallo, 2014). Thus, for brands, such loyalty means reduced costs, increased revenue potentials and greater market shares (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Liu, Y. and Yang, 2009).

It has been proven by many researchers that loyalty is positively associated with long-term profitability of brands since loyal customers tend to repeatedly purchase the brands that they feel attached to (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Jacoby and Kyner, 1973; Liu, Y., 2007). Thus, acquiring a loyal customer means not only securing a single sale but the entire future stream of potential purchases that would be made throughout the customer's lifetime. Moreover, loyalty makes customers less likely to be affected by competitors' advertisements and promotional activities (Agrawal, 1996; Raj, 1982), in turn, less likely to switch to competitors. In other words, promoting to loyal customers costs relatively less. Researchers have also pointed out that loyal customers would like to pay higher prices, so-called premium prices for the brands they patronise (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978), resulting in revenue gains for firms (Reichheld and Teal, 1996). More importantly, loyal customers also tend to talk about the brands and share the favourable experiences with their families and friends (Dick and Basu, 1994), which in turn brings additional values for brand through referrals and advocacy (Keller, E. and Fay, 2012). Accordingly, the importance of building brand loyalty for brand success is clearly seen. In this section, brand loyalty will be understood from its definitions and then specifically discuss it as part of the Brand Value Chain.

2.5.2 The definition of brand loyalty

Brand loyalty research has evolved considerably since its earliest conceptualisations. This section traces this evolution, culminating in the adoption of Oliver's (1999) definition as the theoretical framework for this study, which aligns optimally with the two-dimensional measurement approach employed in the empirical research and provides a particularly suitable lens for examining loyalty in the LuxLSC context.

2.5.2.1 Historical development of brand loyalty conceptualisations

The academic study of loyalty dates back over a century, with Copeland (1923) introducing three incremental stages of shopping attitudes: consumer recognition, consumer preference and consumer insistence. Consumers exhibiting 'preference' or 'insistence' demonstrated reduced willingness to accept substitute brands/products, representing an early conceptualisation of brand loyalty. Formal definitions emerged in the 1940s, with Guest (1944) defining brand loyalty as the indicator of 'constancy of preference over a period of years in the life of the individual' (p.17).

Early operational approaches focused exclusively on behavioural metrics. Cunningham (1956) proposed measuring brand loyalty through market share, tracking a consumer's expenditure on one brand relative to others within a product category. Similarly, Tucker (1964) and McConnell (1968) viewed brand loyalty as 'the simply biased choice behaviour', measured by the proportion of an individual's total purchases devoted to a specific brand. This single-dimension behavioural approach dominated early loyalty research.

2.5.2.2 Recognition of psychological dimensions

A significant advancement came with Jacoby and Kyner's (1973) seminal work, which defined brand loyalty as: '(1) the biased (i.e., non-random), (2) behavioural response (i.e., purchase), (3) expressed over time, (4) by some decision-making unit, (5) with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and (6) is a function of psychological (decision-making, evaluative) processes' (p.2). Their definition marked a pivotal shift by acknowledging both behavioural manifestations and underlying psychological process, particularly through their sixth condition, which recognised that loyalty involves deliberate evaluative process rather than mere habit.

This recognition that behavioural measures alone were insufficient led to a more comprehensive understanding of loyalty. As Kumar, V. and Shah (2004) later asserted, 'behavioural loyalty by itself cannot be a measure of 'true' customer loyalty'. The key limitation of purely behavioural approaches was their inability to distinguish between 'true loyalty' or 'spurious loyalty'. The motivations behind

consumers consistently purchasing from a brand are varied and may stem from genuine loyalty, exceptional offers, and deals, or not having others readily available. Repurchase behaviour driven by the latter two factors is considered as 'spurious loyalty' (Dick and Basu, 1994). Consequently, consumers with spurious loyalty tend to be easily distracted by competing brands' marketing actions, whilst true loyalty enables consumers to justify premium prices and maintain repeat patronage, despite the 'lure' of other brands.

2.5.2.3 The two-dimensional conceptualisation

Building upon these foundations, researchers developed increasingly sophisticated conceptualisations of brand loyalty that incorporated both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions. Dick and Basu (1994) defined brand loyalty as 'the relationship between the relative attitude toward an entity (brand/service/store/vendor) and patronage behavior' (p.100), emphasising the comparative nature of brand evaluation. Day (1976), similarly argued that loyalty involves 'a rational decision made after an evaluation of the benefits of competing brands', emphasising the cognitive processes underlying loyal behaviour.

The most comprehensive synthesis of these perspectives emerged in Oliver's (1999) widely accepted definition of loyalty as 'a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronise a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior' (p.34). This definition elegantly captures the essence of brand loyalty through several key components: (1) a psychological state of commitment, (2) behavioural intentions of repurchase and repatronage, (3) consistency over time, (4) resistance to situational factors and competitive efforts, and (5) the causal relationship between commitment and behaviour.

Oliver's definition is particularly valuable because it articulates how attitudinal commitment functions as the psychological driver of behavioural loyalty. This perspective aligns with Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, which posits that attitudes are critical precursors to behavioural intentions and subsequent actions. Within this theoretical context, an individual who holds a strong commitment

to a brand may not purchase it over multiple occasions due to certain constraints (e.g., accessibility, affordability), yet this commitment is likely to result in future purchase and patronage behaviours when those situational constraints are removed (Watson et al., 2015).

2.5.2.4 Contemporary expression of brand loyalty in digital context

In today's marketplace, the manifestations of both behavioural and attitudinal loyalty have evolved substantially, particularly in digital environments. Behavioural loyalty now encompasses not only purchase intentions but also engagement with brand touchpoints, particularly digital ones such as livestreams, social media interactions, and online brand communities (Godey et al., 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Similarly, attitudinal loyalty extends beyond private preference to include public expressions of loyalty through digital word-of-mouth, online recommendations, and social media advocacy (Kumar, V. et al., 2013; Laroche et al., 2013).

Recent research has confirmed that digital engagement behaviours, such as participation in live streaming events, represent valid contemporary expressions of patronage behaviour as conceptualised by Oliver (Chen, J. et al., 2023; Lim et al., 2020; Liu, W. et al., 2023b). These digital interactions serve as important non-purchase behaviours that reflect and reinforce consumers' attitudinal commitment toward brands. Harmeling et al. (2017) have developed a comprehensive theory of customer engagement marketing that distinguishes between transactional behaviours (purchases) and non-transactional engagement behaviours, arguing that in digital era, consumers demonstrate loyalty through both purchasing and voluntary resource contribution behaviours. The latter includes investments of time, attention, and effort in brand interactions that go beyond financial transactions but nonetheless represent significant expressions of brand loyalty. This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding how digital touchpoints like livestreams create opportunities for consumers to demonstrate loyalty through engagement rather than solely through purchases.

Many researchers also consider word-of-mouth (WOM), particularly in its digital manifestations, an important indicator of attitudinal loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Dick and

Basu, 1994; Kumar, V. et al., 2013). As Aaker (1991) noted, the real value of loyal customers to a brand stems from the fact that their active communication about the brand to others in the marketplace, such as recommending and talking positively about the brand.

2.5.2.5 Brand loyalty in luxury contexts

The conceptualisation of brand loyalty is particularly nuanced in luxury contexts, where symbolic and experiential dimensions of consumption often take precedence over utilitarian considerations (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012). For luxury brands, the relationship between attitudinal commitment and patronage behaviour is distinctively characterised by strong emotional attachments, identity signalling, and aspirational consumption patterns (Chandon et al., 2016; Ko et al., 2019).

Oliver's conceptualisation offers particular utility in understanding luxury brand loyalty because it emphasises the role of deeply held commitment that persists despite situational constraints, which is a critical consideration in luxury contexts where high prices and limited accessibility may constrain purchase behaviours despite strong brand attachment (Hennigs et al., 2015). This conceptualisation helps explain why luxury consumers may display strong attitudinal commitment through brand advocacy and digital engagement even when their purchase frequency is limited by financial or access constraints.

Recent studies have demonstrated that digital innovations have transformed how consumers express loyalty to luxury brands, with social media sharing, participation in virtual brand events, and digital advocacy becoming increasingly important manifestations of luxury brand loyalty (Cho et al., 2024; Javornik et al., 2021; Sung et al., 2023). These developments align with Oliver's conceptualisation by showing how commitment to luxury brands manifests through diverse expressions of patronage and advocacy in digital environments.

2.5.2.6 Adopted definition of brand loyalty in this study

After reviewing the evolution of brand loyalty conceptualisations, this study adopts Oliver's (1999) definition of brand loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby

causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (p.34). This choice is deliberate and follows careful consideration of the major two-dimensional frameworks in the literature.

This definitional choice aligns strategically with the luxury brand conceptualisation adopted in Section 2.3.3.2. As established, luxury brands are defined by their capacity to inspire "deep connection" and "resonance" with consumers (Ko et al., 2019), while Oliver's (1999) loyalty framework emphasises "deeply held commitment." This conceptual alignment suggests that luxury brands are inherently designed to generate the emotional attachment that characterises brand loyalty, making Oliver's framework particularly appropriate for luxury brand research. Moreover, Oliver's definition represents a fundamentally attitudinal conceptualisation of loyalty, focusing on psychological commitment rather than purely behavioural manifestations, which aligns with this study's focus on measuring loyalty intentions and brand attitudes rather than tracking actual purchase behaviors.

While Jacoby and Kyner's (1973) seminal work was foundational in integrating psychological processes into early definitions of brand loyalty, their six-condition approach remains largely descriptive and does not fully articulate the relationship between attitudes and behaviours. Similarly, Dick and Basu's (1994) definition offers valuable insights into the relationship between relative attitude and patronage behaviour, but its emphasis on comparative evaluation may not fully capture the psychological depth of luxury brand attachment that transcends direct brand comparisons.

Oliver's (1999) definition offers several conceptual advantages that make it particularly suited to the context of this study:

First, it explicitly articulates the causal relationship between attitudinal commitment and behavioural manifestations, providing a clear theoretical foundation for understanding how psychological attachment drives both purchase intentions and engagement behaviours in luxury contexts. The concept of "deeply held commitment" aligns with the profound emotional connections that luxury brands typically foster with their consumers (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012).

Second, the concept of "repatronising" extends naturally to include digital engagement with brand touchpoints, such as livestreams and social media interactions, as valid manifestations of patronage behaviour. This broader conception of behavioural loyalty encompasses the diverse ways consumers interact with luxury brands in contemporary digital environments, where engagement often precedes and complements purchasing.

Third, Oliver's emphasis on commitment that persists "despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" is especially relevant for luxury brands, where consumers may face significant constraints to frequent purchasing despite strong brand attachment. This perspective helps explain why luxury consumers may demonstrate loyalty through digital engagement and advocacy even when purchase frequency is limited by financial or access constraints.

Fourth, the focus on commitment as a psychological driver aligns with luxury consumption research that emphasises the emotional and identity-based aspects of luxury brand relationships rather than primarily utilitarian or comparative evaluations (Hennigs et al., 2015; Ko et al., 2019). Importantly, this attitudinal emphasis makes Oliver's definition particularly appropriate for this study's methodological approach, which measures brand loyalty through attitude and intention scales rather than tracking actual purchase behaviours, recognising that attitudinal commitment may be more indicative of true brand relationship strength in luxury contexts where behavioural expressions may be constrained by purchase frequency limitations.

This theoretical foundation directly informs the methodological approach employed in this study. The requirement for respondents to have experience with Burberry's LSC aligns with Oliver's emphasis on experience-based commitment formation, while the measurement of both attitudinal and behavioural loyalty dimensions reflects the two-dimensional nature of the adopted framework.

Table 2-10 The definitions of brand loyalty from previous literature

| Authors | The definition of brand loyalty |
|--|--|
| Guest (1944, p.17) | The indicator of 'constancy of preference over a period of years in the life of the individual'. |
| Cunningham (1956) | The share of market. |
| Tucker (1964, p.32) | The simply biased choice behavior with respect to branded merchandise. |
| Day (1976, p.35) | Loyalty is based on a rational decision made after an evaluation of the benefits of competing brands. This decision is, in effect, a commitment to the brand. |
| Jacoby and Kyner (1973, p.2) | (1) the biased (i.e., non-random), (2) behavioural response (i.e., purchase), (3) expressed over time, (4) by some decision-making unit, (5) with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and (6) is a function of psychological (decision-making, evaluative) processes. |
| Aaker (1991, p.39) | A measure of the attachment that a consumer has to a brand. |
| Dick and Basu (1994, p.100) | The relationship between the relative attitude toward an entity (brand/service/store/vendor) and patronage behaviour. |
| Oliver (1999, p.34) (Adopted in this study) | A deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour. |

Source: The author

2.5.3 Understanding brand loyalty as part of Brand Value Chain

'Generating a sale is not the ultimate goal of the marketing process' (Kotler et al., 2022, p.444), but building a loyal consumer base is. As established previously, brands cannot rely solely on attracting new customers; instead, they must invest in retaining them and generating consistent business from them. Constantly acquiring new customers results in high costs and carries the risk that these customers may

easily switch to competing brands. Conversely, building brand loyalty represents a more cost-effective long-term approach that increases potential for stable sales and profits, essential for sustaining brand growth and ensuring long-term success. As Jacoby and Chestnut (1978, p.1) stated, 'the long-term success of a particular brand is based, not on the number of consumers who purchase it only once, but on the number who become repeat purchasers'. This principle is particularly relevant for luxury brands, which, as established in Section 2.3.3.2, are defined by their capacity to inspire "deep connection" and "resonance" with consumers (Ko et al., 2019). The emotional attachment and psychological commitment that characterise luxury brand relationships align directly with brand loyalty formation, making loyalty development not merely beneficial but essential for luxury brand success.

Based on Aaker's (1992) brand equity model, brand loyalty constitutes a crucial component of brand equity alongside brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary assets. Importantly, Aaker emphasised that brand loyalty operates at a higher hierarchy than other components because it can be influenced and strengthened by other dimensions while directly contributing to brands' overall long-term values. This hierarchical relationship is particularly significant for luxury brands, where the emotional resonance defined as core to luxury brand identity (Section 2.3.3.2) serves as the foundation for the deeply held commitment that characterises brand loyalty (Section 2.5.2.6).

Keller's Brand Value Chain provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how marketing activities translate into brand loyalty through customer mindset development (See Figure 2-10). According to the Brand Value Chain (Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, 2003), brands create values by affecting targeted customers' mindsets through marketing activities. Customer mindset encompassed all brand-related elements that could exist in customers' minds, such as beliefs, feelings, experiences, images, etc. In response to marketing initiatives, consumers generate new knowledge or reshape previous knowledge about brands, ultimately leading to consequential behaviours.

The internal formation process of consumer mindset operates through five hierarchical dimensions: brand awareness, brand association, brand attitude, brand attachment/loyalty, and ultimate activity. Keller, K.L. and Lehmann (2003) suggest

that brand awareness and association formation drive attitudes towards brands, consequently leading to brand loyalty and various consumer activities.

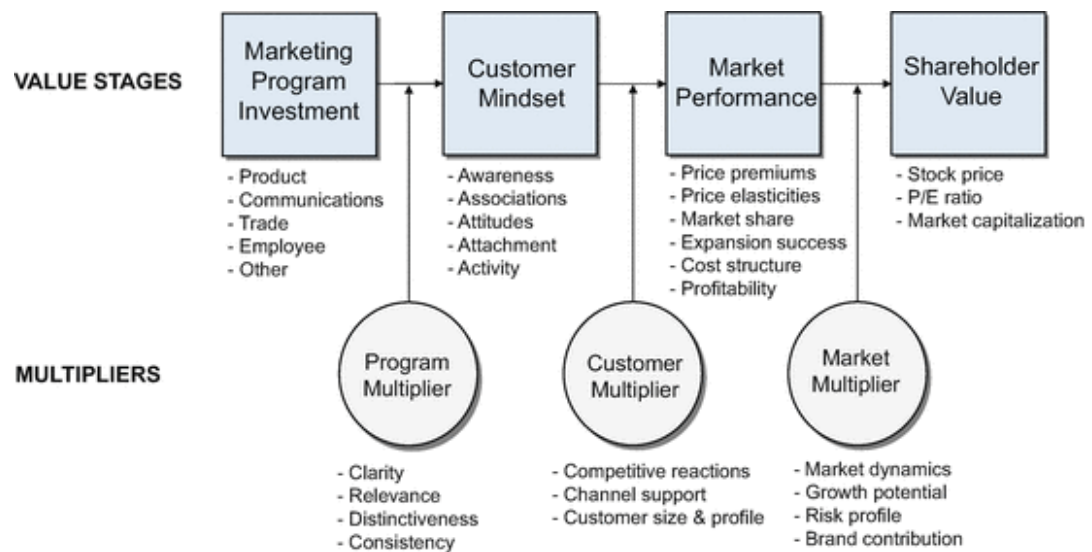


Figure 2-10 Brand Value Chain

Source: (Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, 2003)

The Brand Value Chain model, entrenched in the brand equity concept (Aaker, 1992; Keller, K.L., 1993; Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, 2003), has been widely recognised as one of the most valuable marketing models, and frequently cited in the marketing and business management publications (Kotler et al., 2022). Relative to the present study, the major contribution of the Brand Value Chain lies in its recognition that marketing activities work through influencing beliefs and attitudes highlighting the crucial roles of consumers mindset in driving brand loyalty. This framework echoes Keller's (1993, p.8) observation that "brand loyalty occurs when favourable beliefs and attitudes for the brand are manifested in repeat buying behaviours", supporting this study's focus on attitudinal antecedents of loyalty rather than purely behavioural measures.

The present study builds upon the first two components of the Brand Value Chain to explore how LSC as a marketing tactic affects luxury consumers' mindsets, specifically examining the pathway from LSC marketing activities through brand attitude formation to loyalty intention development. This approach recognises that for luxury brands, which are inherently designed to create deep emotional connections (Ko et al., 2019), the attitude-loyalty relationship represents a particular

crucial mechanism for understanding marketing effectiveness and long-term brand relationship development.

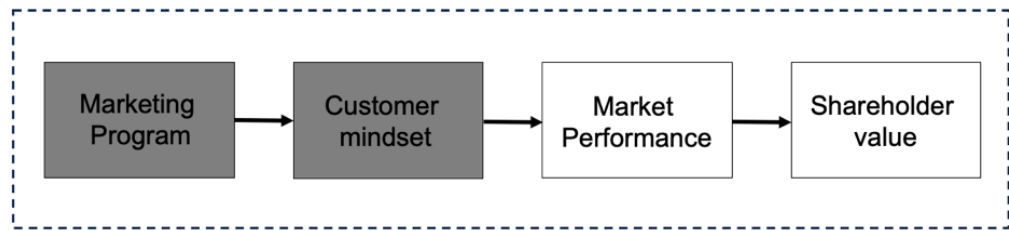


Figure 2-11 The empirical focus of this study based on the Brand Value Chain

Source: The author

2.6 Existing Brand Awareness, Perceived Brand Luxuriousness, and Self-Materialism as Moderators

2.6.1 Introduction

As discussed in the Section 2.2 on LSC, the mechanisms through which LSC operates may be moderated by consumer-related (e.g., susceptibility to social influence and mindset) or LSC-related factors (e.g., channel popularity and livestream genres). Moreover, the primary focus of this study is on the influence of LSC-related factors. To capture the role of consumer-related factors within the research context, this study introduces three consumer-related factors that may moderate the relationship between LSC impact and consumers' brand attitudes. These factors are consumers' pre-existing brand knowledge (i.e., existing brand awareness), perceived brand luxuriousness, and the degree of self-materialism. In this section, the potential impact of each moderator on the relationship between marketing tactics (LSC) and consumer attitudes is discussed in depth.

2.6.2 Existing brand awareness

Brand awareness can be explained as the extent to which consumers are familiar with a brand and can identify it in different situations (Aaker, 1992; Keller, K.L., 1993), which in turn indicates the capacity of a brand to be recognised by consumers (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2018). It has been frequently discussed by researchers in the field of brand equity and consumer behaviours. As one of

determinants of brand equity, the strong link between brand awareness and other brand equity assets, such as brand image, brand loyalty and etc., was revealed by researchers decades ago (Aaker, 1992; Keller, K.L., 1993) and has been widely discussed since then. Meanwhile, researchers in consumer behaviour have also identified brand awareness as a key factor associated with consumer attitudes towards brands and consumer behaviours. Especially in the Internet age, considering the overloaded marketing information that they encounter every day, consumers may be more willing to allocate their attention to the brands that they can recognise and recall. Hence, researchers suggest that brands with a higher level of brand awareness usually possess a greater competitive edge over their rivals in the marketplace, and tend to be favoured by consumers (Shapiro et al., 1997). For instance, as consumers are more aware of a brand, the attention they pay towards marketing information of this brand tends to increase, whilst the impact of advertisements from competitive brands on consumers may diminishes (Kent and Allen, 1994). When it comes to luxury brands, researchers suggest that brand awareness creates values and boosts the desirability of a brand (Kapferer and Valette-Florence, 2018).

There is no doubt about the direct impact of brand awareness on consumer behaviour. As well as this, the moderating effect of brand awareness has also been noticed by marketing researchers. It has been suggested that for brands with different levels of awareness, advertising may work in the different ways (Kent and Allen, 1994; Machleit et al., 1993). In some cases, brand awareness can moderate the effectiveness of marketing initiatives and influence the decisions about marketing strategies. Pae et al. (2002) suggested that international marketers should consider the influence of brand familiarity (awareness) when they are making their decisions about advertising themes and execution styles. Specifically, they found out that when the brand is better known by consumers, standardised commercials with transformational appeals are likely to stimulate more favourable attitudes, while localised advertisements with informative style is more suitable when the advertised brand is new or less familiar to local customers. Lee, J.E. et al. (2018) looked into the social media posts of luxury fashion brands and discovered that the level of brand awareness could moderate the effect of visual complexity on

consumers' perceptions of brand luxury. According to their study, luxury brand with higher level of brand awareness should present images with less complexity on their social media such that consumers perceive the brand as more luxurious.

Also, notably, it is not always the case that strong brand awareness is inherently superior. Under specific circumstances, it may also backfire. Lee, J.E. et al. (2018) reminded that when the brand is high familiar to consumers, it may cause a negative perception if the extensive information contained in social media are found inconsistent with the previous knowledge that consumers already have about the brand. It is also argued that when a brand is excessively aware and consumers become so used to seeing it, they are likely to pay less attention to brand information in media content (Nelson, 2002). Moreover, researchers mentioned strong brand awareness may inhibit the effectiveness of marketing initiatives. For instance, Van Doorn et al. (2017) pointed out that consumers attitudes towards the brand were less likely to enhance through CSR initiatives when the brand already showed a high level of brand awareness, which may be due to 'ceiling effects'. On the contrary, CSR initiatives significantly improved consumer attitudes towards the brand with lower awareness.

Specific to the present study, adopting LSC can be seen as an attempt of luxury brands to localise their marketing strategy in terms of China's market, and it is still at infant stage. Hence, the mechanism of brand awareness as a moderator in this context is still understudied. To consider the importance of brand awareness in the luxury industry, as well as to better understand the impact of LSC, it is necessary to investigate whether or how brand awareness moderates the relationship between LSC and consumer attitudes. Based on existing studies, therefore, it is assumed that if consumers have higher level of pre-existing brand awareness and positive evaluation of a luxury brand, the impact of LSC on brand attitude may be less significant.

2.6.3 Perceived brand luxuriousness

Based on Amatulli et al. (2020), perceived brand luxuriousness can be defined as the extent to which a brand is perceived as unique, of value and prestigious. The importance of perceived brand luxuriousness for luxury brands has been well

understood by both scholars and business practitioners. When a brand is perceived as highly luxurious, consumers are more likely to have favourable attitudes towards the brand (Amatulli et al., 2020), as well as more willing to pay a price premium for its goods or services (Li, R. et al., 2022). Meanwhile, some researchers have also acknowledged the effect of brand luxuriousness level as a moderator on customer behaviour. For example, Verhoef et al. (2007) investigated how brand tiers moderated the contribution of third-party dealers to brand retention in the context of car retailing, and suggested that for prestige brands, the positive contribution of dealers to brand retention was smaller. This finding was explained by the researchers that different brand tiers may appeal to different customer segments who value different aspects in the brands. For prestige brands, consumers tend to care more about symbolic values of the brands than the extra values provided by dealers. Another possible explanation for this is that prestige brands usually have established brand image and reputation of high quality, while the dealers have limited opportunities to add extra contribution. Adopting a same position, considering LSC can also be seen as a third-party selling channel for brands, the impact of LSC may decrease, when the brand is prestigious enough.

However, it is worth noting that whether a brand is perceived as luxurious by consumers could be far too subjective, as Bastien and Kapferer (2012) mentioned in their article 'Armani is luxury for some, not for others'. In other words, consumers tend to have their own understandings of luxury, in which different people perceive different levels of luxury values towards one same brand (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004), in turn resulting in different attitudes and behaviours. In the context of this study, therefore, instead of measuring multiple brands classified by brand tiers, the author focused on consumers' perceptions of brand luxuriousness regarding the same brand. Yet, the moderating role of perceived brand luxuriousness is still understudied.

Several lines of evidence have suggested that consumers react differently to marketing communications in terms of luxury brands and non-luxury brands. Sometimes, the consequences for luxury and non-luxury brands could be opposite. For instance, when Kong et al. (2021) explored the marketing efforts that fashion brands made on sustainability, the results showed that non-luxury brands tend to be

beneficial from it, whilst luxury brand may risk diluting the brand value. In the same vein, it is possible that consumers who perceived a particular brand as high luxury respond differently or even oppositely, to the marketing efforts of this brand than those who consider this brand as low or non-luxury. In this regard, to understand whether and how consumers' pre-existing perception of brand luxury affect consumers' responses to marketing stimuli is a relevant concern for luxury brand marketers when developing marketing plans, as well as a valuable factor that scholars must not overlook when interpreting consumer behaviour.

Specific to social media marketing context, regarding mainstream brands, it has been well recognised that social media channels are valuable and effective marketing tools to build up brand-consumer relationship. However, luxury goods are considered a different product category to measure the effectiveness of social media as a communication tool (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). According to previous studies, luxury brands usually are expected to be 'aloof' and maintain psychological distance from consumers on social media, in order to keep their exclusivity and desirability (Hennigs et al., 2012; Park, M. et al., 2020). Thus, when it comes to LSC, compared to non-luxury product categories, it is likely that consumers have higher expectations and higher satisfaction threshold for luxury brands' live streaming performance, in turn affecting their attitudes towards the brands and livestreams. Accordingly, it is proposed that perceived brand luxuriousness can moderate the impact of LSC on consumers' attitudes toward the brand and its livestreams. More specifically, the higher the perceived brand luxuriousness, the weaker the positive effect of LSC on consumer attitudes.

2.6.4 Self-materialism

Materialism has been broadly studied in various disciplines, such as in marketing and luxury consumption. Generally, materialism refers to the belief that acquiring and owning possessions is important and necessary for one to achieve happiness and success (Belk, 1985; Richins and Dawson, 1992). In other words, materialists tend to believe that the material wealth they possess is an indicator of their social status and a reflection of self-image. They are more likely to maintain and flaunt their status and image through the pursuit and ownership of branded

products. Hence, the association between materialism and consumer behaviour has been identified by researchers decades ago and widely discussed, especially in the context of luxury consumption. Vigneron and Johnson (2004) mentioned that 'the possessions of luxury brands may be more appreciated by consumers who are highly materialistic and susceptible to interpersonal influence'. For materialistic people, to own luxury goods may be a means of reaching happiness, as well as a means of judging and evaluating the achievements of others. Also, it has been realised by some researchers that materialistic customers usually 'pay more attention to ads, consume more, and adopt earlier' than their peers (Flynn et al., 2016). In this vein, for the sake of luxury brand marketers, materialism may be a good motivator that drives the success of their marketing activities.

In terms of the concept of materialism, the most commonly used definitions are proposed by Belk (1985) and Richins and Dawson (1992) which, undoubtedly, laid the foundation for the research on materialism. The studies that were based on their original conceptualisations have provided valuable knowledge and insights in relevant fields. However, it has been sparked for over three decades since these conceptualisations were first introduced, and some researchers felt it was the time to update it in the light of the current context. In this vein, Bagozzi et al. (2020) identified a gap in the existing knowledge and proposed an updated conceptualisation of materialism by adding self-identity aspect into it, which is named as the material self. Specifically, the researchers stressed the importance of self-identity for the formation of individual's materialism, as self-identity can play a key role in shaping individual's self-conception, and in turn derives the certain emotions, attitudes, behaviours or other corresponding elements that help fulfil this identity. Thus, the core of the material self is that one's self-identity underpins the meanings that one attributes to oneself and to others. In other words, materialistic people are likely to see the acquisition, use and possession of material objects as a way to create and sustain their self-identities (Bagozzi et al., 2020). More specifically, Bagozzi et al. (2020) proposed that the material self consists of four dimensions from the perspectives of social and personal considerations. Social aspect includes material self-protection and materialistic evaluation of others. Materialism self-projection reflects the needs of individual to build and present a desired self-image

through material possessions. Materialistic evaluation of others, literally, refers to the tendency of individual to evaluate others through material possessions as a means of achieving their self-identity. These two social dimensions involve the connections with the social others and external impacts from them, which affect the construction of one's materialism. Conversely, personal dimensions concern about how the elements related to inner self, such as one's emotions, beliefs and values, are associated with one's materialism tendency. Emotional self-assurance, one of the personal dimensions, emphasises the hedonic attribute of material objects, and the positive feelings derived from acquiring, using, and owning things. Finally, the other dimension of personal aspect, self-deservingness, also highlights the hedonic nature of material goods, but focuses on the belief that one deserves to have material goods as rewards of one's efforts, abilities, or other accomplishments. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that personal and social dimensions could also function independently of each other (Bagozzi et al., 2020).

Researchers pointed out that social comparison is a key determinant of materialism (Chan and Prendergast, 2008; Pahlevan Sharif et al., 2022). According to social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), people with higher materialism tendency normally more concern about social acceptance and conformity, and more often compare themselves to the reference groups (Islam et al., 2018). Shrum et al. (2005) suggested that when affluence is exposed on media and viewed by people, it affects people's materialistic values. At the same time, rapid increase in social media provides individuals with a channel to connect with peers and share material possessions and consumption styles. Under these circumstances, social media has increasingly become a more socially comparative, materialistic, and compulsive place. Social media users are more likely to be influenced, resulting in high materialistic values (Islam et al., 2018) and luxury goods consumption (Kamal et al., 2013).

Meanwhile, the influence of materialism on consumer behaviours has long been noted and discussed by marketing researchers too. Many studies have shown that when it comes to marketing initiatives, consumers who have higher materialism values are usually easier to be stimulated by marketing stimulus (Chang et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2018; Koay et al., 2022). Specifically, regarding the luxury consumption,

consumers' level of materialism has been found associated with their perceptions and attitudes towards luxury goods and brands, such as perceived product quality and luxuriousness (Mainolfi, 2020). Also, previous studies suggested that materialists tend to compare themselves with celebrities or influencers (Islam et al., 2018), as well as show high celebrity worship (Reeves et al., 2012). Hence, it is hardly surprising that materialism can play a vital role in driving consumers' positive attitude towards celebrities or influencers (Jin and Ryu, 2020). Given that influencer marketing and celebrity endorsement are also frequently adopted marketing strategies by luxury brands, it is highly likely that materialism will play some parts in driving consumers' attitudinal and behavioural intentions under this context.

In addition, researchers have also identified that materialism can moderate the relationships between marketing stimulus and consumer behaviours in various contexts. Koay et al. (2022) investigated how social media influencers affected consumers' purchase intention and found out that for consumers high in materialism, influencer's personal attractiveness could effectively drive them to buy promoted products or services. As mentioned before, materialistic consumers usually show high sensitivity to advertisement, high product involvement or brand engagement, in order to acquire the latest product related information and fulfil the desire of material possessions (Flynn et al., 2016). Chang et al. (2018) echoed this finding and revealed that under the context of online advertorials, the positive impact of perceived credibility and entertainment of advertisements on consumers' emotional state was greater for high materialistic consumers, compared to low materialistic ones. Considering the disruptive development of information and communication technologies, some scholars have also concerned about how materialism moderates the effectiveness of digital marketing on consumer behaviours under this environment. For instance, Colella et al. (2021) explored how brand-consumer interaction on social media platforms affected consumers' perception of brand luxuriousness and how materialism impacted this relationship as a moderator. Importantly, their study suggested that with the increasing values of materialism level, the positive effect of interaction on perceived brand luxuriousness increased. However, interestingly, the effect of interaction on perceived luxuriousness was found negative and non-significant when consumers' materialism level was low. It

can be seen that materialism has been conceptualised as a positive moderator in driving consumers' attitudes and behavioural intention by the studies mentioned here (Chang et al., 2018; Colella et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2022). Yet, some scholars identified the negative moderating role of materialism. For example, Bagozzi et al. (2020) found out that for consumers who has low and moderate levels of the material self, perceived product quality had a positive effect on brand loyalty. However, this relationship did not hold when the level of the material self was high.

Given the above discussion, LSC, as a type of social media equipped with shopping features, provides consumers with the opportunity to make real-time interaction with streamers and other consumers and make immediate purchases. In the context of luxury brands live streams, these real-time interactions, to some extent, can create an atmosphere of 'shopping in public', where the perceived social influence on individuals may be amplified, as 'a consumer will consider reference group influences when publicly consuming luxury products' (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). Moreover, considering materialists are often driven by the desire for immediate gratification and the acquisition of material possessions, they may find live streaming shopping is particularly appealing, especially when the live streams are hosted by celebrities or influencers. Hence, it is possible that, for consumers who have different levels of materialism, the impact of LSC on consumers' attitudes and perceptions may vary. However, no studies on LSC have yet mentioned about materialism or investigated its moderating effect.

Therefore, the present study was to fill this gap by investigating the moderating role of materialism in the context of LuxLSC. Specifically, grounded in the concept of the material self, firstly, we separated personal dimensions from the material self and re-named it as 'self-materialism'. The rationale is that, according to Bagozzi et al. (2020), personal and social dimensions could function independently of each other, and personal dimensions were also reported to provide the major moderating effect, compared to social ones. Moreover, to some extent, social dimensions of the material self have overlaps with perceived social norms that was already examined as a mediator between LSC and consumer attitude in this study. Secondly, we examined the moderating effect of self-materialism on the relationship between LSC

and consumers' attitude through using the measurements scales developed by Bagozzi et al. (2020).

2.6.5 Summary

In this part, three moderators (i.e., existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism) were proposed, which may potentially affect the overall impact of LuxLSC on consumers' brand attitudes. Specifically, it is assumed that when the consumer has higher level of pre-existing brand awareness and positive evaluation of a luxury brand, the impact of LSC on brand attitude may be less significant; When the consumer perceives brand as highly luxurious, the positive effect of LSC on consumer attitudes is potentially weaker. Also, for consumers who have different levels of materialism, the impact of LSC on consumers' attitudes and perceptions may vary as well.

2.7 Research Gaps

Through a comprehensive literature review, five main research gaps were identified in the field of luxury branding and LSC.

(1) A lack of empirical study exploring the adoption of LSC in the context of luxury brands, especially the impact of LSC on luxury consumers' decision-making process. Also, no study has identified the influencing factors of LSC particularly in this context.

The literature on luxury marketing has demonstrated the positive influences of social media and e-commerce on luxury consumers' decision-making process, but also pointed out a research need for exploring the adoption of LSC in this sector (Creevey et al., 2022; Rathi et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the systematic review of LSC literature indicated that there is no study examines the impact of LSC on luxury brands yet.

(2) A lack of empirical research exploring LSC's relational impact on brand loyalty, particularly in the luxury sector.

Although the literature has demonstrated LSC's influence on immediate transactional outcomes and platform-specific behaviours such as intention to

continuously watch or use LSC (Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Zhang, M. et al., 2022), or loyalty towards the LSC channel itself (Ye and Ching, 2023), there is limited understanding of how LSC influences consumers' brand relationship development and loyalty formation toward brands that adopt LSC strategies.

(3) A lack of empirical study exploring the collective effect of LSC's influencing factors on consumer behaviours in the luxury sector.

Although LSC has been recognised as a multidimensional construct in previous studies, most of studies focused on how LSC factors (e.g., streamer-, content-, or IT -related factors) independently influence consumer behaviours. There is little empirical study that explores the cumulative effect of all influencing factors on consumer perceptions and behaviours in the context of luxury brands.

(4) No empirical studies have discussed the moderating effects on the effectiveness of LSC particularly in the luxury context.

No previous studies were found to examine the moderating effect of brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism in the context of LSC. These factors have been found to significantly shape consumer perceptions and behaviours particularly in the luxury branding research.

(5) No existing study focusing on Chinese luxury consumer behaviour in the LSC context.

Although the majority of LSC research focused on the Chinese market, there is no study yet to examine Chinese luxury consumer behaviour in the LSC context.

Table 2-11 presents an overview of the nexus between the proposed research questions, the respective knowledge gap with key studies, and expected outcomes.

Table 2-11 An overview of the nexus between the proposed research questions, the respective knowledge gap with key studies, and expected outcomes

| Knowledge gaps | Identified research gaps | Key studies | Research questions | Expected outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p><u>Luxury branding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Although extensive studies have explored the impact of social media on luxury branding, there is a great need for research to understand how emerging social media (e.g., LSC) influences luxury consumer behaviours, due to the subjective nature of luxury brands and the constant evolution of information technology. - Although the increasing importance of the Chinese market for luxury brands has been recognised, the understanding of Chinese luxury consumers is still insufficient, considering their shifting consumption patterns and preferences, as well as the dynamic environment in Chinese market. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are no empirical studies exploring the impact of LSC on consumer behaviours in the luxury sector. Also, no study has identified the influencing factors of LSC particularly in this context. - While there are studies on LSC's effect on immediate consumer behaviours, there is a lack of empirical research on its relational impact on brand loyalty, particularly in the luxury sector. - No empirical studies have discussed the moderating effects on the effectiveness of LSC particularly in the luxury context. Brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism are critical factors in luxury branding research, as they can significantly shape consumer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creevey et al. (2022) pointed out digital innovations of social media (e.g., LSC) as one of focuses for future research in luxury branding. - Ye and Ching (2023) examined the effect of LSC on consumer loyalty intention but did not differentiate whether this loyalty was directed towards the LSC channel, or towards the brand employing the LSC strategy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RQ1: Does live streaming commerce positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers? - RQ2: Does existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To identify the influencing factors of LuxLSC that may affect consumers' perceptions and behaviours - To develop a theoretical framework of the relationship between LuxLSC and brand loyalty based on the TPB and the Brand Value Chain - To empirically test if LuxLSC positively affect Chinese consumers' brand loyalty via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control. |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <p><u>LSC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a rapid emerging phenomenon, LSC has gained growing attention in marketing research. Specific to consumer behaviour research, most studies have focused on the impact of LSC on transactional outcomes, such as purchase intention and impulsive buying, however, a limited stream of studies has discussed relational outcomes, such as brand loyalty. - There is a lack of understanding of the impact of LSC in the luxury sector, although this sector has its unique characteristics compared to non-luxury sectors. | <p>perceptions and behaviours, yet their roles in the LSC context remains unexplored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While the majority of LSC studies focused on the Chinese market, there is no study yet to examine how LSC influences Chinese luxury consumers' perception and behaviours. - Existing research on LSC mainly focused on how influencing factors independently shape consumer behaviours, however, there is little study that explores the cumulative effect of LSC. | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To empirically test if existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between LuxLSC and brand attitude for Chinese consumers. |
|--|---|--|--|--|

Source: The author

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth, integrative literature review of luxury digital marketing, LSC, and brand loyalty, with the aim of building a solid foundation for understanding how LSC influences consumer behaviour in the luxury sector. The review not only explored the existing research landscape but also identified key knowledge gaps where this study intends to make contributions. It began with the justification of adopting an integrative literature review in the Section 2.2.

Section 2.3 emphasised the distinct characteristics of the luxury sector by discussing the concepts of luxury brands, value-based drivers behind luxury consumption, and the evolving consumption patterns in the digital age. Moreover, studies on social media marketing and e-commerce for luxury brands were also discussed to help capture the mechanism of LSC in this industry. In addition, special attention was given to China's luxury market and China's luxury consumer, reinforcing the relevance of this study's research context. This part underscored the importance of studying LSC in the luxury context, given the delicate balance luxury brands must maintain between embracing digital strategies and preserving their aura of exclusivity.

The existing LSC studies were systematically reviewed and discussed in Section 2.4., revealing significant gaps in understanding how LSC operates within luxury brand contexts. This section established the theoretical rationale for LuxLSC factor development, identifying key dimensions that require adaptation from general LSC approaches, including streamer-related factors (i.e., similarity, familiarity, and likeability), content-related factors (i.e., content quality and visual display quality), and IT-related factors (i.e., visibility, metavoicing, guidance shopping, and trading). These literature-derived insights provide the foundation for developing a comprehensive theoretical framework that captures the unique dynamics of luxury brand-consumer relationships in LSC environments.

Section 2.5 explained the concept of brand loyalty and its pivotal role in the Brand Value Chain, providing a theoretical link between LSC impact, brand attitude and brand loyalty.

Section 2.6 introduced three moderators (i.e., existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism), which are discussed as essential to fully understanding the varying impacts of LSC can have within different scenarios.

Finally, Section 2.7 summarised the five research gaps identified in the literature, which provide the foundation for the research questions and objective set forth in this study.

3 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING AND MODEL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter comprehensively reviewed the literature on luxury consumption, LSC and brand loyalty, and identified the research necessity of exploring whether LSC can enhance brand loyalty through shaping consumers' perceptions in the context of luxury industry. To achieve this goal, the associations between LSC, consumers' perceptions and brand loyalty will be specifically demonstrated in this chapter.

First, the theoretical underpinning of this research, i.e., the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), will be introduced in detail. Then, research hypotheses will be established by justifying the linkages between all variables based on theoretical and empirical evidence. Finally, a research framework will be presented to illustrate all proposed relationships.

3.2 The Theory of Planned Behavior

The Brand Value Chain model provides a robust framework for understanding how marketing activities translate into consumer-based brand equity, including the critical element of brand loyalty. This model highlights the importance of influencing consumer mindsets—comprising awareness, associations, attitudes, and loyalty—through targeted marketing efforts. However, to fully grasp the intricacies of how these mindsets are formed and how they ultimately drive consumer behaviour, it is essential to consider the underlying psychological processes. This is where the TPB becomes particularly relevant.

With regard to marketing research, the TPB offers a deeper exploration of the cognitive and motivational factors that influence consumer behaviour. It posits that human behaviour is primarily driven by behavioural intentions, which are shaped by three core components: attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. When integrated with the Brand Value Chain, the TPB helps to understand how consumers' attitudes towards a brand—developed

through their interactions with marketing activities—combine with social influences and perceived control to form intentions that ultimately lead to brand loyalty.

In the context of this study, the integration of these two theories is particularly insightful. Based on the Brand Value Chain, it suggests that LSC, as a marketing tactic, impacts consumer beliefs and attitudes, which in turn drive loyalty intention. The TPB adds an additional layer by explaining how these attitudes, along with perceived social norms (such as peer influences during live streaming) and perceived behavioural control facilitated by e-commerce function of LSC (such as ease of purchase), lead to consumer's intention to repeatedly engage with and purchase from the brand. By linking the Brand Value Chain with the TPB this study develops a conceptual framework to provide a more nuanced understanding of how LSC influences luxury consumers' attitudes and perceived social norms, leading to the formation or strengthening of brand loyalty. In this section, we will introduce the TPB in greater detail, examining how it can enhance our understanding of the psychological mechanisms that underpin consumers' decision-making journey, and also justify the adoption of this theory in this study.

3.2.1 The constructs of TPB

Briefly, the TPB is a psychological framework developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985 as an extension of the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). While the TRA was effective in predicting behaviours under volitional control, it had limitations in addressing behaviours that individuals do not entirely control. To overcome these limitations, Ajzen introduced TPB, which incorporates an additional component. i.e., perceived behavioural control, to account for factors outside an individual's volitional control. This enhancement allows TPB to predict a wider range of behaviours with greater accuracy. This theory has also been empirically tested in various social settings (Ajzen, 2011), and widely adopted across various fields, including psychology, marketing, education and etc., due to its robust ability to explain and predict human behaviour.

TPB posits that human social behaviour is primarily guided by behavioural intentions which are influenced by three major determinants, i.e., attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Notably, beliefs

play a foundational role in TPB. Under this theoretical context, beliefs refer to the underlying thoughts, perceptions, and associations that people hold about a particular behaviour. An individual may hold numerous beliefs about any given behaviours, but usually only a limited number of them will be considered as important and taken into account, which is so-called salient beliefs by Ajzen (1991). *Salient beliefs* are those particularly prominent or influential in an individual's mind when considering the given behaviour, which can be distinguished to attitudinal beliefs, normative beliefs, and behavioural beliefs, respectively shaping the individual's attitudes, norms and perceived control at the time of decision-making.

Furthermore, according to Ajzen (1991),

Attitude toward the behaviour. It refers to the degree to which a personal has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour in question. Within TPB, these attitudes are formed based on a person's attitudinal beliefs, which are the beliefs about the likely outcomes of performing a specific behaviour and the evaluations of these outcomes. The outcome evaluations involve the person's perceptions about whether performing the behaviour is good or bad. Positive evaluations are more likely to lead to a favourable attitude toward the behaviour, whereas negative evaluations generally result in an unfavourable attitude.

Subjective norm, or perceived social norm (PSN) used in this study. It refers to perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a particular behaviour, which is underpinned by normative beliefs. Normative beliefs are usually about a person's expectations of important referents (e.g., family members, friends, or social groups), which involve the perception of whether these important referents approve or disapproval of the given behaviour. If the person highly values the opinions of these referents, they are more likely to comply with these social norms, and vice versa.

Perceived behavioural control (PBC). It refers to a person's perception of his or her ability to perform a specific behaviour. To some extent, it is conceptually similar to the idea of self-efficacy, which is formed by control beliefs. Control beliefs, basically, is about the person's confidence in his or her ability to execute the behaviour, including internal factors (e.g., the person's skills, knowledge) and external resources (e.g., time, finance, or other obstacles). When people believe

that they have strong control over these factors, they are more likely to perceive high behavioural control. Notably, PBC is also considered having a direct effect on the actual execution of the behaviour, particularly in situations where the perception of control closely matches actual control.

Behavioural intention. Within TRA and TPB, it indicates a person's intention to perform or not to perform a specific behaviour and is considered the immediate antecedents of actual behaviour. It has been commonly recognised by social psychologists that the actual behaviours can be predicted with high accuracy from behavioural intention, making intention measurement particularly valuable in research contexts where tracking actual behaviours over time is impractical. Based on TPB, behavioural intentions are formulated by the combined impact of attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. The stronger the intention to engage in a behaviour, the more likely it is that the behaviour will be executed, provided that the personal has sufficient control over the situation. In luxury brand contexts, measuring loyalty intentions rather than actual loyal behaviours is particularly appropriate because luxury consumption patterns may be constrained by financial considerations or purchase timing, while intentions capture the underlying psychological commitment that drives behaviours when circumstances permit.

In summary, TPB offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and predicting human social behaviours. Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control are three key determinants of behavioural intentions. When a person holds strong positive attitudes towards performing the given behaviour, and perceives strong social pressure to perform it, as well as when perceived behavioural control is high, the person tends to form a strong intention to engage in the behaviour, then significantly increasing the likelihood of the behaviour occurring.

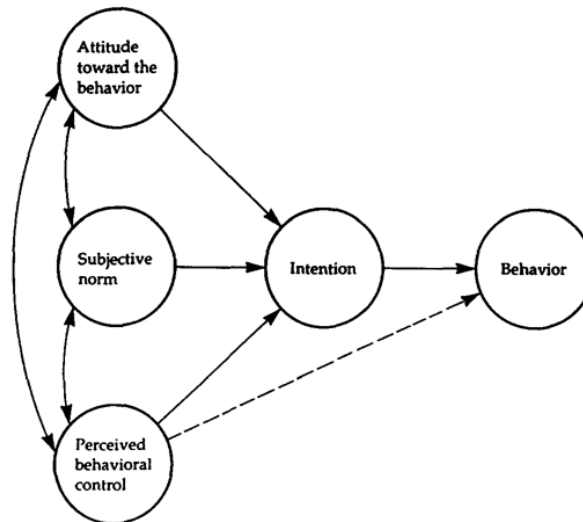


Figure 3-1 Theory of Planned Behavior

Source: (Ajzen, 1991)

3.2.2 Justification of adopting TPB

Understanding consumers' decision-making journey is significantly crucial for both marketing researchers and practitioners. This understanding is foundational to developing effective marketing strategies, improving customer experiences, and ultimately driving business success. As the marketplace evolves, particularly with the rise of digital technologies and changing consumer expectations, it becomes increasingly important to adopt a theoretical framework that can accurately capture the intricacies of this journey. Hence, it is essential to select a theoretical model that aligns with the research purpose of the current study.

Various consumer decision journey models have been introduced and developed since the 1960s. According to Santos and Gonçalves (2021), the theoretical roots of the consumer decision journey can be broadly categorised into three groups: Classical Consumer Buying Behavior Models, Decision Analysis Models, and Hierarchy of Effects Models. Each of these groups offers distinct perspectives on consumer behaviour.

Decision analysis models mainly focus on the cognitive and rational process involved in decision making, developed based on such as rational choice theory and utility theory. These models are established upon the assumption that consumers are rational actors who make decisions based on a logical evaluation of available

options, weighing the costs and benefits to maximise utility. Also, this type of models often employs mathematical, statistical, or logical frameworks to predict and analyse how consumers make choices under conditions of uncertainty or complexity. However, specific to the context of LSC, particularly in the luxury sector, involves more emotional, social, and psychological factors that are not fully captured by purely rational models.

Hierarchy of effects models, originating from advertising and communication research, usually describe the hierarchical stages through which consumers process and use information gained from advertising to guide their choice of products or brands. This type of models mainly focusses on the communication process and its effect on consumer attitudes and behaviours, passing from awareness to purchase, such as the traditional AIDA (Attention-Interest-Desire-Action) model. However, while useful in understanding the impact of marketing communications on consumer behaviour, these models do not fully address the complex nature of information technology (e.g., social media and online channels). Especially, given the interactive and dynamic features of LSC, these models can hardly capture the impact of e-commerce feature of LSC on consumer decision-making.

Considering the limitations of the above two types of models, the classical consumer buying behaviour models provide a more suitable foundation for the current study. This type of models are foundational frameworks that describe the overall process consumers go through when making purchase decisions. Santos and Gonçalves (2021) suggest that there are two major subsets: the grand models and the models based on beliefs, attitudes, and intentions.

Grand models provide a broad, linear overview of the consumer decision-making process, outlining main stages such as problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviours. While these models are comprehensive, they are designed to map out the entire flow of the consumer journey. However, the research objectives of this study are more focused on a specific stage of this journey, that is, how LSC influences consumers' loyalty toward the brands. Given this narrower focus, the

broad scope of Grand Models may not align as closely with the specific research objectives.

Unlike Grand models offering a macro-level view of consumer decision process, *models based on beliefs, attitudes, and intentions* provide micro-level insights into the psychological mechanisms driving specific behaviours within that broader process. Specifically, these models zoom in on the psychological and cognitive processes to explain consumer behaviours based on beliefs, attitudes, and subjective norms as determinants of intention and action. One of the key models in this group is the TPB.

The adoption of TPB in this study is justified for several reasons. First, TPB provides a detailed exploration of the cognitive and emotional factors that drive consumer behaviour, making it particularly relevant for understanding how LSC influences brand loyalty in luxury contexts. In luxury brand environments, purchasing decisions are inherently complex, involving high social signalling through conspicuous consumption (subjective norms), sophisticated attitude formation towards prestigious brands and their digital presentations (brand attitudes), and perception of accessibility and capability in premium retail environments (perceived brand control). TPB's focus on these multifaceted psychological factors is invaluable for capturing the complexity of luxury brand relationships, where consumers evaluate not only product attributes but also social appropriateness, brand prestige, and personal capability to engage with exclusive brand experiences.

Second, while Grand Models are effective for mapping the entire consumer decision journey, TPB is better suited to studies like this one, which focuses on specific segments of that journey, namely, the stages where consumer attitudes are formed and behavioural intentions are developed. TPB's applicability to LSC contexts is particularly strong because LSC involves real-time social influence through streamer endorsements and peer interactions visible during streams (subjective norms), attitude formation through immersive, interactive brand experiences that differ from traditional retail encounters (brand attitudes), and perceptions of technological and purchasing capability within digital platforms

(perceived behavioural control through platform affordances such as ease of navigation, transaction security, and communication features).

Third, TPB's inclusion of perceived behavioural control is crucial for understanding consumer behaviour in digital contexts, where technological familiarity, platform usability, and perceived ease of engagement play significant roles in consumer responses. This makes TPB highly applicable to studying how consumers engage with LSC platforms and how these engagements influence their loyalty to luxury brands. Moreover, TPB's focus on behavioural intention rather than actual behaviour is methodologically appropriate for this study's cross-sectional research design, as loyalty intentions serves as validated proxies for future loyal behaviours, consistent with TPB's theoretical framework and established in consumer behaviour research.

Finally, the integration of TPB with the Brand Value Chain model provides additional justification for its adoption. As established in Section 2.5.3, the Brand Value Chain emphasises that marketing activities can impact consumer mindsets, ultimately driving brand performance and value. TPB complements this by explaining psychological process through which consumer mindsets are shaped by marketing activities, specifically how LSC influences brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control. This theoretical integration provides a comprehensive framework for analysing how LuxLSC affects brand loyalty formation through examination of the cognitive, social, and control factors that drive consumer intentions in digital luxury retail environments.

3.2.3 Summary

This section has provided a detailed examination of the TPB within the context of luxury brand loyalty and LSC. Beginning with an exploration of TPB's core constructs, i.e., attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, it has been shown how this theory offers a robust framework for understanding the psychological mechanisms that influence consumer intentions and behaviours. The rationale for adopting TPB over other consumer decision-making models, such as Grand Models, is grounded in its ability to provide micro-level insights into the specific stages of the consumer journey that are most relevant to this study. By

integrating TPB with the Brand Value Chain model, the section demonstrates a comprehensive approach to analysing how LSC impacts consumer attitudes and perceived social norms, ultimately influencing brand loyalty. This theoretical foundation supports the subsequent analysis in the study, offering a nuanced perspective on the factors that drive consumer loyalty in the digital age.

3.3 The Link Between LSC and TPB for Luxury Brands

3.3.1 The overall impact of LuxLSC as a second order construct

According to (Sarstedt et al., 2019), higher-order constructs enable researchers to model a construct on a more abstract dimension and its more concrete sub-dimensions. In this study, the overall impact of LuxLSC, referring to the overall impact of luxury brands' live streaming commerce, is conceptualised as a higher (second) -order reflective-formative construct, measured by nine distinct lower (first) -order constructs (referred to the LSC attributes) from three aspects, i.e., streamer aspect (similarity, familiarity and likeability), content quality aspect (information quality and visual display quality), and IT affordance aspect (visibility, guidance shopping, metavoicing and trading). This methodological approach is advantageous, because it enhances the model's simplicity by reducing the number of hypothesised relationships and collinearity issues, further making it easier to interpret the results (Sarstedt et al., 2019; Thien, 2020).

The decision to model the overall impact of LuxLSC as a reflective-formative construct is based on the criteria outlined by Jarvis et al. (2003) and Wetzels et al. (2009). Wetzels et al. (2009) suggest that the adoption of higher-order constructs must be theoretically and empirically justified. Theoretically, higher-order constructs are appropriate when the construct is multi-dimensional and aligns with existing frameworks, simplifying complex models while maintaining conceptual accuracy; Empirically, if prior empirical studies have shown that certain dimensions consistently load together to form a single underlying concept, it can justify the use of higher-order constructs. Jarvis et al. (2003) provide further guidelines to help researchers correctly identify whether the construct should be modelled reflectively or formatively. There are four basic rules focusing on the relationships between

measures and first-order latent constructs: (1) Direction of causality. In reflective models, causality flows from the construct to the indicators, while in formative models, it flows from the indicators to the construct. (2) Interchangeability of the indicators. Reflective indicators should be interchangeable and share a common theme, whereas formative indicators need not be interchangeable or share a common theme. (3) Covariation among the indicators. Reflective indicators should covary, but covariation among formative indicators is not necessary. (4) Nomological net of the construct indicators. Reflective indicators are expected to have the same antecedents and consequences, while formative indicators may not necessarily share the same antecedents or consequences. Moreover, Jarvis et al. (2003) outline four different types of higher-order constructs based on the relationship between first-order and second-order constructs, including reflective-reflective, reflective-formative, formative-reflective and formative-formative constructs.

In this study, there are two primary justifications for treating the ‘overall impact of LuxLSC’ as a second (higher)-order construct. First, numerous studies on LSC have examined individual dimensions of LSC to investigate their effects on the consumer engagement and purchase intention. It has been shown that the elements of streamers, such as streamers’ likeability, familiarity and perceived similarity (Cai et al., 2018; Chen, X. et al., 2023; Dang-Van et al., 2023; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Peng et al., 2023; Xu, W. et al., 2023), the information quality of content (Xu, W. et al., 2023; Xu, X. et al., 2020; Zhang, M. et al., 2020b), and IT affordance (Gao, X. et al., 2021; Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Sun, Yuan et al., 2019; Wang, D. et al., 2022; Zhang, M. et al., 2022) play crucial roles in shaping consumer perceptions, justifying the integration of these factors into a unified construct. Second, the notion of LSC impact as a multi-dimensional construct has been supported by previous research too. The characteristics of streamers, content and IT features have been considered as three main components of LSC that determine its effectiveness (Sun, Yuan et al., 2019; Xie et al., 2022). Such as, (Chandruangphen et al., 2022) investigated the impact of LSC on consumers’ intention to watch and purchase through examining twenty attributes of LSC that are related to streamer and product aspects. (Zhang, M. et al., 2022) and (Li, Y. et al.,

2021) pointed out that technical and social factors of LSC could drive consumers' purchase intention. (Lee, D. and Wan, 2023) focused on the impact of content, influencer, and platform factors of LSC on consumers' food overconsumption behaviour.

When all dimensions are treated separately, the model becomes complex, requiring multiple paths, in this case twenty-seven paths, to explain variations in consumer outcomes such as brand attitude and perceived social norms. By integrating these dimensions into a single higher-order construct, the model becomes more parsimonious, reducing complexity and making the results easier to interpret. More importantly, conceptualising the impact of LuxLSC as a higher-order construct also help balance the 'bandwidth' and 'fidelity'. In this case, it means if focus on only three dimensions of LSC, it might overlook a bigger picture of the Lux SC's impact. Conversely, integrating these dimensions into the 'overall impact of LuxLSC' construct allows to see a potentially broader, more holistic view, while still incorporating the detailed impact of streamers-related, content-related, and IT-related attributes. This approach is grounded in the idea that the overall impact of LuxLSC is not just the sum of its parts, but also how these parts interact and reinforce each other.

In addition, it is crucial to understand whether the construct is represented as formative or reflective. In this study, the second-order, formative construct, i.e., the impact of LSC, is collectively formed by nine first-order constructs of three dimensions, i.e., streamer attributes (similarity, familiarity, and likeability), live content attributes (information quality and visual display quality) and IT attributes (visibility, guidance shopping, metavoicing and trading), each representing a distinct yet complementary aspect of the conceptual meaning of LSC. If dropping any first-order constructs, the overall meaning of LSC construct would change. At the same time, each first-order construct is reflective, measured by its own set of indicators that are interchangeable within that specific construct. Therefore, aligned with the guidelines provided by Jarvis et al. (2003) and Wetzels et al. (2009), a reflective-formative higher-order construct model within the research framework is proposed in this study.

3.3.2 Overall impact of LuxLSC and brand attitudes

In this research, the overall impact of LuxLSC is conceptualised as a multifaceted construct comprising three key dimensions: streamers, live content, and IT affordances. These elements collectively represent the integrated influence of LuxLSC. 'Attitude' typically refers to an individual's evaluation of a given object (Mitchell and Olson, 1981). Both the TPB and the Brand Value Chain incorporate 'attitude' as a key construct; however, they approach it from different angles. TPB defines it as an individual's evaluation of performing a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), whereas the Brand Value Chain considers attitude as part of a broader consumer mindset towards a brand (Keller, K.L., 1993). Drawing from both perspectives, this study conceptualises brand attitude both as a predictor of consumers' loyalty intention and as an evaluative response towards the luxury brand itself. According to attitude theory, consumers' brand attitudes are shaped by a set of salient beliefs that they hold about the brand. Marketing activities play a critical role in forming these beliefs, with the Brand Value Chain beginning with efforts to cultivate positive beliefs through well-integrated marketing strategies. In this context, I argue that LSC, as a powerful marketing tool, is particularly effective in shaping brand attitudes by fostering positive consumer beliefs.

Park, H.J. and Lin (2020) found out that the congruence between live streamers and live content was positively associated with consumer attitudes towards the streamers and content. Bawack et al. (2023) further demonstrated that the perceived congruence between a consumer and a brand had a direct effect on consumers' attitudes towards LSC and an indirect effect on the attitude towards the brand presented in LSC. Although no study has discussed the direct effect of LSC on brand attitudes yet, this relationship could be predicted based on numerous studies on social media and e-commerce, considering that LSC is a type of social commerce (Sun, Yuan et al., 2019; Xue et al., 2020).

Given the fact that celebrities or influencers are often invited as the hosts (or streamers) for the luxury brands' live streams (Hall, 2020; Zhang, T., 2024), LSC has been seen as an extension of influencer marketing, by which influencers can promote brands and products, and foster a high level of interaction and engagement

in real-time (Li, G. et al., 2023). In this vein, there is no doubt that the live streamer is a key factor influencing brands and consumers in the context of LSC. Previous studies have shown that celebrities or social media influencers can affect brand attitudes through various attributes, such as their attractiveness and perceived congruence (Torres et al., 2019; Wiedmann and Von Mettenheim, 2020). Also, there is empirical evidence that attitudes towards influencers can be transferred to the products and brands they endorse (De Veirman et al., 2017; Silvera and Austad, 2004).

Moreover, LSC as a source through which consumers gain information about brands and products, the quality of brand created content through it is expected to have an effect on consumers' attitudes. Extensive studies have addressed the positive influence of content quality on consumers' brand perceptions or attitudes (Bawack et al., 2023; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Lee, E.-B. et al., 2017; Yoo, C. and MacInnis, 2005). For example, when consumers perceive that the content provided by advertisements or social media is entertaining or useful, they are likely to have more favourable attitudes towards the brands (Lee, E.-B. et al., 2017). More importantly, visual quality of live content needs to be taken into consideration as well, as luxury brands are expected to offer high levels of aesthetic satisfaction (Dion and Arnould, 2011; Dubois et al., 2001). Previous studies suggest that visual quality can affect consumers' perception of brand luxuriousness (Lee, J.E. et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be assumed that visual display of luxury brands' live streams can also affect consumers' attitudes towards the luxury brands.

Finally, LSC may directly affect brand attitudes through its unique IT-related attributes too. Researchers have confirmed that consumers' attitudes towards advertising medium positively affect their attitudes towards the brands using the medium (Mukherjee and Banerjee, 2019). Hence, consumers' attitudes towards LSC are expected to positively affect their brand attitudes. Accordingly, Bawack et al. (2023) have proven the indirect impact of media attributes of LSC, such as interactivity, on consumers' attitudes towards the brand presented in LSC, mediated by consumers' attitudes towards LSC. Additionally, in the context of online shopping, the real-time live streaming feature enables brands to present the products with

greater details than traditional media formats (e.g., text and images) do, which can enhance consumers' shopping experience and satisfaction through increasing perceived product and service quality (Chen, H. et al., 2022; Ma, Y., 2021a); Especially for luxury brands, the e-commerce feature of LSC allows consumer to conveniently shop luxury goods independently of time and location, which also directly affect consumers' satisfaction (Kim, J.-H., 2019; Kluge and Fassnacht, 2015; Okonkwo, 2009). Perceived quality, satisfaction can be seen as the elements of consumers' attitudes towards brands (Kumar, V. et al., 2013). The interactivity of LSC can provide a two-way para-social interaction between consumers and live streamers who represent the brands (Liao, J. et al., 2022), while para-social interaction has been found to directly shape consumers' attitudes towards brands (Zhang, C.-B. et al., 2022).

Based on above discussion, it can be assumed that:

H1: The overall impact of LuxLSC positively affects brand attitudes.

3.3.3 Overall impact of LuxLSC and perceive social norms

Social norms refer to the shared understanding among social members about which behaviours are permitted, forbidden or obligatory (Melnik et al., 2022), whereas according to TPB, subjective norms refer to an individual's perceived social pressures whether to perform or not perform a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). TPB highlights more about the norms evolved from individuals observing and perceiving others' behaviour, rather than injunctive social norms. Hence, in this study, the term 'perceived social norms' is adopted, which is interchangeable with subjective norms.

Perceived social norms are particularly relevant in the context of social media marketing, where social influence plays a significant role in consumers' decision-making. For example, studies have shown that when consumers observe others engaging in certain behaviours online, such as liking, sharing or purchasing products, they are more likely to perceive these behaviours as normative and feel compelled to conform (Burchell et al., 2013). The interactive nature of LSC allows consumers to engage with streamers who often act as opinion leaders or influencers,

and other consumers in real time, which can amplify the effect of these social influence (Peng et al., 2023; Sun, Ying and Bao, 2023).

Regarding the streamer factors of LSC, when consumers perceive high similarity, familiarity and likeability about the streamer, it can enhance their emotional connection and trust to the streamer, making marketing message conveyed during live streams more persuasive (Chen, X. et al., 2023; Dang-Van et al., 2023; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Lu and Chen, 2021). Research by De Veirman et al. (2017) suggested that influencers with higher perceived likeability are more effective in shopping followers' attitudes, as followers are more likely to internalise the influencers' action and messages as social norm. Hence, when consumers see others positively with the brand in the live streams, they may consider these behaviours as normative, reinforcing their own intention to conform to these perceived norms.

Additionally, IT attributes of LSC such as visibility and metavoicing (referring to the ability to see and interact with others' reactions in real-time) can enhance consumers' social interaction (Ma, X. et al., 2022; Sun, Yuan et al., 2019). These attributes enable consumers to observe collective behaviours, such as positive comments and purchase behaviour during the live streams. the visibility of others' actions in online platform may further reinforce social norms, as people are likely to be influenced by the perceived popularity and social validation of certain behaviours.

Therefore, the author proposes that:

H2: The overall impact of LuxLSC positively affects perceived social norms.

3.3.4 Overall impact of LuxLSC and perceived behavioural control

Perceived behavioural control is conceptualised as an individual's perception of the ease of difficulty of performing a particular behaviour, influenced by both internal (e.g., personal capability) and external factors (e.g., resources and opportunities) (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of LuxLSC, it refers to the extent to which consumers feel capable of engaging with luxury brands' livestreams.

Despite being used to e-commerce, consumers still perceive risk when shopping online. This is especially true for online purchases of luxury goods, which often involve high-value transactions and a lack of physical contact with the goods.

However, the integration of advanced information technologies can reduce these perceived risks during the process of shopping online (Bonnin, 2020). Meanwhile, previous research has proved that when perceived risks are reduced, consumers perceived higher trust and behavioural control (Hansen et al., 2018). In this case, with the help of the technical factors, LSC can provide consumers with a vivid and comprehensive understanding of products by real-time visual presentations and streamers' demonstrations, which can reduce the perceived uncertainty of the products (Cenfetelli and Benbasat, 2019; Zhang, M. et al., 2020a). Also, streamers' attractiveness has also been found to increase consumers' trust in the context of LSC (Lu and Chen, 2021; Zhong, Yingyu et al., 2022).

Accordingly, it is assumed that:

H3: The overall impact of LuxLSC positively affects perceived behavioural control.

3.3.5 Brand attitudes and brand loyalty

The link between brand attitude and brand loyalty has been well established and conceptually and empirically testified in marketing literature and (Baldinger and Robinson, 1996; Dick and Basu, 1994; Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, 2003; Liu, F. et al., 2012). Baldinger and Robinson (1996) empirically and statistically demonstrated that attitudinal dimension is an integral component of brand loyalty, and brand attitude is a significant predictor of brand loyalty. The Brand Value Chain proposed by Keller, K.L. and Lehmann (2003) suggests that if a marketing activity can create a high level of brand awareness and favourable association in consumers' minds, a high level of positive brand attitudes are formed, which can directly drive intense brand loyalty. As mentioned earlier, brand attitude refers to a consumer's overall evaluation of a brand, which encompassing their feelings, perception and predispositions towards the brand (Keller, K.L., 1993). A positive brand attitude typically results in a preference for a brand over competing brands (Bass and Talarzyk, 1972). Brand loyalty, on the other hand, can be considered as a consumer's consistent preference for a particular brand, leading to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth (WOM) (Oliver, 1999). Hence, a consumer

who holds a favourable attitude towards a brand is more likely to trust it, perceive it as superior, and feel emotionally attached to it, which fosters loyalty.

Consequently, it is proposed that:

H4: Brand attitudes positively affects brand loyalty.

3.3.6 Perceived social norms and brand loyalty

The correlation between perceived social norms and behavioural intention is well supported by both theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence. Theoretically, the TPB posits that perceived social norms significantly influence an individual's behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of brand loyalty, perceived social norms reflect consumers' perceptions about whether their attachment to a brand is accepted, supported, and implemented by their circle of influence. In other words, as TPB suggests, if consumers believe that their significant others, such families, friends, or peers, expect them to prefer a particular brand, they are more likely to develop a loyal relationship with the brand. This positive correlation between perceived social norms and brand loyalty has empirically been tested by many researchers (Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2022; Lee, R. et al., 2009; Zhang, K.Z.K. et al., 2016). In addition, previous studies show that perceived social norms can enhance brand loyalty through the social influence of brand communities, as members of a community tend to perform behaviours that are consistent with the group norms, such as having a preference for a particular brand (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Kim, J.W. et al., 2008; Raïes et al., 2015).

Accordingly, it is proposed that:

H5: Perceived social norms positively affects brand loyalty.

3.3.7 Perceived behavioural control and brand loyalty

In line with the TPB, perceived behavioural control is traditionally understood as an individual's perceived ability to perform a specific behaviour, such as maintaining loyalty to a brand (Ajzen, 1991). However, in this study, it has been operationalised in the context of LuxLSC focusing on consumers' perceptions of their ability to engage with luxury brands through this emerging digital platform.

Luxury brands have historically been defined by exclusivity and limited accessibility, which has often been a barrier to broader consumer engagement. LSC, however, introduces a new online distribution channel that may significantly enhance consumers' accessibility to luxury brands and ease the purchasing process. Previous studies have shown that attributes of online luxury shopping channels are closely associated with consumers' perceived values, satisfaction and loyalty (Kim, J.-H. and Kim, 2020; Kluge and Fassnacht, 2015; Togawa and Sugitani, 2022; Yoo, J. and Park, 2016).

Although this operationalisation diverges from the traditional focus on brand loyalty, it aligns with the broader goals of the TPB by recognising that engagement in LSC may be a crucial precursor to brand loyalty in the digital age. Specifically, it may provide insights regarding online luxury consumer behaviour, that is, how digital innovations like LSC can democratise access to luxury brands and potentially drive brand loyalty. If consumers perceive that they have control over their interactions with luxury brands through LSC, such as easily accessing exclusive products or participating in real-time shopping events, this perception of control may enhance their overall brand attitude and foster long-term loyalty.

Accordingly, it is proposed that:

H6: Perceived behavioural control positively affects brand loyalty.

3.3.8 The moderating effects of existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism

3.3.8.1 Existing brand awareness

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers are familiar with a brand (Aaker, 1992; Keller, K.L., 1993). In this study, existing brand awareness emphasises to what extent that consumers are aware of a brand and have existing knowledge about the brand before engaging with its live streams. Brand awareness is a well-established determinant of consumer behaviour based on the Brand Value Chain (Keller, K.L., 1993; Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, 2003). Beyond its direct influence, the moderating role of brand awareness has also been recognised in marketing research. Studies have shown that the effectiveness of marketing

strategies can vary depending on the level of consumers' brand awareness (Kent and Allen, 1994; Machleit et al., 1993). For example, in terms of international brands' advertising, when consumers in a market are highly aware of the brand, standardised commercials tend to generate more positive attitudes; conversely in the market where the brand is less familiar by consumers, localised marketing strategies are more effective (Pae et al., 2002). In this case, considering LSC is a localised marketing communication tool in China's market, its impact on Chinese consumers' attitudes is possibly stronger when consumers are less familiar with the brands. Additionally, researchers have noted that strong brand awareness may lead to negative perceptions when marketing content is not aligned with consumers' existing knowledge about the brand (Lee, J.E. et al., 2018), especially when it is already difficult for luxury brands to showcase their brand's glamour through online channels as they do in real life. Moreover, due to the 'ceiling effects', if consumers already have a strong awareness of a brand, the likelihood of further improvements in consumer attitudes is diminished, as consumers are likely to already have strong pre-existing attitudes towards the brand and are unlikely to be affected by a new marketing activity.

Therefore, the author assumes that:

H7: Existing brand awareness moderates the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes.

3.3.8.2 Perceived brand luxuriousness

Perceived brand luxuriousness refers to the extent to which a product or brand is perceived as unique, valuable, and prestigious (Amatulli et al., 2020). For luxury brands, maintaining an image of exclusivity and high status is crucial, as these attributes are central to their appeal and market positioning. Previous studies have shown that the brand level can be a moderator that affects the effectiveness of marketing communication on customer behaviours. For instance, Verhoef et al. (2007) found out that in the context of car selling, when the car brands are highly prestigious, the contribution of the third-party dealers to brand retention was less significant, because buyers prioritised brand values over additional values from the dealers. In other words, when a brand is perceived as highly prestigious, it has

usually had a well-established image and reputation. Thus, it may be difficult for third-party efforts to outweigh the impact of the brand's own values on consumer attitudes.

In addition, the concept of luxury is highly subjective and is understood differently by consumers (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). A brand may be perceived as a prestige brand, an affordable luxury brand, or a non-luxury brand by different customers. Previous research has suggested that consumers would respond differently to the same marketing efforts depending on their perception of brand luxuriousness. Kong et al. (2021) found out that in terms of sustainability efforts made by fashion brands, consumers had more favourable attitudes when non-luxury brands were doing it; however, for luxury brands, these efforts might risk diluting brand values. This is possibly because consumers have different expectations and standards for different levels of brands. When consumers perceive a brand as highly luxurious, they may have elevated expectations and high satisfaction thresholds. If the brand's marketing campaign does not meet their perception of the brand in their mind, it may result in a failure.

Specific to this study, LSC has been widely recognised as an effective marketing and online selling tool for mass market goods to enhance consumers' engagement and purchase intention. However, given that LSC is often adopted to promote and sell mass-market goods, frequently involving tactics such as heavy discounts and limited time offers. This may associate LSC with impressions like 'cheap' or 'discount' in consumers' minds (Hall, 2020; Williams, G.A., 2021; Zheng, 2020), while luxury brands traditionally avoid such associations to maintain their high-end image (Dion and Arnould, 2011). Hence, consumers may have higher expectations for luxury brands' live streaming performance, potentially leading to a higher satisfaction threshold. Consequently, the more luxurious a brand is perceived, the weaker the positive impact LSC may have on consumer attitudes towards the brand, as high expectations may not be easily met through such channels.

Accordingly, the author proposes that:

H8: Perceived brand luxuriousness moderates the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes.

3.3.8.3 Self-materialism

Self-materialism, rooted in the concept of 'the material self' developed by Bagozzi et al. (2020), reflects the degree to which individuals derive their identity and self-worth from material possessions. Individuals with an elevated level of self-materialism tend to use material wealth to signal social status and construct their self-image, which is especially pronounced in luxury consumption research. As discussed in Section 2.3.4.1, luxury brands can be defined by value-based dimensions, including social, functional, personal and financial values (Wiedmann et al., 2007), which is what luxury brands aim to convey to consumers through their marketing strategies. Wiedmann et al. (2007) pointed out that consumers with high level of materialism often prioritise the materialistic value of luxury brands, seeing the possessions of luxury goods as key to achieving personal happiness and identity. Accordingly, they tend to value luxury brands' prestigious images and reputation which represent wealth and social status. In this case, if the effectiveness of luxury brands' LSC may decrease if highly materialistic consumers perceive that the adoption of LSC undermines the brand's exclusivity and prestige. Additionally, noteworthy, it is the possessions of material goods that materialistic consumers significantly care about, instead of goods themselves. Materialism is a powerful driver of luxury consumption, but does not influence consumers' perceptions and evaluation about product features or brands (Mainolfi, 2020). According to Wiedmann et al. (2007), it also suggests that compared with luxury consumers who value other types of values, materialists have always had the most favourable attitudes towards luxury goods and brands, which is less likely to be affected by brands' marketing activities.

However, on the other hand, given that materialistic people 'wish to have a lot of luxury in their lives' (Wiedmann et al., 2007, p.640), they may possibly have a favourable attitude towards LSC, as it makes luxury goods more accessible and easier to purchase, which in turn may enhance their favourable attitudes towards the brands that use this channel. In this case, the effective of LSC on brand attitudes may be reinforced.

Therefore, the author proposes that:

H9: Self-materialism moderates the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes.

3.3.9 Research hypotheses

The present study proposed nine hypotheses that are summarised in below Table 3-1. Also, each hypothesis can be referred to the following research questions:

RQ1: Does live streaming commerce positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers? (H1-H6)

RQ2: Does existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers? (H7-H9)

Table 3-1 Proposed research hypotheses

| | |
|----|--|
| H1 | The overall impact of LuxLSC positively affects brand attitudes. |
| H2 | The overall impact of LuxLSC positively affects perceived social norms. |
| H3 | The overall impact of LuxLSC positively affects perceived behavioural control. |
| H4 | Brand attitudes positively affect brand loyalty. |
| H5 | Perceived social norms positively affects brand loyalty. |
| H6 | Perceived behavioural control positively affects brand loyalty. |
| H7 | Existing brand awareness moderates the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes. |
| H8 | Perceived brand luxuriousness moderates the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes. |
| H9 | Self-materialism moderates the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes. |

Source: The author

3.4 Conceptual Model

The below Figure 3-2 demonstrates the research model of the present study to show the relationships among all variables.

This research model is designed to examine the relationships between various constructs associated with LSC and their impact on brand attitudes (BA), perceived social norms (PSN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC), ultimately on brand loyalty (BL). This model includes several first-order constructs, such as streamer attributes (i.e., similarity, familiarity, and likability), content quality attributes (i.e., information quality and visual display quality), and IT attributes (i.e., visibility, metavoicing, guidance shopping and trading), which collectively form the second-order construct of the 'overall impact of LuxLSC'.

Rooted in the TPB, the overall impact of LuxLSC is hypothesised to directly influence brand attitudes (H1), perceived social norms (H2), and perceived behavioural control (H3). The model further posits that brand attitudes (H4), perceived social norms (H5), and perceived behavioural control (H6) each have a direct effect on brand loyalty, illustrating how LSC contributes to a consumer's commitment to a brand in the context of luxury industry.

Moreover, the model also includes three moderators that affect the above relationships. Existing brand awareness (H7) and perceived brand luxuriousness (H8) are hypothesised to moderate the relationship between the overall impact of LuxLSC and brand attitudes, suggesting that consumer's prior knowledge of the brand and their perceptions of its luxuriousness could affect how they respond to luxury brands' LSC. In addition, self-materialism (H9), composed of self-deservingness and self-assurance, is expected to moderate the impact of LSC on brand attitudes, emphasising how the materialistic value preference of luxury consumers shapes their response to luxury brands' LSC tactic.

Overall, this mode aims to comprehensively explore the complex interplay between LSC attributes, consumer perceptions and brand loyalty, offering insights into how luxury brands can effectively leverage LSC to enhance consumer engagement and loyalty.

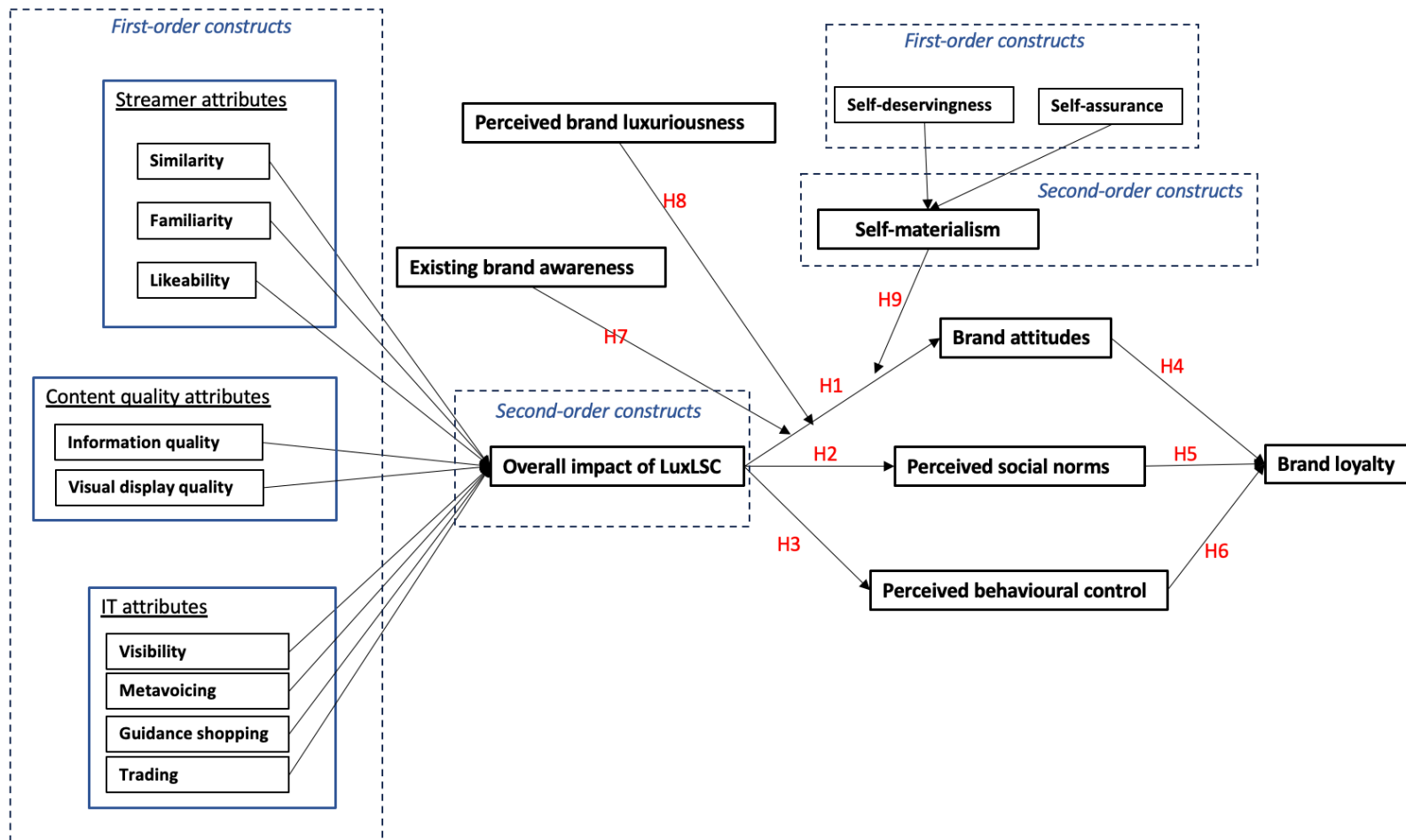


Figure 3-2: Research Model

Source: Author

3.5 Chapter Summary

Following a literature review on LSC luxury consumption and brand loyalty, this chapter has built up the connections between these three fields based on the TPB and then developed nine hypotheses.

The first part of this chapter briefly introduced the TPB by interpreting each component of it, and then operationalised it within the context of this study. Specifically, TPB, one of the most adopted theories to predict human social behaviour, posits that human behaviours are determined by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, which are respectively shaped by behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). By integrating it with the Brand Value Chain, therefore, LSC, as a marketing tactic, can affect consumers' attitudes towards luxury brands, perceived social norms and behavioural control by shaping their beliefs, consequently affecting their loyalty intention. Additionally, the adoption of TPB in this research is also justified, as it aligns better with the research aim of the present research compared with other consumers' decision-making models.

The second part of this chapter further explained in detail the link between LSC and brand loyalty of luxury brands, supported by both theoretical and empirical evidence. Following the identification of LuxLSC attributes in Section 2.4.3.6, this part integrated nine factors into one higher-order construct, i.e., the 'overall impact of LuxLSC', which can help reduce the complexity of the model while maintaining the accuracy, as well as potentially capture a broader landscape of the impact of LSC in the luxury sector. Then, correlations between each variable were established and justified. The overall impact of LuxLSC was assumed to positively affect brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control, which respectively have a positive influence on brand loyalty. Moreover, three moderators, i.e., existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness and self-materialism were proposed to affect the overall impact of LuxLSC on consumers' attitudes towards luxury brands. Overall, nine research hypotheses were proposed.

The last part presented a research model, which visualised all proposed relationships in this research.

Chapter 4 details the research methodology, including the justification of research philosophy, data collection and analysis methods, as well as ethical consideration involved in this project.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters outline the existing literature in relation to LSC, luxury brands and brand attitude and brand loyalty, together with the potential influence of materialism, prior brand knowledge and perceived brand luxuriousness. Key research questions were identified and then a conceptual model was developed and hypotheses to test the key model relationships were determined to explore the research questions.

As a reminder, the key research questions are as follows:

RQ1: Does live streaming commerce positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers?

RQ2: Does existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers?

This chapter provides an overview of the chosen research approach adopted in this study. It discusses the research philosophy, and justifies the methodology and methods used in this research. The research philosophy of Positivism is chosen by the researcher as both being consistent with the researcher's beliefs and being appropriate for analysis of the relationships and research questions examined in this study. Next, a quantitative statistical methodological approach is described and outlined, based on a deductive approach to theory and hypothesis testing of theorised relationships being adopted. The survey method is justified and described as the data collection instrument.

Adoption of a context of the Burberry brand and live streaming in relation to that brand in China is justified as a basis for data collection and context. LSC has been rapidly growing in China, and Burberry has been well-known for its digital innovations and has been regularly active in LSC activities in China's market. It also represents a luxury brand perceived by consumers as having different levels of

luxuriousness, allowing testing of perceived luxuriousness as a moderator. This chapter identifies structural equation modelling via partial least squares (PLS-SEM) as an appropriate technique for testing the hypotheses in the conceptual model. The use of PLS-SEM is justified as the most suitable approach for data analysis, and the necessary procedures to assess the model and test the hypotheses are established. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations of the method and ethical considerations.

4.2 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders et al. (2019, p.130), a research philosophy 'refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge'. For this reason, research philosophy chosen typically reflects the personal beliefs and values of the researcher which may be informed by their studies and experiences (Bryman, 2016). A research philosophy typically has three key elements, being ontology, epistemology and axiology (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2013), which are described in detail below.

4.2.1 Ontology

Ontology is concerned with beliefs about the nature of reality. In philosophical terms, it describes the study of what it means to exist and of explores the fundamental nature of reality. A researchers' methodological choices are strongly influenced by their ontological beliefs. Ontology dictates whether the researcher believes reality can be objectively or subjectively known and what can be known. There are two main ontological stances that are essentially opposites: realism and relativism (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Saunders et al., 2019). Realism is the belief that reality exists objectively, independent of the observer and independent of any theories, human beliefs, or human behaviours. Realism is free from context and is the preferred ontological perspective within quantitative and positivist research paradigms (Saunders et al., 2019). In contrast, relativism is the belief that reality cannot exist outside of a given context. Rather, realities are created and determined by experiences and social interactions (Saunders et al., 2019). Relativists believe

that the truth is created by meanings and experiences and is subjective. Relativism is associated with interpretivism and qualitative research traditions (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Saunders et al., 2019).

4.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology concerns the study of what it is possible to know. It can be described as the theory of knowledge and relates to how researchers know and think about the world (Biesta, 2021). Within the social sciences, epistemology has usually been addressed in relation to an epistemological dualism that classifies research as either objective or subjective (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2013). Some researchers believe that analyses should be carried out in an objective manner, with the researcher seeking to avoid influencing the data under consideration. To discover the truth, the researcher must distance himself or herself from the research as much as possible, so as to achieve more objective measurements. Researchers who feel knowledge is subjective interact with other people to discover what the truth means for them in a given context. Thus, subjectivism is in line with interpretivist research approaches (Carson et al., 2001).

4.2.3 Axiology

Axiology concerns the study of values and ethics or aesthetics and how this relates to research inquiry (Saunders et al., 2019). Moreover, according to Strang (2015) axiology refers to the theory of beliefs and how these impact researchers' values which are reflected within the research process such as religious or cultural values. Consequently, the researcher's values impact the research process, researcher decisions and interactions between researcher and participants (Ruona and Lynham, 2004). All three elements of research philosophy reflect and influence each other as can be seen in Figure 4-1 below.

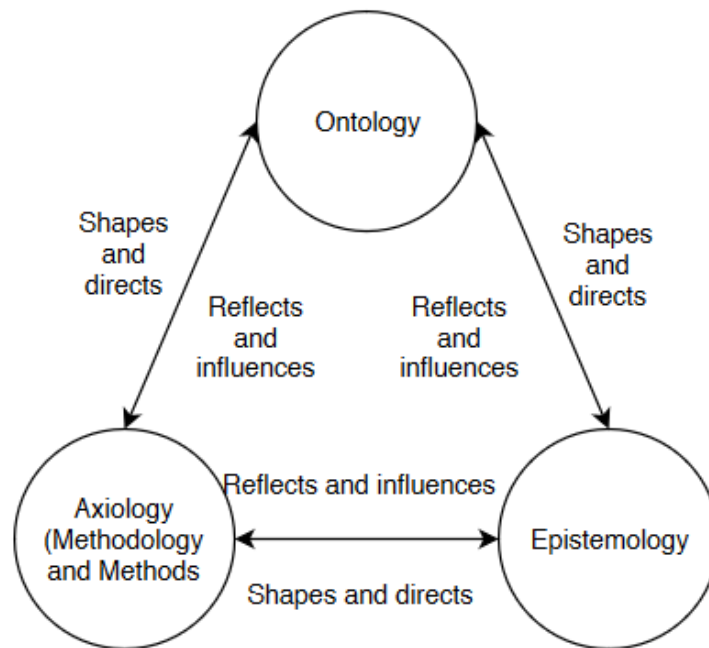


Figure 4-1 Interrelationship between Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology

Source: (Ruona and Lynham, 2004).

4.2.4 Research paradigm

According to Collis and Hussey (2014), research paradigms identify a distinct philosophical framework involving the elements of ontology, epistemology and axiology, guiding researchers through their research process. Each paradigm typically relates to a common system of values and beliefs as to how research should be conducted (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). In this research the positivist research paradigm is adopted, as being most consistent with the researcher's beliefs. A table summarising some key research paradigms is shown below.

Table 4-1 Four major research paradigms

| | Positivism | Realism | Interpretivism | Pragmatism |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Ontology: <i>the researcher's view of the nature of reality or of being</i> | External, <i>objective</i> , and independent of social actors | Reality exists independently of human thoughts, beliefs, or knowledge of their existence (<i>realism</i>) but is interpreted through social conditioning (critical realism) | Socially constructed, <i>subjective</i> , multiple | Multiple realities are the practical result of ideas |
| Epistemology: <i>the researcher's view of what constitutes acceptable knowledge</i> | Only observable phenomena can provide credible data; focus on causality and laws (e.g., generalisations that reduce phenomena to the simplest possible elements) | Observable phenomena provide credible data; insufficient data means inaccuracies in perceptions (direct realism); otherwise, phenomena create sensations that are open to misinterpretation (critical <i>realism</i>); focus on explanations within a specific context. | Subjective meanings and social phenomena; Focus is on the details regarding a situation and on the reality underlying those details; subjective meanings motivate actions | Both observable phenomena and subjective meanings |
| Axiology: <i>the researcher's view of the role of values in the research</i> | Research is undertaken in a value-free manner; the researcher is independent of the data and maintains an objective stance | Research is value-laden; the researcher is biased by his or her worldview, cultural experiences, and upbringing; these beliefs have an effect on the research | Research is value-bound; the researcher is part of what is being researched and cannot separate himself or herself from the process; thus, research is subjective | Values play a large role in interpreting results; the researcher adopts both objective and subjective perspectives |
| Data collection techniques | Highly structured; large samples; preference for quantitative measurements, but qualitative approaches also possible | Methods, whether quantitative or qualitative, must fit the subject matter | Small samples; in-depth investigations; qualitative approaches | Mixed or multiple designs; quantitative and qualitative approaches |

Source: Bryman (2016)

From an ontological perspective, the positivist paradigm assumes a single objective reality which can be understood and measured. This allows development of a conceptual framework to predict and explain general phenomena. Epistemologically, knowledge about this reality must be developed objectively without researcher influence, and there must be distance between the researcher and the respondent to reduce bias. From an axiological perspective, positivism relies on the objectivity of the researcher and data obtained should not be subjective or open to interpretation. Based on the purpose of this study and the research aim, positivism develops knowledge by developing causal explanations for phenomena and hypothesis testing (Saunders et al., 2019).

Positivism is not free from criticism. Consumer research and marketing has been dominated by positivist, empiricist, and realist philosophies, but some authors have argued for a more pragmatic approach recognising the role of subjectivity and the importance of context (Majeed, 2019). Positivism has been criticised for making unrealistic assumptions, confusing predictions with explanation, and discard all non-logical reasoning (Blaikie, 2007).

Despite the potential concerns, given this study engages in theory testing, and exploration of conceptual relationships, and given the authors philosophical beliefs, a positivist approach is adopted.

4.3 Research Approach

There are three major research approaches: deductive, inductive, and abductive approaches. Each of these is essential for knowledge production which involves either developing and/or testing theory. Each of these approaches is an integral component of the overall research method and is capable of connecting theory and data from empirical observations (Saunders et al., 2019).

The deductive approach is sometimes referred to as a top-down approach because it starts with theory, which is often envisioned as high level, and then moves towards gathering more specific, detailed, empirical observations. When researchers use deductive research approaches, they usually begin with theory-

driven hypotheses which are then tested with empirical data. If the data collected supports the hypotheses on analysis, then the theory is also supported, if not it can be rejected as not supported.

The inductive approach is sometimes referred to as a bottom-up approach. Here, researchers start with (often exploratory) research questions, then collect empirical data which they use to generate hypotheses and theories. With this approach, the goal is to build theory, rather than evaluate it. Often inductive research involves qualitative data and examining that data in context leads to a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Bryman, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019).

An abductive approach moves from data to theories. Here, researchers must have enough data to formulate theories and assumptions. Additionally, the abductive approach is a form of logical inference that uses observations to construct hypotheses. Abduction involves aspects of both deduction and induction, it involves ruling out possible explanations until researchers are left with the most plausible one, given the evidence. Therefore, like induction, abduction does not provide a sense of certainty. It is, however, a useful way to get through complex situations when researchers do not have clear evidence from the past to guide them (Bryman, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019).

This research project adopted a deductive approach to test hypotheses derived from theory. A deductive approach is extremely consistent with the positivist research paradigm and appropriate in the context of this study, where to answer the research questions identified, and address research gaps, hypotheses have been developed based on theory which can be statistically tested with empirical data.

4.4 Research Strategy

Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) describe research strategy as a general plan of how to answer the research questions that have been set by researcher. A research strategy is a comprehensive approach to a research effort that has three main elements being the research philosophy, research design (the framework for data

collecting and analysis), and research questions to be answered (Saunders et al., 2019). The chosen research strategy must align with the theoretical framework, research philosophy, and the nature of the research problem. In general, according to Bell et al. (2022) and Saunders et al. (2019), there are eight key research strategies commonly used in social science research, namely secondary data, surveys, experiments, case studies, action research, grounded theory, narrative enquiry and ethnography, each suited to different types of research questions and contexts. A survey method, which has been adopted for this study, is one of the most common strategies in social science research, particularly in quantitative studies. Surveys allow researchers to collect data from a large sample of respondents, offering the ability to quantify behaviours, opinions, or attitudes (Saunders et al., 2019). This method is particularly useful when the research aims to explore relationships between variables and draw generalisable conclusions. Surveys typically involve the use of structured questionnaires or interviews to gather data systematically, which can then be statistically analysed (Saunders et al., 2019).

The research philosophy and research questions have been established above. The research design (the framework for data collection and for data analysis) is discussed in detail below. Also, it should be noted that the context of research design is investigation of consumer reactions to LSC in relation to luxury brands in China, as discussed above.

4.5 Research Design

Saunders et al. (2019) recognise many types of research design, for example experimental designs, survey designs, comparative designs, case study designs, observation-based designs, action research designs, and mixed-methods designs.

In this study, a survey design is adopted, which is typical of most positivist quantitative studies in marketing and supports collection of empirical data remotely – important as Chinese consumers are to be the respondents in this study. An analytical survey is a systematic method for gathering information from a sample for the purposes of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger

population of interest (Groves et al., 2011, p.2). An analytical survey is often used to examine hypothesised relationships, and the differences to test hypotheses (Hair et al., 2019a).

4.5.1 Measurement development

A survey was developed for data collection purposes. The survey commences with participant information and consent, and a screening question to ensure the participant meets inclusion criteria (outlined in more detail in Section 4.5.3.3): ***Have you ever engaged in live streaming commerce of Burberry on Taobao Live?*** It then collects demographic information, before focusing on Likert scale questions used to collect measurement data for evaluating variables in the conceptual model and hypotheses.

This section details the measurement development process employed to operationalise the theoretical constructs established in the literature review (Section 2.4.3.6) and integrated into the conceptual framework (Figure 3-2). The measurement approach translates the luxury-specific LuxLSC factors theoretically derived from the literature analysis into empirically testable constructs while ensuring alignment with established psychometric principles.

All measurement items were adapted from established measures with proven reliability and validity in the previous studies, then modified to address the specific requirements of LuxLSC contexts and loyalty formation objectives. The adaptation process involved three key considerations that emerged from the theoretical development in Section 2.4.3.6: (1) luxury brand context requirements, where general LSC measures were insufficient for capturing the exclusivity, aesthetic sophistication, and aspirational elements crucial to luxury brand evaluation; (2) loyalty formation focus, where measures needed to capture relationship development and emotional attachment rather than immediate transactional outcomes emphasised in much existing LSC research; and (3) live streaming environment specificity, where traditional offline measures required modification to

address the unique characteristics of real-time, interactive digital commerce platforms.

Rather than directly adopting scales developed for general contexts, each construct underwent systematic evaluation and modification to ensure theoretical appropriateness for luxury brands' LSC research while maintaining psychometric integrity. This process involved contextual adaptation (modifying language and references for luxury brands and LSC environments), theoretical alignment (ensuring measures capture the specific dimensions identified in Section 2.4.3.6), and novel item development (applying validate items from other research domains to capture luxury-specific or LSC-specific phenomena).

The questionnaire employs 7-point Likert scales throughout, which have commonly been used to measure brand attitudes and brand loyalty, are easy to comprehend, and can lower participant frustration levels while reducing response error. The literature suggests 7-point Likert scales are more suited to electronic devices and can be used to focus on understanding behaviours (Hair et al., 2012; Symonds, 1924). According to Hair et al. (2019a), Likert scales between 5-7 points are optimal for measuring individual behaviours, as scales with fewer than 5 or more than 7 points may be deemed less accurate. The scale items were anchored as '1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat disagree, 4=Neither agree nor disagree, 5=Somewhat agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly agree'. **Appendix III** exhibits the full questionnaire.

The questionnaire includes multiple first order latent variables, including nine related to LSC (streamer-related factors, live-content factors and IT-related factors) that combine to form LSC impact as a second-order formative variable. Since the items were originally designed in English, a forward-backwards translation method was used for survey questions for Chinese participants: (1) All items were translated from English to Chinese by bilingual experts; (2) The translated items were reviewed by five people who have rich experiences in using LSC to check all items were understandable and culturally appropriate; (3) The translated items were re-translated back to English by two experts; (4) The back-translated items in English

were compared with the original ones in English. As there were no significant discrepancies in meaning, the translation is considered precise and appropriate for Chinese luxury consumers.

The following subsections detail the specific adaptation processes for each construct, explaining the theoretical rationale for adaptations, the specific modifications made to existing scales, and the justification for novel item development where existing measures proved insufficient for luxury LSC contexts.

4.5.1.1 Streamer-related factors

Streamer-related factors were operationalised through McGuire's (1985) Source Attractiveness Model dimensions (similarity, familiarity, and likeability), as conceptually established in Section 2.4.3.6.1. **Similarity** items adapted Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut (2020) with linguistic modifications for clarity. **Familiarity** and **likeability** items adapted Torres et al. (2019) with terminology modification from "influencer" to "streamer" to reflect LSC contexts while maintaining semantic equivalence.

Table 4-2 Streamer-related measures

| Variables | Scales | | Sources |
|------------------|---------------|---|--|
| Similarity | SI1 | I find the streamer has the similar taste as me | Adapted from Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut (2020) |
| | SI2 | I find the streamer fits with this brand. | |
| Familiarity | SI3 | I am familiar with the streamer. | Adapted from Torres et al. (2019) |
| | SI4 | I know that the streamer has a good reputation. | |
| Likeability | SI5 | I like the streamer. | |
| | SI6 | The streamer makes me feel comfortable. | |

Source: The author

4.5.1.2 Live content-related factors

Live content-related factors were operationalised through information quality and visual display quality dimensions, as conceptually established in Section 2.4.3.6.2. **Information quality** items adapted Park and Lin (2020) LSC content

measures with contextual modifications to emphasise both hedonic value ("interesting") (CQI1) and utilitarian value ("helpful") (CQI2) for luxury consumer evaluation needs. **Visual display quality** required cross-domain application, adapting Baker et al. (1994) physical store environment research to LSC contexts (CQI3) while incorporating brand-environment congruence measurement (CQI4) from Park and Lin (2020) to address luxury brands' visual consistency requirements not captured in traditional e-commerce visual quality scales.

Table 4-3 Live content-related measures

| Variables | Scales | | Sources |
|------------------------|--------|---|---|
| Information quality | CQI1 | The live stream content is interesting | Adapted from Park, H.J. and Lin (2020) |
| | CQI2 | The information that the live stream provides is helpful. | |
| Visual display quality | CQI3 | The visual display of this live stream room is enjoyable. | Adapted from Baker, Julie et al. (1994) |
| | CQI4 | The visual display of this live stream room fits with this brand. | Adapted from Park, H.J. and Lin (2020) |

Source: The author

4.5.1.3 IT-related factors

IT-related factors were operationalised through four technological affordance dimensions, as conceptually established in Section 2.4.3.6.3. Visibility, metavoicing, and guidance shopping dimensions built upon Sun et al. (2019) IT affordance framework with contextual modifications from general LSC contexts to and luxury brand references. **Visibility**, **Metavoicing**, and **Guidance shopping** items were adopted from Dong and Wang (2018) with platform specification to "LSC" rather than generic online platforms. **Trading** affordance required integration from multiple sources, combining transaction security considerations with geographic accessibility issues specific to luxury markets, with ITI8 adapted from Jiang et al. (2013) e-commerce research to address luxury brands' geographic concentration limitations.

Table 4-4 IT-related measures

| Variables | Scales | | Source |
|-------------------|--------|--|--|
| Visibility | IT1 | LSC allows me to visualise the products like in the real world. | Adapted from Dong and Wang (2018) |
| | IT2 | LSC can provide me with detailed information of the products. | |
| Metavoicing | IT3 | LSC allows me to communicate with the streamers and other viewers to gain more information of products in real time. | |
| | IT4 | LSC allows me to share my opinions about the products and this brand in real time. | |
| Guidance shopping | IT5 | Streamers on live streaming commerce can provide me with customised information about the products and this brand base on my personal requirement. | |
| | IT6 | Streamers on live streaming commerce can help me identify which product best fits my needs. | |
| Trading | IT7 | LSC allows me to complete a transaction safely and smoothly. | Adapted from Jiang, L.A. et al. (2013) |
| | IT8 | LSC allows me to shop this brand without geographical restriction. | |

Source: The author

4.5.1.4 Brand attitudes

Brand attitudes were operationalised following TPB requirements for dual attitude measurement (detailed in Section 3.2.1), capturing both attitude toward the object (brand) and attitude toward the behaviour (loyalty behaviours). The semantic differential approach integrated Mitchell and Olson (1981), Yim et al. (2014), and Amatulli et al. (2020) because single-source scales proved insufficient for TPB's dual attitude requirements. General brand attitude items (BA1-BA4) retained the established semantic differential format, with generic "brand" references adapted to "this brand" to focus responses specifically on Burberry. Behavioural attitude items (BA5-BA7) adapted the semantic differential approach to measure attitudes toward loyalty behaviours, specifically "saying good things about this brand," addressing TPB requirements for behaviour-specific attitude assessment while maintaining format consistency.

Table 4-5 Brand attitudes measures

| Variables | | Scales | | Source |
|----------------|---|--------|-----------------------|---|
| Brand attitude | This brand is | BA1 | Bad/Good | Adapted from Amatulli et al. (2020); Mitchell and Olson (1981); Yim et al. (2014) |
| | | BA2 | Unlikeable/Likeable | |
| | | BA3 | Unpleasant/ Pleasant | |
| | | BA4 | Unappealing/appealing | |
| | Buying this brand is .../ Saying good things about this brand is | BA5 | Bad/Good | |
| | | BA6 | Unpleasant/ Pleasant | |
| | | BA7 | Harmful/Beneficial | |

Source: The author

4.5.1.5 Perceived social norms

Perceived social norms were operationalised following TPB's subjective norm construct (detailed in Section 3.2.1), capturing perceived social pressure from multiple referent groups relevant to luxury brands' LSC contexts. Items adapted Zhang et al. (2016) social commerce research with significant contextual modifications to address the multi-referent nature of LSC environments. Original items referencing general "important others" were modified to specify "people in live streams" (PSN1, PSN2) to capture immediate social influence within the LSC environment, while maintaining personal social network influence through "friends" (PSN3). Brand references were adapted to include luxury-specific language, with items specifying "luxury products from this brand" to emphasise the premium context while PSN3 includes specific "Burberry" reference to ensure brand focus consistency.

Table 4-6 Perceived social norms measures

| Variables | | Scales | Source |
|------------------------|------|---|--|
| Perceived social norms | PSN1 | People who are important to me like this brand [Burberry]. | Adapted from Zhang, K.Z.K. et al. (2016) |
| | PSN2 | People who influence me would encourage me to buy this brand's [Burberry] products. | |
| | PSN3 | My friends would encourage me to buy this brand's [Burberry] products | |

Source: The author

4.5.1.6 Perceived behavioural control

Perceived behavioural control was operationalised following TPB's PBC construct (detailed in Section 3.2.1), measuring perceived ease or difficulty of performing LSC engagement behaviours. Items adapted Taylor and Todd (1995) foundational TPB measures with substantial contextual modifications for luxury LSC contexts. Original generic references to "performing the behavior" were replaced with specific "engage in Burberry Live Streaming Commerce" to ensure behaviour-specific measurement as required by TPB theory. The adaptations emphasised personal capability assessment rather than external constraint evaluation, reflecting that LSC participation is primarily limited by personal choice rather than external barriers. All items incorporated brand-specific references to "Burberry Live Streaming Commerce" to maintain focus on the specific behaviour under investigation rather than general digital engagement.

Table 4-7 Perceived behavioural control measures

| Variables | Scales | | Source |
|-------------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Perceived behavioural control | PBS1 | Whether I engage in this brand's[Burberry] Live Streaming Commerce is entirely up to me. | Adapted from Taylor and Todd (1995) |
| | PBC2 | Nothing will prevent me from participating in this brand's[Burberry] Live Streaming Commerce. | |
| | PBC3 | I believe I have the ability to engage in this brand's[Burberry] Live Streaming Commerce. | |

Source: The author

4.5.1.7 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty was operationalised following Oliver's (1999) two-dimensional framework (detailed in Section 2.5.2.6), measuring both behavioural and attitudinal loyalty intentions rather than actual behaviours due to the cross-sectional research design. Items adapted Godey et al. (2016) luxury brand loyalty scales developed for social media contexts, with modifications for LSC environments and loyalty intention focus. Behavioural loyalty required adaptation of Godey et al.'s purchase intention item to "I intend to keep purchasing this brand" (BL1) for linguistic clarity, while BL2 "I intend to regularly visit the live streams of this brand" was developed to capture

digital engagement behaviours, as traditional loyalty scales do not address digital touchpoint engagement that contemporary research demonstrates as valid expressions of brand patronage. Attitudinal loyalty items (BL3, BL4) retained Godey et al.'s WOM focus with minor modifications for Chinese respondents, capturing recommendation intentions and social media advocacy that are particularly relevant for luxury brands, where social influence plays prominent roles.

Table 4-8 Brand loyalty measures

| Variables | Scales | | Sources |
|---------------------|--------|---|----------------------------------|
| Behavioural loyalty | BL1 | I intent to keep purchasing this brand. | Adapted from Godey et al. (2016) |
| | BL2 | I intent to regularly visit the live streams of this brand. | |
| Attitudinal loyalty | BL3 | I would like to recommend this brand to others. | |
| | BL4 | I would like to say positive things about this brand on social media. | |

Source: The author

4.5.1.8 The moderators

Three moderating variables were operationalised to examine boundary conditions of LSC effects on brand attitudes, as conceptually established in Section 2.4.3.6. **Existing brand awareness** adapted Liu et al. (2017) luxury hotel branding scales for luxury retail contexts, with modifications changing "hotel brand" references to "brand" and adding LSC-specific temporal context through "before engaging in its live streams" (BAW1) to establish awareness baseline prior to LSC exposure. **Perceived brand luxuriousness** retained Hagtvedt and Patrick's (2016) semantic differential format without modification, as these items demonstrated strong validity in luxury contexts and required no contextual adaptation for LSC environments. **Self-materialism** employed a theoretically-driven subset from Bagozzi et al.'s (2020) comprehensive materialism scale, selecting only personal dimension items (self-assurance and self-deservingness) while excluding social dimension items to avoid construct overlap with perceived social norms, maintaining theoretical coherence while ensuring discriminant validity.

Table 4-9 Brand awareness measures

| Variables | Scales | | Source |
|--------------------------|--------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Existing brand awareness | BAW1 | I was already aware of this brand before engaging in its live streams. | Adapted from Liu, M.T. et al. (2017) |
| | BAW2 | I am able to quickly recall the symbol or logo of this brand. | |
| | BAW3 | I am able to recognise this brand among other competing brands. | |

Table 4-10 Perceived brand luxuriousness measures

| Variables | Scales | | | Source |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------|------------------------|--|
| Perceived brand luxuriousness | I feel this brand is | PBL1 | Luxury/Value for money | Adapted from Hagtvedt and Patrick (2016) |
| | | PBL2 | Expensive/Inexpensive | |
| | | PBL3 | High-end/Low-end | |

Table 4-11 Self-materialism measures

| Variables | Scales | | | Source |
|------------------|--------------------|-----|--|------------------------------------|
| Self-materialism | Self-assurance | SM1 | Sometimes I buy things because it helps me overcome negative feelings (sadness, anxiety, frustration). | Adapted from Bagozzi et al. (2020) |
| | | SM2 | Shopping and buying things make me feel good (happy, joyful, proud). | |
| | | SM3 | Shopping and buying things are fun for me. | |
| | | SM4 | I love to buy and own things. | |
| | Self-deservingness | SM5 | I have worked hard to get where I am and am entitled to the 'good things in life'. | |
| | | SM6 | I think that there is nothing wrong with enjoying the fruits of your labour if you can. | |
| | | SM7 | I deserve to buy things to pamper myself. | |
| | | SM8 | I deserve to spoil myself every now and then. | |

Source: The author

4.5.1.9 Control variables

Control variables in the present study include gender, age, education level, location, LSC usage experience and usage frequency. It has to be noted that, the author preface customers have the resources, the knowledge, and the ability to purchase luxury goods over LSC to eliminate the potential interference of the actual ability to purchase luxury goods, such as financial consideration.

Table 4-12 Control variables measures

| Control variables | Scales |
|---|--|
| Gender | 1 = Male; 2 = Female; 3 = Prefer not to say |
| Age | 1= Under 18; 2= 18-35; 3= 36-55; 4= Over 55 |
| Education | 1=No qualifications; 2=Below Undergraduate; 3=Undergraduate 4=Postgraduate; 5= Others |
| Location | 1=Tier-1 cities (Shanghai/Beijing/Guangzhou/Shenzhen); 2= Tier-2 cities (i.e., the capital cities such as Chengdu/Hangzhou); 3= Other cities |
| LSC usage experience | 1= Less than 6 months; 2= 6 months-1 year; 3= 1-1.5 years; 4= 1.5-2 years; 5= Over 2 years |
| LSC usage frequency | 1 = Daily; 2 = Weekly; 3 = Monthly; 4 = Less frequently |
| Since the present study is only to examine the behavioural intention, we preface that the customers have the resources, the knowledges, and the ability to buy luxury goods over LSC for eliminating the potential interference of the actual ability to purchase luxury goods, such as financial considerations. | |

Source: The author

4.5.2 Case selection and justification

4.5.2.1 Selection criteria for representative case

The adoption of a single case approach for this research is methodologically justified by established case study principles. Single case designs are appropriate when the case represents a critical, unique, or revelatory example of the phenomenon under investigation (Yin et al., 2018). In the context of LuxLSC research, Burberry represents a critical case as one of the few luxury brands with sustained, systematic LSC implementation, making it particularly suitable for theory testing (Eisenhardt, 1989). Moreover, the focus on a single brand enables deep examination of consumer responses within a consistent brand context, controlling for brand-specific variables that might confound findings in multi-brand studies. This approach aligns with the study's objective of understanding the mechanisms through which LSC influences luxury brand loyalty, where consistency of brand experience is essential for isolating LSC effects from brand-specific factors.

The selection of an appropriate luxury brand case for this research required careful consideration of several theoretical and practical criteria. First, the chosen brand needed to demonstrate consistent and sustained LSC engagement rather

than experimental or sporadic activities, ensuring sufficient consumer touchpoints for meaningful data collection. Second, the brand should exhibit comprehensive LSC format implementation, covering the diverse range of live streaming approaches currently adopted in the luxury sector to provide representative insights into the LuxLSC phenomenon. Third, from a theoretical perspective, the selected brand needed to demonstrate variation in consumer perceptions of luxuriousness, enabling the testing of perceived brand luxuriousness as a moderating variable in the conceptual model. Finally, the brand should possess established digital innovation credentials within the luxury sector, indicating strategic rather than opportunistic LSC adoption.

4.5.2.2 Burberry as representative case

Burberry was selected as the focal brand for this research based on its unique positioning within the LuxLSC landscape and its alignment with the established selection criteria. Unlike other luxury brands that have approached LSC experimentally, Burberry has demonstrated systematic and consistent engagement with LSC since its debut on Taobao Live in 2020. This sustained activity contrasts markedly with competitors such as Louis Vuitton, which conducted only two LSC events between 2020 and 2024, or Dior and Givenchy, which have pursued ,limited, experimental approaches to LSC.

Burberry's LSC strategy encompasses comprehensive format diversity, including flagship store tours, runway show broadcasts, studio selling sessions, and collaborations with celebrities and KOLs. This breadth of LSC implementation covers the full spectrum of current luxury brands' LSC practices, making Burberry representative of broader industry approaches rather than a single tactical implementation. The brand's success in this space is evidenced by its achievement of over 3 millions followers on its Taobao Live channel, demonstrating significant scale and consumer engagement (Burberry, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, Burberry occupies a distinctive position within the luxury brand landscape that creates the necessary variation in consumer

perceptions for this research. While Burberry is consistently recognised as a top-tier luxury fashion brand, ranking alongside established luxury houses such as Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Dior (Rakuten Insight, 2024), its luxury positioning shows notable heterogeneity evidenced by ongoing industry debates. Ryan (2024), an industry expert, revealed polarised professional opinions that also demonstrate the variation in perceived brand luxuriousness of Burberry. While some experts argued that 'Burberry is a luxury brand' but 'not on par with uber luxury brands (hyper luxury, or ultra-luxury)', academic analysis positioned Burberry within the 'accessible luxury' tier, noting its 'reliance on volume and outlets' distinguishes it from pure luxury brands. This professional discourse also validates testing perceived brand luxuriousness as a moderating variable, as it demonstrates natural perception variation within a single brand context, which would not exist with brands where consumers show greater positioning consensus.

Furthermore, Burberry's reputation of being a digital innovation leader within the luxury sector has established a decade ago (Kansara, 2014), providing confidence that its LSC practices represent strategic implementation rather than experimental adoption. The brand's systematic approach to LSC, combined with its sustained market presence, ensures that consumer experiences are representative of mature LuxLSC implementations rather than nascent experimental activities.

4.5.2.3 Platform selection: Taobao Live

The focus on Taobao Live as the primary platform for this research is justified by its position as China's dominant LSC platform, commanding the largest market share and hosting the most luxury brand activities. Taobao Live is built on Alibaba's e-commerce ecosystem provides the comprehensive LSC experience for consumers. Additionally, Burberry's primary LSC activities occur on Taobao Live, ensuring alignment between the case study focus and platform selection.

4.5.3 Sampling

4.5.3.1 Sample size

The size of the sample determines the statistical power, generalisability, and reliability of the data. A sample is a portion of the population chosen to represent the whole population in a statistical analysis. In this study Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) theory is used for the reasons outlined in Section 4.6 below.

According to Hair et al. (2017), PLS-SEM has higher levels of statistical power with smaller sample sizes, thus using PLS-SEM for this study allows for smaller sampling size choices than some other methodological options. According to Hair et al. (2017), as a general rule of thumb, the sample size is required to be 10x the maximum number of arrowheads pointing at a latent variable anywhere in the PLS path model. In the model developed in the previous chapter this suggests a minimum sample size of 10 x 9 or 90 respondents. Building on Cohen (1992) power tables (p.155) and according to Hair et al. (2017), in order to achieve 80% power at a 5% significance level, and detect R^2 values of .10 or greater, a minimum sample size of 150 respondents is required. In fact, in this study 168 respondents were obtained meeting sample size adequacy.

4.5.3.2 Sampling approach

In the present context of the study the data collected using a non-probability-based sampling approach. If probability sample were chosen, there would be a risk of a low response rate or of impractical time and cost in finding a truly randomly selected sample of users in the unit of analysis. For this reason, a purposive sampling approach was chosen – see Table 4-13 below.

Table 4-13 Non-Probability Sampling Types

| Non-Probability Sampling | Description |
|--------------------------|--|
| Convenience Sampling | Selecting readily available respondents |
| Quota Sampling | Sample represents target population within strata of variable of the target population. |
| Purposive Sampling | Selecting cases to best answer the research questions |
| Snowball Sampling | Participant volunteer to research, then they identify further participants interested in participating |

Source: Saunders et al. (2019)

Purposive sampling refers to the researcher selecting sample members to conform to the criterion set (unit of analysis) (Cooper and Schindler, 2014) and ensures that individuals who are selected help answer the research questions whilst representing members of the population of interest.

4.5.3.3 Respondent qualification criteria

Respondents were screened using the question: "Have you ever engaged in live streaming commerce of Burberry on Taobao Live (Watching/Purchasing)?" This criterion ensures participants have experiential knowledge of Burberry's LSC activities, including watching livestream sessions, making comments, using reaction features, asking questions, or making purchases. The screening focuses on collecting a sample with experience in at least watching Burberry's LSC, recognising that meaningful brand loyalty evaluation requires familiarity with the brand's LSC environment.

This screening criterion is theoretically grounded in Oliver's (1999) brand loyalty framework adopted by this study (detailed in Section 2.5.2.6). As established in the literature review, Oliver's (1999) definition emphasises loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future" (p.34), where commitment emerges through experiential relationship development. While Oliver's original conceptualisation predated digital commerce, contemporary research has confirmed that digital engagement behaviours, such as

participation in live streaming events, represent valid expressions of patronage behaviour within Oliver's framework (Chen, J. et al., 2023; Lim et al., 2020; Liu, W. et al., 2023b). This theoretical extension recognises that in digital environments, consumers demonstrate loyalty through both transactional behaviours (i.e., purchases) and non-transactional engagement behaviours (e.g., watching and commenting), with the latter representing significant expressions of brand commitment (Harmeling et al., 2017).

The experience-based screening is methodologically essential given this study's measurement of both behavioural loyalty (purchase intentions) and attitudinal loyalty (recommendation intentions, positive WOM). As established in Section 2.5.2.5, luxury consumers may display strong attitudinal commitment through digital engagement even when purchase frequency is limited by financial or access constraints, making viewing experience sufficient for authentic loyalty evaluation. This approach aligns with the two-dimensional loyalty framework adopted, ensuring respondents possess the experiential foundation necessary for meaningful commitment assessment while recognising that digital engagement represents valid contemporary expressions of brand patronage.

4.5.4 Data collection method

An online self-administered survey (questionnaire) was adopted for cost and time considerations. Online surveys can generate a fast turnaround, make participants feel anonymous and can result in more responses (Blumberg et al., 2014). Qualtrics, an online survey software provider, was selected to operationalise the questionnaire and collect the data. Qualtrics allows anonymisation of the respondent, can prevent repeat completions of the questionnaire by the same individual, is hosted on secure university servers and so gains trust from respondents as to where their data will be stored, and administers questions in an easy-to-use format on laptop or mobile devices.

An online approach using a link shared via Chinese social media platforms (e.g., Red, WeChat, Weibo) was adopted to reach specific respondents remotely with fast

and efficient collection of responses. Ineffective survey methods via mail, interviews, telephone or in-person can take a substantial amount of time to collect and analyse, and can have lower response rates (Dillman et al., 2014). The task of data analysis is simplified in Qualtrics with the responses electronically gathered, ensuring accuracy in content, and facilitating both English and Chinese language questions and instructions.

Surveys are developed through questions, which can limit the answers given through their design or through poor wording (Saunders et al., 2019). To minimise this problem, the researcher conducted a pilot survey with feedback on the time taken, missing questions or factors, and on question clarity to eliminate these limitations. To remove any quick responses if respondents rush through the survey and avoid respondents falling into fixed patterns of response to Likert-scale questions, there are questions inserted to prevent common method bias (detailed in Section 4.5.6 below).

4.5.5 Validity and reliability in survey design

Reliability and validity are essential to minimise bias and error in data collection and reliability and validity checks ensure the survey provides information suitable for addressing research questions asked (Newman and Benz, 1998). Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure, and validity to its accuracy. In this study measures are operationalised as Likert-scale responses to questions in the questionnaire. Later in this chapter statistical tests designed to show that reliability and validity are achieved are described. The table below describes the steps taken in survey design to overcome threats to validity and reliability.

Table 4-14 Questionnaire Design Choices to Mitigate Threats

| Threat | Details | Mitigation |
|---|---|--|
| Social Tendency Bias | Being influenced by views expressed by others during response process | Use of individual, anonymised survey. |
| Acquiescence Bias | Respondents replies how they think the researcher will want to see | Anonymity. Randomised question location. |
| Bias embedded in question | Questions are biased or the respondent does not understand terminology | Senior academics reviewed the survey then a pilot study – questions were tested, then amended ready for the larger survey. |
| Participant Error | Factors adversely altering the way a participant performs, such that concentration is lost, or survey is completed in haste with simplifying completion patterns of response. | Added in common method bias questions – see below. This check for accuracy and attention in survey response |
| Participant Bias | Factors indicating a false response, such as conducting and interview in open space, where people may overhear, so the respondent offers false positive answers | Survey links were sent out, so the respondent was able to privately respond online. |
| Researcher Error | Factors altering the researcher's interpretation | Closed questions utilised which cannot be interpreted subjectively |
| Researcher Bias | Bias in the researchers recording of information. | Use electronic questionnaire tool to record responses |
| Ambiguity in the answer or strength of belief in the answer | Lack of a sense of strength of opinion relative to other topics or questions | The study utilises 7-point Likert scale as studies have shown reliability increases when more points are used |

Source: Saunders et al (2019).

4.5.6 Common method bias

According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), Common Method Bias (CMB) is a key sources of measurement error impacting the validity of a study and the interpretation of relationships between variables. This might be specifically a problem with self-reported surveys. Podsakoff and Organ (1986) argued that self-reported instruments can suffer from 'Common Method Variance' (CMV) which can be defined as systematic correlation or variance between conceptually distinct

variables due to a participant's response coming from the same source. Consequently, the relationship between constructs can be either inflated or attenuated and lead to a distortion of results, which may pose a threat to empirical studies (Williams, L.J. et al., 2010). Method bias may appear when both independent and dependant variables are captured by the same response methods affecting the validity (Kock, F. et al., 2021).

In order to overcome method bias, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012) advise avoiding questions which are difficult for the respondent to understand, or which can demotivate them. In the Table 4-15 below are threats to understanding and motivation identified by them, and steps taken in this study to mitigate those threats.

Table 4-15 Mitigation of Common Method Bias

| Factor | Mitigation |
|--|--|
| Motivation: Low personal relevance to the issue | Participation was appreciated and voluntary, and subject matter was relevant to the respondents. |
| Motivation: Low Self efficacy to provide a correct answer | Clear guidance was given to participants that they were asked to describe and rank their experience and feelings. Common Method Bias control question tests for focus and accuracy of responses (see below). |
| Motivation: Low need for cognition | Respondents were informed of the research they were participating in, and its importance. |
| Motivation: Low need for self-expression/ self-disclosure or emotional catharsis | Respondents were told that the authored valued their time and opinion |
| Motivation: Low feelings of altruism | Respondents were reminded of the importance of their answers to the PhD study. |
| Motivation: Agreeableness | Participants were told to give honest answers from their own experience to help the study. |
| Motivation: Impulsiveness | Participants were given clear and short instructions, and could complete in their own time, to reduce quick and impulsive responses. |
| Motivation: Dogmatism, rigidity, or intolerance of ambiguity | Simple and unambiguous questions were used. |
| Motivation: Implicit theories | The questionnaire made no implicit connection to or reference to theory. |
| Motivation: Repetitiveness of items | Items were worded in different ways, and the insertion of a common method bias control question controlled for this risk (see below). |
| Motivation: Lengthy Scales | The questionnaire was relatively short, and participants could comfortably complete it in under 10 minutes. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Motivation: Forced participation | Participants joined voluntarily. No rewards or punishments were given. |
| Motivation: Presence of an interviewer | No interviewer was present as this was an online remote questionnaire. |
| Motivation: Source of the survey disliked | Participants were given information linking the survey to a reputable academic institution. |
| Motivation: Contexts that arouse suspicions | The consent page explained the research purpose, how it will be used and who will and how the information will be kept. |
| Motivation: Measurement conditions that make the consequences of a response salient | Participants were guaranteed anonymity and assured of no 'right or wrong' answers. |
| Understanding: Lack of Verbal ability | Questions were written in simple and clear terms |
| Understanding: Lack of experience of thinking about the topic | Sample consisted of people who were fully familiar with the topic and had relevant experience. |
| Understanding: Complex or Abstract Questions | Simple questions used and pre-tested |
| Understanding: Item ambiguity | Clear and concise language used, and survey was pre-tested |
| Understanding: Double-barrelled questions | No double-barrelled questions were used |
| Understanding: Questions that rely on retrospective recall | Avoided where possible, some element of retrospective recall is inherent. |

Adapted from MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012)

4.5.6.1 Use of common method bias control question

To mitigate the risk of common method bias arising from lack of concentration or focus on questions, lack of understanding or from answering questions in patterns, control questions were inserted into the survey of a form typically of form such as the example that follows:

Q15 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please choose “Agree” here. (Selection options for strongly disagree to strongly agree presented)

Where respondents answer such questions incorrectly, they may be a source of common method bias, either through poor motivation or poor understanding. For this reason, all respondents incorrectly answering these control questions will be excluded from the final pool of complete responses used in data analysis

4.5.6.2 Use of Post-hoc testing for Common Method Bias

Kock, N. and Lynn (2012) describe a test using a random dummy latent variable to identify risks of collinearity between latent variables in a structural equation model of the type envisaged in this research. Kock, N. (2015) illustrates how this test can be used to identify the risk of common method bias and clarifies that if VIF scores are less than 3.3 in the test, then this is evidence that common method bias is not present. This post hoc test will be performed during analysis.

4.6 Data Analysis Method

In this study, the multivariate analysis approach known as structural equation modelling (SEM) approach was selected. This involves identification of several conceptual variables and hypotheses about relationships between them, and the formulation of measurement variables to allow quantification of those conceptual (latent) variables with numbers (Hair et al., 2019a). In this respect, a structural model relates to the anticipated conceptual relationships between constructs from theory. This theory is then empirically measured by structural parameter estimates (Hair et al., 2019a). Moreover, there are two types of SEM techniques that can be applied.

The first method refers to a co-variance approach (CB-SEM), while the second option refers to a variance-based partial least square technique (PLS-SEM). A more holistic overview of the key difference is presented in the table below:

Table 4-16 Key differences between CB-SEM and PLS-SEM

| CB-SEM | PLS-SEM |
|---|--|
| Based on covariance | Based on variance |
| Strict rules and assumptions: Assumption of normal distribution. Non-recursive model. Minimum sample size. Reflective measures. Goodness-of-fit criterion. Accommodates metric data. Theoretical underpinnings of how constructs are related → confirming theory | A higher flexibility of rules and assumptions: No assumption about data distribution. Recursive model (endogenous variables in sequence). 'Smaller' sample size. Reflective and formative measures. No universal goodness-of-fit criterion. Possibility to have non-metric and single-item types of data. Successful in handling of more complex models → exploratory research approach |

Source: Hair et al. (2017)

One reason why PLS-SEM has achieved high popularity is due to its flexible requirements and its power to apply formative models when compared to CB-PLS (Hair et al., 2017). According to Hair et al. (2017), key factors for using PLS-SEM were the use of non-normal distributed data, small sample size and the application of a formative model. In this study in part the research is exploratory in nature and will involve formative measurement of latent variables as discussed below. For this reason, PLS-SEM will be adopted.

4.6.1 Justification of Formative Measurement Approach

Two higher order latent variables envisaged in the structural model are to be treated as formative in nature, following an application of the conceptual tests in (Jarvis et al., 2003) being Overall Impact of LuxLSC and Self-materialism, as shown in the conceptual model repeated below:

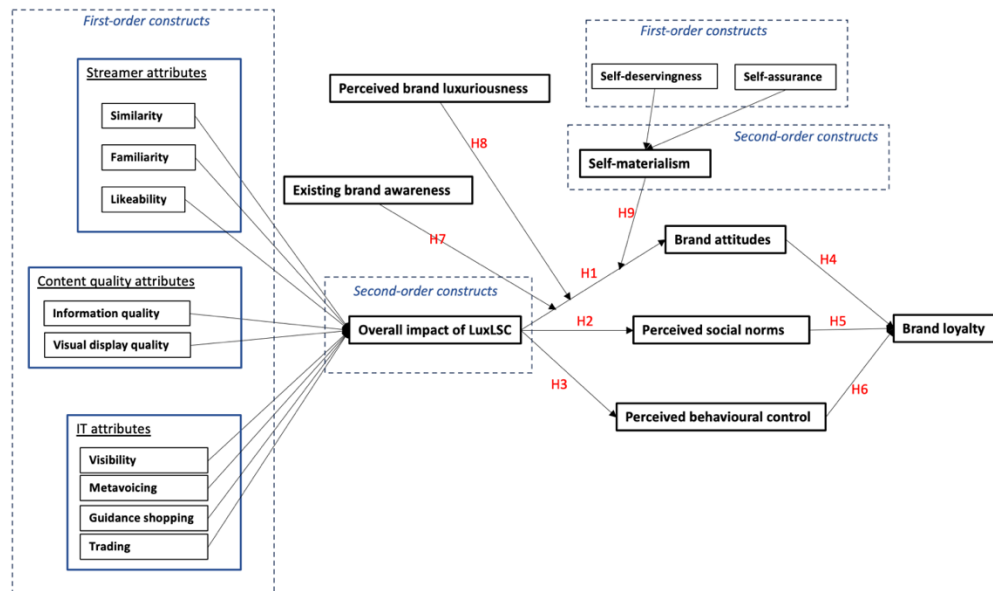


Figure 4-2 Conceptual model showing formative second order constructs

Source: The author

The tests in Jarvis et al. (2003) are outlined in the table below (bold responses are relevant for both second order variables), but in essence the researcher believes that the first order variables related to these second order variables represent conceptually distinct concepts, that are combined in the mind of respondents when evaluating the second order variable.

Table 4-17 Application of Decision Rule

| Application of Decision rule from Jarvis et al. (2003) |
|--|
| 1. Direction of causality: a. Are the indicators (1 st Order Dimensions) defining characteristics of the construct? (Yes - <i>Formative</i> , No – <i>Reflective</i>) b. Would changes in the construct cause changes in the indicators? (No - <i>Formative</i> , Yes – <i>Reflective</i>) c. Would changes in the indicators cause changes in the construct? (Yes - <i>Formative</i> , No – <i>Reflective</i>) |
| 2. Are the indicators interchangeable: a. Do the indicators have the same or similar content / share a common theme? (No - <i>Formative</i> , Yes – <i>Reflective</i>) b. Would dropping one of the indicators change the conceptual domain of the concept? (Yes - <i>Formative</i> , No – <i>Reflective</i>) |
| 3. Covariation (Correlation) between the indicators a. Should a change in one of the indicators be associated with a change in another of the indicators (Not necessarily - <i>Formative</i> , Yes – <i>Reflective</i>) |
| 4. Nomological net of the construct indicators a. Are the indicators expected to have the same antecedents and consequences? (Not necessarily - <i>Formative</i> , Yes – <i>Reflective</i>) |

Source: Jarvis et al. (2003)

4.6.2 Systematic tests to be used in PLS-SEM

Testing of measurement models and hypotheses in PLS-SEM falls into three categories, being tests for the reflective measurement model, tests for the formative measurement model and tests for the structural model (Hair et al., 2017). The methodology for each of the tests is set out below.

4.6.2.1 Reflective measurement model testing

The reflective measurement model is assessed in three steps in line with Hair et al.'s guidance (2019b), (1) assess internal consistency, (2) assess convergent validity, and (3) assess discriminant validity.

Internal consistency is based on the interrelationships between the indicator variables and assumes that similar indicators are highly correlated on the same construct (Hair et al., 2017). The internal consistency between the different measures of each reflectively measured latent variable is tested using composite reliability scores. This reliability metric accounts for the fact that each indicator variable (I) for a construct has a unique outer loading and is defined as follows:

Composite Reliability = $(\sum I_i)^2 / ((\sum I_i)^2 + \sum \text{var}(e_i))$, (where $\text{var}(e_i)$ is the variance of the measurement error defined as $1 - I_i^2$.)

Scores should exceed 0.6 for exploratory research, preferably 0.7 for established measurement scales per Hair et al. (2019b).

Convergent validity is the extent to which a measure correlates positively with other measures of the same latent construct and is measured by both indicator reliability and average variance extracted (Hair et al., 2017). According to Hair et al. (2019b), indicator reliability is first examined by looking at the outer loadings. As a minimum the outer loadings of all indicators should be statistically significant. In addition, the standardised outer loadings should be greater than 0.708.

Next convergent validity is confirmed by examining Average Variance Extracted (AVE). AVE values should be greater 0.5 according to Hair et al. (2019b). Average Variance Extracted can be calculated as follows:

$AVE = (\sum I_i^2 / M)$ where M = number of measures for the construct.

The AVE should have a value of 0.5 or more indicating that the latent variable construct explains more than half of the movement of values in the measures Hair et al. (2019b).

Discriminant Validity is the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs according to Hair et al. (2017). Discriminant Validity should be assessed using the HTMT criterion – HTMT values should all be below 0.9 (Hair et al., 2019b).

HTMT = mean of all heterotrait-heteromethod correlations / mean of all monotrait-heteromethod correlations (Henseler et al., 2015). See Figure 4-3 below for details.

| “Trait” | “Method” | ξ_1 | | | ξ_2 | | |
|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| | | x_1 | x_2 | x_3 | x_4 | x_5 | x_6 |
| ξ_1 | x_1 | 1 | | | | | |
| | x_2 | $r_{1,2}$ | 1 | | | | |
| | x_3 | $r_{1,3}$ | $r_{2,3}$ | 1 | | | |
| ξ_2 | x_4 | $r_{1,4}$ | $r_{2,4}$ | $r_{3,4}$ | 1 | | |
| | x_5 | $r_{1,5}$ | $r_{2,5}$ | $r_{3,5}$ | $r_{4,5}$ | 1 | |
| | x_6 | $r_{1,6}$ | $r_{2,6}$ | $r_{3,6}$ | $r_{4,6}$ | $r_{5,6}$ | 1 |

Figure 4-3 HTMT Calculation

Source: (Henseler et al., 2015)

4.6.2.2 Formative measurement model testing

The formative measurement model is assessed in three steps in line with Hair et al.’s guidance (Hair et al., 2019b): (1) assess convergent validity, (2) assess collinearity, and (3) assess significance of formative indicators.

Convergent validity is tested for formative measurement models by examining whether a formatively measured construct is highly correlated with a reflective measure of the same construct (Hair et al. 2017).

Collinearity is assessed using the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) scores for formative measurement items. High correlations (known as collinearity issues) are not expected between items in formative measurement models, and a VIF score of

less than 5 is required to demonstrate no multicollinearity issues exist - see Hair et al. (2019a).

$VIF = 1 / (1 - R_i^2)$ where R_i^2 is the R-Squared value from the regression of the i^{th} independent variable (formative measure) on all other independent variables (formative measures).

4.6.2.3 Structural Model (hypothesis) testing

Hair et al. (2022) outline five steps to assess the PLS-SEM model results and validate hypotheses: (1) perform a collinearity assessment, (2) look at the significance and relevance of structural model relationships, (3) assess the level of R^2 , (4) assess the level of f^2 effect size, and (5) assess CVPAT predictive relevance.

Collinearity assessment involves looking at each latent variable in the model that other latent variables predict, and examining that group of predictors, to ensure they are not too highly correlated with each other. This is achieved using a VIF test to ensure collinearity is not too high (Hair et al., 2022). To assess collinearity the VIF levels need to be below 5.00 (Hair et al., 2022).

Significance and relevance of structural model relationships involves examining path coefficients in the model. The PLS-SEM algorithm estimates the model relationships in the form of path coefficients that have standardised values falling between -1 and +1, with +1 representing a strong positive relationship and -1 representing a strong negative relationship between constructs (Hair et al., 2022).

The significance of path coefficients can be assessed through use of bootstrapping in PLS SEM, to generate t scores and p values for all path coefficients. In marketing, p values of less than 0.05 typically mean a statistically significant relationship exists between the variables concerned are the path coefficient is statistically significant (Hair et al., 2022).

Evaluating predictive power in the model (R^2) determines a measure of the predictive power of the model (Hair et al., 2022). As reliable goodness of fit indices are not available in PLS, R^2 is used instead to examine the explanatory power of the model (Hair et al., 2017). The R^2 score explains the variance of the endogenous

(predicted) variable explained by the exogenous (predictor) variables. R^2 values may vary depending on the research discipline, however in consumer behavioural studies values of 0.2 can be considered as high (Hair et al., 2017). However, when the purpose is to identify the success drivers of a phenomenon, much higher R^2 value is required. Generally, Hair et al (2011) suggest that in research focusing on marketing issues R^2 above 0.75 are substantial, 0.50 moderate and 0.25 weak. Since this study is not positioned to find the success factors but rather, to examine the possible relationships, it is suggested that R^2 values above 0.2 are acceptable.

The formula used to calculate R^2 is:
$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{SS_{residuals}}{SS_{total}}$$

Effect sizes assess the change in R^2 for an exogenous (dependent) variable that occurs when a predictor (endogenous) variable is dropped, hence it measures the importance of a predictor variable in the model (Hair et al., 2017). According to Cohen (1988), f^2 effect sizes of 0.02 are small, 0.15 are medium or 0.35 are large effects. However, research by Kenny (2016) suggests effect sizes of 0.005, 0.01 and 0.025 for small, medium and large effect sizes are more realistic.

The formula for f^2 is:
$$f^2 = \frac{R^2_{included} - R^2_{excluded}}{1 - R^2_{included}}$$

Cross Validated Predictive Ability test (CVPAT) allows for evaluation and testing of the predictive capabilities of the model (Hair et al., 2022). CVPAT, uses prediction error or average loss as its basis for analysis. For prediction-based model assessment, this average loss value is compared to the average loss value of a prediction using indicator averages (IA) as a simple benchmark and the average loss value of a linear model (LM) forecast as a more conservative benchmark.

The model's average loss should be lower than the average loss of the benchmarks which is expressed by a negative difference in the average loss values. This average loss difference should be significant at a p-value of 0.05 for the model to demonstrate predictive power (Hair et al., 2022). Using the CVPAT reduces the generalisability error of the model and is commended for marketing scholars to strengthen prediction orientated models (Sharma et al., 2022).

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are always a consideration during data collection. According to Bell et al. (2022), there are four main concerns in business research: harm to participants, informed consent, privacy and deception.

In terms of the potential harm that could happen to participants, since our data were collected via an online survey, there was no physical contact with participants, which removed risk of any physical harm. Psychological harm is theoretically possible while answering the questionnaire, however, regarding the research purpose of this study, all questions were answered with participants' consent, and no sensitive topics were involved.

Informed consent requires that participants must be informed as clearly as possible about the research so they can decide whether to be part of it with their own deliberations (Bell et al., 2022). In this study, an information sheet was embedded in the questionnaire and consent was requested from participants in the questionnaire before they continued and completed the survey.

Regarding privacy concerns, the personal information of research participants and their responses need to be protected and kept private during and after the research (Bell et al., 2022). The survey of this study was conducted through Qualtrics, where all data collected is anonymous. There was no direct contact between the author and participants.

Deception happens when researchers deliberately mislead their participants or conceal information from them about the research, such as the purpose of research (Bell et al., 2022). In terms of the research purpose of our study, an online survey was used for collecting data, which was open to the public and did not involve any complex procedures. Hence, it can be guaranteed that no deception occurred in this research.

Ethical approval for this study was granted on the university ethics system Ethos.

4.8 Research Methods Limitations

The methodological approach adopted in this study may have a few limitations. Using Burberry as the example for studying luxury brands' LSC might introduce bias and limit the population sample. Given the diverse nature of LuxLSC in terms of platforms, formats, and content, using a single brand as the focus may result in sampling bias and limit the generalisability of the findings. The sample collected through the purposive sampling method is not reflective of all consumers in the LuxLSC context. Also, as there have been no prior empirical studies specifically addressing LuxLSC or the corresponding measures, the measurement scales used to assess the influencing factors of LuxLSC were developed based on existing literature on LSC and luxury marketing. This could be seen as a limitation; however, it can also be viewed as a potential contribution to the emerging field of LSC research.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides an in-depth overview of the research methodology employed in this study, offering a justification of the chosen research philosophy, approach, and method. This research is grounded in the philosophy of positivism, which aligns with the researcher's beliefs and is well-suited for analysing the relationships proposed in the present study's conceptual model. A quantitative statistical approach, based on a deductive method of theory and hypothesis testing, was adopted to address the key research questions. The survey method was selected as the primary data collection tool, with Burberry, a prominent luxury brand, used as the contextual focus for luxury brands' LSC activities in China. Burberry's digital innovations and active participation in the LSC practices make it an appropriate example for examining the impact of LSC on brand loyalty and brand attitude. Moreover, the chapter also introduced PLS-SEM as the chosen analytical technique for testing all hypotheses, which was justified as the most appropriate method for this study due to its suitability for analysing complex model and handling

exploratory studies, compared with CB-SEM. All necessary procedures for model assessment were detailed in this chapter.

Also, the adoption of a higher-order construct model was justified based on the guidance of Jarvis et al. (2003). Finally, a discussion of the limitations of the method, along with ethical considerations, was provided to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research framework and its constraints.

5 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Following the methodology chapter which highlighted the methodological approach to be undertaken to examine research hypotheses and answer research questions, this chapter examines the data collected from the survey utilising SPSS statistical software (SPSS 15) and PLS-structural equation software (SMARTPLS 4). The model derived from the literature and conceptual framework, and its related hypotheses, established from the literature, are empirically tested.

Firstly, the data is summarised and screened using SPSS software, to understand demographic aspects of the data, and screened for missing values and outliers. Secondly, both the reflective and formative measurement models are examined in line with the approach and tests set out in the methodology chapter. Next, the structural model and hypotheses are examined, again in accordance with the approach and tests set out in the methodology chapter. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary of the key findings from data analysis.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

In this section data screening for incomplete or unreliable respondents, missing values, outliers are discussed. Next the data is examined for normality. Finally, the demographic characteristics of the retained sample are described.

5.2.1 Data Screening

From a total of 220 participants, the data were cleaned and resulted in 168 error-free responses to use in this study. As outlined earlier, the data must be checked and cleaned for missing data, errors, outliers and suspicious patterns in the data in multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2019a). Any respondents with missing data (apart from optional demographic data) were excluded from the final sample. A review of the data identified 8 responses that were invalid due to missing data.

According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), the design of the procedures and statistical controls can reduce common methods bias, however it is difficult to fully eliminate. Suspicious response patterns were controlled for using common method

bias questions as described in the methodology chapter. Where respondents answered the common method bias control questions incorrectly, those respondents were excluded from the final sample. A review of the data identified 44 responses that were invalid due to incorrect common method bias questions.

In relation to outliers, due to the use of Likert-scale questions, no outliers outside the fixed Likert-scale range of 1 to 7 were identified, and no deletions of outliers were required.

5.2.2 Normality

PLS-SEM analysis does not require normality assumptions to be met. However, all non-demographic variables were reported as normally distributed.

5.2.3 Demographic Analysis

The total number of respondents retained after the above steps was 168, who had experience in engaging in Burberry's LSC. All respondents completed the demographic questions. The age, gender, location, education, LSC usage experience and LSC usage frequency of respondents are shown in Table 5-1 below.

The total amount of respondents willing to share their gender were 167. 154 of them were female, while 13 were male.

The respondents in the age category of 18-35 were predominate in this sample with 168. Over 35's reported with only 2 responses. This distribution of age may result in age-bias when interpreting the results as part of testing for hidden heterogeneity.

Regarding location, nearly 45% of respondents (75 individuals) were based in Tier-2 cities, with 32% from Tier-1 cities (i.e., Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou), and 23% from smaller cities.

In terms of educational level, most respondents held a postgraduate degree, with 118 out of 168 participants falling into this category. A total of 44 individuals possessed an undergraduate degree, 4 had qualifications below this level, and 2 held doctoral degrees. This demonstrates that most respondents are university educated. A plausible reason for this could be that higher levels of education are often associated with higher income, which in turn may lead to greater attention and

interest in luxury goods. Individuals with advanced educational qualifications are likely to have more disposable income and a heightened awareness of luxury goods, making them more inclined to engage with luxury brands' events.

In terms of how long respondents have used LSC, the largest proportion (35.71%, 60 individuals) has been engaged for over two years, while 23.21% (39 individuals) have been using it for 6 months to 1 year. A smaller portion (15.48%, 26 individuals) has between 1.5 to 2 years of experience, followed by 13.69% of respondents (23 individuals) who have been using it for less than 6 months, and the smallest group (11.90%) has been using it for 1 to 1.5 years.

Regarding how often respondents use LSC, the majority (42.26%, 71 individuals) reported using it less frequently, with 33.33% (56 individuals) engaging on a monthly basis, 22.62% (38 individuals) on a weekly basis, and only 1.79% (3 individuals) were reported to use it daily.

Table 5-1 Demographic Response Data

| Demographics | Categories | Number of respondents | Total |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Gender | Male | 13 | 167 |
| | Female | 154 | |
| Age | 18-35 | 166 | 168 |
| | 35+ | 2 | |
| Location | Tier-1 cities | 54 | 168 |
| | Tier-2 cities | 75 | |
| | Below Tier-2 cities | 39 | |
| Education Level | Below undergraduate | 4 | 168 |
| | Undergraduate | 44 | |
| | Postgraduate | 118 | |
| | Doctorate | 2 | |
| LSC usage experience | Less than 6 months | 23 | 168 |
| | 6 months - 1 year | 39 | |
| | 1 - 1.5 years | 20 | |
| | 1.5 - 2 years | 26 | |
| | Over 2 years | 60 | |
| LSC usage frequency | Daily | 3 | 168 |
| | Weekly | 38 | |
| | Monthly | 56 | |
| | Less frequently | 71 | |

Source: The author

5.3 Structural Equation Modelling

This section examines the reflective and formative measurement models, the structural model and performs tests to rule out common method bias, as described in the methodology chapter.

5.3.1 Reflective measurement model examination

The reflective measurement model is assessed in three steps in line with Hair et al.'s guidance (2019b), and as described in the methodology chapter: to assess internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

5.3.1.1 Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity

As discussed in the methodology chapter, assessing a reflective measurement model involves evaluating internal consistency using loadings and composite reliability scores, then assessing convergent validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores and indicator reliability. As mentioned in Section 4.5.1, based on a review of the existing literature, a total of 18 scale items were developed to reflect the unique attributes of LuxLSC, 7 items were used to measure brand attitudes, 3 items for perceived social norms, 3 items for perceived behavioural control, and 4 scale items to represent brand loyalty; 14 items were generated to measure three moderators: 3 items for brand awareness, 3 items for perceived brand luxuriousness, and 8 items for self-materialism.

After an initial measurement model assessment, four items, including BA5, BA7, PBC1, and PBL3, were found to have outer loadings below the acceptable threshold, which were removed to improve the reliability and validity of the constructs. The measurement model was subsequently re-estimated using the remaining items with the same dataset ($n = 168$). As presented in Table 5-2 below, composite reliability scores all exceed 0.7, so internal consistency is achieved. All loadings exceed 0.7 with two acceptable exception of 0.67 (ITI8) and 0.60 (SM8), showing indicator reliability, and all AVE scores exceed the minimum value of 0.5, so convergent validity is achieved.

Table 5-2 Reflective Measurement Model – Consistency and Validity

| Construct Items | Loading | t Values | p Values | Composite Reliability (Rho C) | AVE |
|-------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|-------------------------------|------|
| Brand Attitudes | | | | 0.90 | 0.65 |
| BA1 | 0.82 | 24.16 | 0.00 | | |
| BA2 | 0.81 | 22.24 | 0.00 | | |
| BA3 | 0.82 | 27.20 | 0.00 | | |
| BA4 | 0.80 | 17.32 | 0.00 | | |
| BA6 | 0.79 | 22.60 | 0.00 | | |
| Brand Loyalty | | | | 0.90 | 0.70 |
| BL1 | 0.84 | 29.85 | 0.00 | | |
| BL2 | 0.87 | 44.00 | 0.00 | | |
| BL3 | 0.87 | 37.64 | 0.00 | | |
| BL4 | 0.75 | 16.22 | 0.00 | | |
| Existing Brand Awareness | | | | 0.93 | 0.82 |
| BAW1 | 0.88 | 22.22 | 0.00 | | |
| BAW2 | 0.89 | 14.68 | 0.00 | | |
| BAW3 | 0.95 | 52.45 | 0.00 | | |
| Similarity | | | | 0.85 | 0.73 |
| SI1 | 0.84 | 22.80 | 0.00 | | |
| SI2 | 0.87 | 39.96 | 0.00 | | |
| Familiarity | | | | 0.92 | 0.85 |
| SI3 | 0.92 | 52.83 | 0.00 | | |
| SI4 | 0.93 | 70.46 | 0.00 | | |
| Likeability | | | | 0.89 | 0.80 |
| SI5 | 0.89 | 33.76 | 0.00 | | |
| SI6 | 0.90 | 49.01 | 0.00 | | |
| Information Quality | | | | 0.89 | 0.80 |
| CQI1 | 0.89 | 43.79 | 0.00 | | |
| CQI2 | 0.89 | 42.88 | 0.00 | | |
| Visual Display Quality | | | | 0.93 | 0.88 |
| CQI3 | 0.94 | 77.13 | 0.00 | | |
| CQI4 | 0.94 | 79.65 | 0.00 | | |
| Visibility | | | | 0.85 | 0.75 |
| ITI1 | 0.86 | 30.22 | 0.00 | | |
| ITI2 | 0.87 | 23.85 | 0.00 | | |
| Guidance Shopping | | | | 0.82 | 0.69 |
| ITI3 | 0.85 | 25.76 | 0.00 | | |
| ITI4 | 0.81 | 18.02 | 0.00 | | |
| Metavoicing | | | | 0.87 | 0.77 |
| ITI5 | 0.84 | 21.32 | 0.00 | | |
| ITI6 | 0.91 | 52.36 | 0.00 | | |
| Trading | | | | 0.78 | 0.65 |
| ITI7 | 0.92 | 29.52 | 0.00 | | |
| ITI8 | 0.67 | 5.54 | 0.00 | | |
| Perceived Behavioural Control | | | | 0.81 | 0.68 |
| PBC2 | 0.70 | 8.54 | 0.00 | | |
| PBC3 | 0.93 | 40.91 | 0.00 | | |
| Perceived Brand Luxuriousness | | | | 0.94 | 0.88 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| PBL1 | 0.96 | 5.76 | 0.00 | | |
| PBL2 | 0.92 | 5.87 | 0.00 | | |
| Perceived Social Norms | | | | 0.88 | 0.70 |
| PSN1 | 0.82 | 24.31 | 0.00 | | |
| PSN2 | 0.88 | 50.50 | 0.00 | | |
| PSN3 | 0.81 | 18.06 | 0.00 | | |
| Self-assurance | | | | 0.87 | 0.63 |
| SM1 | 0.71 | 10.69 | 0.00 | | |
| SM2 | 0.84 | 27.74 | 0.00 | | |
| SM3 | 0.85 | 35.01 | 0.00 | | |
| SM4 | 0.75 | 15.54 | 0.00 | | |
| Self-deservingness | | | | 0.86 | 0.61 |
| SM5 | 0.83 | 33.95 | 0.00 | | |
| SM6 | 0.82 | 17.43 | 0.00 | | |
| SM7 | 0.84 | 21.00 | 0.00 | | |
| SM8 | 0.60 | 8.216 | 0.00 | | |

Source: The author

All measurement loadings exceed 0.7, with the exception of two items in bold that exceed 0.6. The removal of them is not necessary to improve internal consistency or AVE scores above the required threshold, so they are retained (Hair et al., 2019a).

Table 5-3 Measurement Model Indicator Loadings

| Measurements | Outer loadings |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| BA1 <- Brand attitudes | 0.817 |
| BA2 <- Brand attitudes | 0.812 |
| BA3 <- Brand attitudes | 0.818 |
| BA4 <- Brand attitudes | 0.803 |
| BA6 <- Brand attitudes | 0.788 |
| BAW1 <- Existing brand awareness | 0.876 |
| BAW2 <- Existing brand awareness | 0.889 |
| BAW3 <- Existing brand awareness | 0.949 |
| BL1 <- Brand loyalty | 0.839 |
| BL2 <- Brand loyalty | 0.869 |
| BL3 <- Brand loyalty | 0.874 |
| BL4 <- Brand loyalty | 0.753 |
| CQI1 <- Information quality | 0.891 |
| CQI2 <- Information quality | 0.893 |
| CQI3 <- Visual display quality | 0.935 |
| CQI4 <- Visual display quality | 0.936 |
| ITI1 <- visibility | 0.855 |
| ITI2 <- visibility | 0.872 |
| ITI3 <- Guidance shopping | 0.85 |

| | |
|--|-------|
| ITI4 <- Guidance shopping | 0.808 |
| ITI5 <- metavoicing | 0.841 |
| ITI6 <- metavoicing | 0.911 |
| ITI7 <- Trading | 0.924 |
| ITI8 <- Trading | 0.669 |
| PBC2 <- Perceived behaviour control | 0.704 |
| PBC3 <- Perceived behaviour control | 0.931 |
| PBL1 <- Perceived brand luxuriousness | 0.955 |
| PBL2 <- Perceived brand luxuriousness | 0.925 |
| PSN1 <- Perceived social norms | 0.821 |
| PSN2 <- Perceived social norms | 0.885 |
| PSN3 <- Perceived social norms | 0.809 |
| SI1 <- Similarity | 0.842 |
| SI2 <- Similarity | 0.869 |
| SI3 <- Familiarity | 0.919 |
| SI4 <- Familiarity | 0.928 |
| SI5 <- Likeability | 0.89 |
| SI6 <- Likeability | 0.901 |
| SM1 <- Self-assurance | 0.708 |
| SM2 <- Self-assurance | 0.844 |
| SM3 <- Self-assurance | 0.854 |
| SM4 <- Self-assurance | 0.749 |
| SM5 <- self-deservingness | 0.831 |
| SM6 <- self-deservingness | 0.822 |
| SM7 <- self-deservingness | 0.835 |
| SM8 <- self-deservingness | 0.601 |

Source: The author

5.3.1.2 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is assessed using HTMT. It is achieved for all but one pair of reflectively measured variables as all HTMT scores are less than 0.9 as can be seen in Table 5-4 below. The score of 0.9 is slightly exceeded for the Similarity and Likeability pair of variables, however discriminant validity is achieved for this pair of variables using the Fornell-Larcker criteria, and these variables act only as first order variables for formative measurement of LSC Impact as a second order variable, so discriminant validity is satisfied in accordance with guidance of Hair et al. (2022).

Table 5-4 HTMT scores for Reflective Model

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Brand attitudes (1) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Brand loyalty (2) | 0.52 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Existing brand awareness (3) | 0.30 | 0.40 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Familiarity (4) | 0.31 | 0.65 | 0.21 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Guidance shopping (5) | 0.37 | 0.22 | 0.43 | 0.22 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Information quality (6) | 0.58 | 0.66 | 0.37 | 0.51 | 0.55 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Likeability (7) | 0.61 | 0.66 | 0.32 | 0.69 | 0.25 | 0.73 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Perceived behaviour control (8) | 0.55 | 0.63 | 0.42 | 0.36 | 0.46 | 0.63 | 0.37 | | | | | | | | | |
| Perceived brand luxuriousness (9) | 0.12 | 0.27 | 0.11 | 0.17 | 0.07 | 0.13 | 0.09 | 0.25 | | | | | | | | |
| Perceived social norms (10) | 0.38 | 0.77 | 0.27 | 0.54 | 0.22 | 0.48 | 0.46 | 0.66 | 0.19 | | | | | | | |
| Self-deservingness (11) | 0.33 | 0.18 | 0.37 | 0.13 | 0.36 | 0.45 | 0.21 | 0.31 | 0.18 | 0.13 | | | | | | |
| Self-assurance (12) | 0.37 | 0.40 | 0.36 | 0.17 | 0.48 | 0.65 | 0.32 | 0.53 | 0.07 | 0.32 | 0.62 | | | | | |
| Similarity (13) | 0.61 | 0.70 | 0.43 | 0.58 | 0.50 | 0.72 | 0.92 | 0.71 | 0.12 | 0.51 | 0.29 | 0.38 | | | | |
| Trading (14) | 0.48 | 0.49 | 0.46 | 0.23 | 0.76 | 0.58 | 0.38 | 0.73 | 0.07 | 0.38 | 0.34 | 0.61 | 0.61 | | | |
| Visual display quality (15) | 0.46 | 0.45 | 0.13 | 0.22 | 0.41 | 0.65 | 0.54 | 0.29 | 0.02 | 0.21 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.56 | 0.64 | | |
| Metavoicing (16) | 0.32 | 0.48 | 0.13 | 0.40 | 0.81 | 0.60 | 0.37 | 0.37 | 0.21 | 0.36 | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.40 | 0.53 | 0.50 | |
| Visibility (17) | 0.49 | 0.43 | 0.31 | 0.19 | 0.77 | 0.78 | 0.40 | 0.51 | 0.04 | 0.27 | 0.46 | 0.46 | 0.50 | 0.58 | 0.58 | 0.76 |

Source: The author

5.3.2 Formative measurement model examination

The formative measurement model is assessed in three steps in line with Hair et al.'s guidance (Hair et al., 2019b) and as described in the methodology chapter: to assess convergent validity, collinearity, and significance of formative indicators.

5.3.2.1 Convergent validity

For formative measurement models convergent validity is tested by identifying whether a formatively measured construct is highly correlated with a reflective measure of the same construct (Hair et al. 2017). As can be seen from Figures 5-1 and 5-2 below, the minimum loading of 0.7 between the formative and reflective latent variables for LSC Impact and Self-Materialism is achieved, and convergent validity therefore supported.

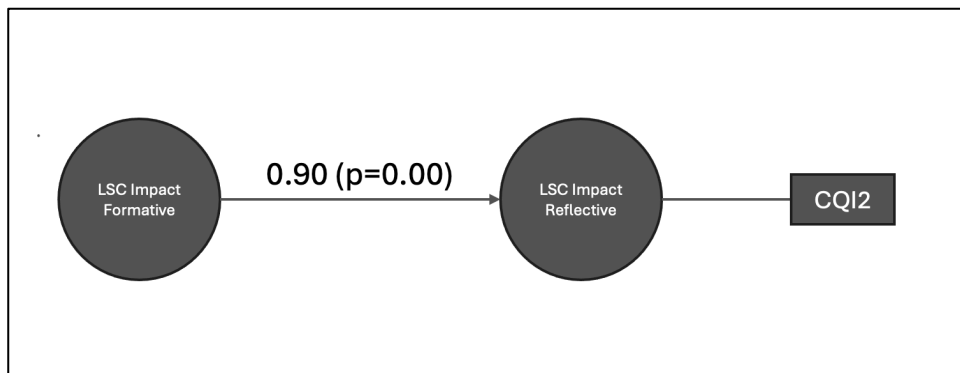


Figure 5-1 Convergent validity for LSC Impact

Source: The author

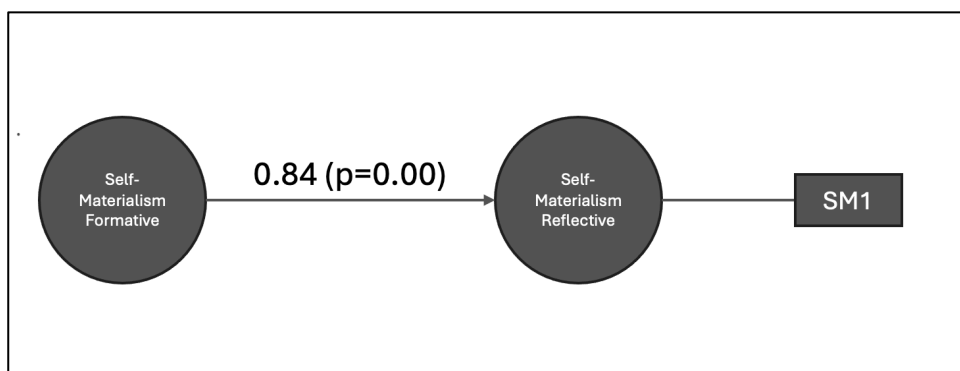


Figure 5-2 Convergent Validity for Self-Materialism

Source: The author

5.3.2.2 Collinearity

High correlations (known as collinearity issues) are not expected between items in formative measurement models, and a VIF score of less than 5 is required to demonstrate no multicollinearity issues exist - see Hair et al. (2019a). From Table 5-5 below it is clear all VIF scores are below 5.

Table 5-5 Formative measures VIF scores

| Formative Measure | VIF |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Familiarity | 1.60 |
| Guidance shopping | 1.54 |
| Information quality | 2.12 |
| Likeability | 2.30 |
| Self-deservingness | 1.33 |
| Self-assurance | 1.33 |
| Similarity | 1.97 |
| Trading | 1.46 |
| Visual display quality | 1.68 |
| Metavoicing | 1.73 |
| Visibility | 1.84 |

Source: The author

5.3.2.3 Formative indicator significance

The formative latent variables must have statistically significant outer loadings. This can be seen from running the Bootstrapping algorithm and ensuring all loadings are statistically significant - see Hair et al. (Hair et al., 2019b). The 5000 resample bootstrap technique was used in this study. As can be seen in Table 5-6 below, all loadings are significant (p value <0.001 level). This demonstrates that relative contribution of the formative constructs to the creation of a higher-order reflective formative construct. Item loadings for first-order constructs are reported in **Appendix IV** and **V**.

Table 5-6 Formative Latent Variable path coefficients

| Path | Path coefficient (β) | T statistics | P values |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Familiarity -> LuxLSC impact | 0.16 | 7.66 | 0.00 |
| Guidance shopping -> LuxLSC impact | 0.11 | 3.49 | 0.00 |
| Information quality -> LuxLSC impact | 0.21 | 13.01 | 0.00 |
| Likeability -> LuxLSC impact | 0.19 | 9.51 | 0.00 |
| Similarity -> LuxLSC impact | 0.19 | 9.21 | 0.00 |
| Trading -> LuxLSC impact | 0.13 | 8.98 | 0.00 |
| Visual display quality -> LuxLSC impact | 0.18 | 10.50 | 0.00 |
| Metavoicing -> LuxLSC impact | 0.15 | 8.61 | 0.00 |
| Visibility -> LuxLSC impact | 0.15 | 7.82 | 0.00 |
| Self-deservingness -> Self-materialism | 0.56 | 16.17 | 0.00 |
| Self-assurance -> Self-materialism | 0.60 | 13.07 | 0.00 |

Source: The author

5.3.3 Structural measurement model examination

Hair et al. (2017) outline five steps to assess the PLS-SEM model results and validate hypotheses: (1) perform a collinearity assessment, (2) look at the significance and relevance of structural model relationships, (3) assess the level of R^2 , (4) assess the level of f^2 effect size, and (5) assess CVPAT predictive relevance. Each of these are discussed below.

5.3.3.1 Collinearity assessment

An inner model (structural model) VIF score of less than 5 is required to demonstrate no multicollinearity issues exist- see Hair et al. (2019a). See Table 5-7 below – all relevant VIF scores for the Inner Model are less than 5, so this test is met.

Table 5-7 Inner Model Collinearity VIF Scores

| Path | VIF |
|--|------------|
| Brand attitudes -> Brand loyalty | 1.25 |
| Existing brand awareness -> Brand attitudes | 1.64 |
| LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 1.43 |
| LuxLSC impact -> Perceived behaviour control | 1.00 |
| LuxLSC impact -> Perceived social norms | 1.00 |
| Perceived behaviour control -> Brand loyalty | 1.41 |
| Perceived brand luxuriousness -> Brand attitudes | 1.06 |
| Perceived social norms -> Brand loyalty | 1.28 |
| Self-materialism -> Brand attitudes | 1.68 |
| Self-materialism x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 1.92 |
| Existing brand awareness x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 2.01 |
| Perceived brand luxuriousness x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 1.12 |

Source: The author

5.3.3.2 Structural model path coefficient significance

Assessing the significance of structural model path coefficients was achieved using Bootstrapping set with 5000 random subsamples. Statistics for the structural model path coefficients are outlined in Table 5-8 below. Statistically significant p values at a 0.05 level are highlighted in bold. All relationships between main variables are significant, and the hypotheses are supported. However, surprisingly, as can be seen all paths relating to moderation are not statistically significant, meaning hypotheses relating to moderation effect are unsupported.

Table 5-8 Structural Model Path Coefficients

| Path | Path Coefficient (β) | T statistic | P values |
|--|------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Brand attitudes -> Brand loyalty | 0.24 | 3.54 | 0.00 |
| Existing brand awareness -> Brand attitudes | 0.11 | 1.16 | 0.24 |
| LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 0.47 | 5.88 | 0.00 |
| LuxLSC impact -> Perceived behaviour control | 0.49 | 7.91 | 0.00 |
| LuxLSC impact -> Perceived social norms | 0.44 | 6.69 | 0.00 |
| Perceived behaviour control -> Brand loyalty | 0.17 | 2.40 | 0.02 |
| Perceived brand luxuriousness -> Brand attitudes | 0.07 | 0.95 | 0.34 |
| Perceived social norms -> Brand loyalty | 0.49 | 8.34 | 0.00 |
| Self-materialism -> Brand attitudes | 0.04 | 0.49 | 0.63 |
| Self-materialism x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | -0.08 | 1.12 | 0.26 |
| Existing brand awareness x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 0.05 | 0.54 | 0.59 |
| Perceived brand luxuriousness x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | -0.03 | 0.38 | 0.70 |

Source: The author

5.3.3.3 Level of R²

According to Hair et al. (2019a), the R² value is a measure of the model's predictive power in relation to dependent (endogenous) variables (latent variables that are predicted by other latent variables). R² values are shown in Table 5-9 below. As noted in the methodology chapter, in consumer behavioural studies values of 0.2 can be considered as high (Hair et al., 2017). For this reason, it can be suggested that all of the above are significant scores, with the lowest score of Perceived Social Norms being close to 0.2 at 0.195. Accordingly, Perceived Social Norms has relatively weak predictive power.

Table 5-9 R² Values for Endogenous Variables

| Dependent Variable | R-square | R-square adjusted |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Brand attitudes | 0.35 | 0.32 |
| Brand loyalty | 0.50 | 0.49 |
| Perceived behaviour control | 0.25 | 0.24 |
| Perceived social norms | 0.20 | 0.19 |

Source: The author

5.3.3.4 F² Effect Size

Effect sizes measure whether a particular latent variable which is exogenous (independent) has a substantial impact on the R² values of the model. Effect sizes are shown in Table 5-10 below. According to Cohen (1988), the f² effect size is 0.02 small, 0.15 medium or 0.35 large. When the effect size is smaller than 0.02, it is considered as insignificant. As was the case for path significance, all paths relating to moderation have very weak f² scores, meaning they have minimal or no contribution to R² scores for the dependent variables. Meaningful f² scores are achieved for all other independent variables, all exceeding 0.02.

Table 5-10 f² Effect sizes

| Path | f-square |
|--|-----------------|
| Brand attitudes -> Brand loyalty | 0.09 |
| Existing brand awareness -> Brand attitudes | 0.01 |
| LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 0.24 |
| LuxLSC impact -> Perceived behaviour control | 0.32 |
| LuxLSC impact -> Perceived social norms | 0.24 |
| Perceived behaviour control -> Brand loyalty | 0.04 |
| Perceived brand luxuriousness -> Brand attitudes | 0.01 |
| Perceived social norms -> Brand loyalty | 0.37 |
| Self-materialism -> Brand attitudes | 0.00 |
| Self-materialism x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 0.01 |
| Existing brand awareness x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 0.00 |
| Perceived brand luxuriousness x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 0.00 |

Source: The author

5.3.3.5 CVPAT predictive relevance

CVPAT tests predictive power of the model as described in the methodology chapter. The model's average loss should be lower than the average loss of the benchmarks which is expressed by a negative difference in the average loss values. This average loss difference should be significant at a p-value of 0.05 for the model to demonstrate predictive power (Hair et al., 2022). The CVPAT test results are

shown in Table 5-11 below – and as can be seen the model has significant predictive power as all average loss differences are significant.

Table 5-11 CVPAT Test Results

| Dependent Variable | Average loss difference | t value | p value |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Brand attitudes | -0.17 | 2.45 | 0.02 |
| Brand loyalty | -0.54 | 5.78 | 0.00 |
| LuxLSC impact | -0.52 | 7.71 | 0.00 |
| Perceived behaviour control | -0.32 | 2.27 | 0.02 |
| Perceived social norms | -0.30 | 2.69 | 0.01 |
| Self-materialism | -0.50 | 6.22 | 0.00 |
| Overall | -0.45 | 7.46 | 0.00 |

Source: The author

5.3.3.6 Common method bias testing

In line with the approach described in the methodology chapter, the test of Kock, N. and Lynn (2012) was conducted using a random number variable and all first order measured variables. The resultant VIF scores are summarised in Table 5-12 and 5-13 below. All values fall below 3.3, however the one value higher than this at 3.46 is only one of three indicators for brand awareness and relates to a moderator. Furthermore, Kock, N. (2015) states ‘the VIF threshold used in common method bias tests should arguably be somewhat higher than 3.3 when factor-based PLS-SEM algorithms are used’ (p.8) and so no common method bias is assumed.

Table 5-12 Common Method Bias Test – Outer Model

| Measure | VIF |
|---------|------|
| BA1 | 1.99 |
| BA2 | 1.99 |
| BA3 | 2.00 |
| BA4 | 1.89 |
| BA6 | 1.74 |
| BAW1 | 2.34 |
| BAW2 | 2.69 |
| BAW3 | 3.45 |
| BL1 | 2.08 |
| BL2 | 2.29 |
| BL3 | 2.34 |
| BL4 | 1.69 |
| CQI1 | 1.54 |
| CQI2 | 1.54 |
| CQI3 | 2.29 |
| CQI4 | 2.29 |
| ITI1 | 1.32 |
| ITI2 | 1.32 |
| ITI3 | 1.17 |
| ITI4 | 1.17 |
| ITI5 | 1.42 |
| ITI6 | 1.42 |
| ITI7 | 1.12 |
| ITI8 | 1.12 |
| PBC2 | 1.19 |
| PBC3 | 1.19 |
| PBL1 | 2.46 |
| PBL2 | 2.46 |
| PSN1 | 1.63 |
| PSN2 | 1.92 |
| PSN3 | 1.58 |
| RAND1 | 1.00 |
| SI1 | 1.27 |
| SI2 | 1.27 |
| SI3 | 1.99 |
| SI4 | 1.99 |
| SI5 | 1.57 |
| SI6 | 1.57 |
| SM1 | 1.49 |
| SM2 | 2.17 |
| SM3 | 2.36 |
| SM4 | 1.67 |
| SM5 | 1.69 |
| SM6 | 2.03 |
| SM7 | 2.02 |
| SM8 | 1.23 |

Source: The author

Table 5-13 Common Method Bias Test – Inner Model

| Path | VIF |
|---|------------|
| Brand attitudes -> Random | 1.51 |
| Brand loyalty -> Random | 1.79 |
| Existing brand awareness -> Random | 1.44 |
| Familiarity -> Random | 1.83 |
| Guidance shopping -> Random | 1.73 |
| Information quality -> Random | 1.93 |
| Likeability -> Random | 2.26 |
| Perceived behaviour control -> Random | 1.28 |
| Perceived brand luxuriousness -> Random | 1.15 |
| Perceived social norms -> Random | 1.52 |
| Self-deservingness -> Random | 1.24 |
| Self-assurance -> Random | 1.07 |
| Similarity -> Random | 1.70 |
| Trading -> Random | 1.51 |
| Visual display quality -> Random | 1.82 |
| Metavoicing -> Random | 1.85 |
| Visibility -> Random | 1.74 |

Source: The author

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the quantitative results of the data collected from the survey, following the methodological approach outlined in the previous chapter. Using SPSS statistical software (SPSS 15) and PLS-SEM software (SMARTPLS 4), the conceptual model developed from the literature and its associated hypotheses were empirically tested. The chapter begins by summarising and screening the data using SPSS, focusing on understanding the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Subsequently, both the reflective and formative measurement models are evaluated. The adoption of the higher-order construct model was also justified. This assessment examines the validity and reliability of the constructs measured,

providing a foundation for the following tests of relationships. Then, to explore the relationships between LuxLSC and brand loyalty, as well as the moderating effects, the structural model is assessed, involving the assessment of collinearity of the mode, the measurement of effect sizes, path coefficients and overall predictive relevance. Overall, the results show that all proposed hypotheses were supported with exceptions for the moderations. In next chapter, the findings will be discussed in further detail.

6 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises the outcomes of the data analysis to address the research questions and provides a comprehensive discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature. It begins by presenting the results of the hypotheses testing, followed by an interpretation of the overall impact of LuxLSC as a higher-order construct. A detailed discussion of the key findings is then provided, systematically structured according to the research hypotheses. This includes an exploration of direct relationships among all variables as well as the moderating effects tested in the study. Each hypothesis is critically examined to determine whether it is supported or rejected based on the empirical data. This discussion not only contextualises the findings within existing literature but also explores the implications for the luxury brand management, consumer behaviour, and digital marketing strategies. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter.

6.2 Overall Findings

The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of LSC on Chinese consumers' brand loyalty in the luxury brands context. To achieve the research aim, the following two research questions were formulated and examined.

RQ1: Does live streaming commerce positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers?

RQ2: Does existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers?

Overall, this study empirically confirmed the positive impact of LSC on brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control in the luxury context. However, no moderating effect was found according to the test results. The summary of the result for each relationship is presented in below Table 6-1.

Table 6-1 Hypotheses testing results

| Research hypotheses | p value | Results |
|---|---------|-------------|
| <i>RQ1: Does live streaming commerce positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers?</i> | | |
| H1: The overall impact of LuxLSC positively affects brand attitudes. | 0.00 | Supported |
| H2: The overall impact of LuxLSC positively affects perceived social norms. | 0.00 | Supported |
| H3: The overall impact of LuxLSC positively affects perceived behavioural control. | 0.00 | Supported |
| H4: Brand attitudes positively affect brand loyalty. | 0.00 | Supported |
| H5: Perceived social norms positively affect brand loyalty. | 0.00 | Supported |
| H6: Perceived behavioural control positively affects brand loyalty. | 0.02 | Supported |
| <i>RQ2: Does existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers?</i> | | |
| H7: Existing brand awareness moderates the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes. | 0.59 | Unsupported |
| H8: Perceived brand luxuriousness moderates the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes. | 0.70 | Unsupported |
| H9: Self-materialism moderates the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes. | 0.26 | Unsupported |

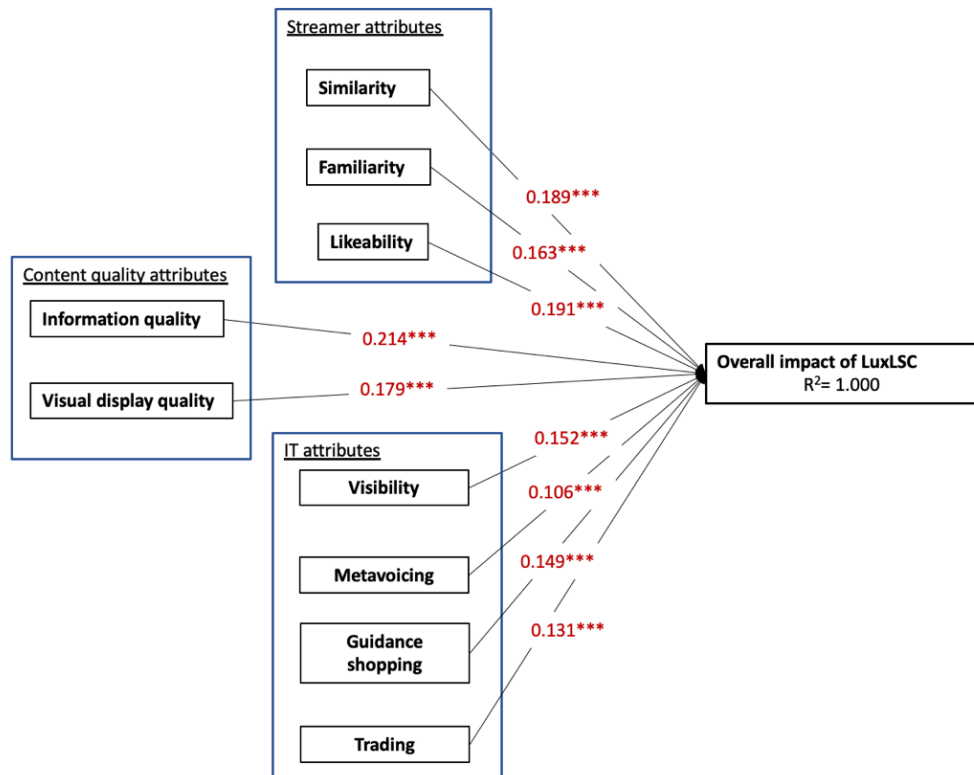
Source: The author

6.3 The Formation of Overall Impact of LuxLSC

First of all, to gain a broader understanding of LSC impact and reduce the complexity of the research model, this study conceptualised the overall LSC impact as a high-order construct that integrates streamer-related, content related and platform related factors. This decision is theoretically and empirically justified. Theoretically, previous studies have examined the impact of LSC as a multi-dimensional construct (Gao, X. et al., 2021; Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021; Lee, D. and

Wan, 2023; Li, Y. et al., 2021; Zhang, M. et al., 2022). For instance, Lee, C.-H. and Chen (2021) identified dimensions such as streamer factors (i.e., attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise), product factors (i.e., price and usefulness), and platform factor (i.e., purchase convenience). Additionally, research has recognised the interactive nature of LSC dimensions, where each factor of LSC interacts with each other, collectively shaping a complex impact on consumer behaviour. For example, IT affordances of LSC have been found to enhance consumer perceptions of streamers (Zhang, M. et al., 2022), while streamer attributes can affect live content quality (Ma, Y., 2021a). Furthermore, the interactivity of LSC facilitated together by streamer, content and IT features significantly enhances consumer purchase intention (Wu, D. et al., 2023). This complexity suggests that LSC impact cannot be adequately captured by a single-dimensional construct. Accordingly, in this study, the overall impact of LuxLSC is defined by multiple first-order constructs, each presenting a distinct facet of LSC, including streamer-related factors (i.e., similarity, familiarity, and likeability), live content related factors (i.e., information quality and visual display quality), and IT related factors (i.e., visibility, guidance shopping, metavoicing, and trading). This approach is further empirically validated in this study. The PLS-SEM results validated the coefficients of these first-order constructs with the latent second-order factor, illustrating that all factors significantly contribute as formative dimensions of the overall impact of LuxLSC construct as shown in below Figure 6-1. The results reveal that among all factors, information quality ($\beta = 0.214$) has the strongest positive influence on the overall LuxLSC impact, indicating that the quality and relevance of information presented during livestreams play a critical role in shaping Chinese luxury consumers' decision-making. This is followed by likeability ($\beta = 0.191$) and similarity ($\beta = 0.189$) of streamers, which significantly contribute to the overall impact of LuxLSC. However, the IT-related factor metavoicing ($\beta = 0.106$) shows the least influence, although it still plays a significant role in enhancing the overall LuxLSC experience.

Then, the remaining discussion draws upon the research questions of this study.



Note: R²=variance explained; ***p<0.001;

Figure 6-1 The formation of the overall impact of LuxLSC

Source: The author

6.4 The Impact of LuxLSC on Brand Loyalty (RQ1)

Research Question 1 states: Does live streaming commerce positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers?

The first research question is concerned with identifying the influencing factors that link the overall impact of LuxLSC and brand loyalty in the context of luxury brands. Brand loyalty can be considered as a long-term attitudinal commitment and behavioural intention (i.e., repurchase intention) that a consumer holds towards a brand (Oliver, 1999). Previous studies have identified the existence of a link between the impact of LSC and consumers' long-term behavioural intentions, such as continuous intention to watch or use LSC (Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Zhang, M. et al., 2022). Ye and Ching (2023) observed a positive effect of LSC on

consumer loyalty intention. However, their study did not differentiate whether this loyalty was directed towards the LSC channel, or towards the brand employing the LSC strategy. In addition, consumer reactions to LSC are not universally positive. In some cases, the information overload presented during livestreams can overwhelm consumers, leading to a negative impact on consumers' long-term relationship with the brand such as brand citizenship behaviour (Hua et al., 2024). Thus, this study sought to confirm the positive impact of LSC on brand loyalty by identifying and examining the factors that reinforce this relationship. The TPB was adopted as an appropriate theoretical framework, linking LSC impact and brand loyalty through brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control. It helped to establish a clear connection between LSC and brand loyalty, offering valuable insights for luxury brands looking to leverage LSC as a strategic tool to strengthen consumer loyalty.

It is also worth noting that, as a precursor to TPB, the TRA has been applied to investigate the impact of LSC on consumer behaviour such as impulsive buying (Yan et al., 2023). This theory focuses solely on attitudes and subjective norms as predictors of behavioural intentions. While it effectively explains these immediate, spontaneous consumer responses, it may fall short in addressing more deliberate behaviours that require an understanding of perceived behavioural control, which makes TRA less suitable for investigating long-term behaviours like brand loyalty. On the contrary, TPB offers deeper insights into the sustained commitment and loyalty, making it a more suitable framework for examining how luxury brands can cultivate long-term consumer loyalty through LSC.

Thus, this study identified three factors that mediate the impact of LSC on brand loyalty, namely, brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control, forming the foundation for research hypotheses H1-H6. The findings of this study confirmed that the significant relationships exist among these constructs (See Figure 6-2), which are discussed in detail in the following sections.

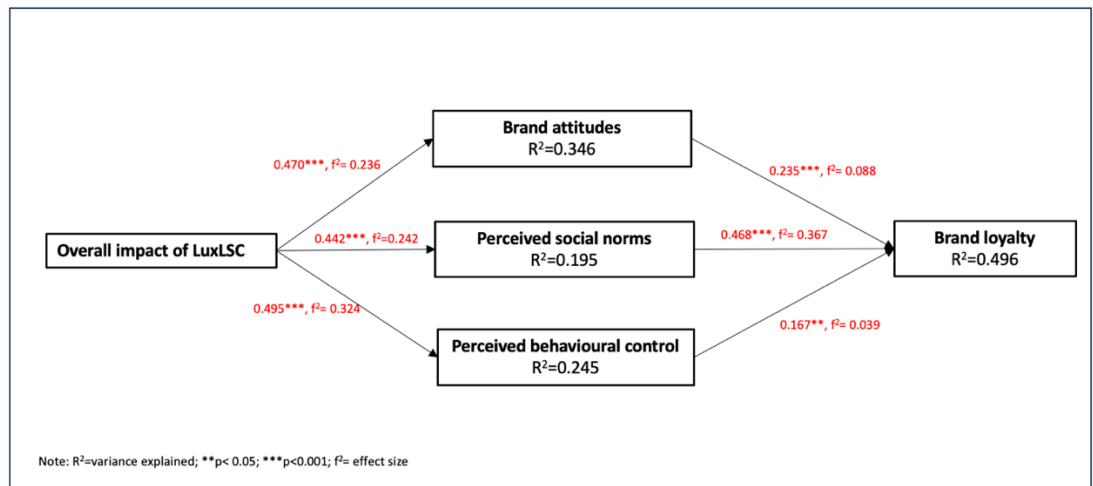


Figure 6-2 PLS results for structural model

Source: The author

6.4.1 The overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes (H1)

The results confirmed that H1 is supported, demonstrating a positive and significant relationship ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$) between the overall impact of LSC and brand attitudes in the luxury brand context. This finding indicates that a positive LSC experience significantly enhances consumers' attitudes towards the brand. Bawack et al. (2023) similarly found that effective LSC can foster favourable brand attitudes through satisfying consumers' social needs, such as the need for self-identification with the brand and social pricing. However, the concept of social pricing, which typically involves strategies like group buying, discounts, or promotions (Gao, H. et al., 2022), may not align with the luxury brand context. Luxury brands rely on principles of exclusivity and premium value, which can be undermined by pricing strategies that emphasise accessibility and affordability.

While limited research has explored the specific impact of LSC on brand attitudes, a few studies have shown that LSC is positively associated with attitudes towards live streaming content (Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020) or streamers (Yan et al., 2023), further enhancing consumers' attitudes towards the luxury brand. This positive transference of attitudes is consistent with findings from broader marketing literature, where attitudes formed towards influencers or advertisements often extend to the brands they endorse (De Veirman et al., 2017; Silvera and Austad,

2004). Moreover, in line with the TPB, LSC can shape consumers' beliefs about a brand through the positive experiences, thereby influencing their overall brand attitudes. For instance, LSC platforms facilitate social interactions (e.g., streamer-consumer interaction) that enhance consumers' perceptions of the livestream content and streamers, such as perceived usefulness and enjoyment (Miranda et al., 2024; Xue et al., 2020). These positive evaluations contribute to more favourable overall attitudes towards the brand.

The finding of a positive relationship between LSC impact and brand attitudes suggests that well-integrated livestream sessions can significantly enhance consumers' emotional connection and positive evaluations of the brand, which provides empirical support for the potential benefits of LSC adoption by luxury brands.

6.4.2 The overall impact of LuxLSC on perceived social norms (H2)

The results confirmed a positive and significant relationship ($\beta = 0.442$, $p < 0.001$) between the overall impact of LuxLSC and perceived social norms in the luxury brand context, supporting H2. This suggests LSC can effectively shape luxury consumer' perceptions of what is socially acceptable or desirable behaviour within their peer groups. In the luxury brand context, perceived social norms are particularly influential, as consumer behaviour is often driven by social comparisons and the desire for status and social recognition. Although no previous study explored the influence of LSC on perceived social norms, the finding of this study can be explained based on extant literature on social media marketing. In the context of LSC, perceived social norm is particularly relevant due to several key factors inherent to its interactive nature. Burchell et al. (2013) noted that when observing others engaging in certain behaviours online, people are likely to perceive these behaviours as normative and feel compelled to conform. In this case, since the IT feature of LSC enables consumers to observe the behaviours of others in real-time, such as making purchases, commenting positively on products, or expressing interest in the brand, consumers' perception of social norms can be affected during

livestreams. Moreover, research has found out that people are likely to internalise the actions and messages of the influencers who they follow on social media as social norms. Hence, it is possible that live streamers, often as influencers and celebrities especially in the luxury brands' livestreams, can significantly influence consumers' perception of what is socially acceptable or desirable. Also, consumers often look to others for cues about appropriate behaviours, especially in public or semi-public settings like live streams. In the context of LSC, when consumers see others expressing interest in or purchasing luxury products, they may feel compelled to do the same to gain social approval or avoid being perceived as out of step with their peers. This desire for social acceptance can drive consumers to align their behaviours with the perceived social norms established during livestreams.

6.4.3 The overall impact of LuxLSC on perceived behavioural control (H3)

The results supported H3, showing that the LSC has a positive and significant impact on perceived behavioural control ($\beta = 0.495$, $p < 0.001$) in the context of luxury brands. This suggests that LSC significantly enhances consumers' perceptions of their ability to engage with luxury brands through LSC. While previous studies have examined perceived behavioural control as a predictor of consumer behaviour in social commerce, such as Hajli et al. (2015), fewer have examined its role as a mediator, especially in the LSC context. This study extends the existing literature by demonstrating that LSC can positively influence consumers' perception of their control over engaging with the brand.

Perceived behavioural control, as outlined in the TPB, perceived behavioural control, is formed by an individual's beliefs about their ability to perform a behaviour, which can be influenced through their engagement with LSC. For example, when users perceive LSC as user-friendly and interactive, their sense of control over using these platforms to engage with the luxury brands may increase. This is particularly relevant to the technical features of LSC, where ease of use and seamless integration of e-commerce functionalities directly enhance perceived behavioural control. Hansen et al. (2018) also suggests that perceived trust positively affects

perceived behavioural control when using social media platforms for transactions. This relationship is supported by research in the LSC context, where LSC is shown to positively affect consumer trust, such as trust in streamer and product (Lu and Chen, 2021; Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020; Zhang, M. et al., 2022). When consumers trust the streamer and the platform, their perceived control over the decision-making process is further strengthened. Moreover, LSC enables real-time, two-way communication between consumers and streamers, providing detailed information about brands and products, allowing consumers to ask questions, and received instant feedback from the streamer. This direct, two-way communication reduces uncertainty and enhancing their confidence in making purchase decisions (Lu and Chen, 2021). As a result, consumers feel more empowered and in control of their LSC experience, which is particularly significant in the context of luxury brands, where consumer decisions often require more deliberation and reassurance.

Overall, these findings highlight the importance of perceived behavioural control in the LSC context, suggesting that luxury brands can leverage LSC not only to inform and engage consumers but also to empower them in their decision-making process, ultimately enhancing consumer loyalty and brand trust

6.4.4 Brand attitudes on brand loyalty (H4)

The results supported the existence of a positive relationship between brand attitudes and brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.235$, $p < 0.001$) in the context of LuxLSC. It suggests that positive attitudes fostered through LSC are likely to translate into consumer loyalty towards luxury brands. Although no prior studies have specifically explored this relationship within the context of LSC, this finding is consistent with expectations and extensive marketing literature that has consistently demonstrated the critical role of brand attitudes as a precursor to brand loyalty (Baldinger and Robinson, 1996; Dick and Basu, 1994; Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, 2003; Liu, F. et al., 2012). LSC provides a platform for luxury brands to engage consumers in real time, offering rich and interactive experiences that reinforce positive brand attitudes. Previous studies have shown that luxury brands can effectively showcase the

craftsmanship, heritage, and exclusivity of their products through social media, thereby enhancing consumers' perceptions of luxury brand values (Phan et al., 2011). In the context of this study, this relationship is amplified by the unique attributes of LSC as a marketing channel. Additionally, LSC provides consumers with unprecedented access to traditionally exclusive events, such as fashion runway shows, flagship store tours, and behind-the-scenes stories. These immersive experiences allow consumers to engage with the brand on a deeper level, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the brand's values and identity (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012). As a result, when consumers form positive attitudes towards the brand through such engaging and interactive experiences, these attitudes are more likely to translate into trust, perceived brand superiority, and emotional attachment, ultimately fostering greater brand loyalty.

Furthermore, brand loyalty is not merely about repeated purchases; it reflects a deep attitudinal commitment, characterised by emotional bonds and a willingness to recommend the brand to others (Oliver, 1999), which goes beyond transactional relationships. This deeper loyalty is reflected in behaviours such as generating positive WOM (Keller, 2009). In the context of LSC, consumers are able to engage directly with the luxury brand and other viewers through real-time scrolling comments. When consumers hold a favourable attitude towards the brand, they are more likely to post positive comments or reactions (e.g., liking, sharing, and gifting) during live streams, which generates positive WOM among other viewers and foster a sense of attitudinal loyalty towards the brand.

6.4.5 Perceived social norms and brand loyalty (H5)

H5 was supported by the results, showing a significant and positive relationship between perceived social norms and brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.468$, $p < 0.001$) as expected. This finding indicates that social approval and the perceived expectations of others play a pivotal role in fostering luxury brand loyalty in the context of LSC. Firstly, it aligns with the theoretical framework provided by the TPB, which posits that perceived social norms significantly influence individuals' behavioural intentions

(Ajzen, 1991). Specific to brand loyalty, perceived social norms reflect whether consumers believe their brand preferences are supported by significant others, such as family, friends, and peers. When consumers feel their brand choices align with these expectations, they are more likely to demonstrate loyalty. Then, in the context of LSC, this effect is amplified due to the interactive nature of live streaming platforms, where social engagement and approval are highly visible. When consumers observe positive feedback from peers or streamers, it strengthens their own loyalty to the brand. Moreover, luxury brands often use LSC to feature influencers and opinion leaders who serve as role models for their target audiences. When these influential figures express positive attitudes and loyalty towards the brand during livestreams, they may set a normative precedent that consumers are likely to follow (Raïes et al., 2015). This is particularly effective in the luxury market, where consumer choices are often driven by the desire to emulate the lifestyles and values of aspirational figures. As a result, perceived social norms play a crucial role in shaping brand loyalty, as consumers seek to align their behaviour with those they admire or aspire to emulate.

6.4.6 Perceived behavioural control and brand loyalty (H6)

The results confirmed that perceived behavioural control positively influences brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.167$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H6. This finding is consistent with the TPB, which posits that perceived behavioural control can directly influence behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 1991). In the LuxLSC context, perceived behavioural control reflects consumers' confidence in their ability to engage with the brand via LSC. This includes navigating the platform, interacting with the streamer and other viewers, and making informed purchasing decisions. However, in the luxury brand context, merely enhancing perceived control is not enough to foster loyalty. Luxury consumers often seek not only convenience but also exclusivity and a sense of privilege in their interactions with brands (Hennigs et al., 2012). Therefore, while perceived behavioural control is a positive predictor of brand loyalty in the LuxLSC

context, its effectiveness depends on how well the brand can integrate this sense of control with the other elements of luxury branding via LSC.

6.4.7 Evaluations of coefficients of determinations

The PLS-SEM results provide a comprehensive overview of the relationships between constructs in the context of LuxLSC. The key indicators, i.e., path coefficients, R^2 values, and f^2 values, demonstrate the strength and significance of these relationships, offering valuable insights into how LuxLSC influences brand loyalty. As addressed earlier in this chapter, research hypotheses H1-H6 were all found significant. Yet, the impact of each variable in the model needs to be analysed and discussed. Hence, the effect sizes (f^2) of independent variables are compared. Additionally, the size of coefficient of determinations (R^2) in the model are explained further in the context of this study.

The path coefficients indicate the strength and direction of the relationships between constructs. In terms of the overall impact of LuxLSC on brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control, the standardised path coefficients between LuxLSC impact and perceived behavioural control at 0.495, which is the highest among the three relationships, followed by brand attitudes (0.470). Consistent with it, the effect size of LuxLSC impact on perceived behavioural control is also the highest at 0.324, while 0.236 on brand attitudes and 0.242 on perceived social norms. This shows that LSC may have a stronger impact on perceived behavioural control than the other two variables in the luxury brand context. It might be because the luxury consumers who choose to engage with LuxLSC are typically those who seek a personalised and seamless online shopping experience that reflects the exclusivity and premium nature of luxury brands. These consumers are not merely looking for convenience but are also drawn to the interactive and immersive aspects of LSC that offer a closer, more controlled connection with the brand.

The R^2 values is a measure of the predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent constructs. In consumer behavioural studies, values of 0.2 can be

considered as high (Hair et al., 2017). As shown in Figure 6-2, this model explains 34.6% of the variance in brand attitudes, indicating that LSC has a significant impact on consumers' attitudes towards luxury brands. Then, it is followed by 24.5% of the variance in perceived behavioural control. For perceived social norms, the proposed model has the smallest but acceptable predictive power, explaining 19.5% of the variations in this construct. Finally, the R^2 value for brand loyalty is 0.496, representing 49.6% of variations explained by this model. It suggests that brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control collectively account for nearly half of the variance in brand loyalty in this model. This substantial R^2 value highlights the importance of these constructs in building consumer loyalty through LuxLSC.

Moreover, the effect size of each variable was calculated, and results showed that perceived social norms ($f^2 = 0.367$) have the highest effect, followed by brand attitudes ($f^2 = 0.088$) and perceived behavioural control ($f^2 = 0.039$). This finding is rather surprising, however can be justified. Although attitude and subjective norms are both strong predictors of intention and behaviour as stated by the TRA and TPB, the weights of them were found to vary. Hartwick and Barki (1994) revealed that when users have limited knowledge and beliefs about the new information system, subjective norms is found to exert a greater influence on behavioural intention; on the contrary, when the system is better known, attitude may exert a greater influence. In this case, it suggests that perceived social norms may have a more pronounced impact on consumers' loyalty intention than their attitudes particularly in environments where consumers are still becoming familiar with the LuxLSC format. In the context of LuxLSC, many consumers might still be relatively new to engaging with luxury brands through live streaming. Despite this limited direct experience, the social influence exerted by peers, influencers, or significant others can strongly shape their behavioural intentions, such as loyalty to the brand. This aligns with Hartwick and Barki's assertion, as subjective norms can fill the gap in attitude formation when direct experience is lacking or minimal. The high effect size of perceived social norms ($f^2 = 0.367$) in this study underscores the power of social

influence. Consumers are more likely influenced by the visible participation and approval of others during livestreams, even if they have not yet fully developed personal attitudes toward engaging with luxury brands through this medium. Furthermore, perceived social norms likely have the strongest effect because luxury brands are heavily influenced by social dynamics and aspirational group behaviours. Luxury consumers are often motivated by social validation and the desire to conform to the expectations of their peers, family, and influential social groups (Wiedmann et al., 2009). In the context of LuxLSC, seeing others engage with or endorse luxury brands can reinforce consumers' sense of social approval, leading to stronger loyalty. This may also explain the strongest effect of perceived social norms on brand loyalty in the context of this study.

6.5 The Moderating Effects on the Relationship Between LSC and Brand Attitudes (RQ2)

Research Question 2 states: Does existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers?

This study identified three factors that moderate the impact of LSC on brand attitudes namely, existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism, forming the foundation for research hypotheses H7-H9. However, the findings of this study showed that no significant moderation relationships were observed, as shown in below figure and table, which are discussed in detail in the following sections.

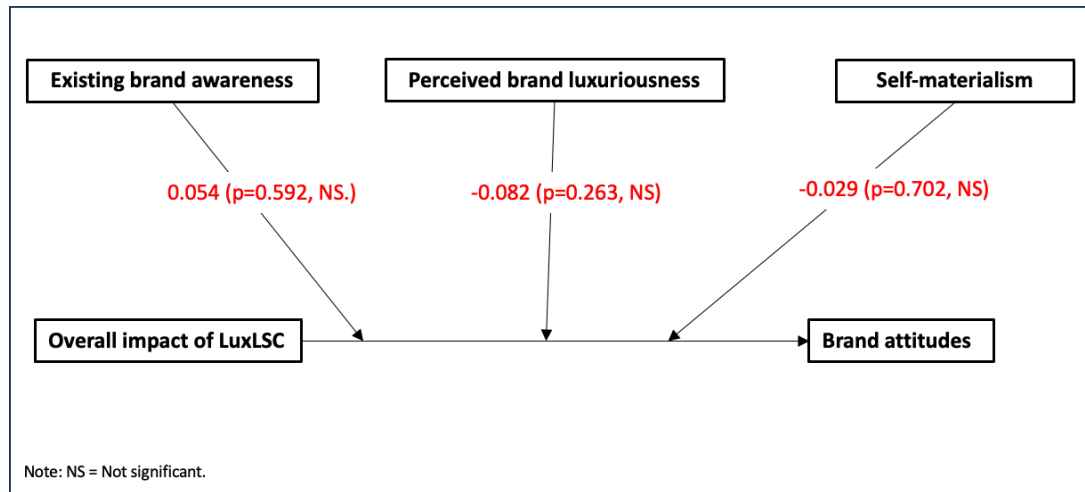


Figure 6-3 The results of the moderating relationships

Source: The author

Table 6-2 Moderator Statistics

| Moderator | Loading | Standard deviation (STDEV) | Confidence interval | T statistics | P values |
|--|---------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|
| Self-materialism x LuxLSC impact-> Brand attitudes | -0.08 | 0.07 | (0.19,0.06) | 1.12 | 0.26 |
| Existing brand awareness x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | 0.05 | 0.10 | (-0.12, 0.21) | 0.54 | 0.59 |
| Perceived brand luxuriousness x LuxLSC impact -> Brand attitudes | -0.03 | 0.07 | (-0.17, 0.12) | 0.38 | 0.70 |

Source: The author

6.5.1 The moderating effect of existing brand awareness (H7)

In the results chapter above, it was found that the hypothesis that existing brand awareness acted as a moderator of the relationship between LSC Impact and brand attitudes was unsupported. In particular, the statistics were as shown in above Table 6-2.

It can be seen that the confidence interval for the loading of existing brand awareness as a moderator falls either side of zero and is insignificant. This implies that the moderator of the population could be a value between -0.12 and +0.21 (either positive or negative). The bootstrapped sample has a high standard deviation leading to this wide confidence interval straddling zero. A larger sample could have a smaller confidence interval and show a significant moderating effect as chance extreme deviations are minimised in larger samples (Koopman et al., 2015).

For this reason, it cannot be assumed that any moderating effect of existing brand awareness exists based on the results. However, moderating effects may be present when a larger sample size is examined.

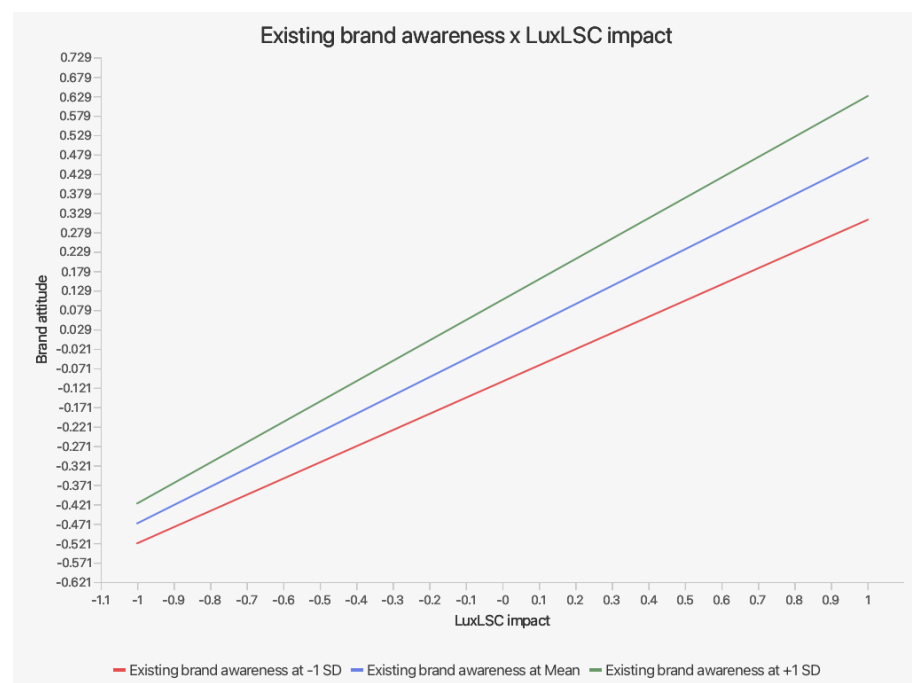


Figure 6-4 Moderating Effect of Existing Brand awareness

Source: The author

6.5.2 The moderating effect of perceived brand luxuriousness (H8)

From Table 6-2 above, again it can be seen that the confidence interval for the loading of perceived brand luxuriousness as a moderator falls either side of zero and is insignificant. This implies that the moderator of the population could be a value between -0.17 and +0.12 (either positive or negative). It cannot be assumed that any moderating effect of perceived brand luxuriousness exists according to the

results. However, moderating effects may be present when a larger sample size is examined.

Based on this study however, there is tentative evidence that LSC can have a positive impact on brand attitudes for a range of perceptions of the luxurious of a brand (given the moderating effect is unsupported). This has managerial implications about the extent to which LSC may be a useful approach without negative effects – suggesting that the potential risk of it having limited or even damaging effect on a brand as it appears more ‘mass market’ is not evidenced.

However, future studies with larger sample sizes or comparing different models for brands with distinct levels of positioning in terms of exclusivity and luxuriousness would be required to explore this further. As can be seen from the figure below via line slopes, in our sample a small negative effect of -0.3 was shown, which if statistically significant would mean that LSC has a less positive impact on brand attitudes where perception of brand luxuriousness is higher.



Figure 6-5 Moderating Effect of Perceived Brand Luxuriousness

Source: The author

6.5.3 The moderating effect of self-materialism (H9)

From Table 6-2 above, again it can be seen that the confidence interval for the loading of Self-materialism as a moderator falls either side of zero and is insignificant. This implies that the moderator of the population could be a value

between -0.19 and +0.06 (either positive or negative). The results cannot provide sufficient evidence to support the existence of a moderating effect of self-materialism. However, moderating effects may be present when a larger sample size is examined.

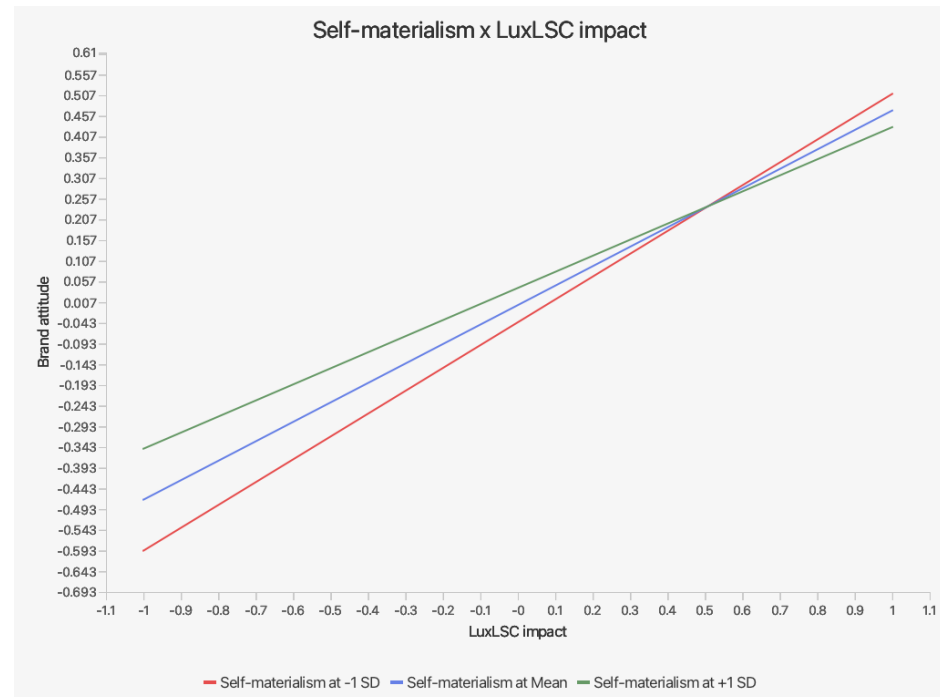


Figure 6-6 Moderating Effect of Self-materialism

Source: The author

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter began by discussing the formation of overall LSC impact construct, identifying information quality as the most influential among all nine first-order constructs in the context of LuxLSC. Then, this chapter systematically presented and analysed the empirical results, addressing the research questions and testing the proposed hypotheses. The findings confirmed that research hypotheses H1 to H6 were all supported, providing a positive answer to Research Question 1:

RQ1: Does live streaming commerce positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers? The answer is ‘Yes’.

The results revealed that LSC had the strongest impact on consumers’ perception of their ability to engage with luxury brands through LSC (i.e., perceived

behavioural control). Additionally, perceived social norms emerged as the most significant predictor of brand loyalty within the study context.

However, hypotheses H7 to H9 were not supported in this study, indicating that existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism did not moderate the relationship between LSC and brand attitudes. This leads to a negative response to Research Question 2:

RQ2: Does existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers? The answer is ‘No’.

Despite the lack of significant moderation effects, the findings suggest that LSC can still positively influence brand attitudes across varying perceptions of brand luxuriousness without substantially risking the dilution of brand value. This offers valuable managerial implications, indicating that luxury brands can leverage LSC without compromising their perceived values.

In summary, this chapter has not only addressed the research questions but has also provided a comprehensive interpretation of the findings. It sets the stage for discussing the implications, limitations, and potential directions for future research in the subsequent chapters.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the key findings and contributions of the research. It revisits the research questions, aims, and objectives outlined in the introduction chapter and highlights how these have been addressed by summarising the key findings of each chapter. The chapter also reflects on the theoretical and practical implications of the findings, discusses the limitations of the research, and provides recommendations for future research. By synthesising the insights gained, this chapter demonstrates the study's contribution to the understanding of LSC in the luxury branding context, particularly focusing on Chinese consumers.

7.2 Research Contributions

7.2.1 Achievement of research aim

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the role of LSC in luxury branding, particularly focusing on the Chinese market. The study sought to address a gap in existing literature by exploring how LSC influences Chinese consumer perceptions and behaviours in the context of luxury brands, and by examining the roles of moderating variables such as brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism.

To fulfil these research aims, two research questions were proposed:

RQ1: Does live streaming commerce positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers?

RQ2: Does existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers?

To answer the research questions, four research objectives were developed to guide the investigation.

1. To identify the influencing factors of LSC in the context of the luxury sector from the perspectives of streamer, content, and platform, and to formulate these factors into a comprehensive understanding of the overall impact of LuxLSC.
2. To examine the overall impact of LuxLSC on Chinese consumers' brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control.
3. To analyse the influence of brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control on brand loyalty.
4. To assess the moderating effects of existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism.

All research objectives were successfully achieved in this study. The following section will summarise the key findings from each chapter, illustrating how the research questions and objectives were addressed.

7.2.2 Summary of the key findings

This section summarises the main findings from each chapter, including literature review, theoretical model development, methodology and empirical results. It also illustrates how these findings relate to the research questions and objectives, providing a cohesive explanation of the study's logic and overall contribution. Please see the details in below Table7-1.

Table 7-1 Summary of each chapter and its key findings

| What it included | How it contributed to answering the research questions |
|--|--|
| Chapter 1 Introduction | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated the research background based on industrial information, including the state of Chinese luxury market, LSC industry, and LuxLSC practices. - Overviewed this research by outlining the proposed research problem, research aim, research questions and objective, adopted methodology, expected research outcomes and contributions - Provided the overall structure of this thesis | |
| Chapter 2 Integrative literature review | |
| <i>Luxury branding</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensively reviewed the definitions of luxury brands and clarified the conceptualisation of luxury brands in this study. - Critically reviewed the literature on luxury consumption to understand what drives luxury consumption - Critically reviewed the literature on luxury digital marketing with a focus on social media marketing and e-commerce to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided an in-depth understanding of the research context - Emphasised the significance of adopting the luxury sector as research context of this study by discussing its distinction as a marketing research context compared with non-luxury sectors. - Identified the knowledge gap in luxury brand and social media marketing, that is, no studies had explored the LuxLSC. |

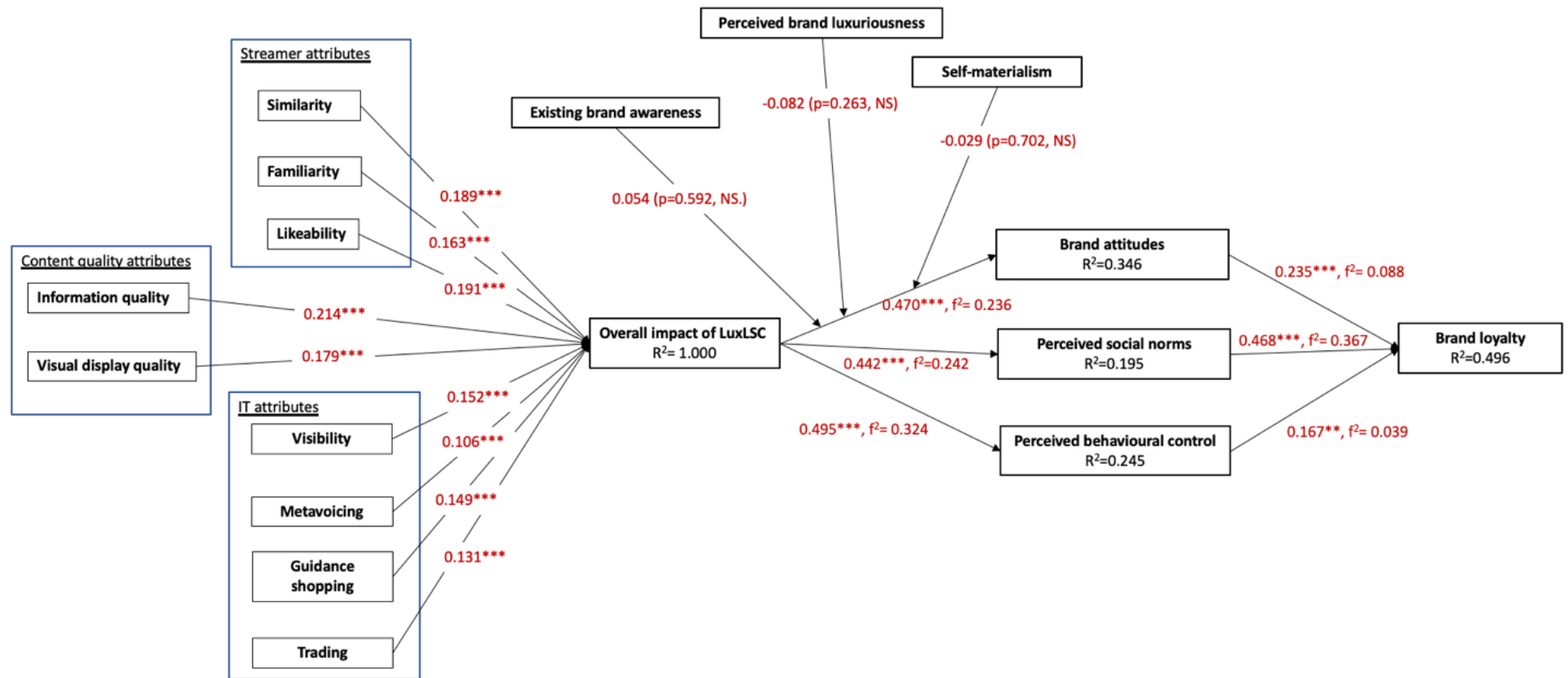
| | |
|--|---|
| <p>understand the opportunities and challenges that luxury brands face in digital era.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensively reviewed the literature on Chinese luxury consumer behaviour and demonstrated their characteristics to reinforce the relevance of the research context | |
| <p>LSC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematically reviewed 37 studies related to LSC with a focus on consumer behaviour research, identifying the antecedents, mediators, moderators, consequences adopted in existing studies, as well as theories and research methods - Critically discussed the findings of the review, particularly about the influencing factors that affects consumers' decision-making in the LSC context. - Developed nine influencing factors of LSC in the luxury brands context, categorised into three dimensions: streamer, content, and IT dimension, and conceptualised the Overall Impact of LuxLSC construct. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided a comprehensive understanding of existing studies that explored how LSC affects consumer behaviours. - Reinforced the knowledge gaps that no prior study discussing luxury brands' LSC. - Identified the specific research gaps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) No study exploring the impact of LSC on luxury consumer behaviours (2) No study exploring the impact of LSC on brand loyalty (3) No study employing the TPB as a theoretical lens to explore LSC context. - Fulfilled the first research objective. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Brand loyalty</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensively reviewed the literature on brand loyalty and clarified its conceptualisation adopted in this study. - Briefly introduced the Brand Value Chain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identified brand loyalty as the consequence of the research model in this study, as it is a key component of luxury brands' value creation and an important indicator of a successful marketing tactic. |
| <p><i>The moderators</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determined existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism as moderators that potentially affect the effectiveness of LSC in the context of luxury brands - Critically reviewed the literature related to these three moderators to explain the potential relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identified three consumer-related factors that potentially moderate the impact of LuxLSC on consume behaviours, while key variables have captured the streamer-, content-, and platform-related factors of LuxLSC. |
| <p>Chapter 3 Theoretical underpinning and Model development</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Briefly introduced the TPB - Demonstrated the links between all key variables and potential moderating effects on the relationship between LuxLSC impact and brand attitudes. - Provided a conceptual framework of this study - Proposed nine research hypotheses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established the relationship between LuxLSC impact and brand loyalty by using TPB as theoretical foundation, that is, LuxLSC positively affect brand loyalty through the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control. |
| Chapter 4 Methodology | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Justified the adopted of a positivist stance and a quantitative approach in this study. - Theoretically justified the conceptualisation of LuxLSC impact as a higher-order construct. - Demonstrated the research strategy and research design. Specifically, the survey method and the purposive sampling technique were adopted for data collection, obtaining 168 valid respondents, i.e., 168 Chinese respondents who had experiences in engaging with Burberry's LSC. Then, PLS-SEM was chosen for data analysis. - Addressed the ethical considerations and limitation of research methodology. | |
| Chapter 5 Data analysis and Results | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysed the proposed research model using SmartPLS 4.0 software. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empirically justified the adoption of the reflective-formative higher-order construct model in this study. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluated the reflective-formative measurement model by testing internal consistency, reliability, validity, collinearity, and the significance of formative indicators. - Assessed the structural model through collinearity test, bootstrapping calculations, CVPAT tests, and common method bias testing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated strong predictive relevance and an acceptable fit, confirming the proposed relationships between the variables. - Confirmed that the model passed all tests and assessments, ensuring the robustness of the findings. - Overall, provided empirical support for the theoretical framework and validated the influence of LuxLSC on brand loyalty. |
| Chapter 6 Findings and Discussion | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LuxLSC impact was found to positively associated with brand attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control, supporting hypotheses H1-H6. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Answered the RQ1 and fulfilled the second and third research objectives. - Yes, LSC positively affect brand loyalty for a luxury brand via the mediators of brand attitudes, perceived social norms and perceived behavioural control for Chinese consumers. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was no statistically significant moderation found in this study, and research hypotheses H7-H9 were not supported. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Answered the RQ2 and fulfilled the last research objective. - No, existing brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, or self-materialism did not moderate the relationship between live streaming commerce and brand attitudes for Chinese consumers. |

Source: The author



Note: R²=variance explained; **p< 0.05; ***p<0.001; f²= effect size; Note: NS = Not significant.

Figure 7-1 The research model with PLS-SEM results

Source: The author

7.3 Research Contributions, Limitations, and Future Direction

7.3.1 Theoretical contributions

Overall, by answering the research questions and fulfilling the research objectives, this study makes an original contribution to the knowledge in the fields of luxury branding and digital marketing, particularly by addressing the underexplored area of LSC and its impact on luxury consumer behaviour.

Firstly, this study extends the existing body of knowledge by empirically investigating the influence of LSC on luxury brands, with a specific focus on Chinese consumer behaviours. Researchers such as Creevey et al. (2022) have stressed that with constant technological innovation and evolving consumer preferences, there are more investigations are needed to explore the new social media formats in the luxury branding. While previous research has extensively examined the impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty in the luxury contexts (Fetis et al., 2023; Godey et al., 2016; Liu, F. et al., 2012), there is a notable research gap that no study had explored how LSC, an emerging digital marketing tool, affect consumer perceptions and brand loyalty within the luxury sector. Hence, to address this gap, this study provided empirical evidence on the positive effect of LSC on Chinese consumers' brand loyalty. Specifically, this study demonstrated that the well-aligned LSC strategy can effectively enhance consumers' attitudes towards the luxury brand, perceived social norms and perceived control over the ability to engage with luxury brands' livestreams, consequently driving their loyalty towards the brand. Moreover, this study also suggested that LSC has the strongest impact on consumers' perceived control over brand attitudes and perceived social norms, while perceived social norms are found to have a stronger predictive power on brand loyalty than attitudes or perceived behavioural control.

Secondly, this study contributes to the literature by identifying and examining the influencing factors of LSC, particularly within the context of luxury brands. The study conceptualises the key influencing factors of LuxLSC across three dimensions: the streamer dimension (i.e., similarity, familiarity, likeability), the live content

dimension (i.e., information quality and visual display quality), and the IT dimension (i.e., visibility, metavoicing, guidance shopping, and trading). While previous studies have explored these three dimensions of LSC in non-luxury contexts, they have largely focused on the information quality aspect of live content (Alam et al., 2023; Gu, Y. et al., 2023; Lee, D. and Wan, 2023; Luo et al., 2024; Park, H.J. and Lin, 2020; Xu, X. et al., 2020; Zhang, X. and Zhang, 2024), but neglected the role of visual display quality. Luxury brands traditionally rely on the visual representation of their products and physical stores to convey a sense of prestige and exclusivity (Arrington, 2021; Dion and Arnould, 2011), and as such, the background setting in LSC environments can significantly impact consumer perceptions and attitudes. For example, Louis Vuitton's debut livestream in China was criticised for its 'cheap-looking setting' (Hall, 2020; Zheng, 2020). This study extends the understanding of LuxLSC by integrating visual display quality alongside information quality, underscoring the unique expectations of luxury consumers. By empirically examining the visual display quality, this study reveals that the aesthetics of the live content play a critical role in enhancing luxury consumers' perceptions and loyalty. Additionally, this study enriches the literature by integrating the trading feature into the IT dimension, alongside the three IT affordances of LSC proposed by Sun et al. (2019). The trading feature refers to the secure payment and seamless and convenient transaction processes of LSC, which are particularly relevant to the luxury brands context, and have been proved to enhance consumer satisfaction in online luxury shopping (Kim, J.-H., 2019; Kluge and Fassnacht, 2015; Okonkwo, 2009). Overall, this study contributes valuable theoretical insights by developing a comprehensive conceptual framework to investigate the impact of LuxLSC.

Thirdly, this study makes a significant theoretical contribution by conceptualising the impact of LSC as a higher-order construct, an approach that had not been previously applied in LSC research. While LSC has been recognised as a multi-dimensional construct, previous studies typically examined how each dimension of LSC independently affect outcomes. In contrast, this study integrates nine influencing factors of the three key dimensions into a single higher-order

construct, capturing the cumulative and interactive effects of all dimensions of LSC. On one hand, the first-order constructs can capture the detailed insights into specific characteristics of LSC. In this study, the findings suggest that, in the luxury context, the information quality within the content dimension has the most substantial effect on the overall LSC impact, followed by the likeability and similarity within the streamer dimension, while IT-related factor metavoicing shows the least effect. On the other hand, a higher-order construct allows for a comprehensive view that captures the essence of a broad concept, i.e., the overall impact of LuxLSC on consumers' perceptions and brand loyalty, without overlooking the complex interactions among its individual dimensions. Moreover, the adoption of this higher-order construct model is both theoretically and empirically validated in this study in accordance with the guidance of Jarvis et al. (2003). From a methodological perspective, this approach reduces the measurement error associated with individual indicator and result in a better model fit, thereby improving the robustness and overall explanatory power of the proposed model. Therefore, by integrating these dimensions into a single construct, this study sets a new precedent for future research on LSC, advocating for the adoption of higher-order constructs to explore the multifaceted nature of LSC and its implications for consumer behaviour.

The fourth contribution of this study lies in using the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) to link the impact of LSC and brand loyalty in the luxury sector. Although previous research by Ye and Ching (2023) has explored the impact of LSC on consumer loyalty intention, their study relied on the SOR model and flow theory, examining that how stimuli provided by LSC create an organismic state of enjoyment, trust, or flow that leads to responses such as compulsive buying and loyalty. While effective in capturing immediate emotional reactions of consumers in LSC context, the SOR model does not fully address the deliberate, cognitive processes that influence consumers' brand loyalty formation. In contrast, TPB offers a broader and more structured framework suitable for examining planned behavioural intention, especially in contexts like luxury branding, where brand-consumer relationships are critical. While this theory has been extensively used in marketing research to

examine how social media affects consumer behavioural intention, such as purchase intention (Nekmahmud et al., 2022), this study is among the first to adapt and extend TPB to investigate the emerging phenomenon of LSC. Specifically, by employing the TPB as a theoretical lens, this study reveals the positive impact of LSC on brand loyalty, emphasising the mediating roles of attitudes, social norms, and perceived control in shaping consumer behaviours. The adoption of TPB represents a significant theoretical contribution by offering a new perspective on how LSC can influence brand loyalty, particularly in the luxury sector. It highlights the importance of cognitive factors, beyond immediate emotional responses, in shaping consumers' loyalty to luxury brands, consequently filling the research gap in the existing literature on social media marketing and luxury branding.

Furthermore, by examining the moderating effects of brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism on the relationship between the impact of LSC and brand attitudes, this study captures how consumer-related factors influence the effectiveness of LSC particularly in the luxury sector. While the findings of this study indicate that no significant moderating effects exist in this context, this research nonetheless addresses a critical gap in the literature by being the first to introduce and examine these specific moderators within LSC research. The absence of significant moderations suggests that the influence of LSC on brand attitudes may be more universally experienced across different customer segments, regardless of their prior awareness of the luxury brand, their perception of brand luxuriousness, or their level of self-materialism. This insight is valuable as it challenges existing assumptions about the variability of consumer responses based on these factors and points to the possibility that LSC could be an equally effective strategy for engaging diverse luxury consumers. For example, for consumers who already have knowledge and recognition of the brand, and those who might not know much about the brand, LSC may have positive effects on both of them by shaping their attitudes towards the brand. Additionally, the lack of moderating effects does not diminish the importance of this exploration; rather, it provides a basis for future research to re-test these factors with different samples and highlights the

need to explore other potential moderators that may impact this relationship. Overall, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of LSC in luxury branding, encouraging scholars to consider a broader range of consumer-related factors in future research.

7.3.2 Practical implications

As LSC gains increasing popularity in the Chinese market, luxury brands have cautiously begun experimenting with this digital strategy since 2020 in an effort to enhance their online presence and bolster brand competitiveness in China. However, the outcomes of these early initiatives have been mixed, with consumer reactions ranging from positive to negative, resulting in uncertainty about whether luxury brands should fully adopt this approach. Although some luxury brands are actively exploring this area, the adoption of LSC in the luxury sector remains limited compared to other industries. Against this backdrop, this study provides valuable insights for industry practitioners seeking to better understand and leverage LSC strategy. The findings offer empirical evidence that, like other sectors, luxury brands can also benefit from adopting LSC strategies. Specifically, LSC can play a crucial role in strengthening consumers' brand loyalty through shaping their attitudes towards the brand, perceived social norms and perceived control over engaging with the brand via LSC for luxury brands.

Firstly, the most important practical implication of this research is that perceived brand luxuriousness does not influence the effectiveness of LuxLSC. In other words, LSC does not have a significant negative impact on brand attitudes, regardless of how luxurious the brand is perceived to be, indicating that luxury brands can utilise LSC without fearing a dilution of their brand image. Concerns that the adoption of LSC might make a luxury brand appear less exclusive or more mainstream are largely unfounded, as long as the brand maintains high standards of presentation and content quality during livestreams. Luxury brands can, therefore, confidently engage in LSC activities to reach wider audiences and enhance brand visibility without compromising their perceived luxuriousness. Specifically, this research

demonstrates that LSC is effective in enhancing brand attitudes across a spectrum of luxury perceptions, from high-end heritage brands to more contemporary or accessible luxury brands. This finding opens up new opportunities for a wider range of luxury brands to incorporate LSC into their marketing efforts. For instance, brands positioned as 'affordable luxury' can use LSC to highlight value and accessibility, while prestige brands can use it to showcase craftsmanship and heritage in an engaging, personalised manner. Meanwhile, it also implies that LSC serve as a valuable tool for engaging a diverse range of consumer segments, making it an impactful strategy for luxury brands across various market positions.

In terms of how-to better leverage LuxLSC, this study firstly reveals that the content quality is the most impactful attributes influencing the overall effectiveness of LSC in the luxury context, with information quality emerging as the most influential factor and visual display quality as the fourth most influential. This suggests that consumers engaging with LuxLSC place a high value on the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and aesthetic appeal of the information provided during livestreams. Given that Chinese consumers have used to watch high-quality and professionally executed livestreams, and have higher expectations particularly for luxury brands (Booker, 2021), it is essential for luxury brands to create content that not only deliver detailed and accurate product information but also offers engaging and emotionally stimulating experiences while maintaining brand image and prestige. To meet these expectations, for instance, luxury brands can offer exclusive previews of new collections or fashion shows that are not available elsewhere, or present a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the brand's design studios, manufacturing processes, or backstage access to event. These not only enhance the sense of exclusivity but also create an immersive experience, making the audience feel like privileged insiders. Moreover, luxury brands must ensure the visual quality of the livestreams is impeccable. As the luxury sector transitions to online channels, marketers have expressed concerns about whether digital platforms can deliver the same level of aesthetic experience as physical stores (Arrington, 2021; Dion and Arnould, 2011; Okonkwo, 2009; Seringhaus, 2005). This highlights the importance

of visual display quality for luxury brands, consistent with the finding of this study. Visual settings that fail to meet audience's expectations can result in critics and potentially damage brand reputation. Hence, luxury brands should invest in high-quality livestream production, such as incorporating professional lighting, multi-camera setups, and creative casual effects, all while aligning with the brand's image and values.

Regarding the streamer aspect, to date, luxury brands like Louis Vuitton have typically employed a strategy of collaborating with fashion KOLs as hosts and inviting physically attractive celebrities as guest speakers for interactive interviews during LSC. This approach leverages the professional engagement skills of KOLs alongside the allure of celebrities, creating a captivating livestream experience. However, this strategy often requires substantial financial investment, which may not be sustainable in the long term. An alternative, more sustainable approach involves using dedicated professional streamers instead of relying heavily on influencers or celebrities. For instance, Burberry, when conducting regular livestreams focused on product presentations and sales, often employs in-house professional streamers who are not influencers or celebrities, but rather well-trained salespeople equipped with extensive product and brand knowledge. This model is relatively cost-effective over time, enabling the brand to maintain consistent, high-quality consumer engagement with a focus on driving sales.

The findings of this study reveal that the likeability and perceived similarity of the streamer are crucial factors influencing the effectiveness of LuxLSC. Likeability, which is measured by how pleasant and relatable viewers find the streamer, and similarity, reflecting the perceived alignment between the streamer's taste and the brand's identity, both play significant roles in shaping consumer engagement and brand perception. In terms of likeability, luxury consumers are not merely seeking a polished, attractive figure on screen; instead, they expect streamers who can engage authentically by being approachable, relatable, and genuine. Unlike traditional marketing approaches that often rely on superficial aesthetics and glamour, LuxLSC requires streamers to connect with the audience on a deeper level.

Beyond merely showcasing products, streamers should act as credible and authentic brand ambassadors, sharing personal insights and responding to viewer comments in a spontaneous and sincere manner. This personal touch is particularly valued by Chinese luxury consumers, as it transforms the livestream experience from a simple sales pitch into an interactive and enriching engagement with the brand. Regarding similarity, the study underscores the importance of aligning the streamer's persona with both the target audience and the brand identity. Consumers are more likely to trust and be influenced by streamers whom they perceive to share their aesthetic preferences and values. Therefore, for large-scale LSC events aimed at generating buzz and enhancing brand influence, collaborating with well-known KOLs and celebrities may be more effective. However, for a sustainable, long-term LSC strategy, luxury brands should consider developing a stable and knowledgeable team of streamers who can create a welcoming and engaging atmosphere while embodying the brand's sophistication and elegance. This approach will not only foster deeper connections with the audience but also ensure consistent and high-quality brand representation across all LSC activities. Additionally, given that the guidance shopping feature among IT factors shows the most significant effect on the overall effectiveness of LuxLSC, it suggests that consumers highly value the interactions with streamers and the personalised information provided during livestreams. This again highlights the crucial role of streamers in shaping the consumer experience by offering tailored guidance and advice that aligns with individual preferences and needs. Therefore, the ability of streamers to act as knowledgeable and personable guides throughout the shopping journey is pivotal in elevating the overall LuxLSC experience and reinforcing brand loyalty.

Moreover, this study reveals that in the LuxLSC context, perceived social norms play a more significant role in enhancing brand loyalty compared to brand attitudes and perceived behavioural control. This suggests that luxury brands should strategically leverage the power of social influence in their LuxLSC campaigns. Specifically, when having sufficient budgets, luxury brands can strategically

collaborate with influential figures, such as KOLs, celebrities, and respected social media influencers, who can shape and reinforce positive social norms around engaging with the brand through LSC. Moreover, luxury brands can use LSC to build a sense of community among their consumers. By providing a platform for social interaction and hosting interactive livestream sessions, brands can encourage viewers to participate in discussions, share their experiences, or even contribute user-generated content. This approach can foster a shared sense of belonging and community around the brand, which in turn strengthens perceived social norms and deepens consumer loyalty (Jang et al., 2008; Zhou, 2011). To facilitate this, brands can leverage the social features integrated into LSC platforms, such as chat rooms, discussion forums, and live polling during streams. These tools enable viewers to interact not only with the brand but also with each other, creating a dynamic social environment that reinforces the influence of social norms. However, it is crucial for prestige brands to maintain psychological distance while leveraging the influence of social norms, ensuring that consumers feel engaged without compromising the brand's exclusivity. For instance, brands can host invitation-only livestreams or VIP virtual events, which allow selected consumers to engage with the brand and each other in a way that reinforces positive social norms while preserving the brand's luxury image.

Finally, given that overall impact of LuxLSC has the strongest effect on perceived behavioural control in the luxury sector, indicating that LuxLSC significantly empowers consumers by providing them with the necessary information, guidance, and ease of access to luxury products, making them feel more confident in their decision-making process. It is particularly relevant when luxury brands determine which third-party LSC platform to work with. Luxury brands should carefully evaluate platforms based on their ability to support consumer empowerment through features such as high-quality video streaming, interactive functionalities, seamless transaction processes, and robust after-sales support. Platforms that can offer these capabilities are better positioned to enhance perceived behavioural control, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of

LuxLSC campaigns. Furthermore, luxury brands should consider the platform's user demographics, technical infrastructure, and engagement tools to ensure that their LSC activities align with consumer expectations and preferences. For example, platforms like Xiaohongshu, known for its community-driven approach and detailed product reviews, may be ideal for building brand communities and providing in-depth product information. On the other hand, Taobao, with its extensive e-commerce ecosystem and seamless integration of livestreams and purchasing, might be more suitable for driving transactions and providing a streamlined shopping experience (The Luxury Conversation, 2020). By choosing the right platform, luxury brands can optimise their LSC strategies to maximise consumer empowerment, enhance their satisfaction and brand loyalty.

7.3.3 Research limitation

Although this study intended to address the research aims and objectives as precisely as possible to develop a generalised model, there are some limitations due to various constraints.

First, one of the limitations is that this study focused on Burberry's LSC as the sample brand, which has been conducting LSC activities solely on Taobao platform. The rationale for selecting Burberry lies in its consistent and active engagement in LSC since its debut on the platform in 2020, unlike other luxury brands, such as Louis Vuitton, which have only had one or two LSC activities. This consistent activity ensured an adequate sample size for meaningful analysis. Moreover, as highlighted in Section 1.2.3, Burberry's LSC practices encompass a variety of formats, including flagship store tours, product presentations in studios, and collaborations with KOLs, thereby covering most of the LSC formats currently adopted by luxury brands. This diversity provides a comprehensive view and valuable insights into the LuxLSC phenomenon, making Burberry a representative case study for this research. However, focusing solely on Burberry and the Taobao platform may limit the generalisability of the findings. This narrow scope might not fully capture the diverse strategies and consumer responses associated with other luxury brands and

platforms. Future research could benefit from examining multiple luxury brands and platforms to offer a broader understanding of LuxLSC dynamics.

Second, the relatively small sample size poses a constraint, as LuxLSC is an emerging phenomenon with limited industrial practices, making it challenging to collect a larger and more diverse sample. This limitation may affect the statistical power of this study and its ability to detect more subtle effects, such as moderating relationships. In this study 168 valid respondents were collected, which meets the minimum sample size requirement of 150 as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). Hence, despite the sample size limitation, this study offers valuable preliminary insights into consumer behaviours and perceptions in the LuxLSC context.

Third, data for this study was collected through a self-reported online survey using a purposive sampling technique in this research. Researchers point out that a purposive sampling may introduce biases, since participants are selected based on predefined criteria, which may not fully represent the broader population (Saunders et al., 2019). Consequently, the insights gained from such a sample may not be generalisable to other brands, platforms, or consumer groups, particularly when the sample is small or focused on a specific brand like Burberry. This limitation is especially relevant to this research, as different luxury brands and platforms may adopt varied strategies and appeal to distinct consumer segments. However, the used of purposive sampling in this study can be justified based on practical constraints and the specific nature of the research context. Given that LuxLSC is a relatively new phenomenon, identifying a truly random sample of consumers who have engaged with Burberry's LSC would be both time-consuming and costly. Moreover, if using probability sampling, it might have resulted in a low response rate, as locating a sufficiently large and representative sample of LuxLSC participants within the general population would be challenging. Hence, purposive sampling was chosen to ensure that the sample consisted of individuals who had direct experience with Burberry's LSC, thereby providing relevant and meaningful insights into their perceptions and behaviours, even if they should be interpreted with some caution.

Fourth, Likert-scales were adopted in this study, which are widely recognised for their effectiveness in capturing the subjective attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of respondents (Chin et al., 2008). This method provides a structured yet flexible means of quantifying complex constructs such as brand loyalty, perceived behavioural control, and consumer attitudes in the LuxLSC context. However, some researchers have argued that using Likert-scales for measuring constructs and conducting statistical analyses can be limiting, as constructs are limited to the corresponding Likert measures (Jamieson, 2004). For example, respondents might avoid extreme options and choose middle points, potentially distorting the true distribution of opinions. Also, Likert scales measure levels of agreement or disagreement but do not capture the reasoning behind responses, limiting the richness of the data. It is also possible that the number of points on the scale and forced-choice design can influence responses, and some respondents may struggle to select an option that accurately reflects their views. Therefore, to mitigate the impact of such limitations, this study only adopted the measures that had been proven valid and reliable in previous research.

Finally, this study measured loyalty intention rather than actual loyalty behaviours. Although loyalty intention is often considered a reliable predictor of future behaviour, it does not always translate into concrete actions, such as repeat purchases or long-term brand commitment. Collecting data on actual consumer behaviour would require access to proprietary sales data or the ability to monitor consumer activities beyond the scope of this study. However, due to limited time and resources, the author was unable to conduct a longitudinal study to track real consumer behaviour over an extended period. Despite this limitation, measuring loyalty intention provides an important first step in understanding how LuxLSC influences consumer attitudes, offering a basis for future research to explore the link between LSC engagement and actual purchasing behaviour. Future research could address this gap by employing longitudinal designs or collaborating with luxury brands to access real-world purchase data, thereby offering a more comprehensive

understanding of the relationship between LuxLSC engagement and true loyalty behaviours.

Overall, despite these limitations, this study contributes significantly to the understanding of LuxLSC by examining its impact on brand loyalty through shaping consumers' perception of the brand, social influence, and behavioural control. These findings lay the groundwork for future research to build upon and offer a foundation for luxury brands looking to navigate this emerging digital marketing landscape.

7.3.4 Directions for future research

This study has provided valuable insights into the impact of LSC on consumer attitudes and brand loyalty in the luxury sector. However, several areas remain open for further exploration. Future research should consider the following directions to expand the understanding of LuxLSC and its implications.

In terms of the research context, this study focused solely on a single luxury brand, Burberry, and its LSC activities on the Taobao platform. While this approach allowed for an in-depth examination of Burberry's LSC strategy, it inherently limits the generalisability of the findings. Future research should aim to encompass a broader spectrum of luxury brands, spanning both affordable luxury and high-end prestige brands, to explore whether the patterns and effects observed in this study hold true across varying levels of brand exclusivity and positioning. This would provide a more nuanced understanding of how LuxLSC influences consumer behaviour across different segments of the luxury market. Furthermore, different LSC platforms, such as Xiaohongshu, Tmall, and Douyin, cater to distinct consumer demographics and offer unique features and engagement mechanisms. As a result, consumer interactions and responses to LuxLSC may vary significantly across platforms. Future research could adopt a comparative approach to examine how platform-specific characteristics, such as user interface design, interactive capabilities, and community culture, affect consumer perceptions and behaviours in LuxLSC. This would offer valuable insights into the strategic selection of LSC platforms by luxury brands, enabling them to tailor their digital marketing efforts to

the unique strengths and user bases of each platform. In addition, future research could delve deeper into the demographic profiles of luxury consumers to better understand how variables such as age, income, cultural background, and digital literacy influence Chinese consumer engagement and behaviour in the LuxLSC context. For instance, younger consumers, who are typically more digitally savvy and accustomed to interactive online experiences, may respond differently to LuxLSC compared to older, more traditional luxury consumers. A comparative analysis of these demographic groups would provide a clearer picture of the varying effectiveness of LuxLSC strategies, helping luxury brands to develop more targeted and impactful marketing approaches.

In terms of methodology, this study employed a single cross-sectional quantitative design to investigate the impact of LuxLSC on consumers' loyalty intentions. While this approach provided valuable insights, it is limited in capturing the dynamic nature of consumer behaviour over time. Future research could benefit from adopting a longitudinal design to track actual consumer behaviours and engagement patterns with LuxLSC activities. For instance, studies that monitor consumer engagement with LuxLSC activities over multiple sessions, or ideally, in collaboration with luxury brands to access real-time sales data, could offer deeper insights into how live streaming influences purchasing patterns and brand relationships over an extended period. This would not only enhance the robustness of the findings but also provide practical implications for luxury brands seeking to develop effective long-term LSC strategies. Moreover, while this study identified the influencing factors of LuxLSC through a systematic literature review based on existing research, future studies could adopt qualitative or mixed methods approaches to further refine these factors. Conducting in-depth interviews or focus groups with consumers, luxury brand managers, and industry experts could provide richer, context-specific insights into the elements that drive LuxLSC effectiveness. Such qualitative data could be used to develop more nuanced frameworks and models that better capture the complexity of consumer experiences and preferences in the LuxLSC context.

Furthermore, regarding the influencing factors of LSC, previous studies have highlighted the role of product-related attributes, such as prices and discounts, in shaping consumer behaviours in LSC contexts (Lee, C.-H. and Chen, 2021; Liu, Z. et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2022; Miranda et al., 2024). These factors are often pivotal in non-luxury sectors, where competitive pricing and attractive deals drive consumer engagement and immediate purchase decisions. However, this study did not incorporate these elements, as it focused on the inherent characteristics of LuxLSC. In the context of luxury brands, discounts may dilute the perceived luxury of a brand, undermining its prestige and the consumer's perception of its value (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009). Future research could explore the influence of luxury-specific product attributes, such as superior design, exceptional quality, craftsmanship, exclusivity, and newness, on consumer behaviour within LuxLSC context. Investigating how these elements affect consumer perceptions and purchase intentions may provide deeper insights into the unique drivers of engagement in LuxLSC, in turn helping luxury brands tailor its LSC content. In addition, regarding the moderating variables, while this study examined factors, i.e., brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism, the relatively small sample size may have limited the ability to detect more subtle moderating effects. Future research could re-test these moderators with a larger and more diverse sample to capture potential nuanced effects that may not have been observable in the present study. Furthermore, future research could explore additional moderators that may impact consumer engagement and loyalty in the LuxLSC context.

Finally, in terms of theoretical lens, the present study used the TPB framework to demonstrate the correlations between LuxLSC and brand loyalty. While TPB effectively captured the cognitive and motivational processes underlying consumer behaviours, future research could benefit from exploring alternative theoretical frameworks to provide different perspectives and deepen the understanding of the impact of LuxLSC. For instance, the SOR model could be employed to examine how various stimuli presented during LuxLSC sessions—such as interactive features,

product presentations, and streamer attributes—affect consumer emotional responses and subsequent behaviours.

7.4 Chapter Summary

The study aimed to investigate the role of LSC in luxury branding, particularly focusing on the Chinese market. Two research questions were proposed to explore the impact of LuxLSC on brand loyalty and the moderating effects of brand awareness, perceived brand luxuriousness, and self-materialism on the relationship between LuxLSC and brand attitudes.

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the study and outlines the logical flow of the overall thesis. It begins with a restatement of the research questions, aims, and objectives as introduced in Chapter One. This is followed by a synthesis of the key findings from each chapter, demonstrating how they address the research questions and objectives, as illustrated in Table 7-1.

The chapter then delves into the theoretical and practical implications of the findings. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by addressing five significant research gaps, empirically examining the impact of LuxLSC on Chinese consumers' brand loyalty and enriching the existing knowledge in luxury branding and digital marketing. Practically, the study offers valuable insights for industry practitioners on effectively leveraging LSC strategies to enhance brand loyalty within the luxury sector.

Finally, the chapter acknowledges the limitations of the study, such as the use of Burberry as sample brand and the cross-sectional research design, and then suggests avenues for future research. These include exploring a broader range of luxury brands, employing longitudinal studies, and investigating additional moderating variables to deepen the understanding of Lux SC's impact on consumer behaviour.

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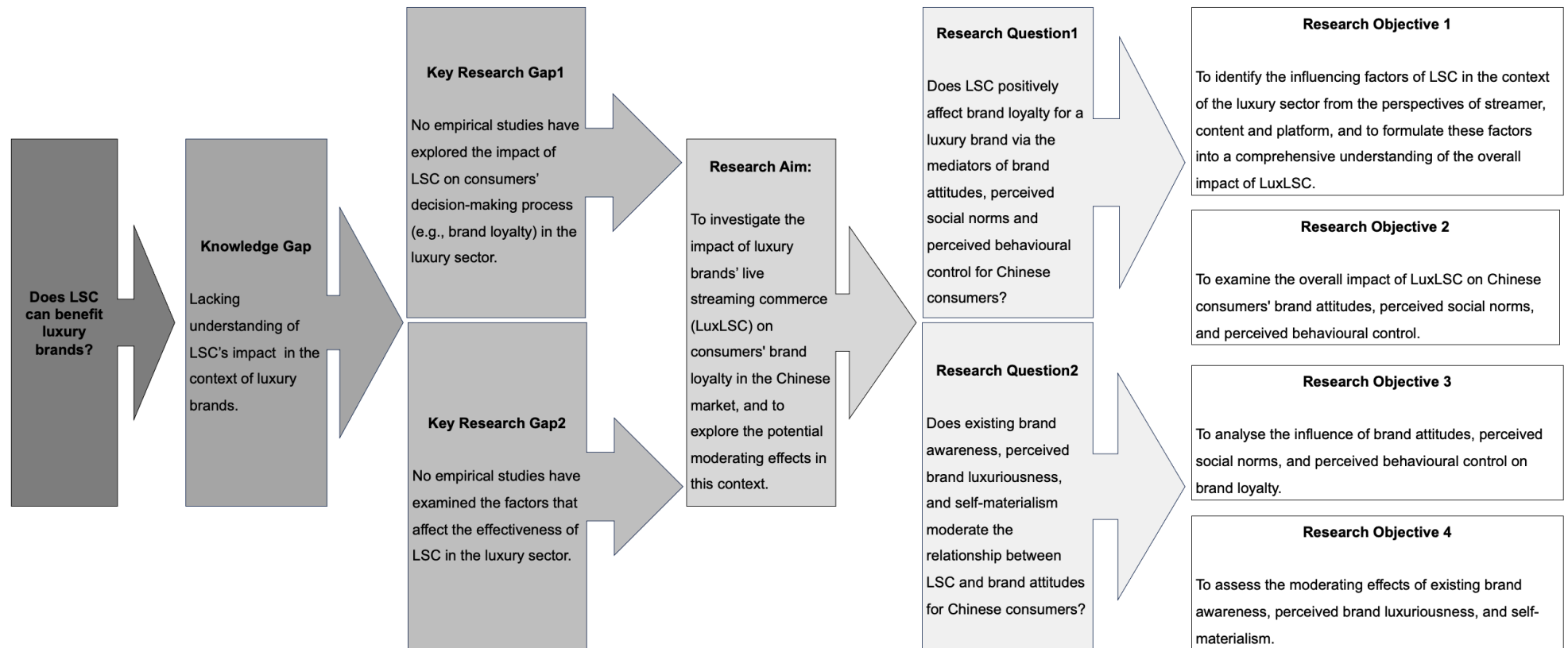
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APPENDIX I MINDMAP OF THIS STUDY



Source: The author

APPENDIX II FULL DETAILS OF THE SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FOR SLR

| <i>Authors</i> | <i>Sources</i> | <i>Theories</i> | <i>Antecedents</i> | <i>Mediators</i> | <i>Moderators</i> | <i>Consequences</i> | <i>Research method</i> | <i>Countries</i> | <i>Platform</i> | <i>Research context</i> |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Cai et al. (2018) | Conference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology acceptance model (TAM) | (Streamer-related hedonic motivations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpersonal attractiveness Physical attractiveness (Product-related utilitarian motivations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usefulness Ease of use | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liking streamer Liking product Needing product | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilitarian intention to watch Hedonic intention to watch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 countries such as USA, India. | - | - |
| Cai and Wohn (2019) | Conference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoyment of interaction Substitutability of personal examination Need for community Trend setting | - | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intention to use live streaming commerce in the future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 countries such as USA. | - | - |
| Sun et al. (2019) | Electronic Commerce Research and Applications ** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordance theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visibility Metavoicing Guidance shopping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immersion Presence (social presence, telepresence) | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> China | - | - |
| Hu and Chaudhry (2020) | Internet Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOR model | (Relational bonds) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial bonds Social bonds Structural bonds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affective commitment to the broadcaster Affective commitment to the online marketplace | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> China | Taobao Live | - |
| Park and Lin (2020) | Journal of Retailing and Consumer Service ** | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wanghong-product fit Live content-product fit Self-product fit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wanghong trustworthiness Wanghong attractiveness Utilitarian attitude Hedonic attitude | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> China | - | Fashion product |
| Wongkitrung rueng and Assarut (2020) | Journal of Business Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value theory | (Perceived value) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilitarian value Hedonic value Symbolic value | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust in products Trust in sellers | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bangkok | Facebook | - |
| Xue et al. (2020) | Information Management*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOR model | (Anchor-consumer interaction) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalization Responsiveness entertainment (Consumer-consumer interaction) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutuality (Machine-consumer) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived usefulness Perceived risk Psychological distance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> susceptibility to informative influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social commerce engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> China | Mogujie App | - |

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|------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Xu et al. (2020) | Journal of Electronic Commerce Research* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOR model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamer attractiveness • Para-social interaction • Information quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive assimilation • Arousal | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedonic consumption • Impulsive consumption • Social sharing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | • China | - | - |
| Guo et al. (2021) | Internet Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust transfer theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in community members • Trust in broadcasters • Trust in product | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swift guanxi | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | • China | Taobao Live | - |
| C. Lee and Chen (2021) | Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOR model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractiveness • Trustworthiness • Expertise • Product usefulness • Purchase convenience • Product price | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived enjoyment • Perceived usefulness | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urge to buy impulsively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | • China (4 biggest cities) | - | - |
| Fei et al. (2021) | Decision Support Systems*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOR model | (Social cues) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of herding message • Number of words comprising interaction text | (Visual cues) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endogenous attention (attention to anchor face/attention to product) • Exogenous attention (attention to herding message/attention to interaction text) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchor attractiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • A within-subject eye-tracking experiment | • China | Taobao Live | Clothing |
| Kang et al. (2021) | International Journal of Information Management** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOR model | (Interactivity) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness • Personalization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie strength | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popularity • Tenure of membership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer engagement behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Data crawling | • China | Weibo Live | - |
| Lu and Chen (2021) | Information and Management*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signalling theory • Uncertainty reduction theory | (Product route) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical characteristic similarity (Social route) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value similarity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product fit uncertainty • Product quality uncertainty • Trust | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | • China | - | Clothes cosmetics |
| Ming et al. (2021) | International Journal of Web Information Systems* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOR model • Flow theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social presence of live streaming platform • Social presence of viewers • Social presence of streamers • Telepresence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer trust • Flow state | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The personal sense of power | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impulsive buying behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | • China | - | - |
| Ma (2021) | Telematics and Informatics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UGT • Network externality theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived network size | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived enjoyment • Perceived social interaction • Social presence • Perceived utility • Self-presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping orientation (task focused vs. experience focused) • Perceptions of digital celebrities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live streaming shopping intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | • China | - | - |

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|------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Lo et al. (2022) | Journal of Business Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOR model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price perception • Scarcity persuasion • Vicarious experience • Parasocial interaction • Social contagion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive reactions • Affective reactions • Impulsive buying urge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susceptibility to social influence • Impulsive buying tendency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impulsive buying behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysia | - | - |
| Wang et al. (2022) | Decision Support System*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordance theory | (IT-based atmospheric cues for BLSE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance information • Bullet information • Parasocial interaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic brand experience | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impulsive purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed methods • Semi-structured interviews • Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | - | - |
| M. Zhang et al. (2022) | Computers in Human Behavior** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-technical systems theory | (Social interaction) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active control • Synchronicity • Two-way communication (IT affordance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalization affordance • Visibility affordance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in streamers • Trust in products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live streaming genre (fixed brand streamers vs. multi-brand streamers) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous use intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | Taobao Live | - |
| D. Lee and Wan (2023) | Journal of Interactive Marketing*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOR model | (Influencer variables) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical attractiveness • Social attractiveness • Credibility • Parasocial relationship (Content type) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genre: ASMR vs. Non-ASMR • Food type: junk food vs. regular food) (Platform variables) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food offerings • Food product information • Monetary savings • Convenience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived values (utilitarian value/hedonic value/social value) | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impulse food consumption • Impulse purchase intention (Ultimately) • Overconsumption behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Two experiments • Cross-sectional survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | - | Food industry |
| Wu et al. (2023) | IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information foraging theory | (First-order construct) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely feedback • Personalization • Streamer-viewer interaction • Viewer-viewer interaction (Higher-order construct) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live interactivity | (Utilitarian value) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product diagnosticity • Product serendipity (Hedonic value) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory appeal • Entertainingness | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • A scenario-based Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | - | Clothing |
| Wang et al. (2023) | Journal of Business Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordance theory | (Systematic related affordances of BLSE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility • Source diversity (Heuristic related affordances of BLSE) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived diagnosticity • Perceived source credibility | (Customer types) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • autonomous help seeking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | Official WeChat group of BLSE | - |

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|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|-------------|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heuristic-systematic model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactivity • Entertainment | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dependent help seeking | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interview • Survey | | | |
| Yang et al. (2023) | Internet Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention theory | Social interaction-oriented content (Social words ' frequency per minute in a broadcaster's live speech) | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcaster popularity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing behaviour • Gift-giving behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Data crawling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | Douyin | |
| Zeng et al. (2023) | Information systems frontiers*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) | (Central cues) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullet screen quality • Bullet screen sentiment (Peripheral cues) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of bullet screen • Source credibility • Popularity | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product type (search product vs. experience product) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Data crawling • Text sentiment analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | Taobao Live | Experience products, such as beauty and clothing Search products, such as electrical appliances. |
| Liu et al. (2023) | Journal of Business Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information foraging theory | (Search cues) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcaster's attractiveness • Broadcaster's perceived product fit (Evaluation cues) • Broadcaster's vividness • Co-viewers' Mutuality • Product's price value | (Search Experience) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived enjoyment • Perceived serendipity • Perceived diagnosticity | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous watching intention • Purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | - | - |
| Gu et al. (2023) | Information & Management*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOR model | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information richness • Interactivity • Vividness • Social presence • Newness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived diagnosticity • Perceived enjoyment • Perceived social support | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorable experience • Continuous participation intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed method • Survey with open-ended questions • Content analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | - | - |
| Dang-Van et al. (2023) | Journal of Business Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory focus theory • Theory of emotions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcaster's physical attractiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Motivation) • Promotion focus • (Emotion) • Emotional attachment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention focus • Positive emotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer engagement (conscious participation/enthusiasm/social interaction) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China | Taobao Live | - |

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|------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|----------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Yan et al. (2023) | Internet Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory of reasoned action (TRA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influencer credibility Celebrity effect Perceived entertainment Trust Perceived usefulness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitude toward influencer Ads | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urge to buy impulsively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | China | - | - |
| Yu et al. (2023) | Current Issues in Tourism *** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value theory TAM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place attachment (place identify, place dependence) Perceived value (perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness) price discount emotional transmission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> configurational effects | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | China | - | Tourism |
| X. Zhang et al. (2023) | Information Systems Frontiers*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appraisal-emotion-action scheme | Persuasive attributes of virtual AL streamers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coolness Mind perception Congruence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arousal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mindset Impulsiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parasocial interaction Intention Urge to buy impulsively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | China | Virtual AI character – Hua Zhibing | - |
| Ye and Ching (2023) | Annals of operations research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flow theory SOR model | (Flow state drivers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal innovativeness Compulsive buying tendency Utilitarian values Social values Social influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer trust Consumer enjoyment Flow experience | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer addition to LSC Consumer loyalty Compulsive buying | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Survey | China | • | - |
| Alam et al. (2023) | International Journal of Hospitality Management*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive emotion theory Theory of pleasure-arousal-dominance | (Live streaming features) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content Interactivity Vividness (Representational delight) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arousal Pleasure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive emotion Negative emotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impulsive consumption tendency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urge to consume impulsively Impulse hotel consumption | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative Cross-sectional survey | Malaysia | Facebook | Hospitality |
| Hua et al. (2024) | European Journal of Information Systems**** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordance theory Cognitive load theory Vicarious learning theory | (Bright side of affordances) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactivity Visibility Entertainment (Dark side of affordances) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadcasting Source diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive load Vicarious learning | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase intention Brand citizenship behaviours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed method Semi-interviews Survey | China | - | - |
| Miranda et al. (2024) | Psychology and Marketing*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOR model | (System-related stimuli) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active-control Reciprocal communication vividness (Marketing related stimuli) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sales promotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived usefulness Perceived enjoyment | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urge to buy impulsively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed method Survey Document analysis | China | - | - |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|--------------------------------|--|---------|---|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorser • Scarcity | | | | | | | |
| Luo et al. (2024) | Internet Research*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signalling theory • Social exchange theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (First-order construct) • Streamer interaction quality • Streamer credibility • (Second-order construct) • Product information quality | • Customer engagement | • Guanxi orientation | • Impulsive buying tendency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | • China | - | - |
| X. Zhang and Zhang (2024) | Technological Forecasting and Social Change*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive-affective framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live streamer-product fit • Self-product fit • Live content-product fit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective intensity • Perceived product risk | - | • Urge to purchase impulsively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Survey | • China | - | - |
| N. Zhang and Ruan (2024) | Psychology and Marketing*** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information richness theory • Psychological reactance theory | • Danmaku consistency :Yes vs. No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information richness • Psychological reactance | • Perceived motivation to post danmaku: intrinsic vs. Extrinsic | • Purchase intention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative • Between-subjects experiments | • China | - | - |

(Note: * refers to journal ranking based on AJG 2021)

Source: The author

APPENDIX III SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please note that the questions' content and order is similar to the developed questionnaire. However, the adjustments on the paper margins, fonts and length of the tables are made to comply with the thesis format.

Thanks for participating in this survey. If you do not complete this survey, all the data you have entered up to that point will be deleted and not used in this research. Please click here to read the [Participant Information Sheet](#).

To ensure this survey is relevant to you, please answer the question below:

Have you ever engaged in live streaming commerce of Burberry on Taobao Live? (Watching/Purchasing)

(1) Yes (2) No – (End of survey)

Demographics

Q1 What is your gender?

(1) Male (2) Female (3) Prefer not to say

Q2 What is your age?

(1) Under 18 (2) 18-35 (3) 36-55 (4) Over 55

Q3 What is your location?

- (1) Tier 1 cities (Shanghai/Beijing/Guangzhou/Shenzhen)
- (2) Tier 2 cities (i.e., the capital cities such as Chengdu/Hangzhou)
- (3) Other cities

Q4 What is the level of your highest qualification?

- (1) Below undergraduate degree level (2) Undergraduate degree level
- (3) Postgraduate level (4) Others (Please specify)

Q5 How long have you used live streaming commerce? (Watching / Purchasing)

- (1) Less than 6 months (2) 6 months - 1 year (3) 1 - 1.5 years (4) 1.5 - 2 years (5) Over 2 years

Q6 How often do you use live streaming commerce? (Watching / Purchasing)

- (1) Daily (2) Weekly (3) Monthly (4) Less frequently

LuxLSC Attributes

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about streamers? | | | | | | | |
| I find the streamer has the similar taste as me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I find the streamer fits with this brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am familiar with the streamer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I know that the streamer has a good reputation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I like the streamer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The streamer makes me feel comfortable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Q8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about live content? | | | | | | | |
| The live stream content is interesting. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The information that the live stream provides is helpful. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The visual display of this live stream room is enjoyable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The visual display of this live stream room fits with this brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Please choose "Disagree " here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| Q9 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about IT-related factors of live streaming commerce? | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LSC allows me to visualise the products like in the real world | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| LSC can provide me with detailed information of the products. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| LSC allows me to communicate with the streamers and other viewers to gain more information of products in real time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| LSC allows me to share my opinions about the products and this brand in real time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Streamers on LSC can provide me with customised information about the products and this brand based on my personal requirement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Streamers on LSC can help me identify which product best fits my needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| LSC allows me to complete a transaction safely and smoothly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| LSC allows me to shop this brand without geographical restriction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Brand Attitudes

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q10 I think this brand is | | | | | | | |
| Bad - Good | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Unlikeable - Likeable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Unpleasant - Pleasant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Unappealing - Appealing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Q11 Please rate "6" here. | | | | | | | |
| Please rate "6" here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Q12 I think saying good things about this brand is | | | | | | | |
| Bad - Good | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Unpleasant - Pleasant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Harmful - Beneficial | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Perceived Social Norms

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | | | | | | | |
| Most people in live streams make me think I should buy luxury products from this brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The people in live streams could influence me to buy luxury products from this brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My friends would encourage me to buy Burberry products. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Perceived Behavioural Control

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Q14 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | | | | | | | |
| Whether I engage in Burberry Live Streaming Commerce is entirely up to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nothing will prevent me from participating in Burberry Live Streaming Commerce. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I believe I have the ability to engage in Burberry Live Streaming Commerce. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Existing Brand Awareness

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Q15 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | | | | | | | |
| I am already aware of this brand before engaging in its live streams. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am able to quickly recall the symbol or logo of this brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am able to recognise this brand among other competing brands. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Q16 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Please choose "Somewhat agree" here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Perceived Brand Luxuriousness

| Q17 I feel this brand is | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Luxury - Value for money | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Expensive - Inexpensive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| High-end - Low-end | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Self-materialism

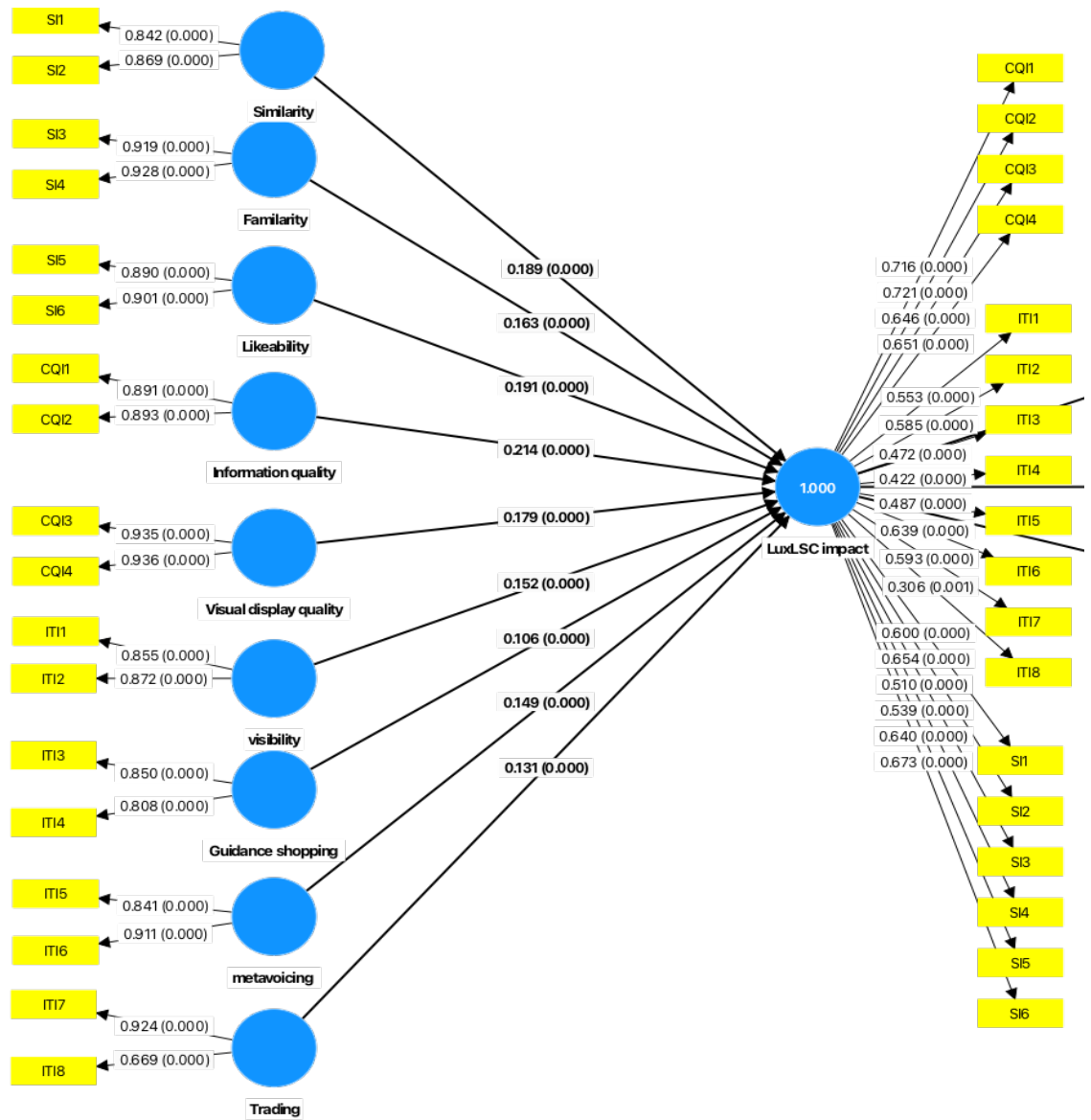
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Q18 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | | | | | | | |
| Sometimes I buy things because it helps me overcome negative feelings (sadness, anxiety, frustration) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Shopping and buying things make me feel good (happy, joyful, proud). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Shopping and buying things are fun for me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I love to buy and own things. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I have worked hard to get where I am and am entitled to the "good things in life". | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I think that there is nothing wrong with enjoying the fruits of your labour if you can. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I deserve to buy things to pamper myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I deserve to spoil myself every now and then. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Please choose "Agree " here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Brand Loyalty

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Q19 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | | | | | | | |
| I intend to keep purchasing this brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I intend to regularly visit the live streams of this brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to recommend this brand to others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to say positive things about this brand on social media. | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX IV ITEM LOADINGS OF OVERALL LUXLSC IMPACT



APPENDIX V ITEM LOADINGS OF SELF-MATERIALISM AS A SECOND-ORDER CONSTRUCT

